

## **The Special Contribution of Contemplative Sisters within the CRC**

In 2013 the Canadian Union of Contemplative Sisters (UCRC) joined the CRC forming a Committee within the Conference. The CRC's General Assembly held from May 29 to June 1, 2014 will go down in history as the first time Contemplative Sisters were both present and voting members.

Queen of Peace Monastery, a newly founded community of Dominican Contemplative nuns in Squamish BC, needs to develop links of communion and solidarity with other religious in Canada. We desire that you know about us and we sense that we are called to be a hidden part of your mission through our life of prayer and monastic welcome. The Assembly was a rare opportunity to meet leaders of Congregations who represent thousands of religious who are giving their lives for the mission both in Canada and throughout the world.

### **A Resurrection Moment**

I had the grace to be assigned to the table of Sister Josephine Badali, CND. I knew she was the superior of Sister Gilberte Bussiere who had been kidnapped by suspected Boko Haram militants in Cameroon and had been missing for two months. She was perhaps the superior of Canada's newest martyr. One morning, before any general announcement, news spread like wildfire through the Assembly. She is alive! She's alive! Our Sister Gilberte had been released.

How could one not compare the experience with that of the disciples when they discovered He is alive! She is alive! A resurrection moment for all. Gratitude! Joy! It was a tangible passage of Jesus in our midst. Sister Josephine and the Congregation de Notre-Dame are indelibly inscribed in my heart and my prayer. This was a strong CRC experience for me.

### **The Challenge of Becoming an Intercultural Community**

The conferences of Father Gittins, CSSP, were very pertinent to our reality which is a microcosm of many congregations as well as the world today. Being that no one monastery had been strong enough to begin a foundation in Western Canada; volunteers came from various English speaking monasteries, principally from the USA. With new members joining us from Europe and sisters of Asian and African descent joining us via the US monasteries as well as the recent influx of vocations arriving from Canada, we are indeed a multicultural community attempting to become a radically welcoming intercultural community.

Father Gittins, CSSP, articulated the internal dynamic of our multicultural community. We often subconsciously seek our comfort zones and try to reproduce the mono-cultures of our monasteries of origin when we are being challenged to build community that intentionally embraces sisters coming from other cultures. As we discover differences and put these assets 'in common' the Lord is indeed 'making all things new!'

### **Contemplative Prayer, a Powerful Gift**

Could the presence of the Committee of Contemplative Sisters in the CRC be a gift for our time? What would radical welcome look like? It could be as simple as a presence which brings a deeper consciousness of the truth that **contemplative prayer is powerfully apostolic and vitally urgent.**

Contemplatives have staked their whole lives on the folly of this teaching. Considering the great multitude of religious who are now confined to homes for the elderly, we perceive that they too could be a response, a gift, for our time. Their mission has not ended but could continue through

the modality of prayer; simply abiding in Love. By faith, we know they will bear fruit. These religious, many of who feel poor and powerless, represent an incredible powerhouse of prayer.

More than ever, now is the time to push back the forces of destruction in our world through prayer. In the face of the world situation today, I hear Therese of Avila say; 'the world is on fire, it is not time to be occupied with things of little importance, so pray!' and the cry of Dominic resounds; O Lord, Have mercy on our world!

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