

April 29, 2008
Father John Kilcrann CSSP
Summary Report: Sister Juliana Miska

NGO Accreditation of the United Nations for Religious Congregations

The presentation began with an overview of questions posed by a member the General Leadership Team. Some of the questions posed were:

- ❖ What does it mean to be an NGO?
- ❖ How does an NGO function?
- ❖ Before considering joining an NGO, what should congregations consider?
- ❖ What are the financial implications?
- ❖ What are the areas of concern that members of an NGO work with?

In response to these questions Father told “The Spiritan “UN Accreditation Story.

- ❖ Recommendation from the General Chapter to investigate advantages and disadvantages of establishing NGO status
- ❖ Research models for accreditation in various religious congregations
 - ❖ VIVAT extends associate membership to other congregations
- ❖ Reflect on issues: finances, personnel, time, training
- ❖ Benefits of accreditation
 - ❖ ECOSOC (Economic and Social Council) depends heavily on the grass roots experiences, eye witness accounts and advice of NGO's
 - ❖ DPI (Department of Public Information) allows us to draft policies and propose actions that will help to create systemic(transformative) change
 - ❖ Information from the grass roots has influence and information from the UN benefits us with opportunities for research and updated information which helps to create systemic change
 - ❖ Collaboration with other religious congregations sharing the same goals and focus as well as encountering other Christian NGO's

Father then took a closer look at UNITED NATIONS in its

- ❖ History: The UN came into existence October 24, 1945
There are over 190 independent countries as members
There are various official languages
- ❖ Structure: General Assembly, Secretariat, Security Council,
International Court of Justice, Trustee Council,
ECOSEC, and DPI
 - ❖ ECOSOC – Main forum for economic issues such as: population, transportation, children, housing, women's rights, racial discrimination, youth, human development, food, crime such as human trafficking etc.
 - ❖ DPI – Draft policies

❖ Criteria for Representatives to the UN:

- ❖ Significant JPIC experiences with
- ❖ Energy and interest in JPIC issues
- ❖ Internship with experienced NGO's

❖ Responsibilities of Congregational Representatives:

- ❖ Define Congregational goals and focus
- ❖ Train membership
- ❖ Promote networking among its members
- ❖ Promote collaboration with the UN
- ❖ Distribute information among its members
- ❖ Glean grass root experiences and insights from the members to bring to the UN
- ❖ Encourage congregational membership on local, national and international levels
- ❖ Present congregational issues of FOCUS with RESEARCH and GOSPEL VALUES

❖ Challenges :

- ❖ There are over 2 million religious in the world. We are using less than 5% of our influence and opportunity to raise the voices of the poor as an instrument at an international forum such as the UN.
- ❖ Is this where Mother Pauline would be today, reading the signs of the times and seeing with the eyes of God and women's hearts?
- ❖ Are not the Millennium Goals for 2015 similar to the priorities at our General Chapters? Are we being asked to use our resources and grass root influences at the UN or at another level of influence?
- ❖ Is membership at the UN or with an accredited congregation a new challenge for mission and a model for ministry today?
- ❖ As we strive to bring Christ's Light, Love, and Life into a world plagued by destruction and broken relationships, is our collaboration and networking with an NGO or another organization, a response to the cry of the poor in our midst?