

C R O S S R O A D S

A Newsletter of The Grail International Leadership Team

June 2007



SPIRIT OF LOVE
SOUL OF THE LIVING
HEART OF THE LOVING
MAKE US INTO SOUL PEOPLE
NEW BORN AGAIN

Father Clarence J. Rivers

In the Spirituality Forum in August 2007 we pray we will:

- *Listen deeply* to each other as we share what is holy and sacred in our lives
- *Dialogue* about the spiritual richness we share, the questions we have, the spiritual challenges we face in our lives on an individual, national, and international level in the Grail
- *Go more deeply* into our Christian roots and to deepen our understanding of what it means to be an ecumenical movement
- *Widen our understanding* of inter-religious dialogue
- *Enlarge our understanding* of the diverse spiritual paths we have personally and in our own cultures
- *Face the spiritual challenges* from our cultures
- *Include* as wide a representation as possible

(IGA Report 2006, p.13)

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Deadline for the next Crossroads - October, 2007.
Please send to Mary Gindhart at the address below. Thank you

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**REPORT FROM THE
INTERNATIONAL LEADERSHIP TEAM MEETING
January 29 to February 9, 2007
And Activities until June 22, 2007**

We (Ruth Crowe, Cristina dos Anjos Conceicao, and Mary Gindhart) had our first International Leadership Team (ILT) meeting after the IGA 2006 at the Graalhuis in Utrecht, the Netherlands from January 29 to February 9, 2007. The Dutch Grail members welcomed us warmly and took very good care of us, providing us with good accommodations, wonderful home cooked meals, and a very comfortable meeting space.

The Graalhuis was an excellent place to meet. On the canal level is a prayer room and a small meeting place. The ground floor has an office, a large meeting room, and an eating place with kitchen appliances. The first floor has living quarters for Annemarie Pappet-Verdurmen and her husband Bert. The top two floors have three apartments, one that is available for Grail use. Many furnishings, files, books, and equipment from the Tiltenberg fit very well in the new place.

During the ILT meetings, Cristina dos Anjos stayed in the Graalhuis, and Ruth Crowe and Mary Gindhart stayed in the nearby house of Carla van Thiel. Joke van Neerven gave us great meals in her house and Annemarie and Bert cooked for us in the Graalhuis. We had special "eat and meet" evenings with the Dutch National Team and an enjoyable open house with Dutch Grail members and friends. On Tuesday evenings we joined the Zen meditation sessions. We were happy to meet and exchange with all these people.

Prior to the meeting, Ruth Crowe spent two weeks with the Grail in Uganda at their National meeting and visiting Centres. Cristina dos Anjos visited the Daraja-mbili Grail Centre in Kenya and attended the World Social Forum in Nairobi, Kenya. After the meeting, Ruth Crowe and Mary Gindhart met with the Dutch Grail Nucleus members. Mary Gindhart visited the small Grail-related group in Brussels that grew out of the Lien Network. Ruth Crowe and Mary Gindhart visited the Grail in Germany. In April 2007, Mary Gindhart visited Grail groups in Mexico.

We had many things to consider in our meetings, especially The Mission Goals and Recommendations adopted at IGA 2006. We were able to initiate some actions and take steps in a number of areas.

We worked on the following aspects of The Mission Goals and Recommendations adopted at IGA 2006:

Establishment of an International Grail Secretariat

The first steps were taken with the assistance of the Dutch NLT and a Dutch personnel search committee. The office International Secretariat will be in Graalhuis in Utrecht, the Netherlands. Mineke van Sloten, of the Dutch Grail will be the International Administrative Assistant commencing in July 2007. (NOTE: Mineke van Sloten will now use the name "Hermien" to avoid confusion with Mienke Hage, International Finance Officer.)

International Grail Spirituality and Theology Forum *(See IGA 2006 Report, p. 13)*

Since January, we have been working by telephone and e-mail with Ticha Vasconcelos of the planning team of the Forum that will be held in Portugal from August 1 to 7, 2007. Two persons will attend from each country. National Leadership Teams (NLT) in each country have set up a way for those 2 persons to be chosen. A letter was sent to all Grail participants about the Spirituality Forum.

Solidarity

We see the need to focus on sharing personnel, finances, and knowledge in the International Grail. Recommendations are listed for Grail members, National Teams, and ILT. *(See IGA 2006 Report, p. 14, 15.)* During our meeting we worked with the International Finance Officer (IFO), Mienke Hage, and the International Assistance Fund Team (IAFT) — Frances Broekhoven, Josette Kersters and Jeanette Loanzon

— to develop a proposal to assist the Grail in 9 countries in the global south towards more self-reliance. The proposal was sent to NLTs in those countries (Brazil, Kenya, Mexico, Mozambique, Papua New Guinea, The Philippines South Africa, Tanzania, and Uganda). The ILT will work to create a team to facilitate the international exchange of people between countries and across regions.

Formation

As we met, we had e-mail contact with Rosaurora Espinosa and Mary Kay Louchart, who are members of the core team for International Formation. Maria Goretti Semvua from Tanzania joined the core team after the ILT meeting. We had input on formation activities that were planned for Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, and for Portuguese/ Spanish speakers.

A national Leadership Development Programme is being held in Papua New Guinea in June 2007. Planning for a Formation/Leadership Programme for Portuguese/Spanish speakers in 2008 in Brazil is underway. (See IGA Report 2006, p. 15, 16.)

Culture and Language

The ILT was able to see that the work on Solidarity and Formation and the preparations for the International Grail Spirituality and Theology Forum are being done with close attention to culture and language. (See IGA Report 2006, p. 10.)

Overcoming Poverty

The ILT asked for a report on the joint meeting of Training for Transformation (T for T) and Overcoming Poverty Programme with 11 people for 3 days that was planned for 2005 in East Africa. Ruth Crowe is working with a small group to determine the feasibility of a T for T programme in the Asia-Pacific region. Cristina Dos Anjos is seeking ways to develop south-south exchange. The Global Justice Overcoming Poverty Network publishes a monthly Bulletin.

Ton Brouwer reported that each Grail country now has a contact person and awareness is growing among Grail women about trafficking of women and children. (See IGA 2006 Report, p. 18)

Living in Harmony with the Earth: Living Sustainably

The ILT is working to find ways to supply educational materials to teams and centres, especially about genetically engineered organisms (GEOs). (See IGA 2006 Report, p. 21.)

Justice for Women

Mary Kay Louchart of the Grail/UFER Linkage Group to the UN gave the ILT daily updates on the Grail preparations in New York for the meeting of the Commission on the Status of Women at the UN on the Girl Child.

The Lien Network has been working to organize a Pan-African meeting of younger professional women. Ruth Crowe will be working further with them. Ine van Emmerik met with the ILT and shared how Lien had developed in Europe.

Peace

Robin Sclafani conducts workshops on diversity training. Efforts will be made to get Grail women to attend those workshops and to have Robin present the workshops at Grail venues.

The ILT encourages you to contact us if you have questions, thoughts, or suggestions for any area mentioned in this report.

Love and best wishes,

Ruth Crowe, Cristina do Anjos and Mary Gindhart

SPIRITUALITY FORUM

International Grail Spirituality and Theology Forum to Begin

The 7-day International Grail Spirituality and Theology Forum will open on August 1, 2007 at Casa de Oração Sta. Rafaela Maria, Portugal. The planning team Ticha Vasconcelos (Portugal), Cay Charles (USA), Kerstin Jacobsson (Sweden), Teopista Nakubuule (Uganda), Maria Carlos Ramos (Portugal), and Anita Saisi (Italy). Sixty-one participants will attend from 17 countries: Australia, Brazil, Canada, Germany, Italy, Kenya, Mexico, Mozambique, Netherlands, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Portugal, South Africa, Sweden, Tanzania, Uganda, and USA. The criteria for selecting the participants from each country were sent to all National Teams in February 2007.

The 6-person planning team invited 16 resource people who will give presentations on the 6 themes: 1) Cultural Changes and Spiritual Changes, 2) Youth Voice in the Grail and what their Search is about, 3) Exploring Mysticism and Prophecy, 4) Elaboration of Suffering/Human Wholeness/Justice/Solidarity, 5) Reflections on the Eucharist and the Early Christian Communities, and 6) New Vision. We are very grateful to the planning team for all the work they are doing.

Grail members can get copies of the preparatory materials from the persons in your country who will be participating in the Forum, or from the website that has been set up for the Spirituality Forum: www.grailspiritualityforum.org. Grail members can send an e-mail to mariana.malta@gmail.com for a login/password. The preparatory materials, list of participants, and program are now on the website. During the Forum it will be possible to follow what is happening on the website.

FORMATION

Papua New Guinea (PNG) Formation Program — was held in Madang PNG from June 10 - 22, 2007.

Twenty-two women from PNG and 6 Australians participated in the formation program. The program was for 2 groups: Group 1 met for one week for a follow-up to the program last year; Group 2 (new women) met for two weeks to do a program similar to the one Group 1 did in 2006.

PEACE

From Teresa Wilson (USA): Women Standing To Save the World

An idea born of a book called *The Great Silent Gathering of Grandmothers*, by Sharon Mehdi, became a reality with 25 events in public parks of “Standing Women” in 70 nations scheduled. Women were invited mostly by e-mail to join others on Mother’s Day, (May 13) in solidarity for the world’s children and grandchildren, and for the seven generations beyond them.

A small group of women in Ohio living close to Grailville who distributed invitations to everyone they knew on e-mail, dreamed of a world where “all of our children have safe drinking water, clean air to breathe, and enough food to eat. A world where they have access to a basic education to develop their minds and healthcare to nurture their growing bodies. A world where they have a warm, safe, and loving place to call home. A world where they don’t live in fear of violence—in their home, in their neighborhood, in their school, or in their world. This is the cause for which we stand.”

Seven thousand printed invitations were distributed at the CSW meeting at the UN in March 2007 and the initiative became international. I brought the invitation to Pilgrim Place in Claremont, California where I live. I discovered that the parents of one of the women who started the initiative live at Pilgrim Place, and we began to organize a Standing Women event in Memorial Park. Grail member, Joann Lamb read the book about the grandmothers who started the silent gathering to the Pilgrim Place community at lunch one day. We invited local women and we e-mailed our friends to gather in their city parks.

On Mother’s Day, we had a great and enthusiastic turnout of 250 people for Standing Women in Claremont Memorial Park. Internationally, there were 35,866 sites in 76 nations.

Now, though Iraq consumes our hopes, we continue our stand for peace and non violence.



GRAIL CENTER REPORT

Kenya, Grail Centre at Daraja-mbili

The Grail in Kenya held a strategic planning meeting from February 21 to 25, 2007. In their report to the International Leadership Team (ILT), they listed how the Grail Centre Daraja-mbili will carry out the recommendations on Grail Centres from IGA 2006:

- Contributions of skills and money
- Exchange of facilitators and other resources with Uganda and Tanzania
- Education on genetically engineered organisms during Formation
- Work on women and girls' issues
- Promotion of sustainable agriculture
- Prayer for peace
- Work on self reliance

GRAIL GLOBAL NETWORKS REPORTS

Human Trafficking Network

by Ton Brouwer

I am glad that more and more Grail members all over the world are now becoming aware of the tragedy of trafficking in women. Since January of this year, the following representatives from 12 Grail countries have reacted to the IGA's appeal (August 2006) to start research on the trafficking of women in her country:

Australia — Mary Robertson sent me a final version of CATW Shadow Report on the Netherlands authored by Laura Chavez. Mary mentioned that the report written on Australia some years back certainly resulted in activity by the government, even though it denied that trafficking is a big problem in Australia.

Italy — Pia Zuccolin is preparing a report about the situation of trafficking in women, together with Giusi Brocca, who is working with Caritas in a service for women.

Kenya — Pauline Makwaka promised to send information on trafficking of children and women in Kenya. She wrote as follows: "Most children are trafficked from their rural homes to the city. The parents being promised a lot of money, but the children end up being sexually abused, or even thrown to the streets, then ending up as prostitutes. Some parents even send their children to the streets just to earn money from their prostitution. So there is a lot to share with you, and I will do it soon".

South Africa — Loek Goemans wrote: "South Africa has become one of the central spots on the trafficking map of Africa, as well as of the world. People, mainly women and children, are trafficked (a terrible new verb) from as far as Uganda. Johannesburg and Cape Town are the two landing bases in the country from where many people are taken to Europe and even to Asia. Within South Africa, too, women and children are transported — from the poorer areas to the richer demand areas." Loek also sent some case studies on trafficking of women, provided by International Organisation for Migration (IOM) and published in AGENDA, Empowering Women for Gender Equity, No. 70, 2006.

Canada — Olga Kolisnyk sent an article from a Canadian Newspaper (11/26/06) entitled "Human Cargo a \$ 10-billion Industry" which is in the GJOP Bulletin, No. 24, December 2006.

Germany — Maria Schwab sent some newspaper articles mentioning that human trafficking is still flourishing, though 200 years ago was the official end of slavery.

Tanzania — Sophia Paul Shayo sent a translation of an article published in the Swahili Rai Newspaper (June 8 -14, 2006), which was in the GJOP Bulletin, No. 27, March 2007.

India — Pearl Drego thanked me for sending "Transactions," the newsletter published twice a year by the Dutch Foundation of Religious against Trafficking in Women. This Newsletter is sent to all the representatives of the Human Trafficking Network.

Mexico — Arun Kumar Acharya, a colleague of Rosaurora and Rosaurora, thanked me for the "Transactions" newsletter issue, January 2007. They both keep me informed on human trafficking.

Philippines — Nonna Therese Sagan of the Grail team in Dipolog will take care of the Human Trafficking Network according to the information received from Jeanette Loanzon.

Uganda — Josephine Nakagolo was happy with the "Transactions" newsletter, and wrote that Uganda is one of the countries where the victims come from, after they have been promised jobs in European countries. More information about this and what the government is doing to combat this will be sent another time, along with information from relevant sources.

USA — May Gindhart read the 15 year anniversary of “Transactions.” She thanked me for working with the Dutch Foundation of Religious for so many years, and helping the Grail to become aware of the scope of trafficking. So many women are affected, as well as the police, the pimps, and the men who seek sexual experiences, etc.

Netherlands — A Training Conference on Trafficking for Religious (January, 20 - 25 2007, Nairobi, Kenya) was organized by the Dutch Foundation of Religious against Trafficking in Women (SRTV) with funding from a Dutch Catholic Missionary Development Organisation (CMC). The conference was held at the same time as the World Social Forum, since trafficking was being highlighted at the Forum. The participants came from Nigeria, South Africa, Ghana, Cameroon, Malawi, Ethiopia, and Kenya — mainly sisters and women from other faith-based groups working in this area. Each country grouping was asked to draw up a three-year plan of action and share this with the other groups. The countries are at various stages in the fight against trafficking, with Nigeria and Italy having a network of congregations offering transit homes and an established shelter for rehabilitation and reintegration of the trafficked women. It was from the desire to deepen contact and sharing of information and material that African Network Against Human Trafficking (ANAHT) was born. I will follow this development and inform our Grail representatives in Africa about it.

Grail/UFER Linkage Group to the United Nations—

Report on Grail Participation at the Commission on the Status of Women at the United Nations in New York February 26 to March 9, 2007

by Mary Kay Louchart

The Grail brought over 40 women between the ages of 14 to 77 at the United Nations 51st Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), held from February 26 to March 9, 2007. Teenagers from Portugal, Honduras, Mozambique, South Africa, Mexico, Switzerland, South Korea, and from Michigan, Maine, and the Bronx, in the United States attended. Young adults from Mexico, South Africa, Portugal, Mozambique, the Netherlands, Honduras, Canada, and Croatia, as well as some seasoned Grail/CSW “veterans” from the Netherlands, Germany, California, Louisiana, Michigan, Pennsylvania, and New York also attended.

The 22 Grail-sponsored teenagers were shepherded through the long halls and meeting rooms of the UN and through the maze of different procedures and processes of the CSW’s work—to say nothing of the encounter with the culture shock of New York City. They presented on workshop panels, contributed to the Girls’ Caucus, hung out in the Girls’ Tent just outside the entrance to the UN Building, engaged in the Girls’ Speak Out, made themselves visible, and spoke up in many workshops

Immediately after the Friday Speak-Out at CSW-51, some girls — most of them Grail-sponsored girls — met and made a statement and recommendations to the Commission on the Status of Women:

Statement: *We have a right to directly participate here, being the younger generation we have the ability to begin the change. We are not just a topic, but those who can raise a voice and act. As participants in the 2007 CSW, we would really like to improve the system for young women and continue the work that we’ve started.*

Recommendations for CSW preparation:

- PRE-ORIENTATION — publicity through schools, websites, and the media. Gain the support of schools.
- ORIENTATION — explain the steps NGOs can take for lobbying the member states of the UN.
- LANGUAGE — provide more translators and more time for those translating to incorporate questions and comments

Recommendations for CSW participation:

- GIRLS CAUCUS — hold every year
- WORKSHOPS — young women and girls organize and run the workshops themselves
- BRIEFING — morning briefing for girls
- SKILLS DEVELOPMENT — how to work from the ground up in our own communities at home

Follow up activities at home:

When the 22 girls and the more seasoned Grail/CSW attendees went home, they shared with their families, friends, and school mates, reported to local and regional Grail members, and spoke to classes, government officials, and NGOs that work with

girls, parish groups, and diocesan meetings. They are studying more about HIV/AIDS, trafficking in girls, children in war zones, and the situations of women and girls in their own countries.

Girls sponsored by the Grail received three of the ten Mary Purcell scholarships awarded by the Working Group on Girls: Claudia Ascençao from Portugal, Sindisiwe Qwabe from South Africa, and Denise Milice from Mozambique. They each received a \$100 to start their project at home. Denise Milice describes her project:

“The meeting that I had with government and NGOs was the beginning of my project. Those meetings gave me the overview of issues that I would like to focus on in my project, *“The Empowerment of the Girl Child in My Community.”*”

“I presented my trip to New York and my project to the Grail members in April. That was so important because they have given me support and some ideas about how I can implement my project. After that, I invited other adolescents (between 14 and 17 years old) including boys, through pamphlets that I spread at different schools at Maputo City. Now I have a group of 30 adolescents (21 girls and 9 boys). We are going to start with an “Adolescent Club” with the slogan “Choose Life through Education, Information and Development of One’s Gifts and Talents.” The meetings will be held at Grail Centre every Saturday from June 16 to August 26, and it will be coordinated by Ida Alvarinho and Abida Jamal from Grail - Mozambique.”

Abida Jamal Grail Moçambique, chaperone and translator for Denise Milice during CSW, made the following suggestion:

“What about starting discussion sessions with the girls and boys in countries where the Grail was involved in CSW this year to prepare and empower them for CSW-52 and their life? It will be good to keep them in touch.”

The following resources are available: 1) copies of the talks given by the girls at Baruch College—a Grail sponsored event—are available on DVD and in print, 2) biographies of all of the girls, 3) photos, and 4) reports. Contact Mary Kay Louchart at Grail-IPT@juno.com for information.

Sharon Joslyn, Kate Twohy, and Mary Kay Louchart are members of Working Group on Girls (WGG) of the NGO Committee on UNICEF. They will continue

to work at capacity building and carrying forth the theme repeated many times during those two weeks, *“Making Girls Visible.”*

Call for CSW 52

Financing for Gender Equality will be the theme for CSW-52, February 25th thru March 8th, 2008. E-mail Mary Kay Louchart at Grail-IPT@juno.com, if you want additional information.

Grail Participation in the World Social Forum in Nairobi Kenya

by Cristina dos Anjos and Priscilla Erasmus

The participation of a Grail delegation in the 2007 WSF was defined at the IGA 2006 (*See IGA 2006 Report, p. 19*). Although this wasn’t the first time the Grail participated in the World Social Forum (WSF), the recommendation by the IGA legitimized it, and the International Leadership Team worked intensely to make it happen.

This was the seventh WSF, a space which has been built by popular organizations and movements and is recognized world wide as a space of sharing experiences and construction of alternatives to face the challenges of neo-liberalism .

The Forum opening was preceded by a big march, which was organized by an ecumenical group of churches. The march started from two strategic places: 1) from Kibera community (a huge slum in Nairobi) and 2) from an Anglican Church. It was impressive to see the participation of grassroots groups, bringing their dances, music and realities to share. It was very interesting to hear Desmond Tutu (South African) and Wangari Mathai (Kenyan, Nobel Prize).

We were 15 Grail women: from Brazil (Maria Cristina dos Anjos and Silvani Valentim), Kenya (Mary Daniel, Grace Kuuyaiyui, Angelina Kyonda, Pauline Makawaka, Monica Nguku, Rosebell Nyakinyua Chege, Eunice A Okello, Mary Wangui Karanja Shangaa), South Africa (Priscilla Erasmus), Tanzania (Sophia Fahumba), Uganda (Josephine Nakagolo and Rosemary Yiga), and USA (Carol Barton). The majority were participating in that event for the first time.

As we didn’t have much possibility of previous preparation, we decided to have a meeting on

the day before the Forum opening to prepare our participation and to thank God for the opportunity to be present. We used the nights to share experiences of the day and prepare for the next day. We took a day at the end to dialogue about our expectations and to evaluate our participation

There were many difficulties with the infrastructure, organization, and other aspects of the WSF that were minimized by: the effort and courage of the organizations leading the event; by the richness of sharing; by the possibilities of getting to know realities in many parts of the world; and by experiences of solidarity with other participants. Staying in the same hotel with International Caritas, made possible our participation in workshops /events organized by Caritas, such as the beautiful celebration at Kibera Community. Caritas also provided transportation from the hotel to the forum venue, which was 5 kilometers away.

What called for our attention:

- The understanding that the whole world is affected by the HIV/AIDS problem;
- The privatization of water;
- The extent of poverty in African countries;
- The life reality of people in the urban center of Kenya, especially in Kibera slum;
- The Kenyans hospitality;
- The message of Wangari Mathai (Nobel Prize winner) about perseverance in the struggle;
- The evidence that the entire world is against Bush;
- The fight for human rights is a universal phenomenon;
- Globalization affects people more negatively than positively;
- Solutions to many of the world's problems are in the hands of civil society not multinational corporations.

What the WSF made possible for us:

- A formation space for various themes with which we also work;
- The dialogue of the Grail with other organizations including Caritas and the Groots Kenya organization;
- Dialogue and sharing experiences with other Grail women, making possible a better understanding of the life reality of each one, and also their Grail reality.
- Participation in the big discussions, which are focused, nowadays, by organizations involved with social issues.

Future proposals:

- Constitute a team to coordinate/organize the Grail participation in the WSF, making possible a better preparation for it;
- Include in the program visits to the local Grail, so that the reality and the action of the Grail in that country may be known;
- Elaboration of a project of fund raising to finance the Grail participation in the Forum.

In the final evaluation meeting there was expressed our gratitude: to the Grail in Kenya that made great efforts to help us to understand their reality and to make us feel at home; to Caritas for open spaces so that we could participate together in many activities, as well as staying in the same space; to the ILT and Mienke to make possible the participation of this delegation in 2007 WSF.

COUNTRY REPORTS

From The Grail in Australia, by Fran Warner

Here in Sydney we are enjoying the autumn coolness, and some much needed rain. Our water supplies are very low — the state government is planning to build a desalination factory to make sea water into fresh water. There is a lot of criticism, because the factory will use lots of electricity, with bad results for our greenhouse gas production. A lot of water is used by ordinary Australians in our homes and gardens, by our farmers growing inappropriate crops in a basically dry continent, and by our industry. Our rivers have had far too much water taken from them before they reach their mouths close to the ocean. It is a big challenge for us all — even in the cities we are beginning to install rain water tanks. But, of course, we have to learn to live more simply, if we are to have enough water for all. Meanwhile, many of our small neighbouring countries — island nations in the Pacific — are already suffering from rising ocean levels. — There will be many environmental refugees.

Sydney is preparing for World Youth Day (July 15 -20, 2008). At the school where I am principal, all classrooms will be used for the pilgrims to sleep on the floor — perhaps 700 in all. Last week we had a visit from Fr. Stan Fortuna, the rap singing Franciscan friar, who sings in a style that appeals to the young urban kids of New York. This was to stir up interest here in Australia. There have been mixed reactions.

From The Grail in Germany, by Marita Estor and Silvana Ferraguti De Cecco

The new National Leadership Team in Germany is Silvana Ferraguti DeCecco, Christa Werner, and Edeltraud Zörkler. They will take office during the national meeting, June 15 – 17, 2007. The team and a few others went to Milano at the end of May to celebrate Pentecost with the Milano Grail group! Silvana Ferraguti De Cecco dreamed that the Christian and Muslim women who live next to each other in Duisburg could meet and share experiences and desires to help overcome prejudices and to learn mutual respect and understanding. Silvana then organized a meeting in cooperation with the migration service in Duisburg Hochfeld that the Grail initiated in 1972.

On Saturday, October 21, 2006, twenty-six women met at Duisburg. They ranged in age from 25 to 85 years old; 11 were Muslims of different nationalities, 15 were Christians of different denominations (Roman Catholic / Protestants/ Orthodox from Syria and Armenia). Resource persons were Ingrid Roth (Roman Catholic) and Nigar Yardin (Muslim), both theologians in Duisburg.

The program (10am-4pm) started with a short presentation by each participant who said why she came and her expectations. Then 4 groups were formed. As a conversation starter about religious tradition or daily life, each person chose one or two pieces from a variety of objects that they found on a table. Many questions were asked about the other religion and the other person. Some were answered. All were put on paper for everyone to read.

During the break for lunch, a group of Muslim and Christian women from Thailand in colorful folk dresses played their traditional instruments and sang songs from their country. In a plenary session, Mrs. Roth and Mrs. Yardin told about their youth and education and how they live their faith. They also openheartedly shared questions and opinions of their grown-up children and answered questions.

During the final evaluation the women recognized the trustful and openhearted atmosphere in which the sharing took place. Many gained new insights, even into their own religion, and would like to continue this kind of exchange.

From The Grail in Italy, by Gemma DiMarino

New members of the Grail in Italy

Guisy Brocca, age 44, and Terry Fiammanti, age 42, began to know the Grail in the Spirituality and Research group run by Anita Saisi and Pia Zuccolin for women who wanted to know more about spirituality and religion. After two or three years, Guisy and Terry began to attend Grail meetings.

Guisy who has two daughters, Chiara, 16 and Paola, 12, and is a social worker for Caritas Ambrosiana in Milan says:

“Following this first experience, Anita and Pia invited me to the Grail group meetings. I’ve just started to learn about the beautiful history and the values of the Grail, and I think this is a real gift for me. I’m fascinated by the wideness and the diversity in the movement, both from the cultural and the religious side. Above all I feel the deep bonds connecting you all. The Grail values I’ve been inspired by are justice and spirituality lived by and for women. I really appreciate who you are and what you do, because you really give birth to an authentic feminine humanity.”

With love and affection, Giusy

Terry who is happily married to Enrico and has two daughters, Silene, 17, and Agnese, 14, says:

“I was able to join the Grail meetings once a month on Sundays. I cannot do much for the Grail because my spare time is very little, but reading Crossroads and knowing there are women trying to do something to change the world to a better place and sharing the same aims that I do, makes me feel proud to be a woman and, even more, to be a Grail woman. I’d like to end this letter telling you that there is one more woman who you can rely on.”

A big hug to everyone, God bless you. – Terry

From Mexican North South Group, by Rosaurora Epinosa

Members meet regularly on Grail matters and to have celebrations. In every region Grail members use common bases of reflection and action on environmental degradation, emerging issues, local problems related to migration, and all issues relating to women—particularly poverty, murder, trafficking, and healthcare. The goal is to link our spiritual inspiration from the Grail with all those reflections/ actions, in order to develop leadership. In Mexico

City, members work in pastoral, legal support, and popular culture groups, as well as in local meetings with young women. In Torreon, in the north of the country, women meet for reflection and prayer and to discuss the complex social problems associated with soil pollution by arsenic and migration.

In Guanajuato, women of different generations seek solutions to local problems. The Grail encourages women to search for programs and activities according to their interests, giving them information on budgets and programs for rural women at municipal, state, and federal levels. Thus they can fight for their rights and lead others to do the same. Women from Oaxaca and Chiapas share experiences and efforts to overcome obstacles and conflicts.

A Grail Formation Program is developing in Guanajuato, with women from Oaxaca, Chiapas, and Mexico City participating. The goal is to have the women share experiences, life histories, and learn about each other's regions. A ceremony was held giving material to each woman interested in participating in the Grail.

The work with young women involves spirituality, leadership, and the areas of gender, culture, and environment. The goal is to link these factors to their experiences, then to give information on what is taking place in the Grail related to these topics. Some of the young women say that it is very important for them to find a place where they can reflect on spirituality, since in their NGOs and schools it is not acceptable to link Christian issues, the gospel message, and political or academic work. The discussions help to break down feelings of isolation, loneliness, and frustration, as well as encouraging and giving them hope to become women who are spiritually based and fighters for justice.

Since 1992, the Grail members have been very active in the Women of the Americas Network. They were involved in the past year in meetings at the IGA and in Canada. They are preparing for the Young Women of the Americas meeting in Honduras in July 2007. Other International Grail networks to which they contribute are: Human Trafficking, Global Justice Overcoming Poverty, Spirituality and Theology, and Lien. They give visibility to the Grail through participation in national networks, Mexican civil society, campaigns, and their jobs.

As a part of the International Grail we were very proud for having for the first time the presence of Mary Gindhart, an International Leadership Team

member, giving us testimony of strength, living faith, as well as respect and love for our culture. Readings and reflections from the Gospel that women could relate to with their current life conditions (economic, spiritual, emotional) really encouraged them to plan the next steps. Mary's presence was a sign of hope. Thanks for everything!!!

**From the Grail Region Morelos, Mexico,
by Ma. Luía Mejía Lagunas, María Teresa
McDermitt, and Isabel Hernández Tezoquipa**

The Grail in Morelos and the Valley of Mexico has projects in three regions that include Reyes la Paz estado de Mexico y Tenorios, Ixtapalapa D.F. with coordination in Cuervavaca of the many areas of Grail work in the Church, professional life, community development and social justice and outreach to young women. Recently young women have participated in the Young Women of the Americas gathering in Chiapas and in the Commission on the Status of Women meeting at the UN.

In Los Reyes the Grail supports and leads activities within the community and parish throughout the year. They sponsor a nutrition workshop and have assisted with many activities and groups for women, youth, children, families, persons preparing for marriage. These groups have worked on self esteem, economic empowerment through groups that produce goods to be sold, prevention of domestic violence, opposition to drugs, healthful living and care for the environment. In the parish, they have a bible reflection group and do pastoral work through Eucharistic ministry, evangelization and religious education.

The activities in Iztapala include: mental health workshops on depression, pastry making, domestic violence, traditional cooking, parenting and spirituality. They promote the production of articles for the home and for sale in order to improve their domestic and community self-reliance.

In the state of Morelos, the activities are rooted in a wide circle of national, regional and local happenings about economic empowerment, ecological sustainability, cultural awareness, public health, cooperation with educational institutions and governmental authorities, creation of cultural festivals, participation in national conferences, and life long learning opportunities. Grassroots people, artists, musicians, dancers, professionals in social work and public health, government officials, NGOs

develop a new vision and work together to make it real.

Eleven (11) visiting groups of students and professors from Canada and the US have been given opportunities to participate in projects, attend events and learn about the economic realities that force many people to leave their homes and families in Mexico to live under harsh conditions in Canada and the US. The groups visited two (2) of the various groups that exist in Morelos:

Grupo Luz y Libertad.

For 10 years a base Christian community in the area of Civac has been meeting for bible reflection, analyzing the needs of their surroundings and taking actions. They provide nutrition workshops, a buying cooperative, and space for women to reflect on the sociocultural conditions of their lives. They have income generating projects so women will be more economically independent. They organize exhibitions and invite people to come to buy the handcrafts that the women produce. They give self esteem workshops to women in other areas.

Centro de Compostaje Tierra Fértil.

This center in Jiutepec grew out of a bible reflection group that analyzed the problems of environmental pollution and contamination in the area. They conduct programs and projects to reduce the amount of waste, promote the fertility of the earth and promote community hygiene and health. They sell organic compost, aromatic plants and handcrafts to generate income.

Many things have been accomplished through Grail coordination with church groups, civil society groups finance people and municipal authorities.

From the Grail Mozambique, by Manuesse Mocumbe

From February 8 – 11, 2007, the Grail Mozambique held their traditional “Annual Meeting” in which they reviewed the activities carried out last year and planned this year’s activities. They invited experts to give presentations on gender, the human rights of women, and liturgy. For the first time, they had an auction of personal items (clothes, shoes, ear-rings, etc.), to raise funds for their Centre.

They decided to continue with periodic formation meetings for the Grail participants, Lent and Advent gatherings, “Friday’s Discussions,” and “Saturday’s Literary Assemblies.” They challenged themselves

to study means to ensure a bigger impact of those activities in their society and to expand their activities.

The cultural magazine of the main daily newspaper of the country published an article by Sara Jona about the Saturday Literary Assemblies, which celebrated its 7th anniversary this year. As a result, the Literary Assembly held on Saturday April 29 was attended by many young people. Our challenge is to kindle interest in reading, primarily among the youth. Dr. Nataniel Ngomane made a critical and comparative presentation of the books, *Ualalapi* and *Vozes Anoitcidas* by Ungula Bad Ka Chose and Mia Couto, two renowned Mozambican writers. In May, Professor Francisco Noah made a presentation of “Dom Casmurro” of Machado de Assis.

For the “Friday’s Discussion” on April 20, we organized a talk about the “status of imprisoned Mozambican women,” focusing on the advantages and disadvantages of extradition. This session was led by Dr. Joaquim Bule, a specialist in international relations.

During Lent, we had meditation and reflection gatherings on the Lenten message of Pope Benedict XVI.

We held two meetings in which we talked about “Culture and Inculturation” and about the Grail Participation in the 51st Session of the Commission on the Status of Women Forum held in New York City from February 22 to March 9, 1997. The Grail-Mozambique is assisting the young Mozambican girl, Denise, who participated in the Forum, accompanied by Ábida Jamal, in carrying out her “Back Home” project throughout this year.

In the upcoming meetings, we will revisit the “Grail identity and mission” to address the issue of the expansion of the Grail-Mozambique. We will also talk about environmental issues. In August, we will participate in the Spirituality Forum in Portugal.

In the first three months of the year, the Centre and North of the country were severely affected by floods that displaced hundreds of people. Then, cyclone Favio destroyed infrastructures in Southern and Central parts of the country. These natural disasters make us question global warming and climate changes, and bring to focus the importance of implementing measures at a global level to overcome the current situation.

On March 22, heavy weaponry exploded in the main armory of the country, located in the outskirts of the capital, Maputo, causing more than 100 deaths and 400 injured people, besides destroying hundreds of houses and social and economic infrastructures. On that tragic Wednesday, we lived through terrible moments in Maputo, as it was literally being bombed. Fortunately, no Grail participant was injured.

The catastrophe caused by the armory explosions is paradoxical in a time of peace in Mozambique. This situation raises our concern about the latent threat hanging over our country and the world from arsenals that, even in a peace, can be detonated by mere inattention.

In the midst of such desolation, we witnessed the readiness among Mozambicans to assist their brothers and sisters, as well as experiencing the spirit of solidarity shown by other peoples and countries to Mozambique.

From the Grail in the Philippines, by Jeanette Loanzon and Sandy Aristorenas

We had a Grail national meeting in Dipolog, Western Mindanao, from April 27 – 30. Attending were: Jeanette Loanzon, Sandy Aristorenas and Jackie Lou Echon from Manila; Joy Rubillo, Nona Therese Sagan, and Bernie Baereia from Dipolog; and a team from Cagayan de Oro – Adalberta Francis, Precila Arce, and Candelaria Mugot. Joy's family provided shelter, food, and other assistance to us. We went to Oasis of Life Retreat House beside the sea for a 2-day retreat before our meetings and sessions. The nine of us did a lot of sharing and made plans. We hope to have a leadership training program for young women in April – May, 2008.

In Eastern Samar, twenty preschool teachers participated in an upgrading seminar led by a Grail member from Cagayan de Oro in Northern Mindanao on May 26 – 29, 2007.

To begin their bakery project in Dipolog, Western Mindanao, Joy Rubillos and team went to Cebu to learn the rudiments of baking *pan de sal*, a popular Filipino breakfast and snack bread. Mary Baluyot, an economics professor who acts as enterprise development specialist, accompanied them. The Dutch Grail provided the seed money to begin this project.

Our new NLT team for June 1, 2007 through May 31, 2010 will be: Adalberta Francis from Cagayan de Oro,

Northern Mindanao; Jeanette Loanzon from Luzon; and Joy Rubillos from Dipolog, Western Mindanao. Sandy Aristorenas is treasurer, Jeanette Loanzon is communications person, and the IC representative is Joy Rubillos.

HIGHLIGHTS

Seder for Women of all Faiths, Brussels, Belgium

Two Grail members who live in Brussels, Belgium, Robin Sclafani and Patricia Camisao, are meeting regularly with other women who are interested in the Grail. Mary Gindhart from the ILT met with the group in February 2007.

Patricia sent a report of their Seder for Women of all Faiths. To begin, Rabbi Floriane Chinsky described the different parts of the service. We sat together in a circle with women we knew and women we had just met. The first thing we were asked to do was to get up and thoroughly wash our hands to prepare for the program ahead. I won't describe our whole meeting, but will let you know that we offered light as we lit candles and blessed each other towards freedom; and took the tears shed in oppression to celebrate the struggle on the way to a new life. Singing the Seder order we shared the making of bread, which would be rising during the Seder, as we rose up, together, towards liberation. Learning stories of each of the women, we slowly wove delicate bridges across our paths on the road to liberation.

Saving Seeds.

Silvia Rodriguez who discussed her work against genetic engineering of agricultural crops at IGA 2006 says:

“For sure my agronomist friends say that the best way to preserve seeds is to leave them in the hands of farmers who grow and take care of them year after year.”

The following are two examples of approaches that ignore farmers:

1) The Gates Foundation has joined with the Rockefeller Foundation in promoting a new “Green Revolution” in Africa. The question is: will the new effort learn from the mistakes of earlier “Green Revolution” initiatives? The [Africa Focus Bulletin](#) of Oct. 15, 2006 contains a critique from GRAIN, an NGO that promotes sustainable management

of agricultural diversity. The problem is not that the Green Revolution has “bypassed” Africa. It is that several decades of experience, lessons and new insights have bypassed the Green Revolution sponsors — now backed by corporate foundations — who insist on an outdated technology model that benefits corporations, not farmers. (See www.africafocus.org for more information.)

2) The Norwegian government has presented the designs of the building that will house the biggest seed bank in the world. BBC News has called it the “doomsday vault.” The huge depository will be constructed in the city of Svalbard, on an island in the Arctic Ocean. The depository will house three million genetic duplicates of horticultural plants and wild derivatives, such as herbs. The seeds will be buried at more than 10 meters, and will be preserved at a temperature of –6 degrees centigrade. It is foreseen that the construction work must begin in the next few weeks and end in September of this year, so that the huge warehouse will be functioning by winter 2008. (See www.elporvenir.com.mx/notas.asp?nota_id=114003 for further information.)

OBITUARIES

MARIA ALIDA VAN LANGEN (MECHTILD)

April 29, 1912 – May 1, 2007

After a fulfilled life of 95 years, which to her great joy Mechtild van Langen could still celebrate with her relatives last Sunday, she peacefully returned to the Lord on Tuesday evening, 1st May. Mechtild joined the Grail in 1932 and made her dedication in the nucleus in 1936. She put her talents at the service of the Grail youth movement for a short time in England and in Germany, but most of her active life was spent in the Netherlands, especially at St. Antoniusshove, the hospital run by the Grail in Voorburg.

After retirement from professional life she returned to her birthplace to live with her sister. Mechtild had an open, optimistic and faithful character. She was straight forward and said what she meant; she also enjoyed a good joke. She loved nature and had a green thumb. The many plants on her balcony and later in her room at the nursing home were thriving.

With age her health declined and she had to let go a lot but she remained joyful and grateful for the care received and for every visit. She has now been received by the Risen Lord to whom she dedicated her life and whom she served faithfully. She is now

sharing in His peace and His joy, together with the heavenly Grail family.

from Ton Brouwer and The Grail in the Netherlands

MOYA CATHERINE MERRICK

August 24, 1920 – January 6, 2007

The date of Moya’s death had a great significance in her life. It was on 6th January 1959 that she responded to God’s call to dedicate her life in the Nucleus of the Grail. Through the years she was a staff member of the Grail Adult Education Centre, Tay Creggan, in Melbourne; the founding principal of St. Raphael’s College for Women, affiliated to James Cook University in North Queensland; National President of the Grail in Australia from 1972 to 1979; a leader of study groups for women in Sydney; a member of the production committee of the Women-Church Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion which celebrates its 20th anniversary in 2007; a supporter of the Aboriginal women living in “the Block” in Redfern as they struggled for their just rights; an advocate with a funding agency for the Aboriginal House of Healing in Picton; and an organizer of exchange visits with Muslim women.

Moya was farewelled in a joyous Eucharistic celebration in St. Mary’s Church, North Sydney, on January 9, 2007.

from The Grail in Australia

RESI (THERESIA) SAX

April 16 1934 – February 24 2007

Resi was a dear, strong, and active woman, who gave all her energy and capacities for the work in Africa, Germany, and Europe. In the 1950s, she was one of the first participants in Grail programs in Bavaria. At the Grail-Training-Centre in Ubbergen/Netherlands, she learned English and Swahili and studied African Culture. Resi’s main task was educational and social work with women in a Catholic diocese in Kenya. For the rest of her life, Resi kept contact with her friends in Kenya, returned there for visits, welcomed them in her house, and supported them financially when needed.

After Resi’s return to Germany in 1967, she continued to work on many levels in the public school system of Bavaria. Resi was especially involved in the European Grail Meetings. They started in 1992 and were organized every two or three years. Resi participated in International Council meetings and in General Assemblies. She served on the National Leadership Team from 1992-1998. In 2003, Resi and five other

Grail women with similar experiences in East Africa started a task-force to coordinate their links to African Grail women and to promote partnership with Grail groups in Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda. During the last years of her life, Resi struggled with her illness, but she trusted in God's presence in her life and contributed her own gifts whenever possible.

from the Grail in Germany

MARY SCHICKEL

Died April 8, 2007 (Easter Sunday)

Mary and her husband Bill settled near Grailville in the 1940s with a group of young families to raise their 11 children and contribute to Grailville's development. Bill became a well known church designer and Mary developed a successful family business. Mary was deeply involved in the Grail, in local community affairs, and was a wonderful musician. Mary was an extraordinarily dependable member of the Liturgy Team and in the Grailville Choir. She could change parts when and where needed. She was a 'support system' kind of person — "I'll be glad to make some calls"; "I'll be happy to bake bread for the Eucharist"; "I'll bring flowers"; "Let's pray together"; "Whatever I can do for..."

On Holy Saturday, having baked the bread for the Easter Eucharist at GV, practiced with the Holy Week choir, and fed the birds at her house, Mary Schickel had a massive heart attack and died. Mary's funeral and burial at Grailville was a beautiful time. Hundreds of people were present. The bread that Mary had made for the Easter Sunday Eucharist was used at her funeral Mass.

CATHERINE SHEA

1922 – 2007

Catherine and Jim Shea were part of the intentional community of young couples that chose to live close to Grailville. They raised six children and participated in the thriving Grail community. A later move to Cincinnati brought them closer into closer contact with Jim's work. A cherished and committed Grail Member, Catherine maintained interest in current Grail events and thinking. A friend kept her posted on what was being discussed by e-mail. An avid reader and faithful correspondent, she commented on "the immediacy of computer language," an acute observation.

In recent years, in addition to her letter writing ministry, she took an active role on the resident

council of the apartment building where she lived, brought communion to many who could not attend Mass, and endeared herself to many by her kindnesses to them. Her brother, Father Francis Dorff, O. Pream., assisted by Father George Jacquemin, celebrated her funeral mass—a Mass planned by Catherine. The readings and the music were most memorable: strong in the message of enduring faith and tender in the promise of faithful love, much like Catherine herself.

Frances Martin and the Grail in the US



ANNOUNCEMENTS

■ **From the Grail in The Netherlands**

The speech "Women's Spirituality," held by Manuela Kalsky for the opening of the new Grail Centre in Utrecht, has been translated into Spanish and is now available electronically.

Please e-mail degraal@planet.nl to receive "La fuerza espiritual de mujeres".

■ **From Grail/UFER Linkage Group to the United Nations**

Remember the 'job posting' in the January 2007 CROSSROADS for a Grail liaison to the United Nations? Jenna Messier of New York will be taking that position, 10 hours per month, working with the Grail/UFER Linkage Group to the UN. Initially she will participate in the online discussion in preparation for the 2008 meeting of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), develop a list of Grail contact persons for UN related work, and investigate the resources of the Women's Tribune Center and the UN Department of Public Information (DPI) for the Linkage Group. This position was created at the IGA 2006. (*See IGA 2006 Report, p.19-20.*)