EFECW

ECUMENICAL FORUM OF EUROPEAN CHRISTIAN WOMEN

Let us renew!...

Online meeting, 19th June 2023

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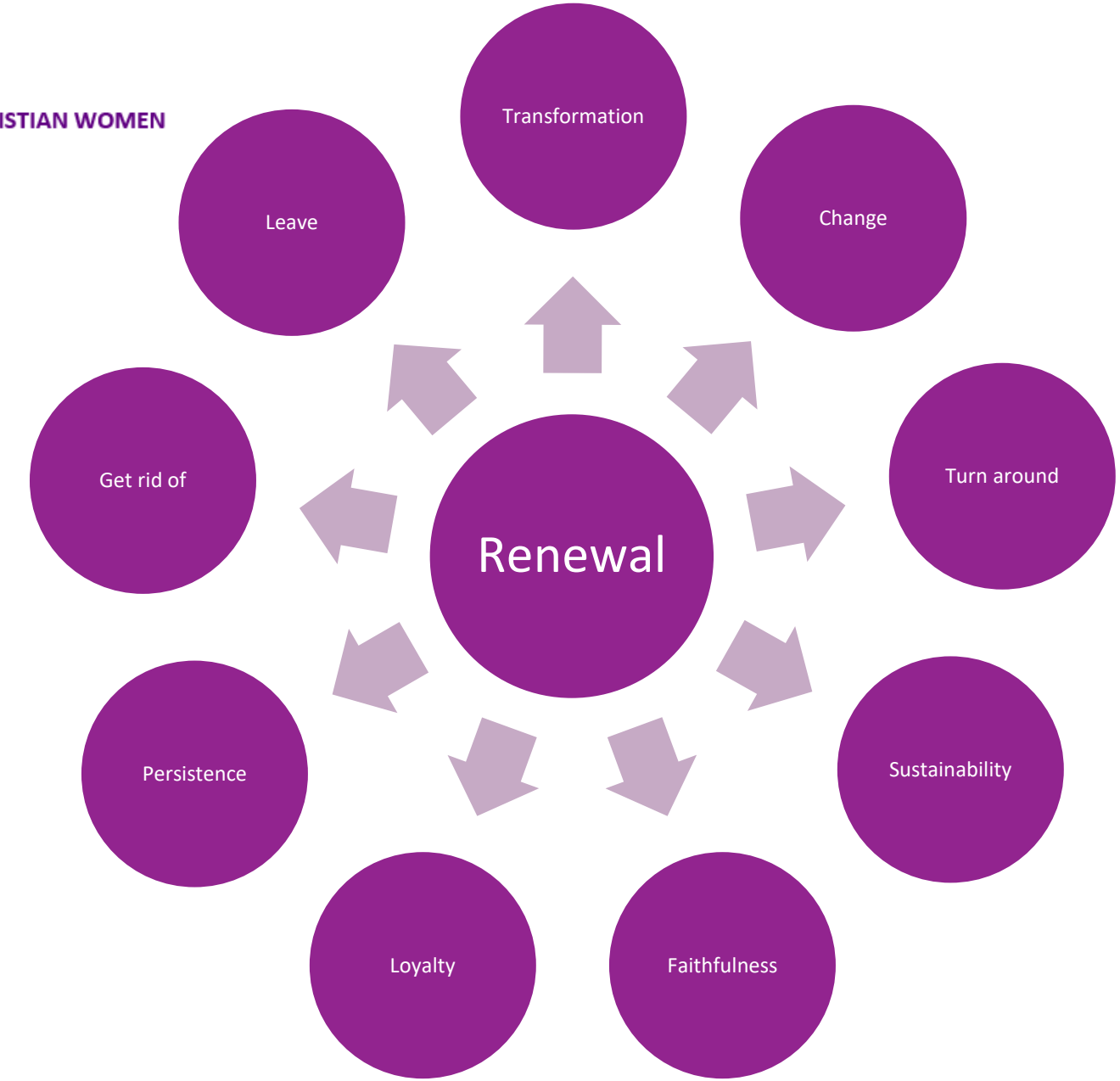
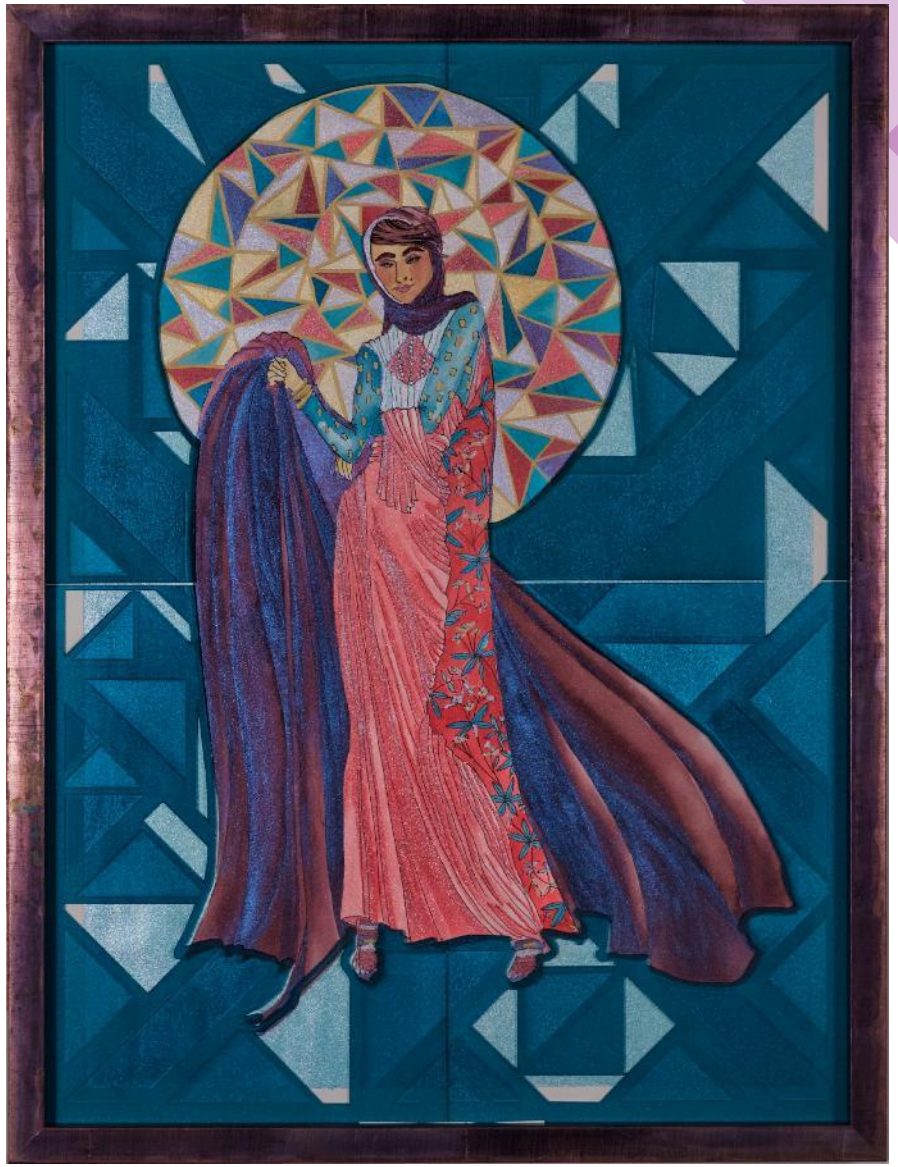


- Why renewal? God creates a world, a web (net) of life, with humanity a common future.
- As the Archbishop Emerita Antje Jackelén says "The curses of the time" are "the toxic Ps" of our time: polarisation, populism, protectionism, post-truth, and patriarchy.” To reverse the trend, all good forces must work together.
- Faith in sustainable development: Partly the world's religions, not least Christianity, are important for how society develops, partly pointing to the fact that our faith also changes and has done throughout the ages.
- Development is also inevitable in the world of faith. But not only that. **Renewal is also necessary to preserve the message.**
- Jesus did so in his time. He took an interest in the persons he met and the lives they lived. And he interpreted his **faith** and the tradition so that it could **promote life** right then and there.
- We must talk about **faith** in a way that makes faith a **gift**
- **Convert** us. It's about us needing to turn around every day. It is not a matter of joining a foreign God, but of turning back to our God and our fellow human beings. To change the way of life is to turn around.
- We see that hope changes but never disappears. “*Martha, Martha,” the Lord answered, “you are worried and upset about many things, but few things are needed—or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her.*” Luke 10:41-42

Different portraits of same saint



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On the Road to Emmaus

Now that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem. They were talking with each other about everything that had happened. As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them; but they were kept from recognizing him. He asked them, "What are you discussing together as you walk along?" They stood still, their faces downcast. One of them, named Cleopas, asked him, "Are you the only one visiting Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?" "What things?" he asked. "About Jesus of Nazareth," they replied. "He was a prophet, powerful in word and deed before God and all the people. The chief priests and our rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him; but we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel. And what is more, it is the third day since all this took place. In addition, some of our women amazed us. They went to the tomb early this morning but didn't find his body. They came and told us that they had seen a vision of angels, who said he was alive. Then some of our companions went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but they did not see Jesus." He said to them, "How foolish you are, and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?" And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself. As they approached the village to which they were going, Jesus continued on as if he were going farther. But they urged him strongly, "Stay with us, for it is nearly evening; the day is almost over." So he went in to stay with them. When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight. They asked each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?" They got up and returned at once to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven and those with them, assembled together and saying, "It is true! The Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon." Then the two told what had happened on the way, and how Jesus was recognized by them when he broke the bread.

Luke 24:13-35

- Context, guidance, educational rode, insight
- The realities of present-day contexts have implications for the Forum, for us and the church's mission and theology. The disciples on the Emmaus Road saw their context differently when Jesus opened the scriptures and revealed himself to them as the resurrected Christ in the breaking of the bread. This **enlightenment** was necessary for them to make sense of and to address their context in a way that would help and empower and equip them for mission. The church, too, needs to reflect critically on its theology and practice of mission in the light of the Word of God made alive (flesh) by the Holy Spirit within every context.
- The Emmaus Road story does provide a powerful paradigm for the journey of the Forum and churches as they engage with these challenges.

"Do not conform to the world, but be transformed by renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is- his good pleasing and perfect will". Romans 12:2

- Uppsala 1968 the WCC and 50 years later in 2018. The WCC 4th GA in Uppsala 1968 was a moment where the churches opened for the world's questions in a new way. "Behold, I make all things new!" Rev 21:5
- Matthew 5:13 **You are the salt of the earth**; but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? (It is no longer good for anything but is thrown out and trampled under foot.)
- (14) **You are the light of the world.** (16) In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.
- To whom did Jesus address these words for the first time? They were poor, the poor in spirit, the meek, those who thirst and hunger for righteousness., the peacemakers, those who are clean in their hearts, those who experience difficulties following Jesus Christ.
- There were people as us, with limitations and mistakes, failures and even sins. But as a church in fellowship with all saints, we are called to show the power of the salt and the clarity of the light.
- Receptive Ecumenism: Attitudes and models of learning. Trust, context. To have Faith- reformation. To understand my tradition. Ecumenism-learning to understand my own faith and tradition.

Group discussion

1. How should the Forum present itself today? How to be present today? How do we remain faithful to our vision while renewing the message and the communication means? How to convey the EFECW message to ensure being heard by Christian women at large? And how to convey our message to the churches and the world?
2. What is the new context? Do we stop to discern changes and renew our Forum aims to be a living Christian community of sisters by creating an open and safe space where all women – beyond their differences – are empowered to share their spirituality and to experience faith? How contemporary reality of: diverse gender identity, world politics, war, violence, artificial intelligence, climate change, etc., could transform EFECW?
3. Receptive ecumenism is not about what do others need to receive and learn from our tradition but instead what is it that we need to receive and learn with integrity from others? What gifts and learnings have I and my church received from other´s traditions? How the Forum can be a space for this to happen? How do you understand receptive ecumenism from your experience?

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Leader: Lord, make me an instrument of Your peace;

Where there is hatred, let me sow love,

Where there is injury, pardon;

Where there is discord, harmony;

Where there is error, truth;

Where there is doubt, faith;

Where there is despair, hope;

Where there is darkness, light;

And where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master, Grant that I may not so much seek

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All:

To be consoled as to console;

To be understood as to understand;

To be loved as to love.

For it is in giving that we receive;

It is in pardoning that we are pardoned;

And it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.