

GAC 2023

The annual General Advisory Council meeting commenced on the 3rd of June 2023 on a very positive note. 66 participants from the 6 provinces, East Africa region, GAC members and the formators took part in it. The meeting began with the ceremonial lighting of the lamp by the Superior General, Sister Maria Nirmalini. Sister Nessa conducted the inaugural prayer and introduced the theme 'Enlarging the Space of your Tent'.

In her opening address sister Nirmalini thanked the Provincial Superiors, Regional Superior and the Delegation Superior along with their teams for the hard work and the cooperation received during the past year. She introduced the theme by saying that enlarging the tent means not only expanding the area of influence but also strengthening the existing area of influence. As women religious we have a special role to play in the inclusive church.

Sister Nilanthi the Provincial Superior of Sri Lanka along with the team members and sister Constantine who returned from the mission in Pakistan after 35 years, were felicitated by the Superior General and team.

Introducing the facilitator Sister Alba Rodrigues, from the Presentation Sisters of Ireland for the GAC meeting 2023, the Superior General said she that she was an expert in Cosmology and has conducted a number of retreats and sessions for many congregations. With her wide experience she journeyed with us for three days. She committed herself totally to be with us practically each day guiding and directing us to elicit our strengths and vulnerabilities. The input sessions on cosmic spirituality, and innovative prayer kept us spell bound. Speaking on the theme, she stressed the need to reclaim our spiritual place in order to enlarge the space of our tent. In the scriptures we find the role of women as preservers of the tent, therefore we need to celebrate our women ancestors in order to understand our role as women of today and create a new tradition based on the old. For this she gave three principles of the universe namely differentiation, interiority and communion. The way to move forward is to share the wisdom of the indigenous people, of women, of established religion and science. She moved with us as fish in the water, involving herself in every activity. Above all she expressed her sincere love for our foundress, Venerable Mother Veronica. Before each day came to a closure, a sister from each province met Sister Alba along with the Superior General and her team, for evaluation and integration.

The one-year report for the GAC 2023 was brought alive on the stage by the Generalate team on the theme 'Enlarging the Space of your Tent'. It was thought provoking and much appreciated, and the 6 provinces and East Africa Region who came well prepared had their presentations in a very creative way, each surpassing the other. After each presentation, time was set aside for discussion and Sister Alba Rodrigues, the facilitator helped the house to unearth the riches of each province and region. She also made room for the provinces to appreciate and affirm each other. This was a new gesture which tightened our bond of unity.

To express our solidarity with the female wrestlers who are demanding a fair investigation of the sexual assault by the Sports Minister, Sister Nirmalini and the GAC members participated in a protest held in Freedom Park on the 5th of June.

On the 6th Mr. Hari Subramaniam the founder of Subramaniam and Associates, unravelled to us 'Carmel as a Brand'. He exhorted us to value, treasure and to be vigilant in order to safeguard the brand name of Carmel. He stressed that it is each one's responsibility to do so.

In the afternoon, addressing the joint session Sister Nirmalini asked the members to discuss in the province groups, the criteria for recruitment/selection of candidates, term for principals, finance and strengthening of interpersonal relationships. The province groups discussed the matter and came back for the reporting and discussion.

The group gathered in the evening after supper for recreation where the province groups presented colourful items. The recreation ended with thanksgiving to all who helped in the arrangements of GAC meeting.

The next day the provincial councillors met with their counterparts of the general administration to share and to clarify matters in their specific fields. The Superior General met with the Provincials and this was followed by a joint session in the chapter hall, of both the teams from the general and province administration.

Sister Maria Christi thanked Sister Nirmalini and her team, on behalf of the entire group. The GAC 2023 concluded with a short prayer.



GAC 2023 TEAM



