

**Reflection for the Opening of the General Assembly
Monday, April 12, 2010**

Sister Kathleen Kluthe

**Buenos Dias Guten Morgan Suprabath Good Morning
Welcome to each of you!
Welcome to this General Assembly of 2010.**

The official opening address of this Assembly was yesterday at the Liturgy in order that more Sisters and Associates would feel included in this sacred event of our International Congregation. So my reflection this morning will be brief and is intended to accompany the meaningful opening ritual that already set a prayerful atmosphere for our multi-cultural gathering.

- This is the moment for which we have all been preparing.
- The past and the future yet to be created are held in this present moment.
- This is indeed a gift of time in which each of us from around the world has been called to participate.
- It is difficult to express in words the power, the sacredness of this event

In this moment of our history, we are called in **RIF 68**, to carry the spirit of our foundresses forward. We are called, according to **RIF 69**, to commit ourselves to a congregational direction for the next four years and to choose a new Spiritual Leadership Team for our international congregation.

We are called to be attentive and to listen to the Spirit speaking in each person regardless of age, color or culture.

We are called to be ONE in spirit, mind and heart in the midst of the energy and diversity of the many cultures of our Sisters and Associates in India, Europe, Latin America and the United States.

We are called to “Be the Franciscan Face of the Gospel in a Multicultural World.”

My prayer, as we gather for this 2010 General Assembly, is that this time will be a spiritual experience for each one of us. As we sit around tables, I am reminded of the powerful image of Jesus inviting us to “sit at table” to share our stories, to build community, to eat, to pray and to share Eucharist. Jesus asks us to invite everyone from all nations to sit at table and to share the blessings of peace, of justice, of equal rights, of freedom from fear, of the joy of belonging to one another. Jesus asks us to feed one another during this General Assembly with the very giftedness inside ourselves, with the gifts of our backgrounds, our beliefs, our life experiences, our visions of the future. We pray that we may have the unquestioning courage to be seated at the world’s table.

Will we open our hands and hearts to be fed and to feed one another each day as we gather around these tables? Or will we close in on ourselves and allow the meal - the Assembly - to proceed without us?

Will we be instruments of God's peace in the building up of our world, our church, our congregation for future generations of pilgrims and seekers?

Do we have this courage?

Can we make the leap of faith, trusting in a God of surprises and of deep faithfulness?
(Adapted from Edward Francis Gabriele in his book From Many, One: Praying Our Rich and Diverse Cultural Heritage

In the words of Mother Alexia, "*Nothing is impossible with God*". Let us go forward now and enter into this moment of the General Assembly of April 2010.

Let us invite one another to walk together into our future with the same determination and faith of Francis and Clare, Mothers Alexia, Alfons, Clara, and the Sisters who led the way over many, many years.

Danke schön, Dhanyavad, Gracias, Nanni, Thank you for your willingness to be members of this General Assembly and accept the challenge of co-creating the future of our international congregation.

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