



Today began with an extraordinary experience. Have you heard of the “World Café”? If not, an ultra-brief description: it is a dialogue that leads to a collective discovery. The Brothers seated themselves, five to a table, to talk openly about two questions that were meant to ignite heart and imagination. At the mid-point they moved to new tables and new conversations. The two questions: “What kinds of things are we passionate about, want to explore further, and act upon?” and “What needs to happen next to make a difference?”

The Councilors played the role of waiters, serving beverages and cookies, as French café music played in the background. It was exciting to eavesdrop, though serving my Brothers was paramount, and observe how dialogue that is not-a-meeting-dialogue looks. Everyone is responsible for the conversation, so there is no chairman, no decisions to be made.

Brother Michael French introduced this stage in our collective discernment with his characteristic intelligence and humor, which went a long way to ensuring the engagement was at a very high level. The World Café experience provided the very connective tissue we needed between the first week and this week. I was in awe watching world tables like India-Ireland-Ethiopia-Thailand-Australia; Poland-Cameroon-France-Congo-Burkina Faso; and, Colombia-Spain-Brazil-Peru-Mexico imagine a way into the future.

It was fun being in the middle of all that magic.

The afternoon was more of the future tense. We received a comprehensive presentation on the tercentenary of the Founder’s completion of his earthly journey—2019, or as Brother David Hawke called it, “219.” The international events and initiatives were explained, and we shared the Region and District ones as well. There is a lot planned, but after it was all over I thought: gosh, there is no telling what more fresh initiatives may still be introduced and implemented, even if 219 is imminent.

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