

Statutory Meeting: Pastoral Ministry
Where: Lima Peru
Date: 1/28 - 2/8 2011

As the plane was preparing to land in Peru, I noticed two or three lights shining dimly below. For an instance, I imagined Lima Peru as a very poor City. It was only when the plane turned to land that my eyes saw millions of light shining brightly before me. I came to learn that it was a reflection of 70% of Lima's poor people. It was a bright light to the world that social, economic and radical changes is needed for the poor, the oppress and the marginalize.

Sisters Marguerite Fortier and Vilma Torres welcomed me. I arrived at Casa Regional Basil-Moreau where Sister Liette and other sisters (insert picture) greeted me. This was to be one of many encounters with the Sisters in Peru. Allow me to share with you this very humble experience.



Pastoral Delegates Sisters Vilma Torres of Peru, Marceline Victor of Haiti, Ms. Patricia Murphy, an Associate representing Ontario Province and myself began a whirlwind visitation. We visited Pastoral Ministry sites in Tacna and in Lima. While in Tacna, Yolanda Cruz and Françoise Savoie brought us to visit their people. We stayed in the International Novitiates and visited families with Vilma, Celine and Holy Cross Associates

What we noticed in our visits were the warm welcome we received upon entering their humble abode. We were greeted with hugs by the children and their parent(s). In each home that we visited we saw poverty. One bulb per room, if they had electricity. A room that took 5 to 10 years to build. No refrigeration, no indoor bathrooms, no closet, no privacy, hand me down clothes, toys, and so much more. The parents live for their children. The children go to school and receive an education hoping that one day they can live in a more efficient surrounding. Through our eyes, we saw poverty. With our hearts, we saw God working in action.

We began our meetings in Chaclacayo. We met with Priests, Brothers of Holy Cross as well as Sisters of the Holy Cross. Their topic surrounded the Church's view on poverty. Statements such as: The Hierarchy is blinded by the everyday situations for the poor. Convert yourself first, so you may convert others. What Kingdom are we working for? Bishops removing Religious Communities from their Diocese in parts of Peru. How can we continue to provide spiritual guidance and love for the Church when the Church itself does not address the poor? These were concerns we are to reflect on.

The Pastoral Ministry Statutory Meeting began with Prayer and a Song called, We are the Hands of Christ. Being the Coordinator, I welcomed the Sisters of Peru and Chili and the Associates. I mention to them that I could not stand before them and speak about their ministry without first visiting the regions that they serve. I mentioned that no matter what grouping we belong to, we share with those we touch each and every day Gods' message of love, forgiveness, and compassion. Delegates from Haiti, USA, Ontario and Peru showed a Power Point of their Pastoral Ministry in their milieu.

For the next two days, Ms. Laura Vergas was our main speaker. The theme was Mystical and Prophetic Presence in Pastoral Ministry. Laura began to explain to us The Mystical Dimension of Pastoral Ministry according to the Bible. She spent time on the Spiritual discipline aiming at direct communion with God. Being mystical is looking upon a relationship by living and experiencing mystery. It is the desire of the human soul towards having an intimate union with the divine. It is an attempt to determine the process and the means of realizing this end which is a direct union of the human soul with the divinity through contemplation.

We visited various Prophets who proclaimed God's continual love for his people as well as admonished them for turning their backs from God's covenant. Prophets foresaw the future and tried to prepare the people. Their message to the people was to have a change of heart towards their relationship with God and their people. They challenged the people to respect the poor, the marginalize. The Prophet spoke on behalf of the poor and condemned the authority who had eyes to see and were blinded with greed and power.

Laura continued by saying that being a Prophet is a vocation not a profession. There is an urgent need for a Prophet in the Church today. Being a Pastoral person means to live and be in a Mystical state as well as being a prophet in our own milieu. We cannot separate the Eucharist without serving the poor. We need to plant seeds of hope to the people that we serve. We are called to see the Presence of God in others. A Prophet is one who receives the Word of God and respond by challenging the Church, the World of our responsibility to the people of God. There is a urgency to change our ways of thinking, and living.

Our Founder Basil Antoine Marie Moreau had the audacity to take risks. His message is very relevant in today's society. We cannot be afraid to speak out, to educate, to accompany the poor. We cannot continue to look only around our towns, our cities but we must look Globally. Laura suggested that we reflect on these questions. What vision gave life to our Founders? How can we put this into practice today? How can we enrich our lives by listening, being hospitable, while journeying with others? Are we listening to the Signs of the times? Do we have the Audacity to become once again Pilgrims on a journey to be about a work of resurrection?

With great gratitude, I thank Sister Liette and all the Sisters in Peru for their hospitality.

Group: Pastoral Ministry
Coordinator: Lorraine Choiniere, csc
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