

# Nostra Signora di Sion

Via Garibaldi 28 - 00153 Roma



## From the Plenary Council in Rome

18th March 2009

Dear Sisters,

We are happy to share with you some of the highlights of the Plenary session in Rome. The presence of sisters from various parts of the congregation: the General Leadership Team, Maureen, Darlene, Helen, and Marta. Oonah representing the Congregation Finance Team, Marie Lise from Europe, Diane from the Mediterranean, Maria do Carmo from Brasil, Flor Maria from Central America, Brigitte Agnes from the Solitude, Mary Babic from Canada/US, Brenda from UK/Ireland, Mary Barbuto from Australia/Philippines, Ecaterina from Romania was enriching and energizing.

Each day began with Biblical reflection/study which was led by a different member . The experience of the Spirit moving amongst us was central to the discernment of the day.

Following on from our biblical reflection each day, we were facilitated by Ronnie McEwan, a Marist Brother, working at the Kinharvie Institute in Glasgow.

Our first task was to recall the purpose of the meeting: to share experiences of life in the provinces and to promote the dynamism of the congregation by initiating the preparations for the next general chapter. We were invited to write the story of Sion in six words, an interesting exercise that you might like to try in your province. This highlighted for us the need to speak in a language understood by people outside of Sion. Our story must speak with relevance to others.

After hearing the province presentations we began to build a 'data wall'. We were invited to look for the 'significant' and seemingly 'insignificant' elements from the province reports, as these are often the ones that require our attention.

As a group we were then able to identify a clear agenda that we needed to address. These areas included strengthening local leadership/membership, congregational teams (how we can strengthen and affirm existing teams and create new teams), Jerusalem, animation of communities of our senior sisters and possibilities for first formation. The main area is our need to re-organise our congregation to make the best use of all our resources for the sake of our mission.

The general leadership team shared their vision with us. From this we identified the areas of Jerusalem and 'reconfiguration' that needed to be addressed.

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Saturday morning saw us heading off to Subiaco. After a bus ride through the glorious countryside we enjoyed a wonderful tour of St. Scholastica's Monastery, the earliest existing monastery in Europe. The hale and hearty climbed the mountain to St. Benedict's Monastery, whilst the mature and sensible ones took the bus! The magnificent frescos were a sight to behold. On our return journey we stopped at the Generalate for afternoon tea and an opportunity to see the work that had been done on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor.

The day concluded with a beautiful and prayerful entry into Sunday, focusing on the story of the woman at the well.

In the final days there was a strong desire to walk forward confidently as a Congregation, in hope, open to the leading of the Spirit.

In the coming weeks you will receive more communication from this vibrant meeting.



Manila Enriamo Ecaterina Mary Barbuto, Beth  
Florence Brenda, Mary Salvia Jane Marta Darlene  
Helen Sr. Brigitte Agnès Marnen