

Missionary Servants of the Most Holy Trinity- Mississippi Region

Fall Regional-Meeting Monday October 26, 2014

Members Present. Senan Gallagher, Odel Medina, Raul Ventura

Absent. Bob Goodyear

The meeting began in an atmosphere of recollection and prayer at Sacred Heart Missionary Cenacle in Camden. Br. Senan, region coordinator, led us in prayer and we proceeded to reflect on the proposed questions for this meeting.

Where are the signs of unity?

We all seem to be in agreement that indeed the writing of Pope Francis in *The joy of the Gospel*, affirmed and it's in resonance with our charism. Indicating that the role and the Charism of the Missionary Cenacle Family is valued and is still needed in today's Church.

"I want a Church which is poor and for the poor." Serving the poor and the best way to serve continue to be a challenge for us. We certainly do not want to just keep the "status quo" (current state) of poverty. We know that we will always have the poor with us as in expressed by Jesus, but yet we know that poverty is not something that God wants.

How can we reach to the poor, with the mentality of systemic change, empowering others to improve their lives? The goal and the vision is to cultivate a mentality that will improve people's life and allow the community to improve and move forward. We certainly do not want to keep people in the same situation of poverty where they are just depending on charities.

We need to keep working and promoting moving away from "the giver and receiver" method of Charity. This is a challenge we face because we will constantly have people in need knocking at our doors for immediate help. In this region the Missionary Servants have always being aware of the poor and had responded well in capacitating many by providing education and social outreach. The method of providing quality education (schools) and training to

help people move forward was a great method that the Missionary Servants brought to this region. Education has helped many to get out of poverty, and improve their life.

What are the realities of the region that are emerging?

One thing we can agree on is that the Holy Spirit is sustaining us and moving us to respond to the new reality of this region. We see an increase need to attend to the Hispanic population and the same time to strengthen our commitment to the African American, the Choctaw, and Anglo populations where we are presently serving. The fear of the Southern Missions disappearing has a parallel connection with our vocations efforts and exposure of younger STs to the USA Southern Missions. Why are young men not being sent for example to Holy Rosary to be exposed to our work with the Choctaw? Or being assigned to work under the mentoring and leadership of Bob Goodyear, for example? Are we thinking of continuing ministry to Black Catholics (African Americans in particular), Native Americans and if so is there any interest from the confreres to be expose and sensitize to the peculiarities of being Church in these contexts? As we move into the future how are we to define our ministry in this region. How do we see the Missionary Brother vocation being a part of the way we are going to be doing ministry in this area?

Where did the Conversation deal with the whole of the congregation?

There was a significant amount of energy surrounding the topic of our presence and our continue work in the “southern Missions.” An underline fear or/and concern was manifested regarding the future of the Southern Missions. It is evident that a major shift and focus has taken place in this region, it does not look the way it used to look maybe 20 years ago. We recognized that a process of grief is necessary for those of us who remember the “glorious and flourishing days of the Southern Missions” and meanwhile the “new comers” should approach this reality of the Southern Missions

with an awareness of the history, the stories and the contribution of each of the Missionary Servants who were mission in this region.

We certainly know that doing mission with past method of coming as **providers of things**, and **doers for others** is not an effective method. We hear of “systemic change,” yet knowing that we need more clarity around this concept and more examples of concrete application. There is no clear understanding of what is meant by systemic change as it apply to the missions in the US. One confrere expressed that he cannot visualize systemic change in the US. He is aware of the project in Latin America where we are implementing systemic change (Referring the Empresa, Sucre, Colombia). What is systemic Change? And how would it look in a Mission in the USA?

One concern that emerged from our conversation was “that there is no MCA in this area. Why is there no MCA in this region? This is part of our history that we do not understand and would like to understand.

We hope the pre-chapter and Chapter process take into consideration the questions posed concerning our work in this region and how can we support and expand on the work that is already being done here.

Respectfully submitted

Raul A. Ventura, S.T.