



When in New York for the UNANIMA International Board meeting, Kathleen Butler csb also attended part of CSW 57.

SOME HIGHLIGHTS FROM SIDE EVENTS AT CSW57

A panel on the role men can play in reducing violence against women and girls. It is a sad fact that across our world the one place where a woman often does not feel safe is in her own home. The male cross cultural presenters were honest and thoughtful. In the words of one of the best panelists, Bafana Khumalo from South Africa, who works to break patriarchal attitudes and structures: "Patriarchy does very little for men in the world as it is now. New thinking must begin with boys at school."

Asia Girls' Campaign. This session focused on celebrating girl children in cultures where girls are not valued from birth. In Taiwan last year 3000 girl fetuses were aborted just because they were girls. The Garden of Hope Movement has spread throughout Asia with amazing success. In many homes in East and South Asia violence against girls is a fact of life, remaining hidden, and accepted by the girl. What wonderful opportunities Brigidine schools have offered, valuing girls at every level and encouraging their advancement in so many ways for "when you empower girls you empower the world." At the session I spoke with ladies from Chechnya accompanied by a young translator from the Caucasus. They attended the session because of the fractured nature of family life caused by the bitter conflict there. In the region girls/women need to be valued and opportunities opened to



them. I attended another session presented by the Salesians in India, who care for abandoned girls. A sister spoke of the difficulties encountered when dealing with male authority figures. She has had a **big win** convincing the police in her town to make the police station more "child friendly". I must admit, I'd never at any time thought of myself as a "girl child"; I took so much for granted.

Above: Shanti tells her courageous story. At age 11 she took herself and her 5 siblings to the Salesian Girls' Refuge to escape an alcoholic and abusive father when her mother abandoned the family. She is looking forward to continuing her studies. The young woman to the left was her translator into English.

Local solutions to global human trafficking. Attention must be given to the countries of origin, transit and destination so that intervention can occur at any one of these points. While many countries have laws against human trafficking, the rate of prosecution is low thus revealing a gap between commitment and action. Survivors should be invited to the policy table to speak of their experiences. Break the cycle by addressing the root causes, destroy the profit opportunities and PROSECUTE WITH INTENTION! There is a growing global trend of a woman found dead, with no name or nationality-she is the woman no longer useful to her trafficker.

