

ENGLISH GROUP 2° RELATION OF MARY BOUZ - U.S.A.

Good morning. My name is Mary Bouz.

I am oblate of the Camaldolese Hermits of America in Big Sur, California.

1. Three days of English language discussion were based on comments by our Father Abbot, Msg. Thanya-anan and Mother Hickey. We did not have time to cover Fr. Freeman's topic "The contemplative oblate to day"

Our Father Abbot said "We must give mutual encouragement...have a common way". We discussed being an oblate is about WHO one is. It is a vocation. To continue quotation: "Daily life is no longer sufficient. There is a quest for God..for spirituality :Material things, consumerism are not filling the void.

How will I face God today? And, at the time of my death". For this question, we had a few minutes of silence in our group. No one shared !

Father Abbot said, "People are afraid of dogmas. They want freedom in their spiritual life. We, at time, forget humankind. Spirituality is to live, pray, and believe with others to find the core of life. There must be real truth. The word of God is the center of Benedictine life. Living the way of God is our duty with celebration of the Eucharist our real home, our real family, our real monastery".

We discussed how an oblate embodies that vocation through study of the Rule and Scripture with Lectio based on these.

The oblate experiences formation before oblation. After - the wisdom, prayer, love and guidance of his Benedictine family, supports his continued spiritual growth.

In this special time of financial and economic crises, we discussed how religious communities have been affected. Many oblates make financial donations to their monasteries. Others, donate time and talent.

Although, retreat and guest house expenses have increased, no one is turned away. Benefactors donate to the foundation and help other oblates financially. One oblate has included her Benedictine family in her will.

There is a grace in learning to receive as well as to give.

2. From our personal position, we open to IRD. Msg. Thanya-anan asked these questions

- What is the Church position on IRD,
- what is the means,
- what does the Church plan for the future

The Second Vatican Council produced "In our own time" *Nostra Aetate* which opened the world of IRD then and is more Relevant today.

Four parts of IRD include

- **First** - life in which we meet the other and live together;
- **Second** - to pursue action with the caution to remain who we are before and after engaging in dialogue;
- **Third** - Expertise backing discussion;
- **Fourth** - Deepening experience by sharing, helping and sitting together in contemplation.

There is an element of risk in this endeavor. Relativism, syncretism, losing my identity and turning to the market place of secularism. The greatest risk of all is to become indifferent to harden my heart

Our language group did not understand IRD. The discussion veered to Ecumenical topics with one gentlemen commenting "What do the American bishops have to say about this !"

The problem of lack of Religious practice was shared by an east European woman in our group. The Communist takeover destroyed public worship and the people have become indifferent to a practicing Faith life. They do not want to be organized or to be part of an institution. They want personal religion without commitment. It is important to reach out to non believers in this post communist area.

Sadly, a poverty of knowledge with regard to IRD was evident in our group. May this painful truth motivate us to study the Church documents and reach out to those who do not know JC in charity and humility.

3. Personal relations and communion was the topic Mother Hickey offered to this Congress.

Peace, justice and protection of all Creation are of primary importance.

Mother asked "Can a network be built to deal with. . . Think globally, act locally".

In our group,

Aspects of Benedictine Spirituality were considered with regard to living one's life in the world. This includes self knowledge to obtain intimacy with God, Purity of Heart . Mother stated. . . .

"The Christian anthropology of human relationships is you. Christian community built on healthy relationships can be a power house. Although. There is a danger of anger in community life. Patience and lack of bitterness are to be pursued. The Rule is a source book on relationships, a world view focused on Christ"

In closing I quote our Father Abbot, "We are like Moses and his people in the desert, beautiful panorama, oasis, flowers but, the most beautiful of all is: We are together"

09/10/09 Mary Bouz