



International Solidarity Reflection

Shalom

School Sisters of Notre Dame

Cultural Diversity and Unity

May 2009

Introduction

Amid the diversity which exists in our Church and in our world, our continuous striving for unity in our faith communities is a valuable witness. Realizing that unity can be expressed in and enriched by diversity, we endeavor to be a unifying force among God's people. In turn, those to whom we are sent aid us in our union with Christ and challenge us to renewed commitment to his mission. (YAS GD 10)

Call to Prayer

We are members of the human family. We are residents of the global community. Impelled by the word of God, our congregational writings, and other sacred writings, we, School Sisters of Notre Dame are committed to be transforming agents to the world, bringing all to that oneness for which Jesus Christ was sent.

Opening Song: Choose any song that speaks to peace, love, or unity.

Experience

"Cultural diversity is enormously valuable as U.S. President John F. Kennedy said in 1963. For example, we should be trying to make the world safe for all. Cultural diversity is, however, on a collision course with two other values on which the twenty-first century will also have to be built. One of these is the class of 'group rights' asserted by ambitious cultural and racial communities, with the contrasting ideology of 'human rights' and individual inalienable rights.

The pull of community, which gives us all part of our valued identities, is part of reality. The value of each person as an individual is a reality. The need to shape more inclusive community and institutions made possible by modern knowledge is a reality. What's universal threatens and is threatened by what's unique. So while we celebrate cultural diversity and political change that is being brought about on all continents, we need to think hard about reconciling them with both individual human rights and global human opportunities." (Excerpts from *Birth of a New World* by Harlan Cleveland. 1993)

Reflection

By our unity, especially evidenced where we live and serve together internationally, we witness to the possibility of overcoming national and cultural barriers. The gift of our internationality sharpens our consciousness of universal needs and calls us to foster within ourselves and others a responsible concern for the people of the world. (YAS, GD 36)

With all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another through love, striving to preserve the unity of the spirit through the bond of peace: one body and one Spirit,

as you were called to the one hope of your call; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. (*Ephesians 4:2-6*)

Words of Mother Theresa of Jesus Gerhardinger:

- We must always be and remain one in Jesus. (*MT 3006*)
- As long as unity and an esprit de corps endure among us ... no enemy will be able to harm us; but if this bond is loosened, then it is serious. Then we need no enemy from outside; we will destroy ourselves. (*MT 4679*)
- In unity is our strength; therefore, we must hold to this anchor above all. (*MT 4980*)

Silent reflection and then time for faith sharing on Cultural Diversity and Unity

Action

During the month, read and reflect on articles that show the joys and celebrations of cultural diversity and those that show the struggles and challenges with cultural diversity.

Share insights with the community from the readings and reflections. Identify practical ways to foster both cultural diversity and unity.

Plan ways to commemorate [World Day for Cultural Diversity](#) on May 21.

Intercessions: Respond with “We are one.”

- We give you thanks for our membership with the School Sisters of Notre Dame...
- We give you thanks for the gift of internationality and our mission in Christ...
- We give you thanks for our founders and all those significant persons of the Congregation...
- We implore you now to complete the work that You have given us...
- We ask you now, dear Lord, to be with us and may we grow in unity among ourselves and with other people throughout the world...
- For what else shall we pray?

Closing Prayer

Good and gracious God, as sisters and brothers in Christ, we dwell together in unity not by our own strength or our own merits but by God’s grace, like dew from heaven. This dew symbolizes Christ who calls us to unity amidst our diversity. May all who wish to dwell in unity desire the dew and be moistened by it, for otherwise we cannot hold firm what we profess. (Adapted from *COMMENTARY ON PSALM 133*)

Closing Song: Choose any song related to peace, love, and unity.

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