

Day 2 of the Religious Leaders Meeting.

Morning Session:

Presentation by Sr Joan Chittister, Benedictine Nun, Renowned Author, and Prominent Voice in Interfaith. She spoke of Judo/Christian religions story of creation. There are two versions of the creation story, the first has been used to dominate, it is the masculine domination of the scriptures, “Come now gentleman – God creates man in His own Image – be fruitful and multiply, have dominion over every living thing – you can have it all – it is all for you, it is all here to satisfy your needs – everything physical is to serve man alone – humans are beyond nature – those who have the resources dominate, those who do not have the resources, are made the resources.”

She then spoke of the second story of creation is The Companion Story - God brings all creatures to be named, to be known, bringing humans into relationship with the rest of creation, this relationship is what makes us like God. Domination is destructive, being in relationship, makes us care for creation. We must see it differently, say it differently, we must put the second creation story back and change our story”

Sraddhalu Ranade, Scientist, Educator and Teacher at the Sri Aurobindo Ashram in Pondicherry India, gave an Eastern perspective – The east has not been deeply enough connected to our own belief or we wouldn't have been so easily influenced by the Judo/Christian story. The ancient Vedic Rishie's experience was of God Consciousness – We are one. One Source, one origin that is present everywhere – we are not separate from the seed. Each one has their own way of realizing it. Each recovers and discovers themselves in the three aspects of one – each finds their own way, this is called Dharma. The divine must be realized here on earth – it is a divinization of life. Our weakness was that we withdrew from life. The east specialized in otherworldliness and the west specialized in mastery over matter – each must learn from the other. He then went on to say that each major religion carries the description of its own end times. Perhaps this end means an end to the formal structure of religion, leaving each person to find their own way to practice. There are religious and scientific descriptions of ends of cycles from many different disciplines – and he went on to describe some of them including the 2012 scenario of the Mayan Calendar. He also described how on a personal level, in a cycle of a single year, we make new years resolutions which in its first stage (Golden Age stage) it is easy for us to commit to our resolutions, then after a while we need self discipline to keep going (Silver Age). Then we find some structure to keep going (Copper Age) and finally our resolutions breakdown (Iron Age). Now being at the apparent end of different cycles, he expressed the urgent need for a change in consciousness – but comforted the delegates with a “Now” that ranged from 2-500 years!

A scientist from the **Nordic Folkecenter for Renewable Energy** then spoke of urgency of moving away from fossil fuels, which are not natural or unlimited resources (you have to dig them out of the earth at great expense and a lot of waste), to the real natural and unlimited resource of Sun which is available to all, with no waste. This, once the initial investment is made will provide cheap and decentralize power, in more ways than one. His organization is committed to the advancement of all forms of renewable energies (all of which originate from the sun). **Sister Jayanti made an intervention** explaining that the Brahma Kumaris is the largest single supplier of Solar Energy in India, servicing 1000's of people, both institutionally and also by supplying solar cookers for individual homes.

Afternoon Sessions

The first session of the afternoon was jointly facilitated by Sister Jayanti and Dr. Tho Ha Vinh, Meditation disciple of the Venerable Tich Nhat Hanh, and Head of Global Training in the International Committee of the Red Cross in Geneva. The theme was. **The Role of Contemplative Practice and Prayer in Addressing Climate Change,**

Sister Jayanti set the context by saying, the crisis is not just a Climate Crisis, but it is a crisis of ethics and of values and sometimes it takes for us to "hit a wall" before we do something about it - that wall is fast heading towards us. Physical things will happen very quickly when there is a change of human hearts and consciousness. The two living systems of mind and matter can work together in harmony. She spoke of the law of entropy in all living systems and the need of an injection of power from outside the system, a source of power which is ever constant to bring the change needed to start the new cycle, to bring about the new world we are all desperately seeing the need for. This is the role of our contemplative and meditative practices -- to bring in the new cycle.

A number of interventions were made from the religious leaders during this session one of which was from Reverend Richard Cizik, a prominent Christian Evangelical lobbyist from Washington, who spoke of an article, in a newspaper, from the Secretary General of the UN, Ban Ki-moon, part of which included the Secretary General saying (to paraphrase) it is not the governments who would know the hearts of the people, but it is the religious and spiritual people; people of faith, who had the length, breadth, and depth of impact on the community.

Sister Jayanti also gave a joint interview with the Christian Evangelical, Reverend Richard Cizik, for a Christian daily newspaper called Krislelig Dagblad.

This day marked the end of the closed meetings of the religious leaders, from now onwards the leaders would be going out into the public arena to give presentations, speak in dialogues, and generally share with the rest of the Climate Change delegates of the NGO Forum, Christiana, and other public forums around the city of Copenhagen. Sister Jayanti will be joining them at various times over the next few days. The meeting was then closed with some prayers, from the different traditions present.

CPO15 and the NGO Forum.

Patricia, Renaud, and Arnold continued to attend COP15 and the NGO Forum activities. Patricia met a number of her contacts from the UN secretariat for Climate Change (from her climate negotiating days) and is working on making appointments for Sister Jayanti with the secretariat leadership. The main message coming out of the NGO Forum is that there is a need for systemic change not climate change, there must be cooperation between systems -- everything is connected. So the slogan has become "Systemic Change Not Climate Change."