

Cassia- Karibuni! Welcome to the RIMOA community in Kenya of the Eastern Central Africa Province! The community members are Sr. Fe (Philippines), Sr. Manel (Sri Lanka) and Sr. Cassia Maria (Brazil). The province is comprised of the countries of Kenya, Democratic Republic of Congo, Uganda and South Sudan.

The committee "*Creators of a New Now*" requested us to articulate our experiences of how we live our Essential Elements – in our case, **Complementarity**, in the reality of today.

Cassia - **How do you define complementarity?**

Manel – it reverences our two distinct lifestyles as we, in a relationship of communion and participation, sustain each other in our common mission, spirit and charism. This complementarity tends to the unity of the apostolic and contemplative sisters, the ideal for which we are striving.

Cassia- **Can you share with us how you began to communicate the understanding of contemplative life on complementarity today?**

Fe - The community has been in Kenya for four years. Before the formal opening of the community, Sisters Brigid, Reina and we, the community, talked about contemplative life in the congregation today to the Sisters of the Congo-Kenya Sector. It's their first experience to have a contemplative community. And so, there is a need of a continuing process to communicate to them the significance of our contemplative life.

Cassia -**How do you relate to the apostolic sisters?**

Manel - I can share with you some concrete examples. Since we are new in this province, we take the initiative in inviting our apostolic sisters who are near us, for Eucharistic celebrations and meals on special occasions like Christmas, Easter and congregational feasts. We enjoy being together on special occasions with simple fun. We are deepening our welcoming spirit of being open to our apostolic sisters whenever they need to spend few days with us in silence and prayer.

They make an effort in looking for a market for our products.

Cassia- **After the conversation with the Sisters in the sector, what are the activities done to deepen their understanding of complementarity?**

Fe - * There is an on-going contemplative sharing on formation; sisters preparing for final vows, temporary vows, come and see workshops (perspective candidates).

*unification happened between Congo / Kenya Sector and the Province of Kenya and it became a new province. The vision to communicate to the sisters becomes wider. A challenge came in an invitation to visit the communities near and far. We responded to the invitation; to let go of our comfort zone, an opportunity to meet more sisters, an exposure to the different ministries, and to put in their awareness the presence of the contemplative sisters in the new province. The visits were short and limited but it was a good beginning to know one another.

* We asked ourselves, how and when can we gather the sisters in order to share and to deepen their understanding of our contemplative life?

* A recommendation at our CACS that at Province Chapters ... we make a space for reflection, discussion, sharing with our apostolic sisters on areas of importance to the contemplative way of life.

* At our unification chapter, we shared important flashbacks of our contemplative history and contemplative life today. It was a moment of grace to share our contemplative life living in an apostolic congregation, where almost all sisters were present.

* As we are new to one another, we need to know more the differences in our ways of life that needs to be mutually respected.

Cassia - **Is complementarity tending towards union and the beyond to communion?**

Manel – Yes, it is. A memorable experience I had was when we moved from Angola to Kenya in 2013. Sr. Fe and myself had an opportunity to live with our apostolic sisters until the construction of our house was finished. It was a great and enriching time to know one another and to meet the people whom they are working with, people in the margins. There were occasions where we joined with our apostolic sisters to introduce ourselves in our new parish and diocese. They value and respect the contemplative life. Our Bishop is proud of our presence in his diocese. Every now and then, he comes to celebrate Mass and entrust to our prayers the needs of the diocese.

Another memorable experience was when we were attacked by robbers. The sisters were one with us in prayer and physical presence; they took turns to accompany us until we recovered from the traumatic experience.

Whenever there is a gathering or visits from mission partners, our apostolic sisters make it a point to accompany them to our place and make them aware of our spiritual apostolate. They encourage them to turn to us for prayer intentions.