

WUCWO CORNER



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After a four hour trip by car from her home to the airport, Susanna Evening flew from Fiji to Sydney, Australia (four hours), from Sydney to Singapore (eight hours) and waited a further four hours in the airport in Singapore for her 13 hour flight to Rome. She brought each World Union of Catholic Women's Organizations (WUCWO) board member a fan woven from palm leaves. She returns home to a country where the government is in crisis. Fiji is a member country of WUCWO.

Thirty members of the WUCWO board, from all regions of the globe, gathered in Rome to address issues identified at the General Assembly in Arlington, Virginia, and to share their realities including endangered democracy, ongoing civil war, human trafficking, unequal distribution of wealth, education for the privileged few, gender discrimination, illiteracy and HIV/AIDS. The board came together as voice for all of God's people. It listened and discussed knowing that board members must: become educated so that they, in turn, can educate; act and ask for change; and, speak for justice in all 192 countries of the world.

The WUCWO aim is, "To promote the presence, participation and co-responsibility of Catholic women in society and Church, in order to enable them to fulfil their mission of evangelisation and to work for human development." In 2006, the Holy See recognized WUCWO as an international public association of the faithful.

In Rome, board members began the process of implementing the WUCWO priorities for 2006-2010, "Building a Culture of Peace: with special attention to Education and Eradication of Poverty." Under the direction of President-General Karen Hurley, the new board began this daunting task. Each board member was appointed to a committee (finance, communications or statutes & procedures) and also became a member of a commission (women in the church or women in society) and a working group within that commission. The resolutions

adopted at the Statutory Assembly will give focus and direction to the work of the commissions.

The days in Rome were full. Sr. Maria Martinelli, CMS, spoke of the HIV/AIDS situation in Africa. Dra. Fermina Alvarez, who works in the Secretariat of State, spoke of her work in the Vatican.

At the WUCWO board level, there were committee meetings, organizational meetings for commissions and working groups, as well as regional meetings. Meetings were scheduled with dicasteries, specifically with the Secretariat of State; the pontifical councils for the laity, social communications, the family, *Cor Unum*, and culture; and, the congregations for the evangelization of peoples, and divine worship and the discipline of the sacraments.

Along with four other board members, I visited with President of the Pontifical Council for Health Pastoral Care Cardinal Javier Lozano Barragán. We were introduced to the Good Samaritan Foundation which was instituted by Pope John Paul II in order to "...bring economic help...to the sick people who are most in need in the world..." WUCWO Board Member for Zambia Theresa Nyirenda spoke of the plight of her people ½ a life expectancy of 37 years, 20% of the adult population living with HIV/AIDS, 86% of the population living below the poverty line, and a 50% unemployment rate.

As vice president for North America, I will begin the process of writing a newsletter which will be available for all who are interested. In 2008, the North American Regional Conference will take place in Winnipeg in conjunction with the League's 88th annual national convention. At the 86th annual national convention in Halifax, each delegate was given a country and asked to learn about that country and pray for those who live there.

My dream for WUCWO is that every nation would join, and that each of us would feel our sisterhood connection with all women in every nation and recognize that indeed we are *companions on the journey*. †

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