

BE A LEADER

For Life-Enhancing Change

...I was
a stranger
and you
welcomed
me...
Matthew 25:35

"We have always had culture clashes, fear and challenges," says Shelia Richards, retired Methodist pastor. "Currently, 64 countries have conflict and ten wars are going on in the world. When and where there are wars, conflicts or natural disasters, people flee, they migrate, they move. That's the way it has always been."

Justice Is Our Work!

The Aberdeen Presentation Sisters willingly go forth to any part of the world to work for justice, alleviate oppression and promote human dignity, especially among the poor. This is done in a spirit of love and joy.

Can you think back to a time you felt unsafe, scared and alone? Imagine you are in a place far from home and may not be able to speak the language. Circumstances out of your control brought you to this place, perhaps being born into a country of conflict. For many, this is everyday reality. They work hard to create a better life for their children, similar to what many of our ancestors did for us. Before 1924 there was no legal or illegal way to immigrate into the US. It simply took a few hours of processing at the port of entry and the new immigrants were admitted.

As more people are relocating on a global basis, how can we work to create a welcoming environment? Nearly 150 languages are spoken in South Dakota. This creates a great learning opportunity for us who call this area home. Pope Francis encourages us to look beyond our own needs and wants to those of others around us. Children often naturally display this healthy curiosity and remind us to be in the present and open as we take these first simple steps.

• **Smile, engage positively:** Many times in our busy lives we rush from one place to next. The positive power of a smile, which is universal, is a first sign of welcome.

• **Open yourself to learning a new culture:**

Welcome the opportunity to learn a new culture. A sincere and meaningful attempt to get to know someone allows us to understand differences and connect on areas of similarity.

• **Invite and share your culture with others:**

Be open to sharing your history, culture and traditions with new neighbors and co-workers. Aberdeen now hosts "meet and greets" with local law officials. This has opened a positive line of communication and helps people get to know each other, sharing cultures in a positive setting.



Challenge Question:

What can you do to better create a culture of encounter in your life? How does your family, church, school or business welcome the newcomer?



Pastor Sheila Richards , Sister Myra Remily and Sister Kathleen Bieme are part of the Aberdeen Area Diversity Coalition, established to welcome persons of all cultures to the Aberdeen area.



Sisters of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary

In Joyful Service

Through dialogue our voice becomes clearer. United we are stronger. Justice flourishes.

Please visit: www.presentationisters.org to learn how you can become a partner for justice.