

Intercultural European Meeting

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The younger Sisters of the Daughters of Wisdom in Europe met for the second time at the end of December. The space of our tent was widened with the presence of Sr. Patricia and Sr. Siobhan from GBI, Sr. Jeannette and Sr. Mariette, from Madagascar, both presently missioned in France, and two French Sisters who could not attend our last meeting, Sr. Marie-Dominique and Sr. Josiane.

After an interesting round of sharing on our mission insertions, our commitments and the intercultural life of our respective countries, we reflected on a document by Peter Bisson, S.J.* With this sharing we were better prepared to listen to the daily preoccupations of the multicultural populations living in our inner cities and ghettos.

We set out for the "Place de l'Abbaye" in Créteil, where Sr. Christiane and Moustafa were expecting us at the House of Solidarity. This association offers activities to children, youth and adults in order to promote a better life together in the appreciation of each other's culture.

We then headed for the Community. With Sr. Françoise, we met another Françoise, a Friend of Wisdom, who is in charge of the "Restos du Cœur" in the city. She shared with us her experience of poverty, the growing number of requests for assistance she receives and her joy at serving with her team of volunteers.

The following day, Sr. Marie-Thé welcomed us at the Tartarêt City of Corbeil-Essonnes. A neighbor, Radia, served us mint tea according to Moroccan culture. She spoke to us of her life here and in her country and of the difficulties she encountered. With her was Michelle, a Friend of Wisdom, who has seen the evolution of the neighborhood and could relate its history.

Back in Paris, interculturality for French families, displaced persons, refugees, and immigrants, was visible in the faces, in the life experiences but also in the situations of poverty. Filled with hope upon arriving on French soil, many have nothing now. "All they have left are their eyes to cry". Our Malagasy Sisters were surprised as in their country, strangers who are poor are the exception.

All through this experience, by way of translations, we lived little by little the conversion that our cultural differences require. We hope that this conversion will be expressed in our commitment to stay in relationship with one another, to support each other in the implementation of our Provinces' projects. The next meeting is planned for February 2014.

*Cultural Conversion and Intercultural Communication: A Basis of Community Discernment
<http://mds.asso.fr/WordPress3/>

*Restos du Cœur founded by Coluche. <http://www.restosducoeur.org/>