

Eastern Regional Meeting Notes

Toronto – October 1 – 4, 2010

I. “Table Talk and Travel” (impressions, newness, challenging points)

1. Jerusalem

- Glad to see the statement and to see the practical. Why? Because it means we are serious about Jerusalem for us.
- Challenge to ourselves: to know history and politics of the region, so we are more able and informed with solid information about life “on the ground”, the context; to be able to speak.
- Challenge: to know/have as much information as we can about the Centre for Biblical Formation, life at Ecce Homo and the project at Ein Karem, so we can engage more fully with these projects.
- To strongly affirm what is in the document about moving out into the larger Christian community, as a Congregation.
- That a commitment to Jerusalem is larger than our commitment to institution alone.

2. Vocations and Formation

- Have to act now.
- There are people to be invited - and invite them.
- Each area’s response will be different. We have to start somewhere, e.g. :
 - a) Prayer
 - b) Speak at all Masses on Vocation Sunday
 - c) Invite women that we know to consider religious life.
 - d) Go to high schools – plant seeds.
- Come and see afternoons or evenings
- Take the risk and do it now.

3. Associates/Friends

- The document recognizes diversity of experiences within the congregation and wants to continue to respect this. This respects our reality, cultures and experiences.
- Research needs and aspirations of Associates and Friends, to broaden the basis of ideas. This also respects who they are, their background and gifts.
- Deep desire to respond to the call to include Associates and Friends at the various levels in the Congregation and to be transparent with one another regarding our fears and hopes. We start on the same page, knowing our reality.
- Our impression of this document is that it is tangible and concrete at different levels, rather than theoretical. There are some clear tasks, proposed structure, and allowance for formation.

- Challenge: How to be open to the gifts that Associates/Friends want to offer us? We need these gifts for the future of the charism.
- Challenge: How to connect with those who already had some biblical formation, e.g. biblical program and Bat Kol? Associates/Friends and sisters build on their experience. All enriches us. Mutuality.

4. Stewardship of Creation

- What surprised us? That it exists in the General Chapter document! Delighted, pleasure, new, amazed how concrete and practical document is. Inclusive, integrative.
- Seems so obvious from Theodore's book of nature that this be dealt with and because Theodore was conscious of world events in his day, so we need to be in our day. Boundaries of the charism are opened up and we see the stewardship of creation through the lens of the charism in a new way.
- "We will hear and we will do" concrete actions. Verbs: examine, put it into your project of life.
- Life giving by connecting with others on crucial issues of justice today. Theodore was prophetic as he read Scripture, so must we be and do today. Confirms my own spirituality and sense of the charism.
- Calls, challenges, questions: how do we interpret Theodore's love for nature and be true to his insights without reading into his writings our own concerns of today?

5. Community Life

- Document is life giving, encouraging. Takes into account our reality: that it is not defined by numbers or structure alone; that it is not limited to Sisters of Zion alone.
- There is a new emphasis to live the values of community life and that our Project of Life is linked, be linked to these values.
- Challenges, calls:
 - a) to community and formation – to have communities able to receive
 - to support continuing formation
 - b) to counter-witness to individualism
 - c) to obedience: What does this mean vis-à-vis listening to God's call through community and leaders; to being open to a decision and to being sent.
 - d) to inclusivity: open to welcome and to others; for those having/wanting an experience and to other sisters.
 - e) to welcome one another in our uniqueness, with our gifts, backgrounds so diverse. We cannot do it on our own. We need to help one another and we need the help of the Spirit.

6. Charism

- New:
 - a) Suggestion to partner with Jewish community re ecological crisis.
 - b) “Revealing the newness of Jesus” needs more conversation.
 - c) Stating the dialogue with Muslims.
 - d) Direct naming of Israelis/Palestinians, written into the document, although is not strong enough.
 - e) We are beginning to express the integration of our charism.
 - f) To be lead by the charism to new countries.
 - g) First time we’ve said that Associates/Friends share the charism in their own hearts with us.
- Questions:
 - a) Is it valuable for the Congregation to set up a Team (e.g. a sub group of the International Jewish Christian Team, or other) to “track”, study, reflect critically on the situation (Palestinians/Israeli conflict) and share/reflect with the Congregation on various issues?
 - b) What is the process foreseen on a Congregational level to discern re: “ new countries”, i.e. a process where the whole Congregation will be involved in this reflection and feel a part of the discernment process, to appropriate/assume the decision more readily, as Congregation.
- Challenges/calls:
 - a) It calls us much more deeply; is a call to action. Verbs used i.e. impels, presses, have been mentioned before, and is very strong here.
 - b) glad for affirmation and call implied in Cardinal Kasper’s words; perhaps this is about our connection to the Church and also a challenge.
 - c) to not hold back in the face of struggle and reticence.
 - d) to re-read Nostra Aetate
- Document doesn’t seem quite finished.
- Seems disjointed.
- Beautiful texts were used: Ps 89:3
- Fleshed out the 3 books which Theodore spoke of: Scripture, nature, human heart.

7. Reconfiguration

- Life is going to change. We are being called to go beyond ourselves, to go beyond myself.
- Our fears around identity, security, vulnerability, yet the importance of taking the risk anyway.
- We hear both desire and fear in us.
- The strength is in the first two paragraphs of the document: “Choose life” with confidence.
- Recommendations are clear. The doing and the work required is massive. The time frame is clear, but there is not a lot of time. This will be and is demanding of all age groups.

- Particular to us in the province, there are questions of coordination of our provincial chapter preparations and the process of coming to a new structure around reconfiguration. We would like for there to not be overlap, or a “barrage of papers”.
- Eastern Regional Meeting recommends:
 - 1) Chapter Delegates and Provincial Leadership Team to plan the Chapter plus the Logistics Committee (help from groups).
 - 2) Content for the Chapter to be the General Chapter Documents with emphasis on Reconfiguration in terms of mission.
 - 3) Affirm need for facilitation for Province Chapter July 2011.

II. Comments/ideas/continuation of work

(in view of Chapter process coming and General Chapter 2010 Document)

Further Contributions (added comments re: General Chapter document)

- feel we are still sorting out the relationship of Associates/Friends and ourselves with respect to identity. “threatening?”
- support for idea of study/articulation from Scripture that would give the “underpinnings” of our response to Stewardship of Creation statement.

Implications (for our lives arising from the General Chapter Document)

- re: “Jerusalem” document: point #2, bullet 4. NB: to be clear about decision-making and where authority lies.
- re: “Associates/Friends”: legal implications of membership/belonging, etc
- re: “Stewardship of Creation”: a question; who speaks out? How do we speak, make statements?

III. Evaluation of Regional Meeting

- Informative; makes the document real, not only a piece of paper.
- Liked the process: in and out of small group sessions, individual time, large group.
- An intense day. Hard to keep up. Times of feeling lost, overwhelmed by information, volume of it.
- Grateful for clarifications.
- Bringing Chapter present; anecdotes were helpful, telling the stories.
- Appreciated learning about the 3 books of Theodore.
- Amazed at knowledge and amount that was done in a month.