

## Interview of Jacqueline Keune

*conducted by Regula Grünenfelder, published in the June, 2010 issue of Qu(elle)/Impulse, bulletin of the Swiss member organisation SKF.*

**Regula Grünenfelder (RG):** *The opening up of this communal prayer of Andante is like witnessing a procession. It speaks to me, being both joyful and gentle, it's reassuring too, encouraging you on your way towards the person of God. Likewise, for those it challenges, it offers something unusual: the opportunity to show pride, to put themselves forward, to be the cantor – what does this opening up mean to you?*

**Jacqueline Keune (JK):** To process is an ancient gesture dating back several centuries, it's an expression of praise, thanksgiving, sorrow and petition. It requires the sincerity of prayer; one should not see God as a judge, or life as some kind of play with oneself as a marionette. For me, it's not only – literally – a matter of proclaiming the pride of men; there is also an all too modest pride, that of women. It's time to make room for this, because we are all sons and daughters of God.

**RG:** *Who is, where is the person of God? In your prayer I sense a person facing you and an ancient theological wisdom which, for me is a difficult theology because I don't think of God sitting on a throne, graciously receiving our gifts.*

**JK:** For me, the person of God is the eternal breath blowing through ALL the ups and downs of life – effervescent, groaning. God is there in the blossoming of life, in hatred, tears, death, rising, love, suffering, but also when we play, disseminate, work, witness, groan, share. I can't think of a single place or act from which God would be absent. The person of God is also, for me, someone facing me, talking to me personally, it is the God of my childhood and, especially, love of my neighbour and justice. In their prayers, women don't bring before God offerings, fine clothes, palm branches, they come and they bring their lives. Simply images – which are LIKE fine clothes. My daily life as a woman is defined by its many tasks, its bustle and the unexpected. All this together is put before God in a very deliberate, slow gesture, full of meaning.

**RG:** *My experience is that prayer gives lasting breath to political action (or my/our commitments). What do you think? How does prayer nourish political action?*

**JK:** I don't know to what extent prayer nourishes political action. But I do know what prayer inspires in me, whether I pray alone, in thanksgiving in 'Anna's chamber' or during community prayer in a church. It makes me appreciate the way we belong to a community and are responsible for one another. I also feel that my hands are important, that my mouth is important, that my feet are important. I'm aware of all this and I'm very grateful for it because God, in infinity, has more (is more) than our hands, mouths, feet.

**RG:** *You have asked the members of Andante about their desires, sufferings, joys and you have written a prayer based on their responses.....*

**JK:** The prayer is not just about the responses to my enquiry. Those responses made an impression on me – I couldn't have written it otherwise. It in no way reflects the last word of wisdom (theological-spiritual) of one single woman. It is evolving and each woman who prays it is free to adapt it. Because my wish was – as I understood my commission – that the greatest number of women might share in it together. I wasn't content simply to read the responses of the leaders from each country, I also tried to have a picture of these women in my mind,

especially an idea of how they pray. It would be lovely if the women allowed the reflection of that unbreakable thread which binds them together to show through in their lives and in their actions.

**RG:** *Thank you very much, Jacqueline.*