

# C R O S S R O A D S

*A Newsletter of the Grail International Leadership Team*

*November 2010*

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## PRAYER

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Renew our faith that you are God

beyond our grasp

S

but within our reach

past our knowing

S

but within our searching

R

destroyer of illusions

but creator of dreams

O

observer of our acknowledged missteps

A

but keeper of the promise of forgiveness

by Ted Loder

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LET US REJOICE, CELEBRATING

ALL SAINTS DAY 2010

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**Deadline for the next Crossroads – April 1, 2011**  
**Please send to Mary Gindhart, [mgindhart@verizon.net](mailto:mgindhart@verizon.net)**

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## **LETTER FROM THE INTERNATIONAL LEADERSHIP TEAM**

***Cristina dos Anjos Conceição, Carol Webb, and Christa Werner October 2010***

Recently, the Grail Group in Uganda memorialized in a Holy Mass with meaningful rituals those who departed from them over the years – and those who are very near and dear to them presently, facing sickness, heavy treatments, changing life situations and standing in the line for being redeemed. The international list of their names is long – together with the Ugandans we embrace them with good wishes, encouraging thoughts and prayers. We hope that the cover of love will carry and heal them and give them light in dark hours.

We, the members of the ILT faced a time of demands and work far from each other, each one in her surrounding. Occasional skype meetings, many e-mails, some phone calls kept us informed. The programme in Pirapora Italy (18<sup>th</sup> till 28<sup>th</sup> of September 2010) united us and gave us the opportunity to see each other face to face. We also met from September 29<sup>th</sup> to October 2<sup>nd</sup> in Utrecht. Many points were on the agenda:

- **Carol** reported on her work of in India (March 2010), in Australia (June 2010), in the USA (July/August 2010), and the Training for Transformation (TfT) programme in Portugal (September 2010).
- **Cris** updated us on her responsibilities in all catastrophic areas of the world, the applications for Grail **financial support**, and **developments** within the South American Groups and the Portuguese speaking countries.
- **Christa** had news from the **European meeting**, from a very active and energetic young group and plans for projects using TfT in the European Grail Groups. She updated us on the progress of the **Higher Education Fund Team** and the **Nucleus Reference Team**
- **Mieneke Hage** gave us **perspectives**, supports and **new ways** of operation for the future.
- **Hermien van Sloten** updated us on her **plans**, the **data base**, the **websites**, and other **communications** with Grail women etc.
- We are busy looking ahead to the **IGA preparation meeting** in Rubaga, Uganda in February 2011, to the IGA process leading to a meaningful **IGA programme** in **South Africa** – most probably in **September** 2011 in Kleinmond, and to the planning for the future in Grail countries.
- We reviewed the work going on with **TXINTXA II** and the **VISION** Statement. We reflected on the meeting in Pirapora, Italy for those doing **formation**. We were informed about **commitments** and preparations for dedications. We learned about the ecumenical church day, the Africa day, the UFER conference, and the results of programmes on **spirituality**, national meetings.

We look forward to share new plans and good decisions and count on your suggestions and your guidance in prayers.

*Cristina, Carol and Christa*

## ALL SAINTS DAY, November 1, 2010

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### CELEBRATING THE GRAIL BIRTHDAY/ALL SAINTS DAY



#### Brazil

The Grail in Brazil usually gathers at All Saints Day for its National Assembly, but this year our Assembly will be on November 13 to 15th. We will celebrate the Grail anniversary on those days. We usually have a Mass in the morning at the Grail Center and invite friends to celebrate with us and afterwards we have lunch together. When we have women joining the Grail we make a special celebration ceremony for that.

*Nadia Rosana Agaputo*

#### Mexico

*Rosaurora Espinosa* wrote: "In the **North-South Group** we are going to celebrate our work in Formation/Growing Together in the Grail on November 6. We have invited the Morelos-Reyes group to join us. We will welcome into the Grail some of the participants who have been working with us for several years: Ushuaia Camarena, Montserrat Villatoro, Teresa Giron and Felicitas Perez Avila. At the same time, we all will affirm our identity as Grail. We are preparing a ritual related to Grail as a prophetic movement. We will recognize that the Grail Faith Message announces many things that are already happening."

*Marie Theresa McDermid*, who is part of the **Morelos-Reyes Group**, shared what she wrote in the February 2009 issue of *Age-wise*, a US Grail publication: "Here in Mexico, the celebration of November 1 as a Grail feast is difficult since the remembrance of the dead requires several days—a day for those who die by violence, a day for children and another for adults. Altars with "offrendes" are set up in homes. So I decided, in accordance with the culture, to share with a small

group, some of the Grail departed who surround us like "a serried rank of Witnesses", commenting my personal experiences or perceptions about each one. I set up a little altar with their photos and clippings about them."

*Ma. Lusía Mejía Lagunas, Grial Región Morelos:* En México, como en otras partes del mundo, el tema de la muerte ha estado ligado, a las creencias religiosas de los pueblos, las tumbas estudiadas de nuestra cultura antigua, han revelado que era costumbre dejar utensilios, flores y alimentos, para que los muertos, los usaran en su vida futura. Tomaremos datos interesantes de la Cultura Nahoá, ya que en ella se describe con detalle las mansiones de los muertos, que según Ellos eran cuatro:

La primera era la del Chichihuacuauhco, allí iban los niños muertos; la segunda era la del Mictlán, donde el difunto tenía que hacer un largo viaje, primero ayudado por un perro, que lo pasaba del río, después tenía que emprender un largo caminar, hasta presentarse ante los dioses Mictlantecutli y Mictlancihuatl quienes lo juzgaban según sus acciones en la tierra, al Mictlán llegaban todos los que morían de muerte natural, ya fueran grandes señores ó macehuales; la tercera mansión estaba destinada, para los que morían por la caída de un rayo, ahogados, sarnosos, leprosos ó hidrópicos, ese lugar lo llamaban Tlalocan ó mansión de la Luna. Lo concebían como un lugar de regalo y de contento, fresco y ameno en el que siempre reverdecían ostentando copiosos frutos.

La cuarta mansión de los muertos era el cielo donde vive el sol; allí no se contaba el tiempo, el gozo no tenía fin y las flores nunca se marchitaban, a este lugar iban los hombres que morían en la guerra, los cautivos victimados por sus captores, y las mujeres que morían de parto.

Este legado de nuestros antepasados nahoas, perdura hasta nuestros días con algunas modificaciones, sincretismo de elementos cristianos y prehispánicos que tienen una connotada manifestación EN LA CELEBRACIÓN DEL DÍA

DE MUERTOS los días 31 de octubre, 1º y 2 de Noviembre de cada año, a lo largo y ancho de nuestro país.

## **Mozambique**

How do we, the Grail in Maputo, celebrate the November 1, All Saints Day? November 1 is not a holiday in Mozambique. The only holiday related, somehow, with a religious event is the 25th of December, which is officially proclaimed, 'Family Day'. The Catholic Church in Mozambique celebrates All Saints Day on the Sunday following November 1.

In the Grail in Maputo, we celebrate between November 1 and 15. We celebrate the Grail, the constant demand, the continuous movement. We celebrate the saints in union with our ancestors. We celebrate the woman and all the creation. We perform different rituals, in which the main objectives, beyond the celebration itself, are related to the 'holiness' and the vision and mission of the Grail. We take this occasion to talk about the Grail to other women.

In practical terms, the celebration usually takes place on a Sunday. During the first part, members of the Grail talk/ reflect how we feel in the Grail, the meaning of the Grail in our concrete lives and how this kind of commitment moves us towards holiness. In the second part we receive other women and share a meal including a ritual. After or during the ritual, we inform them about the Grail in general and the activities of the Grail of Maputo in particular. We have a kind of a big picture with the major 'historic phases' of the Grail group in Maputo. We usually use it as a base in different ways, in this ritual. During the ritual we include a moment for the women to share. In Mozambique, people, and especially women, share easily their lives and this moment is always a very intense moment. After this meeting some of these women, although not being members of the Grail, start to come to participate in other activities that the Grail organizes during the year.

## **Philippines**

On November 5 -7, 2010, the Grail in the Philippines will be celebrating their 35th Anniversary at Lawa-an, Eastern Samar with the theme "I have come that you might have life and have it to the full." (John 10:10). It will be an occasion of giving thanks for the many blessings we have received and of sowing seeds of hope for the future. For the program and with confirmations/questions/clarifications, email **Jennette F. Rodriquez**, at [grailphils@gmail.com](mailto:grailphils@gmail.com).

## **United States**

On November 1, 2010 at 5:30 PM people of all ages are welcome to attend Grailville's fall potluck dinner and The Feast of All Saints holy day observance! Activities will begin in the Dining Room at Grailville with a potluck supper. All are invited to dress up as a saint and tell us their story. Then the hayride or walk to the Grailville cemetery for a fire and a simple ceremony remembering those who have died. (weather permitting)

## **FORMATION**

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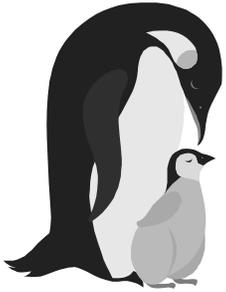
### **Questionnaire Responses on Grail Formation**

As we prepared for our formation meeting September 18 to 23, 2010 at Pirapora in Italy, we asked countries to send us information about their formation programmes and processes. We received 14 responses.

Countries have both formal and informal processes for formation. Most call it formation but others refer to it as Growing into the Grail, New Women's Programme, Proceso de Sensibilizacion al Trabajo del Grial, Exploration process. These initial processes are usually between one and two years but some are longer. Formation continues throughout life as Grail members grow and learn together.

Some countries have no people in the process currently. Other numbers vary from 26 to 8 to 0 to 14. Many come through programmes at centres, especially during advent and lent. Other women meet the Grail through projects and work that Grail women do; through personal contacts; through 'meet the Grail' sessions; through Grail information put out to schools and parishes.

Some countries look for women to join the Grail, others do not. Outreach includes speaking about the Grail to groups that Grail women are involved in; using the website and speaking about the Grail at programmes that are offered by the Grail; offering a specific programme for young leaders; participating in Vocation Sunday and other parish activities.



There was also a difference in who is attracted to the Grail. Several countries wrote that middle-aged to retired women who were looking for community and a spiritual base were those coming now. Six

countries spoke of young professional women and students being the core group that was attracted.

The following elements were mentioned by formation teams

- Meeting Grail members and participating in Grail programmes
- Political, economic, social, religious and cultural situations of the country and world. Different forms of Grail participation
- Reflection on Grail documents.
- Grail history and the deep spiritual and transformational roots of the Grail.
- Spiritual nourishment through Bible Sharing and reflection on the Scriptures
- The work of the Grail locally and internationally and our local experience.
- Origins of the Grail, national and international structures, Christianity, ecumenism and inter religious dialogue,

social movements and feminist movements, gender, race and ethnicity, multiculturalism

- Women, human rights, women rights, justice, citizenship, democracy
- Environment, The Earth, The Creation, Care for the future of humankind and for the life of our planet
- Health, women's health
- The global economy
- Reflection on life experiences and reasons they're attracted to the Grail
- Personal and interpersonal growth
- What commitment means in terms of time and resources
- Spiritual reflection on themes – "we often use the work of Donal Dorr who reflects a search for a deeper spirituality, an outreach to other religions and a renewal of teaching in a post-modern age. We integrate this with social and community issues ..."
- How to integrate African spirituality with other forms of spirituality
- Team work
- Developing one's own talents
- How to give life to the Grail

*Carol Webb, International Leadership Team*

## **Vision Statement Progress**

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The Blue Draft, the Green Draft, the questions following them, and the discussions that happened around the Grail world...these have been important parts of the process of writing a new International Grail Vision Statement. At present, most countries and groups within the countries have responded to the drafts. The ILT has suggested that the next step is analyzing these responses, and working with the analysis at the meeting of the IGA preparation team which will meet in Kampala, Uganda in February 2011.

At the European Meeting in Brussels in late August, Mary Gene Devlin gave a progress report on the Vision Statement work, and she mentioned

that a delicate challenge in rewriting the statement is how to address the issue of the pluralism of spiritual and religious beliefs and practices within the International Grail today. Claudia Poggi from Italy and Hermien van Sloten from the Netherlands met with Mary Gene. The three of them found that two paragraphs from the 1993 paper of Rachel Donders (which was part of the first Txintxa papers) helped them in thinking about this challenge. Here they are:

*"The Grail is a Faith Community where Faith is understood in its widest sense as:*

- *a consciously reverent openness to the Mystery in and around us, the Source of life,*
- *a vision of the world revealing ever new dimensions and presenting new prospects,*
- *a wellspring of hope and trust in life, leading therefore to action and celebration.*

*Gradually the Grail is learning to live and be active in a plurality of viewpoints and visions, respecting everyone's fidelity to her own inner contemplative quest and outer active involvement."*

The women gathered in Brussels reacted positively when the group shared these paragraphs. Many of them verbally agreed that Rachel Donders' words can help to solve the challenge of expressing pluralism in the Vision Statement. The quote will be added to the material being analyzed from the countries' reports. Little by little, the work of revising the International Vision Statement moves towards resolution. When the IGA Preparation Team meets in February, they will create a draft based on all the input received. The new draft will be sent to the countries for amendments. This draft and amendments will be presented for discussion and voting at the IGA in 2011.

Mary Gene Devlin



## **Grail Network/Workgroup Reports**

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### **EARTH, ENVIRONMENT AND BIODIVERSITY NETWORK**

2010 is the United Nations Year of Biodiversity. The 192 states who have signed the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (UNCBD) gathered in Nagoya, Japan in October, for the 10<sup>th</sup> Conference of Parties (COP), to report on the measures they have taken to stop the Loss of Biodiversity. Four teenage girls from the Grail Women's Leadership Training Project in South Africa attended the Conference in Japan: Anelisa Shamase (19), Sethabile Gcume (17), Thando Nzimande(16) and Bandile Ngcobo(16). Thando and Bandile, who are leaders in WLTP presented the results of their research on *Fear as a Cause of the Loss of Biodiversity* at the Conference.



They had done the **UNCBD COP Survey on Fear and the Loss of Biodiversity** with 120 people and presented the results at the WLTP 25<sup>th</sup> Birthday Conference.

**The animals that people fear most are:**

- Snakes 98%
- Frogs 90%
- Chameleons 50%
- Baboons 50%
- Owls 48%

**The people surveyed said:**

"I kill snakes with a stick and enjoy seeing them lying dead"

"Frogs attract lightning. I kill them by pouring salt on their skins or kick them like a football."

"Baboons are killed and their paws and other parts are sold to traditional healers to make medicine."

"The chameleon is an ancestor."

"Owls must be killed because they bring bad luck and death. Owls are used for witchcraft."

**One researcher asked, "Is there a future for Biodiversity in Southern Africa and in our world?"**

**People kill every animal that they can kill and just leave them lying around dead”.**

WLTP girls have attended demonstrations with live snakes and live frogs. They are educating their friends and families not to kill these animals.

**The full Survey is available in a Word document and also in a PowerPoint format. Please contact Sibongile Mtungwa [sibongile@webafrica.org.za](mailto:sibongile@webafrica.org.za) or Marilyn Aitken [maitken@mail.ngo.za](mailto:maitken@mail.ngo.za) if you would like a copy.**

*Sibongile Mtungwa and Marilyn Aitken, Coordinators*

## **HUMAN TRAFFICKING NETWORK**

### **The 2010 World Cup in South Africa**

“We did not find any recorded cases of Human Trafficking during the World Cup. There was one report in the newspaper but later withdrawn as no evidence could be found when investigated. It was said that even the prostitutes were disappointed. It seems everyone was too occupied with the matches and the replays on TV.”

This was the message in the e-mail I received from the Coordinator of the Catholic Bishops’ Conference Human Trafficking Desk when I asked her whether she could help me draw up a report for our international Grail communications.



Well, perhaps everyone concerned about a possible increase in human trafficking during the World Cup was able to get the message across loud and clear. Of course the possibility still exists that there were incidents of people being trafficked but it is extremely difficult to prove and have all the evidence to lead to a conviction.

It was very encouraging to see an increase in awareness raising of the danger of human

trafficking. There were TV announcements and warnings in the press and even the SA Police Services distributed pamphlets on the dangers of human trafficking....

Meanwhile we who are concerned about human trafficking will need to keep up our awareness raising campaigns especially as the school year ends and young people in rural areas may be tempted to accept job or study opportunities without asking too many questions. So, we continue to say beware, if the offer is too good to be true it probably is!

*Loek Goemans* (Loek’s full report on the World Cup in South Africa is in the GJOP, Network Bulletin, September 2010 which is available from Alison Healey, [grailsydney@ozemail.com.au](mailto:grailsydney@ozemail.com.au))

## **GRAIL LINK TO THE UN NETWORK**

### **UFER Seminar and General Assembly**

18 – 23 September 2010 in Brussels.

The Grail is one of the founding members of the NGO the International Movement for Fraternal Union among Races and Peoples (UFER). Four and a half days were spent on Human Rights: Migration and Women Trafficking followed by Statutory: Activity and Financial Report, Election of the Board of Directors and Vision for the future. We were a nice group of 25 people coming from Ethiopia, Senegal, Lebanon, Equator Guinea, Burkina Faso, Haiti, Japan, South Korea, India, Switzerland, Belgium, France, the Netherlands, USA, Canada, and Australia. Among them were 4 Grail members: Gloria Lazzarini (Australia), Sharon Joslyn (USA), Elly König and Ton Brouwer (Netherlands). During the meeting we have been convinced that our status at the UN is very important but that we need a lot of patience and perseverance. The keynote speaker Mrs. Ndioro Ndiaye from Senegal talked about: Migration and the challenges faced by countries and their people. The empowerment of people is very important. This was followed by a panel of 5 participants who told about the experiences of migrations in Africa, Asia, the

Americas and Oceania followed by discussion. We got a full day of training in Religious Diversity and Anti-discrimination which was very interesting because of the different backgrounds of the participants. The same was true for the clear presentation of Ivonne van de Kar about Trafficking of Women.

Elly König was elected the new President of UFER for the coming years. Raymonde Martineau will continue to be the Secretary-General, Mariëlle Peltier will be responsible for the Finances. Two other Grail members who were not present have also been chosen on the Board of 9 Directors: Joy Garland and Monica Maher. (USA)

We wrote a vision for the future. Each participant gave one activity that she/he thought would be the most important for UFER in the coming years. All the preferences were listed and each one wrote down the activity for which she/he will be responsible. I committed myself to be the contact person for Trafficking in Women.

*Ton Brouwer*

## Country Reports

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### AUSTRALIA

Dear Grail Friends

Gunawirra, a Grail partner in Australia, presented an exhibit at the United Nations DPI/NGO Conference, "*Advance Global Health – Achieve the Millennium Development Goals*" in Melbourne, Australia in August 2010. The conference addressed transnational health issues, determinants, and solutions and the impact of the changing ecological environment and political climates that Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOS) must navigate to foster global health.

The Grail Link to the UN Network worked with the Grail in Australia to facilitate Gunawirra's participation in the conference. The team at the Conference was Helen Gomez, Anne Day and Joan Ryan from the Australian Grail, and Anne Gorman

and Kristina Karasulas from Gunawirra.

We found a place among the International contingents, shared our work, promoted The Grail and Gunawirra, discussed what works and does not work. We heard many stories of struggle, disempowerment, and degradation but there were also stories of survival, pride and a deep show of humanity too. Success is on every horizon. We are happy we made a contribution to the Declaration from the Conference for the UN Global Health Summit in New York.

Gunawirra Limited is proud to acknowledge the significant foundational role played by the Grail in its formation. The Grail is a movement of women of faith working together to bring about a world of peace, justice, equity and renewal. A Grail member was primarily instrumental in the initial gathering and all Grail members assist in the work of Gunawirra in many different ways. The spirit of the Grail permeates the work of Gunawirra and so together underlying meaning and action combine to form a rich organisation that gives support through 14 distinct projects to over 30 Aboriginal preschools in NSW and two centres in outlying and inner Sydney areas



Gunawirra is based in Sydney and provides health and education services throughout New South Wales which has the largest number of Aboriginal people in Australia. Our focus is on early intervention and closing the gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people. The families we work with are disadvantaged. We provide support and skills in parenting. And now we will be working closely with mothers from before the child is born until the child is 5 years old. We will offer diverse and personalised services to support the health and wellbeing of mother, child

and connect them to the community.

*Kristina Karasulas – Gunawirra and Norma Tracey –  
The Grail*

## GERMANY

**Welcome, diversity!** The latest from the International Initiative Hochfeld ( IIH)

For many years now the Grail in Germany and the Netherlands have supported the International Initiative Hochfeld in Duisburg (IIH) The IIH has provided various programs for children: language-advancement for primary school pupils, regular homework supervision and the regular summer-holiday program. In these groups children from 15 different countries meet and get together; however these contacts are not always amicable.

Particularly in the last 6 months in the children-groups remarks such as “Who are these Jews”, or “Jews kill Muslims” or “I hate churches” have been heard. Even the director of one of the local primary schools in Hochfeld reports similar racist remarks. To head off this trend in her 3<sup>rd</sup> year school group Riki Eßers-Groß began a block of lessons with the subject heading: ‘Welcome, diversity!’ Currently the subject in the classroom is “diversity”. For example: How many countries are there on the planet? What are the Human Rights listed in Article 3 of the German Basic Law (Grundgesetz) and the general laws governing equality. In further discussions the children talk of their experiences of being left-out and other discriminations.

One positive result is that the children now themselves confront discriminating remarks with comments such as “you shouldn’t discriminate against anyone”. In further work Riki Eßers-Groß will use games and mediation exercises to further familiarisation and understanding amongst the children.

Likewise, in the groups available for women there is friction between the participants along the lines of nationality. In one of these Integration-groups, a

group of Turkish women has an aversion to a second group of Kosovo women; this is especially apparent in the seating-order in the classroom of the old Primary school, where they meet. The teacher has to use all her expertise here to motivate group-work if she wants to further teamwork and to encourage working not only with people that one already knows.



There is also rivalry between the two nationalities. This is reflected in exclamations like this example: “We Turks always supply more food for the communal breakfast than the Kosovo Women, they don’t bring anything, they just want to eat”

Since February this year every two weeks there is a communal breakfast for the women as an opportunity for a chat and to get to know one another. Up to now migrants who have lived in the neighbourhood for a number of years meet here.

Since Bulgaria became a member of the EU in 2007 the neighbourhood has experienced a noticeable influx. At the end of 2007 there were only 714 Bulgarian nationals in Duisburg, at the end of April 2010 this number had risen to 2017, the majority live in the Hochfeld district. This immigration has awakened fears in the local population and for some, has resulted in considerable aversion.

These examples illustrate the increase in social tension, the fear and animosity amongst the inhabitants, in spite of the fact that Hochfeld has for decades been a melting-pot for migration and has always stood as a peaceful community with people living and working next to each other.

Not only the staff at the International Initiative, but many others in the neighbourhood observed this tendency with some trepidation.

The Initiative with its programs strives to be a force against this development. With the unit "Welcome Diversity" the children learn to protect themselves and others from discrimination and defamations. In our counselling office we empower women and support them in their everyday problems. The integration office offered workshops in which the women can participate and develop conversations whilst getting to know each other. These workshops help them to widen their perspective and look beyond the boundaries of their neighbourhood. They discover new interests like the Ruhr museum in Essen and the Synagogue in Duisburg.

We recently added a Bulgarian student to our team. With her support and language skills we are now better able to welcome and help Bulgarian families.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the Grail in Germany and the Netherlands for their enduring support.

To help carry on our work any donations would be appreciated:

Sparkasse Duisburg

IBAN DE 02 3505 0000 0240 0029 49

SWIFT-BIC: DU ISDE 33XXX

*Karoline Robins*

## THE NETHERLANDS

Belieforama is a training program for inter-religious dialogue and anti-discrimination. It is a project by CEJL, a Jewish NGO that is directed by Grail member Robin Sclafani. ([www.ceji.org](http://www.ceji.org)). The Grail is an associate partner of this project. During the past three years, dozens of people in several European countries have been trained to work with this program. Among them were several Grail women, from Italy, Portugal and the Netherlands, I was one of them.

Since the beginning of this year I have been active as one of the seven European network partners. I am making a contribution for the further development of this program to an active, self-

sustaining Community of Practice that is able to take care of its own development and quality assurance.

The network partners meet three times a year. In June we were guests of the Dutch Grail in Utrecht. For three days we worked together and we invited Dutch relations of the project to visit us during our meeting.

The lunches were prepared by a small team of women of the Grail, dinners were catered outdoors. We felt at home in a house that was welcoming us and we had a fruitful, inspiring meeting. Members of the Dutch Grail had an opportunity to hear more about the Belieforama program and meet people who are involved in it.

The next time that partners meet will be in Madrid, during the second week of October. This meeting will be followed by a three day conference for all the European trainers and the broader network of Belieforama in Spain.

On the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> of November, Elly König and I will facilitate a two day workshop with the Belieforama material for a mixed group, also in the Grail house in Utrecht.

*Ine van Emmerik*

## SOUTH AFRICA

### South African Grail celebrates 25<sup>th</sup> Birthday of WLTP

The scene was the African Enterprise Centre in Montrose, Pietermaritzburg. The Saturday programme in the thatched boma began with the 'Ntombizodwa' ('All Girls') String Ensemble from Soweto. The resident troop of vervet monkeys came down from the trees and listened to the violin music from the rafters.

200 delegates, women and a few men who had been involved in *the Women's Leadership and Training Programme* (WLTP) came from many parts of Southern Africa. The largest contingent was

from Kwa Zulu, Natal including 90 girls and young women with whom WLTP is currently working. 12 Grail members attended the event.

In her keynote address Ida Alvarinho Goncalves, from Mocambique, warned the girls and young women against losing their identities in a globalised world: "We appear to be getting closer but are we in fact closer to ourselves, closer to other human beings and closer to the whole Creation?...What about me, as a WOMAN? There are many girls and women who have become dolls, doormats, rubbish bins, glasses of water for thirsty people, and women who copy men. We must make choices about who we want to be."

Each delegate received a book of WLTP's achievements from 1985-2010. **Emthonjeni. Come to the Wellspring**, a collection of material developed in the programme was launched.

Abida Jamal said: "It was a wonderful, deeply rooted African celebration. I can't find words to describe it - the interconnection of the people, the colourful cultures and different generations was unique."

*Marilyn Aitken*

## **Grail meeting reports**

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### **The European Grail Meeting**

The European Grail Meeting "Spirituality in Action: Women Facing Challenges in Europe" took place in Brussels, Belgium from August 15 to 22, 2010. The meeting was supported with funding from the European Commission Citizens for Europe Programme affirming the social relevance of our work as Grail within Europe.

The 35 women gathered were more than a collection of individuals or a gathering of different country groups. We were also there as citizens of Europe. We learned more about how decisions are made within the European Parliament and how we might influence them. We engaged with

representatives from other NGOs about issues of joint concern and how we can act in cooperation and solidarity with one another. Belonging to a country, belonging to Europe, and belonging to an international organisation were identities that could exist together in harmony with all our individual inner and outer diversities.

This European Grail meeting had quality exchanges, many moments of deep spirituality and insight, and fun and energizing activities in doing the work.

We discovered that there are many similarities in the social and political concerns faced by the various Grail groups in Europe. From Portugal, Sweden, Germany, Netherlands, Italy, Ireland and Belgium we heard interesting presentations about the needs and issues regarding: migrants, religious diversity, women's empowerment and the rising of racist and right-wing political movements. With the strengthening of the European Union as a government entity and the processes of globalisation and increased mobility of its citizens, the contexts of the national Grail groups in Europe today are probably much more similar than they were 20 years ago.

We developed actions for the future that would take place locally, transnationally and at European level on human trafficking, non-violent communication, migration, and interfaith dialogue and cooperation. These actions will include: mobilising our efforts at the European level against human trafficking; incorporating training in non-violent communication into our local and international groups; investigating which organisations are working with migrants and choosing one to work with; meeting with people of other faiths; being more inclusive in our rituals and events; developing a proposal for a new European project using Training for Transformation materials with women of different faiths; organising a meeting of the younger Grail generation internationally (under 50) in 2012 to envision the Grail in the long-term and address needs and issues towards that future.

A small workgroup worked on some of the language issues remaining with the drafting of a new International Grail Vision Statement. We plan to continue working within the Grail to envision the Grail in the future and participate in events that give more visibility to the Grail.

A full report on the event coming out later this year which will be available on the Grail website ([www.thegraill.org](http://www.thegraill.org)) – pictures, anecdotes, results and all!

*Robin Sclafani*

## Irish Grail Explorers at European Meeting

Four women represented Ireland at the European Meeting in Brussels in late August: Carol White, Mary Gene Devlin, and two Exploring Grail women, Margaret Roche and Margaret Quinlan. They presented a short history of the first stages of their group, now two and a half years old.

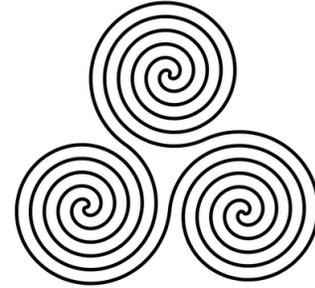
The Irish women explained their individual interest and attraction to the Grail, and showed how relevant the themes of the European Meeting were to Ireland: The pillars of a combined Church and State in their previous forms are crumbling, leaving a longing for a new spirituality and awareness of social issues such as migration and immigration, human trafficking, and religious and cultural diversity.

At one of the morning prayer experiences, the Irish group used the story of Brigid (by tradition born on a threshold) from pre-Christian times through her inclusion as a Saint, to inspire the assembled women in their threshold work of addressing the issues of social justice and diversity in Europe and the world today.

Warmly welcomed by the European women attending the Brussels meeting, the group returned to Dublin with these challenges: reaching out to new members, working on a decision and process to become a 'Grail country,' continuing the practice of creating and participating in rituals around the seasons of the year, and considering whether there

is a unifying work for the group to take up in the spirit of transformation of the world.

*Mary Gene Devlin and Carol White*



celtic triple goddess symbol

## Grail member story

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*Samkelisiwe Mhlanga from the Grail in South Africa is now the Ambassador of South Africa in Denmark. Here is a letter written in August 2010 telling of her first weeks in Denmark.*

My dears,

You see, in this strange life I am still adapting to here, often by the time I get home I don't want to go anywhere near a computer. I go to work in normal working hours, do my work as I understand it, and then late afternoon or early evening I attend an event: some country's national day/the farewell of an ambassador returning home/reception for a new ambassador/cocktails for some group or other etc, etc. In my previous life I viewed this whole networking thing with a measure of suspicion, but I'm afraid it's what I do now at those events, and I must admit it has helped throw some light on aspects of my work. It has also meant going to work on my not-really blooming skill in small talk.

For various reasons summer was the best season to arrive here. It was warm, although some days feel like winter back home. The country just about shuts down in summer, so that lack of activity gave me plenty time to find my feet. It unfortunately meant that I could not present my credentials earlier, as the Queen was on holiday, but that was no setback really as the Chief of Protocol gave me permission to work. But just this morning we got

the message that the Queen will receive me early next month. That's a great relief: I hope a few weeks from now will still be warm enough as I intend to dress up for her in Zulu regalia. Xhosa traditional attire would have been warmer, but my 'fashion consultant' has not come through. The only difficulty I have had was the long summer light. In June the sun set around 11, and I could not get to sleep before dark. I would turn once in my bed and find that it was already light outside, as early as 3:30 AM. So for very many weeks I was not getting enough sleep. It gets dark around 9 now, but I should really be savouring this because I am told in winter the sun sets around 3, and rises at 10. So I am not complaining. I have a staff of 16, four of them transferred from SA. I had lessons in Danish for about three months back home, but it is a difficult language. The written and the spoken have no relationship. Everyone in the city speaks English, including government employees. But having learnt some Danish I find helps. But still it is difficult figuring out what voice prompts on the phone are saying, or trying to load airtime unassisted. So later this month I will be enrolling for a class, and that should certainly reduce my linguistic limitation over the next four years. Newspapers are of course in Danish, as is TV. You can of course catch international channels. Work itself is OK, and what I have seen of the country is beautiful. I actually need to take a few days off to do the tourist thing – there are hundreds of museums and places of interest. And then Sweden is just across the fjord, and has its attractions too. You all know of course that you are all more than welcome to come here on holiday – lots of interesting things to do and places to see. You can catch an overnight ferry to Norway or England. Then there is what I am told is a very interesting cruise along the Baltic Sea where you sail by night, dock in some country in the morning, go on a guided tour of the city, get back on the boat in the afternoon, sail again and do this till you get to St Petersburg. This may sound frivolous but it is something I am going to have to do because I may never again be within fairly easy reach of these countries. Places like Iceland and Greenland, were it not for this new close proximity,

would have remained in geography text books and maps. So, save your money and come and see! I'm not missing home yet, probably because I have had visitors this whole time. All the same my phone bill needs watching, so I will have to get organised around using skype, the phone connection via internet.

I'm sure there is a lot more I am forgetting but I will be able to share more when you each find time to write and I respond to your individual questions. From now on, I am a transformed communicator!

Much, much love,

*Samkelisiwe Mhlanga*

## **In Loving Memory**

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### **Clara Garcia (1941-2010)**



Clara Garcia from the North South Group in Mexico died on September 20, 2010. She was a member of North South Group in Mexico. We celebrate her life though we are **grateful** for the privilege of having her with us in the Grail for 20 years. She had a big heart and did everything she could to support each of us. God gave us a gift. God has our Clarita in heaven.

### **Catherine Leahy (1920-2010)**



Catherine was the first woman to join the Grail in the United States. Mary Louise Tully had joined the Grail in Europe and was not back in the United States when Lydwine van Kersbergen and Joan Overboss arrived from Holland.

In 1944 she was in the group that started Grailville where she lived and worked until her retirement in 1990. During the 1960s she traveled around the world visiting Grail members and friends that she had welcomed at Grailville. She made several trips to Europe and also visited the Philippines. In the 1970s she participated in a 3-month study tour of

new towns in the Netherlands, Sweden, England and Poland.

In 1990 she moved to St. Paul Retirement Home where starting in 2002 she required full nursing care. Catherine's funeral and burial were at Grailville on September 17, 2010.

### **Grace Rogan (1919-2010)**



Grace and her husband, Jim Rogan, were among the 1<sup>st</sup> families to settle near Grailville in Loveland, Ohio in the 1940s. Both Grace and Jim had a long active interest in the lay apostolate, they served as medical missionaries in Africa. In 1952, they went to South Africa with their 2 children; David--age 6 and Judith--age 3. Jim's illness brought them back to Loveland, Ohio in 1956.

In the 1970s their children moved to Washington State. Jim died in 1974 and was buried in the Grailville Cemetery. Grace went to work as a secretary for Bill Schickel and then became an executive secretary for the Archdiocese of Cincinnati. Eventually Grace moved to Washington State to be close to her children and their families but she made a yearly trip to Grailville.

She leaves behind her 2 children and their spouses, 4 grandchildren and 2 great grandchildren. Grace's funeral and burial were also at Grailville on September 17.

### **Angelina Weis (1931-2010)**

The great longing for fulfilment, to be one with God and the world, to be the perfect self in love, be a non-interchangeable stone in the mosaic of God's image – that was the dream God dreamed within her. On September 1<sup>st</sup> 2010 at 3:30 a.m. this dream became a reality.

Her joy in serving as a nurse – her friendship with

patients, children and Grail women in Uganda, where she worked for years - her ability to make people grow in her presence – numberless initiatives in her home village - sharing and working in the Grail – the untiring commitment to make the kingdom of God visible were her characteristics and a most wonderful inspiration during the process of dying. We will miss her tremendously, and yet we are happy and grateful for her fulfilment and praise the Lord for the gift she was and will be for us.

Monday, September 6th, 2010 at 2 p.m., after the Rosary and Resurrection Mass, she was put to rest in the cemetery of Gernach.

For the Grail Women in Germany,  
*Christa Werner*



## **Announcements**

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### **KNOWLEDGE OF FUNDING ?**

The International Leadership Team is looking for people who can help **preview funding proposals**. Anyone who can research possible funding sources for Grail work/project please contact the ILT at [iltsecr@thegrail.org](mailto:iltsecr@thegrail.org)

### **CEJI**

**CEJI**, A Jewish Contribution to an Inclusive Europe, is offering a five day "Train the Trainer" workshop in Religious Diversity and Anti-Discrimination Training in Brussels, Belgium, April 10-15, 2011. Robin Sclafani, US/Italy/Brussels Grail member, is one of the course's facilitators. The course prepares individuals to train others around the issues of religious diversity, interfaith dialogue and sensitivity, and anti-discrimination skills and awareness. For more information on how to attend,

including room and board options while in Brussels, please contact Robin Sclafani at: [robin.sclafani@ceji.org](mailto:robin.sclafani@ceji.org) or see CEJI's web site at [www.ceji.org](http://www.ceji.org) . A flyer describing the workshop in more detail can be found at this link.

### **COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN**

The 2011 UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW 55) begins on a Tuesday, 22 February 2011 and finishes on Friday, 4 March 2011. The focus of the session will be "Access and participation of women and girls in education, training, science and technology, including for the promotion of women's equal access to full employment and decent work".

The Grail Link to the UN Network invites anyone who wants more information or would like to attend the meeting to contact Mary Kay Louchart at [grail-ipt@juno.com](mailto:grail-ipt@juno.com). We are especially interested in getting girls to attend this year.



formation meeting in Pirapora, September 2010