

The Messenger in May had a long and personal story of VE Day, thanks to Br John McOwat. In 'Dates to Remember' was 12 May: the signing of the Brotherly Agreement which marked the Renewal of the Unitas Fratrum in Herrnhut, in 1727. These two items brought to my mind the word 'reconciliation'.

Last autumn found me having the great joy of joining Sr Sarah Groves to attend a European Province conference in Herrnhut, where we enjoyed exploring the meaning of reconciliation. The many activities encouraged us to walk in the footsteps of our forefathers and foremothers, to reflect on what brought them to walk the way of reconciliation. We also looked at our present time and to the future, considering how we can serve, nurture, live and take steps towards reconciliation.

Let us start with the question what is meant by reconciliation? It generally relates to the transformation from a place of separation, hurt and brokenness to healing, forgiveness and reunion. Most frequently today it is applied to countries where society is deeply fractured by historical divisions. The aim is not punishment but a restoration of balance and of living well together.

This month of June should have seen Moravian women from around the Unity meeting together in the USA for a conference, learning how to be advocates for women and girls. We would then be encouraged to put these lessons into practice in our own communities. Despite the major preparations by Sisters from the Unity Women's Desk (UWD), it is not going ahead. A simple reason: too many women could not get visas or could not be assured by the USA authorities of access, even with visas. One example of division in our world.

The world is currently a sad place. War, upheaval, prejudice, poverty. If I don't watch it, this will get depressing, but surely the message is the need for peace and reconciliation. Many of you do practical things where you live to challenge the problems being faced by people. The MWA each year, through your efforts, raises much needed funds for a variety of international, national and local charities.

Hopefully, the UWD conference goes ahead in a place where many more Sisters can safely come together to learn, share in fellowship and forge friendships. We can all play our part by praying for the successful work of this conference and to continue with the great efforts of each Circle to raise funds for the charities we are supporting.

Last month I referred to the power of Sisters coming together. Whether you were physically at Hall Green or you were at home thinking about the Away Day, I hope you had a good day. The event was joyous and, like the Reconciliation Conference in Herrnhut, showed to me once again the power of friendship and fellowship. As we look to the future, let us each reflect upon how we can serve, nurture, live and take steps towards reconciliation in our lives and local communities.

Sr Mary Holmes