By Sr. Barbara Hudock, ASC

What has been stirring in you since we met at the Assembly? Keep it alive. Share it with someone in one of those deep conversations that we said we are looking for.

Here are a few of the questions stirring in me:

• How do we want to be in community together?
• Where and what are we called to?
• Are we called to new areas, new ministries?
• Who will go?

We come before the presence of Jesus to remember the power of his Blood and to call upon that power to touch our lives so that we can be a compassionate presence to our world.

What are your thoughts and with whom will you share them? ☛

“Out of an awareness of our own brokenness and the wounds of the world we Adorers choose life for ourselves and others by being a compassionate presence wherever need touches our heart.”

Assembly 2011, US Region
Pioneers and Prophets

By Sr. Krystal Funk

My journey as a novice began on Aug. 24, 2014 and so far has taught me many things. As we finished our Assembly, I realized just how much I had grown this year as a person and in my knowledge of religious life. It also made me realize how much more I have yet to learn. Sr. Mary Johnson’s talk left me thinking where we are called and how we get in touch with Millennial and future generations.

Many people who taught me this year stick out in my mind, but especially Sr. Regina Siegfried. She taught two classes this year to female novices in various St. Louis-area religious communities. I vividly remember the class on the history of religious life, how sisters ended up here and who they served. We discussed sisters who went West with the pioneers and served Native Americans and those who traveled across the Plains. We also talked about sisters who served African Americans during slavery and in the civil rights era.

It made me wonder about the location and needs of people to be served today. Since this class, my heart has been on fire with the question of: how do I serve those who are in need and where are those people that God calls me to serve? Mary Johnson talked at length about church demographics and how the Southwest has relatively few religious compared to the Northeast.

As a U.S. Region, we currently have seven sisters in the Southwest, where I feel the call and see the need to be present and would like to explore. I do not think that presence alone will help tackle the underrepresentation of Hispanics exploring religious life. I believe many more things affect the numbers such as the ones she mentioned: culture, education, and debt. Each of us has an ancestor who came to the U.S. Did they go through a similar transition? I don’t have the answer to that right now, but I do have a lot of questions.

Another area that struck me at the Assembly is the use of social media, which I have been pushing for since beginning this journey in 2012. How can we use social media to show who we are? I have been itching to start a ‘vlog,’ or video journal, or a blog. Both of these ideas are put on hold until I take vows. Yet, in my defense, if someone could do a blog or a vlog about her journey through this period of discernment, it might help other women who are on the same journey or looking to begin

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it.

I also am looking forward to helping out with Giving Voice, a 50-and-under group of women religious, maybe to create videos introducing the current generation of young sisters on its YouTube channel.

We need to find creative ways of interacting with this newer Internet generation and to begin thinking about the generation that follows. I can speak from personal experience that (communications associate) Miranda Caulkins is a fantastic person to work with and has fantastic ideas. Please spend some time with her and work with her. She is doing great things!

Nearly every Millennial in the U.S. has used social media, which is becoming so big that it is and can be incorporated into classroom teaching. Teachers have and can create projects that involve social media. We are jumping in, but we must not be afraid of what is being used every day. God is in everything we do, even the Internet. We have a chance to be out there promoting our lives and our work for God, and to touch someone who is struggling to find his or her path. We need to try social media wholeheartedly and get those feet wet, dirty, and mucky because you never know who you may touch someday in the future.

As I continue on this journey today, I try to keep in my mind the future that God calls me to. I know I am called to love and to embrace culture with open arms. The challenges Mary Johnson laid out in her presentation include many I was already considering:

Are we moving with the signs of the time?
Where is the mission in the U.S.?
Do we still have mission territories here?
Are we ready for the generation after mine?
How do we reach the next generation?

I think the best thing I can do is to continue to ask questions and challenge myself to ask, how do we, today, become Pioneers and Prophets? ☕️

Heard on the Street:
Utterances Overheard at the 2015 Assembly

“My passion is to share our stories, to show how God is in our lives.”

“Why do we not discuss mission in our governance plan?”

“We need to let go of the past and live in the present moment: what I do today as an old lady 83 years old.”

“Mission flows from who we are as individuals and collectively.”

“There’s not enough communication and trust. We are too secretive.”

“Writing a new governance plan won’t give us more trust.”

“We need saints, but not in cassocks, but rather in blue jeans and Reeboks.”
Sacred Encounters: A Call to Deep Conversations

By Sr. Mary Shaw, ASC

Over the years and especially at our most recent Assembly, we heard loud and clearly that “we should always seek to hear the stories of others -- all others -- and learn from them.”

This could be a clarion call as we diminish and find small numbers around our tables, places and spaces. This could inspire a new mindset, as mentioned in General Acts to let go of the old way and let come the new. Thus, there could be new power to the word, “invite,” an urgency to let go of preconceived ways and ideas.

Our smallness at times leads perhaps to loneliness. Refectories are not filled as they used to be and somehow, s/aging moves us more quickly into our rooms and we feel the existential ache more acutely. There is a risk to turn in on ourselves and project our emptiness on another. It becomes so easy at times, to label our Sisters who come to visit as disconnected. We are not sure why they come, and at the same time, if asked why they feel that “sister is disconnected,” we hear such remarks as, “well she did not visit me,” or “she did not sit at my table and I had no idea why she came to visit.”

But the question to those who make such comments is, are you willing to hear the tough responses and calls raised by so many, not just sociologists, but Sisters who are the target of such despairing remarks?

Whom did you invite to your table? Did you ever visit Sister or invite her home to share deep conversation? How have you reached out? Or are these remarks coming from expectations, assumptions or perhaps one’s own emptiness?

Connection, communication and dialogue are two-way streets. Encounter is key to all communication. Expectations for “outsiders” to fit our schedule are not community nor do they lead to good conversation. They are prejudicial and set one up as altruistic and the other as an appendage. As we continue to diminish and to grow, may we never forget that reaching out to meet and greet the other as s/he is and where s/he is at is tantamount to good conversation and encounter. Pope Francis in “The Joy of the Gospel” calls us to “go beyond our comfort zones in order to invite others to (faith, table, our place and space) whatever you desire so as to meet the other as Jesus met the other and continues to meet each of us. No expectations! Just reaching out and encountering!

Yes, out of an awareness of our own brokenness and woundedness, we choose life and empower others to choose life ... and we seek to encounter the other, so that life for all is life-giving.
The Miter Cup

By Sr. George Ann Biscan, ASC

St. Anne’s Retirement Community held its fourth Miter Cup Golf Tournament June 25 at the Hershey Country Club.

Teams from Harrisburg and Lancaster played each other in hopes of winning the trophy.

Last year the teams tied, but this year, Lancaster prevailed.

The trophy is kept at St. Anne’s Retirement Community.

A couple of the sisters continued the tradition of cheering for both teams and passing out snacks and drinks as the golfers came to the 10th hole.

Harrisburg Bishop Ronald Gainer attended the banquet and presented the trophy to the winning team. We look forward to this event every year.
by Sr. Kate Reid, ASC

Five mothers who lost sons and three teenage girls who lost a father and a brother to gun violence found some comfort and delight during a day hosted by Adorers in Ruma that we called “A Day Like a Balm in Gilead.”

The title refers to an African-American spiritual that affirms the Holy Spirit’s power to restore broken hearts:

“There is a balm in Gilead to make the wounded whole,
there is a balm in Gilead to heal the sin-sick soul.

“Sometimes I feel discouraged and think my work’s in vain,
but then the Holy Spirit revives my soul again.”

Members of the Illinois and Missouri (ILMO) subcommittee of the Adorers’ Justice and Peace Committee organized the day. Sister Marita Toenjes coordinated arrangements at Ruma. Sister Joan Shalapin got names and addresses of grieving mothers from a contact at city hall in East St. Louis. Twenty-one mothers received personal invitations and a follow-
up phone call arranging their transportation compliments of Sisters Cecilia Marie Hellmann, Pat Schlarmann and Kate Reid. It was the mothers who asked us to include a granddaughter missing her daddy and two daughters grieving the murder of their older brother.

Nature graciously cooperated with our plans for the day that included a wagon ride through acres of rolling fields and a chance to fish in a pond nestled in a pine grove. The girls caught 10, the mothers, two. The girls wanted no part of baiting the hook (Sister Mary Alan was at their service), but they were happy to pose for photos with their catch. Two moms chose an alternative to fishing: a chance to sit in a swing and let warm, soft breezes brush over them.

The Ruma Center dietary staff prepared a special dinner featuring favorites such as roast beef, turkey, mashed potatoes and gravy and an ice cream bar. The women enjoyed letting others prepare the food for a change.

In the afternoon, Sister Joan Stoverink invited mothers and girls to create a “comfort pillow” as a memento of the loved one who had been ripped from their lives by gun violence. Joan distributed pillow casings that had been prepared in advance, as well as fabric markers and assorted stencils. Sitting around tables and fashioning the pillows became the occasion for some mothers to share with each other the circumstances of their sons’ deaths, how they got the news,
and how they have managed to carry on. Both women with whom I sat said it was only by the grace of God that they themselves survived.

At Sister Marita’s suggestion, Pat Crowell, convent gardener, purchased flowering plants and pots with a heart on each so that our guests could have a living remembrance of their sons/brother/father to take home with them. Joan Shalapin also brought neck scarves made by her sister so the women and girls could pick out something pretty for themselves.

The “Day Like a Balm” ended with a healing and anointing ritual led by Sister Kate Reid. Sisters used branches of soft-needle pines to gently brush each woman and girl from head to toe while quietly praying that they may know themselves to be caressed and gradually revived by Mother Earth and our Mother/Father God. Then, with “Amazing Grace” playing in the background, sisters anointed the arms and hands of the women and girls with a fragrant lotion and prayed that the Holy Spirit would continue to anoint them in strength and revive their hearts and souls.

On behalf of the ILMO committee members, I offer this prayer: May the Holy Spirit who worked powerfully in the heart of Maria DeMattias help us both extend God’s compassion to those who mourn and speak and act to heal broken social systems that perpetuate the harms that keep breaking the hearts of God’s people.
Hunger and Need

By Sr. M. Evelyn Nagle, ASC

A couple weeks before Lent, Sisters Virginia Walsh, Mary Evelyn Nagle and Rachel Lawler were invited to speak to the PSR classes at St. Joseph School in Prairie du Rocher, Ill.

We talked to the children about Catholic Relief Services’ Rice Bowl project for Lent. We wanted them to know that children around the world too often go hungry. We spoke to them and showed them photographs of our beloved Liberia, including those of children having to carry pans of water on their heads and doing farm work by hand.

One of the PSR students’ teachers provided candy jars to hold the change children contributed as they purchased small candies for five cents. One of the children remarked that a can of soda costs 75 cents.

Sister Rachel, a seamstress, shared with the children some little sundresses that she has been making to send to Liberia and Haiti. We let the children try on clothes from Liberia.

Their contributions will help pay for the needs of children in a refugee camp for Liberians who fled their civil war.
Laudato Si’

By Sr. Janet Sue Smith, ASC

Wichita Adorers, friends, associates and sojourners joined in the international celebration of the release of Pope Francis’ encyclical on the environment, ‘Laudato Si’, on June 18.

They gathered in the St. Francis of Assisi courtyard of the Wichita Center amidst joyful bells, singing and prayers.

And at the Ruma Center, the sisters anticipated Pope Francis’ encyclical with a dining room display prepared by Sisters Alan and Frances.
I recently had the opportunity to travel to Acuto, Italy, where our community was founded by St. Maria De Mattias in 1834.

I was there to help review proposals for funding formation and ministry projects for Adorers throughout the world, and to disburse funding. But I also found time to enjoy the beauty all around those of us gathered at the meeting.

The visit offered lots of contrasting images:

The quill and ink on the desk in the room of St. Maria De Mattias and the laptop used by Srs. Nadia Coppa and Hee Kyung Julianna Kim at the Congregation Fund meeting.

The door to the Stefani House, on Corso Vittori Emanuele, the main street in Acuto, where Maria lived from 1838 to 1843 and the automated gate that leads into the Maria De Mattias Center, located at the highest point in Acuto.

The chapel at the Casa Madre in Acuto and the tabernacle in the chapel at the Maria De Mattias Center.

An Italian Adorer and a Tanzanian Adorer

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The narrow streets of Acuto and the fields and mountains in the distance.
• How do we want to be in community together?
• Where and what are we called to?
• Are we called to new areas, new ministries?
• Who will go?

-Sr. Barbara Hudock

Check out the Adorers’ blog!
Be sure to check out our blog to see what else Adorers are saying.

We’re posting information all the time @adorersUS on Twitter!
www.twitter.com/adorersUS