

Closing Spin

Knowing nothing shuts the iron gates; the new  
love opens them.

The sound of the gates opening wakes the beautiful  
woman asleep

Kabir says: Fantastic! Don't let a chance like this go  
by!

In a time when the world is moving towards another wave of nationalism and racial distinctions, we have found the Order not willing to compromise what we have known and experienced as our globality. In the Panchayat visits we have seen genuine concern for the Order's corporateness and globality. We have seen expressions of great love for the Order. We have seen the iron decision of our colleagues to stand tall in humanly impossible situations. We were given hope by seeing our colleagues carry the whole weight of our future on their backs. We have seen emerging leadership of this Order caring for their people and their assigned task with objectivity and sensitivity beyond any expectation. We have been given courage by colleagues from beyond the symbolic order who decided to double or tripple their financial and time involvement for the sake of the Year of Order Council.

We have become aware of and were grateful for the lives of those who have gone before us laying the foundations upon which we now set out to build. It was, for us, an experience of journey through time, seeing layers and layers of expenditure.

We were addressed by the dedication and descipline of our colleagues in building the future from where they were.

Now we have just crossed another bridge within the Year of Order Council. We have experienced the events of the IERD Central International Event and the Models Focusing Task Force as sizeable explosions. This experience came to us as a transformation so radical it shook all the foundations we have known in the past. We have witnessed an outburst of creativity - giving birth to something we've never seen before. We are, indeed a very different people - both individually and corporately. Different from what we were four weeks ago.

Someone came to me and said, "I'd like you to tell me if I am right. I feel like I'm glorifying and basking in the experience of wholeness and fulfillment. Someone else who may be experiencing deep pain may not comprehend what I'm saying but I feel like celebrating". These past few weeks were indeed the experience of both pain and ecstasy.

The IERD has forced us to stand before the unsynonymous. It has demanded of us radical responsibility not just for the process of human development but for particular human lives.

The IERD reaffirmed for us the foundational presuppositions of strategy - based on the assumptions that we can decide to manifest globality. In this event we have demonstrated how to hold the tension between the global and the local and in the midst of that pain forge a new kind of global interrelatedness that the world does not believe possible.

The disciplined flexibility of the methods of the IERD has given us another affirmation of our willingness to listen and be sensitive to what is necessary ... That, for me, is a victory.

The IERD has tested the power of our corporateness, without which this event would not have been possible.

As I mentioned earlier, the first part of this bridge of the YOC is the IERD. Now, the second part of the same bridge is the MFTF.

In this Model Focusing Task Force we have encountered our diversity in a new depth. When we arrived at this hotel and got into our rooms there were five of us relaxing and exchanging news. Then one of us pointed out that there were five nationalities present in that room, four of whom are living in a country other than their own. Then to have read the talking papers from Raul in Chile to those from the Sydney House illustrated the many-ness of perspectives that we embody. What an amazing way to experience the richness of our diversity.

The work in the task forces and the plenaries pushed us into deeper levels of consensus building. We demonstrated to ourselves our willingness and readiness to deal with the foundations of our life and be responsible for the total Order.

The models that have been focused are like laser beams producing holographic images of the Order. Through each model the life and task of the Order is revealed. The actuation of these models involves dealing with the totality of our lives; nothing less.

The MFTF has become a unifying image. It has become a glue to our consciousness. It transcended particular geography, concerns, and strategy and yet empowered them.

The MFTF has brought new meaning to our self-understanding. Lyn used the word, "ELITE". It is rooted in the Hebrew notion of election-not for special privileges but rather for special responsibility.

By the fact that we were chosen to be here and that we "elected" to be here, we are responsible for interpreting the consensus of the Order as it has been discerned at this meeting. The Order continues to count on all of us to perform this role.

There are few anticipations of the next five months that we would like to share with you.

First, the Stories from each house- Each house we visited wrote a brief history of the Order in that location. We have asked Chicago Nexus to work on those stories. The Continuum may play an important role in this creation of the 16 year history of our life and work across the globe. We believe that this document will be a part of our celebration of the 16 years of expenditure and will be a powerful tool for us and for others as well.

Second, the Joseph W. Mathews papers. We have spoken a lot about doing something with the writings of JWM. We would like to recommend that in this YOC, we take a serious look at his writings. We have asked Betty Pesek to work with the Continuum on this before the July-August Event.

Third, the Guest list for August-July. Monsigneur Ortiz from the Philippines and Bishop Joe Iida from Japan have expressed desire to be present at the July-August meeting of the Order. Francis George, Vicar General of the Oblates of Mary in Rome has been invited. If you know of people from your location who either are coming or need to be asked to come, please get the word to the Continuum. I wonder if there are those who have supported us or representatives of organizations, or members of the GAB and NSC we might want to have participate in this momentous event in our life. Wouldn't it be great to have 50 or so of this calibre present at this event?

Fourth, the Panchayat Selection and Transition. In 1978 the Order assigned the first full time Panchayat and they served for five quarters. The following year we decided to change the length of service to two years. Last year at the Priory Check Signals Meetings in Brussels, with the previous consensus to operate in the two year mode, it was recommended that there be an extension of the retiring Panchayat's eligibility. The Order has done that. This year the ballots for the Panchayat selection have been mailed in January with the proposal of starting the Panchayat selection in the later part of March.

I would like to remind us all of the announcement of the Panchayat made at the July Council last year. It was recommended that this year's retiring make the transition on June 1, 1984. The newly elected Panchayat members will work with this year's Panchayat members for a month of transition, from May 1 to June 1, 1984. We also recommend that the retiring Panchayat members be given carefully thought through assignments at the July-August gatherings that would capitalize most on their experience of having been in the Global Panchayat.

Again, we ask for your prayers.

Finally, I would like to share with you one last reflection.

We have witnessed in the past 6 months, a new confidence in the Order's willingness to take on brand new arenas of exploration. We have seen through this meeting, a leap from trying to see what the Order is thinking to boldly declaring the consensus concerning these next several months. In other words, what we have seen amongst us, I believe, is a process of re-covenanting. What I mean is that all of us these days have participated in an act of re-deciding how we intend to expend the one life we have.

We experience our own frailty in our decision to be in this covenant. We know others experience this also; yet, increasingly we are aware of the need for a body of people like ourselves in history and across the planet. This underlines our concern for Order forms and spirit modes.

Maybe it is not an exaggeration to say that it is re-covenanting that this year is all about. Maybe, it is not an exaggeration to say that this Order is depending on us to lead the way in this process.

I have also wondered, what it means to honour my colleagues these days. We are all longing for ways to express authentic appreciation for each others' lives and journey. I don't know about you, but for me, courage comes from knowing I have colleagues who stand with me; colleagues who have decided to be about one thing - that is, to love that Mysterious Power and to serve the world. We see and experience the depths of our separation. Our difference will never go away. The tensions will be more intense among us whether it is the Year of The Order Council or not. Yet, in the midst of these, we are called upon to transcend all our differences, our interests, our prejudices, our fragmentation and to forgive each other, time and time again. We are called to be the steadfast ones, living out of the most profound understanding of life.

The call is, to continue the glorious journey of being; those who care for the planet, on behalf of all.

This is the Year. It is fantastic. Don't let a chance like this go by!....