



LET JUSTICE AND PEACE EMBRACE EACH OTHER

36th Annual Meeting of the International Committee for the Fellowship of the Least Coin at the Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary, Louisville/Kentucky, USA, October 12th – 21st 2016

2016 is a festive year for FLC as it has been founded 60 years before, in 1956. This anniversary was commemorated with a special celebration at Caldwell Chapel of Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary on Sunday 16th of October, followed by a reception where many 'old' and 'new' women committed to this prayer movement met each other and exchanged memories. Rev. Yamina Apolinaris, outgoing chairperson from Puerto Rico, held the sermon based on Psalm 85 emphasizing the importance of keeping justice and peace together, letting them embrace each other instead of putting them in separate boxes as it happens so often by dominant forces in the trying and difficult times we live in.

“Dominant forces in our world have tried to strip justice of peace. The situation is that, Peace can represent a genuine effort to bring harmony and wellbeing, but, if it's not accompanied by justice, it will be short lived, for peace without justice could not be maintained. And so, in the name of peace, killing continues; in the name of peace, the ends justify the means; in the name of justice, hundreds of black children and youth end up in jails or cemeteries; in the name of a justice and a peace process that are disconnected from one another, civilian children, women, men are bombarded; the rights of the poor are ignored and basic human and civil rights are put into hold.”

Against this hopelessness FLC sets – together with the psalmist – signs of hope in continuing her 60 years old journey by praying for justice, peace and reconciliation and by putting aside least coins in solidarity with women and children all over the world. As in previous years the International Committee gave grants to 44 projects for women and children in all parts of the world promoting health care, theological education, awareness raising about gender-based violence, women's leadership skills, war trauma healing, empowerment of indigenous women and children, interfaith dialogue, awareness raising about HIV/AIDS and many other items. Five (5) scholarship awards were granted to young women from Asia, Africa and Latin America to support them in their studies of theology, law and midwifery.



We are thankful to the Presbyterian women who hosted us, organized a marvelous program – one of the highlights being a visit to the Presbyterian Center in Louisville built out of two old ware houses at the shores of the river Ohio - and made it possible that we could visit churches and their communities nearby. I was in the group which was warmly welcomed by Shawnee, an African American congregation in Louisville West. We also saw a project of a shrinking Presbyterian congregation in the neighbouring state Indiana which found new purpose and inspiration by starting a diaper project for poor single mothers, mainly of Hispanic origin. Even in a rich country as the US 1 out of 3 children under 4 years live in poverty. Their mums cannot pay the diapers which are obligatory for staying in a day care center. So they have to stay at home with their babies and cannot go to work or

follow an education. So they are kept in poverty. By reaching out to these women this vicious cycle can hopefully be broken through. Finally some members of the ICFLC including myself got the opportunity to meet students working on their doctorates in leadership education at Spalding University, founded by and affiliated with the catholic Sisters of Charity of Nazareth. We spoke at a panel on global leadership of women and brought to an interested audience our experiences as women in leading positions in churches and ecumenical networks in our respective countries and contexts.



2016 is also a festive year for Church Women United – USA. In 1941 while bombs were dropping on Pearl Harbour and the world was at war three Christian women's organisations formed a national umbrella representing women from 70 Christian denominations. Their first common action was a petition to the US government to take its responsibility for peace. CWU is still a strong movement for informed prayer and prayerful action. The mission is to be a racially, culturally and theologically inclusive Christian women's movement celebrating unity in diversity and working for a world of peace and justice. This was well mirrored in the group of more than 300 women from all over the US who celebrated the 75th anniversary in Louisville during the weekend prior to the ICFLC annual meeting. We were invited to take part and gave a wider picture and broader horizon by contributing with prayers from all over the globe and bringing concerns of our respective countries.

In CWU multicultural America and all skin colours were represented. This gave a diverse picture where we Christian women of Europe have still to work on as the Ecumenical Forum of European Christian Women is still an entirely white movement. One of the main concerns, however, was named over and over again: how can we attract more young women to our movement? I was told that the average age of CWU is above 75! The motto of the celebration was Remember! Rejoice! Rebuild! Focusing on the future - for example by workshops about social media - and building on the wisdom of the pioneering women of the past. It was an honour to meet all these dedicated American women and to hear about their concerns and actions.



Martina Heinrichs, October 2016 - ICFLC regional coordinator for Europe and ICFLC chairperson 2016-2018; on behalf of the Ecumenical Forum of European Christian Women

Philippines

Fellowship of the Least Coin Hymn

Words by Rev. Cirilo A. Rigos

Music by Jerry Dadap

1. Christ-ian wo-men 'round the globe, Join in pray'r for peace. In the
2. From the south and from the north, From the east and west, We with

ho-ly name of Christ, Let His love in-crease. Thru' the
treas-ures of the heart, Hum-bly given our best Spi-rit

least coin we ex-press un-ni-ty and care, Thru' the
of true sis-ter-hood Here we con-se-crate; For the

gift of lov-ing hearts. God's glo-ry we share.
king-dom of our Lord, pa-tient-ly we wait.