



Issue 11 - July 2010

Dear fellow-members of the TS and TOS around the world,

The July issue of our International TOS electronic newsletter invites you to experience the recent World Congress of the Theosophical Society through the eyes of our International Secretary, Diana Dunningham Chapotin. Diana shares her impressions and conversations in her own unique way and naturally, highlights the service aspects of the Rome Congress and the TOS connections.

This month's update to the [International TOS website](#) shares news of the Italian TOS's amazing fundraising initiative at the Congress, Diana's talk at the TOS session during the Congress and highlights of a new project in the Philippines – the opening of the Lumen School for young children which is based on theosophical principles.

So take a few minutes to enjoy [this souvenir of a special event](#) in the TS calendar and journey with Diana to the World Congress in Rome through her words and photographs.

[Diana's report on the TS World Congress, Rome 2010](#)

Remember that the newsletter is designed to be read while you are connected to the internet.

Please consider sending photographs of your TOS activities and news items that might be of interest to fellow TOS members. We would welcome your contributions, either through your National TOS Director/President/Coordinator/Correspondent or directly to the editors at: carolyn.tosinternational@gmail.com

TS WORLD CONGRESS IN ROME 10-15 JULY 2010

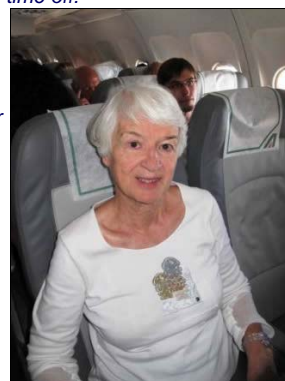
Report by TOS International Secretary, Diana Dunningham Chapotin (Page 1)

Dear All,
I don't want to be a wet blanket but I have to say that I hesitated for a long time before signing up for the Congress. Why? Because with the mentality I've gradually developed over the years as international secretary of the TOS, I can't help thinking of how many meals and school fees for underprivileged TOS-sponsored children I'm spending when I purchase an air ticket – not to mention the carbon imprint of the plane travel itself. I'm quite serious. Once I finally made the decision to participate, though – justifying it on the grounds of needing to represent the TOS and to support the hard-working Italian organisational team – I started to get excited, mainly about all the special people I'd see again and the opportunity to exchange creative ideas with them for improving our TS and TOS work.



The Congress began for me in Paris! Betty and David Bland arrived from the USA a few days before the congress as special guests of the French Section's 111th convention and my husband Michel and I had the pleasure of looking after them in their time off. Actually we didn't focus much on the sights of Paris because I had a whole stack of TOS projects on which to ask their advice and input. A short boat ride on the Seine River was one of the few moments of relaxation David and Betty got. Here we see Betty working on a TOS draft document. So much for her time off!

I travelled to Rome with Joëlle Cosmao-Dumanoir, a French TS member of 30 years' standing who sponsors the education of a needy child in India through the TOS in France. During our flight, Joëlle told me that at a very difficult period in her life when she didn't know how she'd be able to carry on, she was standing in front of the mirror in her bathroom one day when she heard a voice saying, "I need you still". She felt an almost miraculous strength arise in her and from that day she has been able to face life with determination. Even though she doesn't know who spoke to her, she now holds the conviction that she has a fount of strength inside her that can always be tapped. She wishes that everyone else could have the same knowledge....



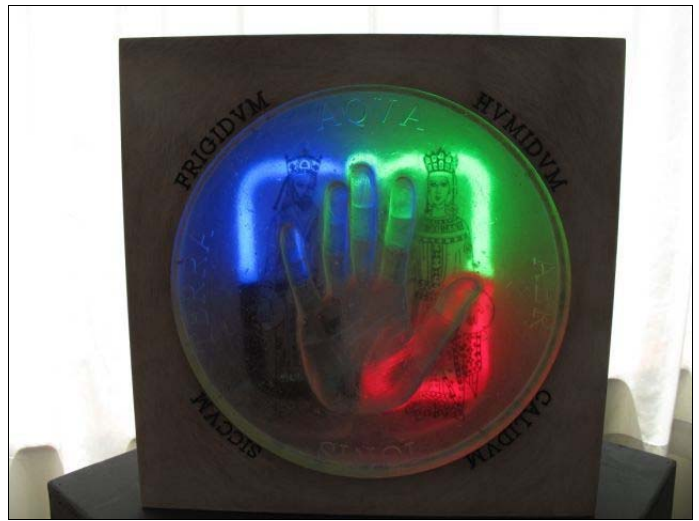
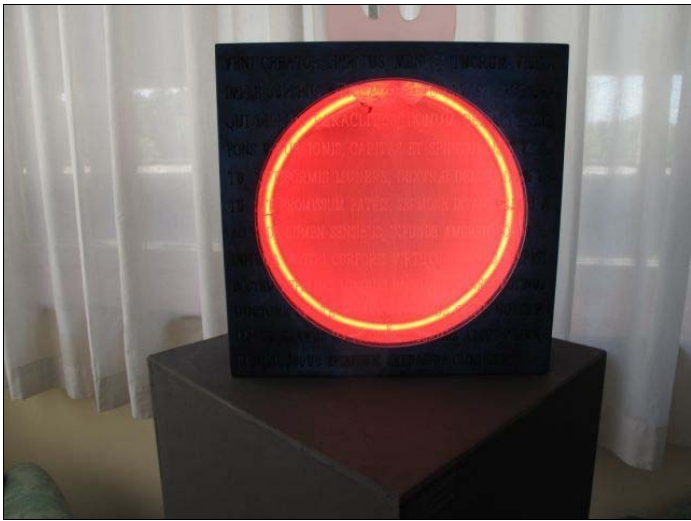
Before alighting from the plane to Rome, I took a moment to say to myself, "At this gathering, how can I be of help?" (I always try to set my attitude before an event so that the natural instinct of "What can I get here?" is kept somewhat in line.)

Three Italian Theosophists met us at the airport. I dread to think how many flights they must have met with a registration of 524 members. Upon our arrival at the hotel, things became a blur because of the excitement of seeing so many old friends and dear co-workers. One thing was clear from the first, though: the colossal work that had gone into preparing the Congress. What a welcome Antonio Girardi and his team gave us! What models of friendliness, what professionalism! In fact no fewer than fifty members and sympathisers were involved in the preparation and staffing of the congress – not to mention Radha Burnier and the staff at Adyar who drafted the formal parts of the programme.



The Italians, even when working ceaselessly, seem to have the art of remaining gracious and elegant. Behold Antonio's right hand helper, the inwardly and outwardly lovely, Patrizia Calvi! (above left) We all received a bag of gifts upon arrival, including three books, at least two of which were published especially for the Congress. (above right)

A magnificent, inspirational art display was awaiting our contemplation on one of the hotel landings. Five examples below:





We were really spoiled. There were wonderful evening concerts and special services such as "live-streaming" of the programmes around the world, a computer area with wi-fi, and an earphone system permitting simultaneous translation (principally by Eduardo Weaver) for the many Portuguese speakers present (Brazil sent the largest delegation of around 90 members).



The Rome Municipal Police Band played for us one evening.



Members around the world were able to watch the programmes in real time. Here we see American TOS President, Tim Boyd.



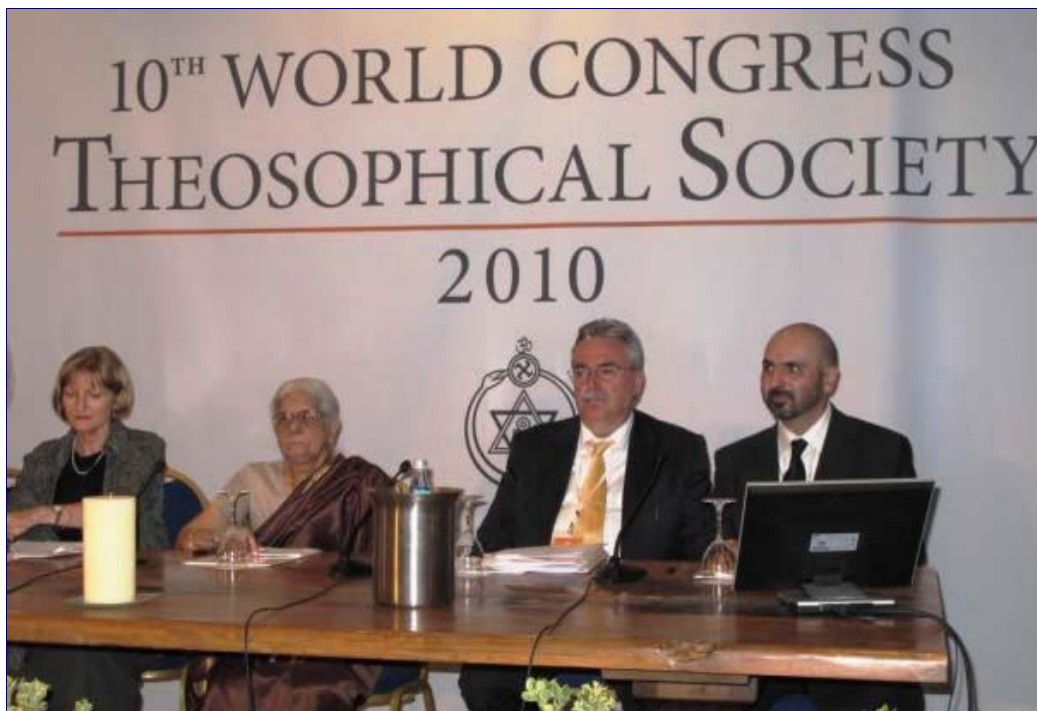
Ruth Cruz of the Philippines and Gerard Brennan of Australia take advantage of the wi-fi centre set up for the use of all.



Congress opening session



East African delegation in lecture hall: Some of the large Eastern African delegation in the lecture hall



Vice-president Linda Oliveira, President Radha Burnier, TS Italy General Secretary Antonio Girardi and Enrico, our omnipresent interpreter.



Prayers of the religions



[To top.](#) [To page:](#) [Previous](#) [1](#) [2](#) [3](#) [4](#) [5](#) [6](#) [7](#) [Next](#) [Back to newsletter](#)

TS WORLD CONGRESS IN ROME 10-15 JULY 2010

Report by TOS International Secretary, Diana Dunningham Chapotin

(Page 2)

The congress opening, with participants from at least 34 countries, was impressive.

After the prayers of the religions and the host General Secretary's words of welcome, a representative of Grand Orient Freemasonry in Italy presented greetings. He talked about the fair social order and human rights that Masons and Theosophists believe in and of the persecution of people who affirm truths others are not yet ready to accept. "Brotherhood means responsibility toward our hopes", he said. He was followed by a lama representing the Italian Buddhist community. The lama urged us to commit ourselves to making the world a better place. "Thank you for inviting me when I am nobody!" he said. "I have no country so all I can do is work for humanity as a whole, work for peace in all countries". After greetings were presented from all over the world, Radha addressed us, speaking also about brotherhood in relation to social issues. She questioned the policy of trying to bring about peace through war, for example, and suggested that instead of paying selective attention to what is important to us personally, we need to be aware of all that is happening around us, to all the rest of life, to all creatures.

I was surprised that the Freemasons and Buddhists were invited to speak to us even before the individual and Section greetings were delivered, and delighted at the outreach to the community this represented. It reminded me that when I took on the job of international secretary of the TOS (too many years ago), the only advice Radha gave was to network as much as possible with like-minded groups.....

I won't summarize every talk given at the congress here, don't worry! Almost all the talks will certainly be published anyway. Most have already been translated into several languages. I would like at least to draw attention to a service-related talk or two, though, such as Mr S. Sundaram's "**Love and Service – Twin Stars of Brotherhood**". I knew Brother Sundaram was an active TOS supporter but during his talk I learned that he has written at least two books directly connected to the theme of brotherhood: *Emerging Harijan Elite: a Study of Their Identity*, and *War and Violence*. Do we have an insufficiently tapped source of knowledge and practical wisdom in Brother Sundaram?!



S. Sundaram, General Secretary of the TS in India.

His talk was certainly inspiring and I hope that our webmaster, Geoffrey Harrod, will reproduce it on our website when it is available. One or two of the three talks given at the congress TOS session will be published there too. Tim Boyd, the president of the TOS in America, Vicente Hao Chin, the President of the Theosophical Society in the Philippines, and Diana Dunningham Chapotin, TOS international secretary, spoke on the theme "Service as a road to awareness".





After the TOS session, a group photo was taken, but not all TOS workers at the congress were present.

Most of the lectures at the congress focused on the need to develop a sense of brotherhood. They were of high quality but somehow I wish that we could have spent less time listening to talks about the need for brotherhood and more in concrete practical exercises designed to help develop it in ourselves. "Exercises for learning to be brotherly?" I hear you exclaim. Well, yes! Why can't we have meditation lessons, conflict resolution workshops, and debates on the application of Theosophy to crucial social issues? Why can't we have "best practice" exchanges so that news of the most successful projects for making Theosophy known in our communities can be shared? Why do we prefer to limit ourselves to lecturing each other about the need to be brotherly? Are we perhaps preaching to the converted, as one congress participant asked?

Betty Bland gave a workshop entitled "Forgiveness and interconnectedness". I would love to have attended it because I'm sure it was practically oriented. Unfortunately I had duties elsewhere and was unable to attend any of the small group work. I understand that the other two workshops (conducted by Marja Artamaa of Finland and Marie Harkness of Ireland) were participatory as well.

[To top.](#) To page: [Previous](#) [1](#) [2](#) [3](#) [4](#) [5](#) [6](#) [7](#) [Next](#) [Back to newsletter](#)



Issue 11 - July 2010 To page: [Previous](#) [1](#) [2](#) [3](#) [4](#) [5](#) [6](#) [7](#) [Next](#) [Back to newsletter](#)

TS WORLD CONGRESS IN ROME 10-15 JULY 2010

Report by TOS International Secretary, Diana Dunningham Chapotin

(Page 3)

A big surprise of the congress was the TOS fundraising bazaar. I had been told by Patrizia Calvi that the ladies of the TOS in Italy were making some items for a sale table in support of the Chennai TOS's "Seeing Eyes for Everyone" (SEE) project. I knew also that there was to be a second table selling teddies in support of the Tanzanian TOS's Heart Babies project. When Patrizia took me to see the bazaar, I discovered not two tables but *three walls of an entire conference room* lined with heavily laden sale tables, along with a series of large and beautiful posters explaining the work of the TOS and the three projects that would receive support. (The third project selected, I discovered, was the repair of the earthquake-damaged HQ building of the TS in Santiago Chile.) I was overwhelmed at the sight of the handiwork of the ladies, at the generosity of the TS in Italy and at the actual beauty of the whole room. How often does an international secretary receive such a wonderful surprise? When I tell you that the total takings at the end of the congress amounted to €6,950.00 (8,970 USD; 420,000 INR; 10,000 AUD), you can perhaps better gauge the work undertaken by the Italians, not to mention the generosity of the Congress participants. (I fell in sisterly love with the Italian volunteer sales ladies - Maria, Rosella, Graziella, Mariangela, Manuela... - so gracious, loving and flexible. They spent long hours at the bazaar, missing out on many activities, particularly the extra-curricular programmes in Italian.)



Rosella Milani Fanzio & Maria Motore welcome visitors to the TOS fundraising bazaar



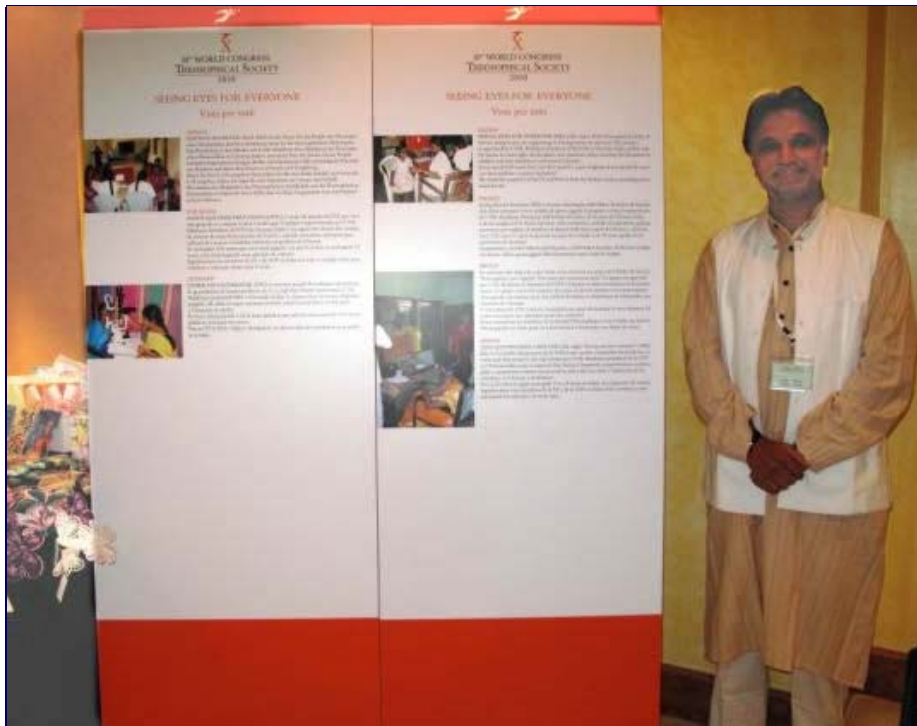
*Carla Nobis & the ladies from the Milan TOS who hand-made many of the items on sale, including hundreds of knitted teddy bears.
Carla Nobis sta mostrando i suoi lavori ai membri del bazaar.*



Rosella, Graziella & Manuela ready to serve at the bazaar



Mariangela Marsi & Carla Nobis displaying items for sale



CVK Maithreya, president of the TOS Chennai, beside the large sign in seven languages outlining the outstanding project he and his wife Dr Sunita Maithreya are running to provide sight checks for needy children and adults. Thousands of slum-dwellers have been seen by medical staff already.



Look at the beautiful bags CVK Maithreya kindly brought with him for sale, embroidered by the tsunami-affected women from the south coast of India. They sold within an hour (the bags, not the women!).



Luigi Marsi - head of the TOS in Italy



When TS Vice-President Linda Oliveira visited the bazaar, she spent time carefully reading the big signs on display. It was a little disappointing to see how little time most visitors spent reading them. Most were in multiple languages so there was really only a single paragraph to read.



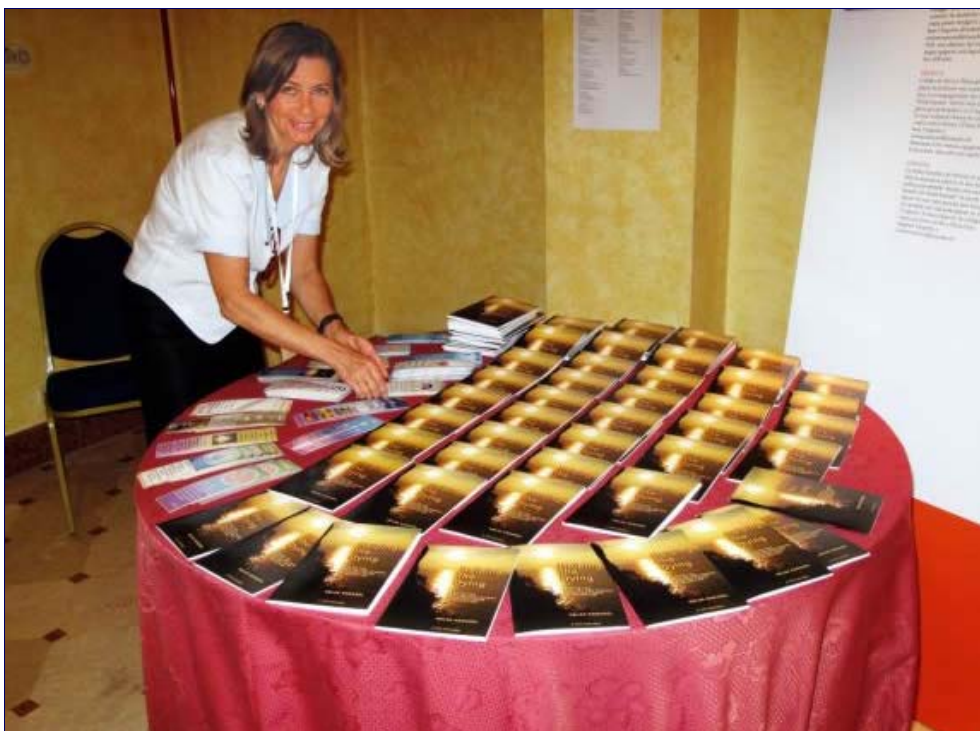
Maureen Paterson from New Zealand browsing at the bazaar



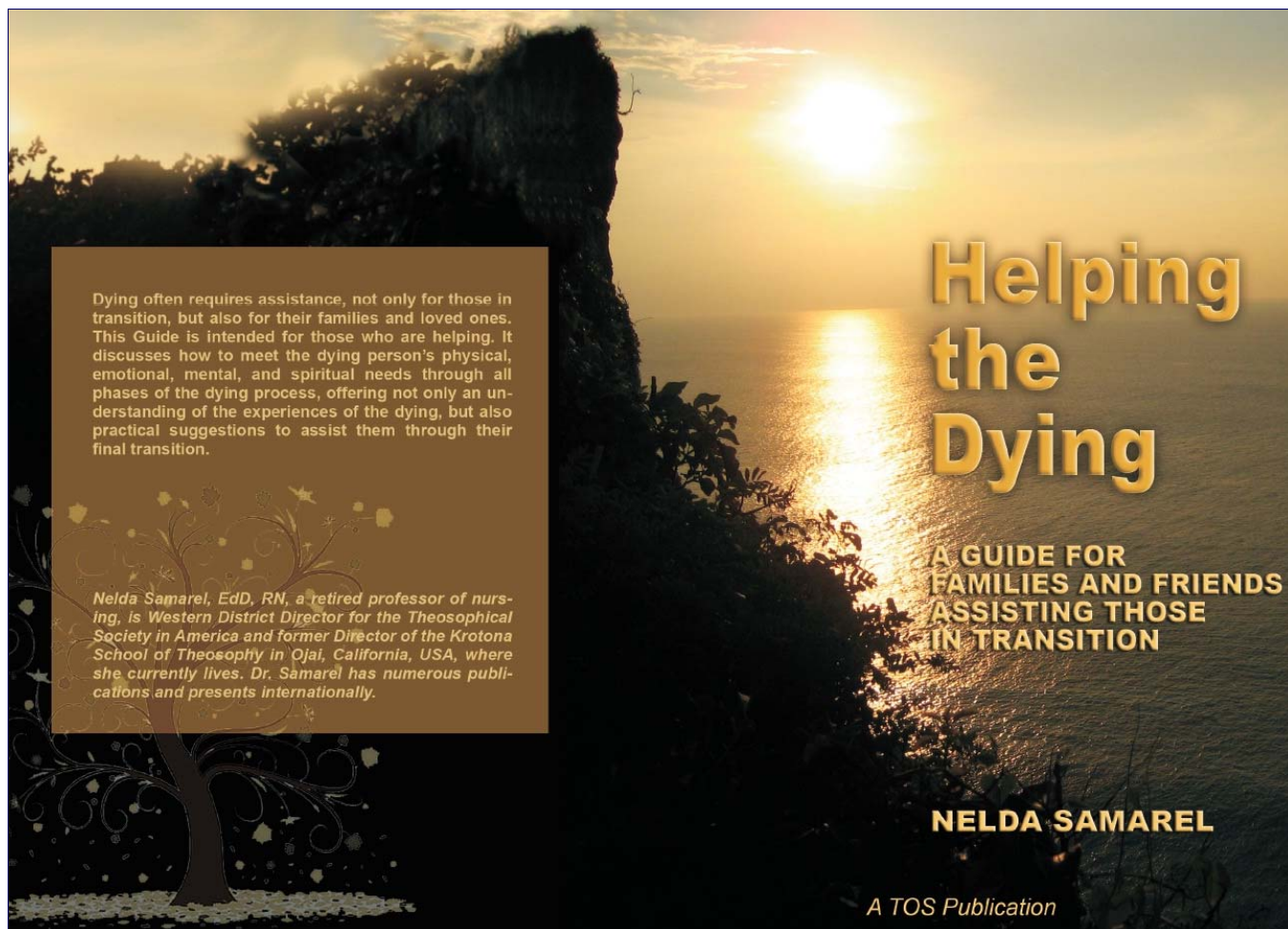
Photo name and caption: TOS International President, Radha Burnier stopped by the bazaar one afternoon.



The TS in Italy produced Congress pens, T-shirts, bags, note-pads, etc. and donated the entire sales proceeds to the fundraising bazaar. Incredible generosity!



Rosella lays out the bookmarks donated by the TOS in New Zealand and the booklet, Helping the Dying, written by Nelda Samarel of the USA, offered as a gift to all congress participants who could read English.



For more information on this booklet, including how to order your copy,

For lots of other photos of the bazaar and its many visitors, go to the [TOS website](#) You may pick up ideas for organising your own TOS fund-raising sale!

To top To page: [Previous](#) [1](#) [2](#) [3](#) [4](#) [5](#) [6](#) [7](#) [Next](#) [Back to newsletter](#)

TS WORLD CONGRESS IN ROME 10-15 JULY 2010

Report by TOS International Secretary, Diana Dunningham Chapotin

(Page 4)

How wonderful the informal contact with everyone at the congress was.

There were all kinds of rich exchanges. For example, I was able to discuss applied Theosophy – brotherhood in action – with members living in hot spots in the world. I asked Tom and Ann Davis from South Africa how Black Africans are doing since apartheid was abolished. As an engineer training freshly qualified Africans to be practising engineers, Tom says he is at the coal face. As a primary school teacher, Ann also had young African teachers to support. I asked how quickly they feel the Black Africans will be able to perform their new functions with confidence and competence. "Some already are, of course", Tom replied, "but the majority are struggling. There is a huge gap in culture, education and experience to fill. There have been improvements in the quality of education. Parents have obtained jobs through affirmative action or employment equity and this has meant that more Black Africans have moved into positions where they have a higher salary and are thus able to pay the higher school fees in better locations. But the road is very long because from the developmental standpoint, they have to be able to absorb and stand alone in an extremely competitive industrial world. Ann and I are hoping they will take the best from Western culture and not the worst, whilst preserving the best in their own." Perhaps it could be said that Tom is busy not simply at the coal face of training Africans as engineers, but that with Ann, he is at the coal face of the first object of the TS.



Ann and Tom Davis actively pushed for the abolition of apartheid and are now participating in the long and difficult transition period during which Africans are taking up political power and professional responsibilities at management level.



I was also happy to be able to chat with an Israeli member, Donna Liss, and ask her if the lectures on brotherhood we were hearing were of help in gaining perspective on the very difficult political situation in which she lives. With great sincerity and honesty, Donna described the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, trying to bear in mind the conditioning that inevitably prevails in a polarized political context. Such informal chats were extremely enriching.

Perhaps the most exciting aspect of the congress for me personally was the opportunity finally to meet TOS workers with whom I have corresponded, sometimes for many years.



Norberto Cicirelli, director of the TOS in Argentina, and his loving wife Monica Angela Pastore



Silvia Raquel Blajer, former national director of the TOS in Argentina



Here we see some of the large Eastern African delegation - one big family! Did you know that there are Theosophists not only in Kenya and Tanzania but also in Uganda and Zambia? (More of them later.)



*Blanka Blaj Borstnar, Melis Pangerc & Breda Zagar
- members of the Slovenian Section*



Svitlana Gavrylenko, leader of the Ukrainian delegation



Ukrainian delegation



*Lissette Arroyo Jiménez, Correspondent
of the TOS in Mexico*



Janos Szabari & Adrienne Nagyiday of Hungary

[To Top](#) [To page:](#) [Previous](#) [1](#) [2](#) [3](#) [4](#) [5](#) [6](#) [7](#) [Next](#) [Back to newsletter](#)

TS WORLD CONGRESS IN ROME 10-15 JULY 2010

Report by TOS International Secretary, Diana Dunningham Chapotin

(Page 5)

I thought I knew all about the service activities of these groups but I discovered that there are far more than I realized. Meet Ebony Peteli and Jayu Sampat of Kitwe in Zambia, for instance. The members there organise public speaking contests for 15 to 18 year olds on broadly theosophical subjects such as "Simple living with high thinking".



At the end of the congress, Ebony and Jayu filled all available space in their suitcases with teddies knitted by the Milan ladies. They will give them to needy children in a hospital or orphanage in Kitwe.



The Kenyans took about a hundred teddies away from the congress too, which will be delivered to needy children in a Nairobi hospital by TOS members including Usha S. Shah MBE, pictured here.



The Tanzanians also took a batch of teddies home with them for the babies they help send to India for heart surgery. In short, the Teddies for Tragedy project that the Italian TOS took up initially with the TOS in Tanzania has now spread to Zambia and Kenya, which is a quite wonderful thing!



Photo: Tara & V.M. Shah of Kampala, Uganda - How did we miss out on entrusting a batch of teddies to Tara and V.M. Shah of Kampala, Uganda?!

Another new project which I discovered only in Rome is a theosophically-oriented school near Bacolod City in the Philippines. We have all heard about the Golden Link College in the outer suburbs of Manila but what about the just-opened Lumen School? For a brief report and photos, [go to the TOS website](#).



Here we see Vicente Hao Chin, the President of the TS in the Philippines, Rekha Nahar, the administrator of the Golden Link College and Ruth Minerva Cruz, the administrator of the new Lumen School.

[To top](#) [To page:](#) [Previous](#) [1](#) [2](#) [3](#) [4](#) [5](#) [6](#) [7](#) [Next](#) [Back to newsletter](#)

TS WORLD CONGRESS IN ROME 10-15 JULY 2010

Report by TOS International Secretary, Diana Dunningham Chapotin

(Page 6)

I had an interview of over an hour with the TOS President, Radha Burnier, on TOS matters. I updated her on the Plan of Action that Dorothy Bell of Australia did so much to develop for us and I gave her a printed set of guidelines for new TOS groups that Ananya Rajan of the USA has recently updated. I also gave her a copy of the booklet by Nelda Samarel already mentioned, *Helping the Dying*.



Radha in Rome



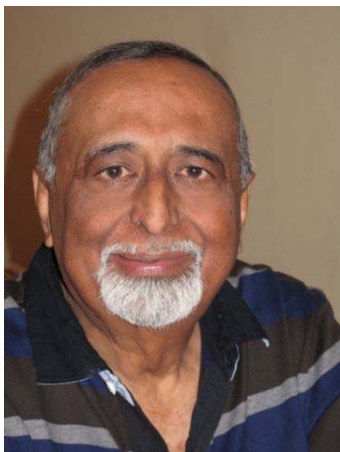
Here we see Radha and her secretary of ten years, New Zealand member Bernice Croft.

Toward the end of the congress, Radha Burnier, P. Krishna and Colin Price gave us a splendid question and answer session. Really interesting answers came out of some unexpected questions at this session: "I want to practise brotherhood but I still feel compelled to swat wasps, cockroaches and so on." "Did great masters like Beethoven practise brotherhood?" It is to be hoped that the recording of this session will be transcribed.



What touched people the most at the congress?

I posed this question to some people on the last day and the thing that was mentioned the most often was the friendliness, efficiency, indefatigability and generosity of the Italian team running the event.



Dr H.K. Rawal (of Kenya, the U.K. and elsewhere) said: "The hospitality of this congress was incredible. What a dance of brotherhood! There were so many instant friendships that I'll treasure the rest of my life."



Maija Wenzel, long time member of the French TOS, identified ease of communication with participants as the thing that touched her the most at the congress. "Whether they were from Brazil, Africa or Australia, one could sit down beside anyone at all and have no need to hunt for a subject of conversation. Exchanges

sprang up spontaneously and naturally.”



Deepa Kapur, the coordinator of the TOS work in Dar es Salaam, unable to attend the congress, sent this message to Antonio Girardi: “Brother Dubal arrived home in Tanzania yesterday full of exciting news about a World Congress that was a stupendous success!

He conveyed the wonderful news about the charity bazaar and the brilliant collection of 2000 euros for the Tanzanian heart surgery babies. We are overwhelmed with this kind of encouraging response from our fellow TS members. I extend my heartiest congratulations to you all on supporting the TOS work across the globe. Tanzania was highlighted in a way that touched everyone's hearts.

Antonio, Patrizia, Sergio, Enrico: the hard work you and so many others put in prior to the Congress, the many months of planning, co-ordinating and organising truly came to fruition as this World Congress was the most 'hi-tech, internet savvy' congress the T.S. must ever have had. I was able to watch some programmes live over the net.

Words are scant to express the sense of brotherhood we feel with all of you who have stretched out your hands a thousand miles across the planet to create a chain of human compassion with us. This is true Theosophy in action.

I have already informed the hospital and the chairman of the project, Dr. Kanabar, that we have received this contribution and we shall be handing over the travel incidental expense envelopes as soon as the next batch of babies leaves for surgery in India.”



President of the TOS in Chennai, CVK Maithreya, wrote: “The 10th World Congress was a great opportunity to meet old friends, make new ones, share ideas & experiences and enjoy a feeling of fraternity. The charity bazaar organised by the TS and TOS in Italy was a resounding success; we, at TOS, Chennai are deeply grateful for the display of posters on the SEE Project, the sale of products made by the tsunami-affected women and the generous donation to support our work.

Since the congress ended, Antonio Girardi has written to us: “The whole Italian Section now hopes that the brotherly spirit of Rome will give strength and energy to everyone's work in the sign of faithfulness to the Masters and to the Aims of the Theosophical Society.”

The Rome congress has indeed given us strength and energy for the work, dear Antonio. Heartfelt thanks from us all...

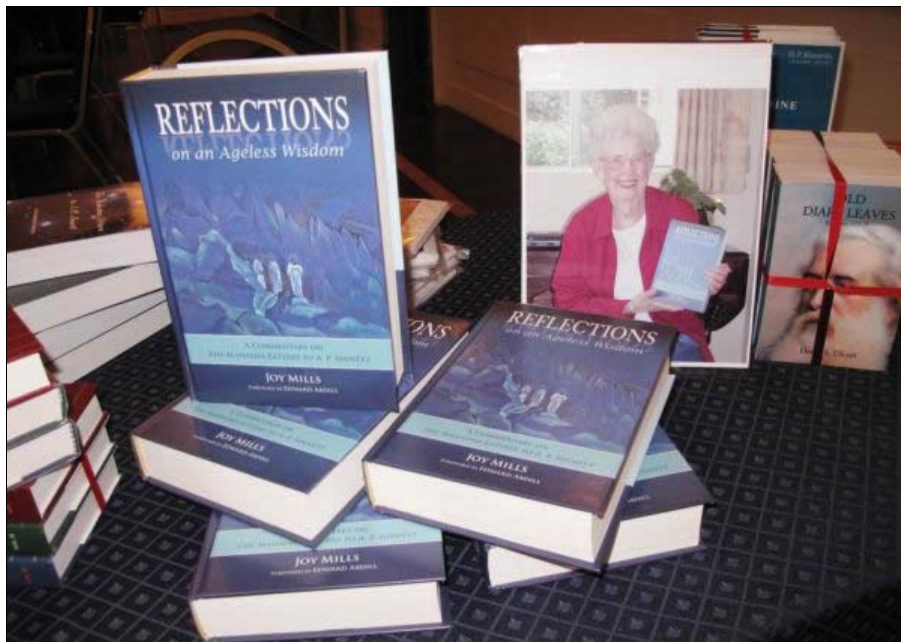
For lots more photos of the congress see page 7, the last page.

[To top](#) To page: [Previous](#) [1](#) [2](#) [3](#) [4](#) [5](#) [6](#) [7](#) [Next](#) [Back to newsletter](#)

TS WORLD CONGRESS IN ROME 10-15 JULY 2010

Report by TOS International Secretary, Diana Dunningham Chapotin

Page 7 - More photos



Joy Mills' new book on sale

It would have been so nice to have Joy Mills with us at the Congress to sign copies of her latest book, *Reflections on an Ageless Wisdom*. To compensate, her photo was put on display at the sale table. The copies of her book sold out almost immediately. Joy well remembers the last World Congress held in Europe – the 1966 Salzburg one with over 1200 members present, including 400 Young Theosophists.



Rekha Nahar & Radha Muthiah in St Peter's Square.

Congress participants very much appreciated the opportunity to visit the "eternal city". Here we see Rekha Nahar of the Philippines with Radha Muthiah of Chennai, India in St Peter's Square.



It was a real treat and privilege to find a vegan buffet alongside the ovo-lacto vegetarian one at the hotel.

So many members wanted to try the vegan dishes that a waitress had to stand guard over the area to ensure that those registered officially as vegans got enough to eat!



Brazilian cameraperson



Alfredo Covelli & Vic Hao Chin



Carol Ward of USA



Birte Hansen of Denmark at the book stall



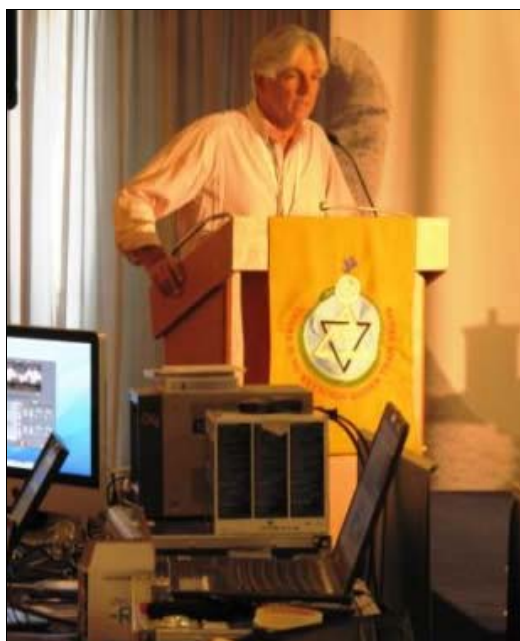
Diana DC and Vic Hao Chin



Diana DC, Tim Boyd & Lily Boyd (USA)



Dr Sarla Maroo of Kenya



Eduardo Weaver



Live streaming broadcasting and conference AV facilities



Pedro Oliveira, Ricardo Lindemann & Linda Oliveira



Jayu Sampat & Ebony Peteli from Zambia with CVK Maithreya from Chennai



Tara Shah from Uganda



[To top](#) [To page:](#) [Previous](#) [1](#) [2](#) [3](#) [4](#) [5](#) [6](#) [7](#) [Next](#) [Back to newsletter](#)