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The Outsider become Insider

Thomas C. Fox | Nov. 7, 2009 NCR Today

Consider for a moment the challenge Sister of St. Agnes Dianne Bergant posed to CTA delegates in a plenary session Saturday morning, based on biblical reflections. She said:

"Our understanding of ourselves or our identity, not merely our practices of social justice, must be radically revised," she said. "While we are certainly called to open our minds and hearts and lives to migrants and to commit ourselves to their well being, we should consider the possibility that the migrants themselves, and not our commitment to them, might be the source of God?s blessing for us.

The needs of the migrants might simply constitute the context within which God will bless us through them. In other words, the story of Ruth reminds us that blessing does not merely flow through us to migrants, but through migrants to us.

"As we appropriate the religious meaning of this story, we who are relatively secure in the dominant culture might discover that like Naomi, who was genuinely concerned with the well being of her migrant daughter-in-law, we are really a threatened remnant. If we are granted this insight, we might come to see that it is precisely through the migrant and not through our authentic and unselfish concern for the migrant that we will have a future.

The story of Ruth will also show us that this restoration is not dependent on our acceptance and inclusion of those who are marginal, but in their willingness to accept us and to allow God to work through them for our good."

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