

EUROPE CONTINENTAL AREA REPORT

In March 2017 Area Presidents coming from most of the world met in Chicago, all there for the same mission. It was very important to listen to each other and discuss about the work that the Churches are carrying out and how they are facing some of many problems that arise at many times and in many places to give witness to the World of God-

Those days in Chicago gave us strength and encouragement for the work in our individual Areas.

Proclaiming through worship

The “Tree of Life”, the monthly prayers from our president and the Bible studies are good ways to stay in touch with the sisters in our Areas and ways to make us feel that we belong to the same body of Christ.

In every community sisters are meeting regularly to read and study the Bible or other Christian books that can help to increase their faith, do crafts, help organize their community's activities and more.

I know that some parish groups still struggle with the average age of members and seek wisdom to make their gatherings more attractive to a younger generation which would help make a difference in their lives. It is important to keep working in this sense and continue to pray to God because we believe that without His help and presence we can build nothing.

National or Regional Seminars are a moment for spiritual growth and a means for preparing ourselves for the witness to the Gospel that we are called upon to give in this world.

In the past months some new Unit Presidents have been elected and I want to thank the sisters that terminated their period of service for all the work they have accomplished and I welcome the new presidents and wish them a fruitful work filled with the Lord's blessings. I hope we'll be able to meet together in Belfast in June 2018.

A large group of sisters from our Area will be in Belfast for the Area Seminar. I am aware that small churches have difficulty in paying their quotas for these kinds of meetings and thank the sisters who offered their help and support in this situation, giving many the opportunity to participate in this important event.

Proclaiming through social action

Social action is a very important part of living our faith. “Faith divorced from deeds is lifeless” (James 2,26). At the present time the biggest problems we face are poverty and immigration and most of our Churches are involved in helping those people who have lost everything due to the economic crisis and those who are trying to escape from wars and hunger. The women in our Churches are up front in the distribution of food and clothing, in integrating into European society and Church life immigrants coming from many different cultures and economic situations.

Violence against women and children and femmicide are other problems in which we are very much involved, participating in demonstrations and volunteering in initiatives that are supporting women and children in these situations.

Proclaiming through relationships

The units of the Central Conference have a closer relationship with each other. Thanks to Dr. Patrick Streiff, Bishop in Central and Southern European Methodist Conference, who is supporting and encouraging women gatherings. The unit presidents of the Central and Southern Europe met for a Consultation in Kisac, Serbia in 2016 in October. The topic of the meeting was enfolded by Ms Claudia Haslebacher, Superintendent in UMC of Switzerland. Our spiritual life and our christianity is based on our identity being the children of God. There was a special moment during one of the morning prayers when all the women who participated gave and received a crown as symbol of being a princess of God. Yes, we are chosen people, called to proclaim God's goodness.

This event's theme was the same, it is not the mirror or a magazine or my boss who tells me who I am, but the Great I AM. It was a wonderful event of 25 participants led by Barbara Bünger (Switzerland), who is Central European Women's Coordinator and her team. A new Central European Task Group was also elected and other decisions were made regarding future women's gatherings.

In closing I would like to thank Lilla Lakatos for her help and support in preparing for the Belfast event and many other tasks in coordinating our mission in Europe and the World.

We are preparing for a national congress in Italy, next September, that is hoped to bring about many new ideas and projects.

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