

## REPORT ON THE SOUTHERN REGIONAL MEETING

Mississippi ~ Alabama ~ Tennessee ~ Georgia

Holy Trinity, Alabama

29-30 January 2015

Present: Enrique Arango, Gary Banks, Víctor Canela, Sean Gallagher, Bertin Glennon, Bob Goodyear, David Hamm, Clif Marquis, Martin Pacholek, Raúl Ventura

Absent: Dennis Berry, Odel Medina, Thaddeus Searles

The sessions began with a consideration of the themes received. The delegates present shared about the development of the points.

- There was much energy around formation and mission.
- Emphasis on our identity and how we pass on our identity.
- Emphasis on our method of doing mission rather than a plan
- Spoke of our relationship to the MCA
- The theme of systemic change
- Our struggle to try to define our spirituality
- The theme of on-going formation
- Discerning future leadership

### COMMENT IN GENERAL:

[01] Being that we were asked to reflect on the 'Joy of the Gospel', we found that too much of what was in the papers and what the delegates talked about was self-referential: forming in the charism, spirituality, issues of formation, on going formation, future leadership were all about US. In mission, we are forever talking about the laity and their need for formation and spirituality, but most of our mission work in the South is parochial – everyone with the exception of Bertin & Clif.

There is a fear here of talking about the same things forever, with no clear focus.

Missing were some of Francis' concerns: new evangelization, Church renewal, missionary disciples, injustice and an excluding economy, consumer society and greed, the challenge of missionary spirituality, being a referent for the spiritualizing of an apostolic laity, need for a deeper spirituality.

[02] Reading the themes that we received, we wonder if what was brought forth was more the worries of administration, rather than the creative, introspective, forward thinking of the delegates. The delegates have their task laid out before them.

With this said, our meeting developed around three questions:

1. why are we missionaries?
2. what is the mission?
3. what is the spirituality that sustains us for the mission?

## 1. Why are we missionaries?

Younger members shared as to what they came to us, what attracted them

- closeness of the members/accompanying MCA's/ real sense of Family
- real accompaniment/ simplicity of the men & their dedication to work

Others shared their vocational story:

- call to serve the poor/ concept of Family/belief in the lay apostolate
- witnessed an anti-Catholic cross burning/ wanted a group with no European baggage, fresh and American
- liked a group that was hard working and practical, not afraid to get hands dirty, people about what they say they are about
- desire to spread the Catholic among the poor in the USA
- entered from the MCA/Dr Healy inspired work with poor, homeless, sick, needy/ all was done in a spirit of prayer/no one like our Sisters in their generosity and zeal
- working with the poor and abandoned/influenced by working with the African Americans at St. Peter Claver Mission
- contact with our Sisters/formation at Father Judge high school/apostolate to help the sick
- work with the immigrants/ our Sisters were the only home visitors in the fifties, attended to the social and religious needs of the Italians, later the Puerto Ricans.
- closeness to the people/ real Family spirit in doing things together
- influence of the Brothers/ a desire to do God's will

There is still a great power in the power of the story: hearing of the foundation of our group and each one sharing their dream and reason for coming.

## 2. What is the mission [NOW]??

- need for an apostolic laity, capable of visiting and organizing to respond to the loss of the faith and the leakage from the Church, of both English and Spanish communities. English are distracted and indifferent. Spanish are overwhelmed and easily attracted to churches that offer help and advantages.
  - need to work with the people who are in the pew – make them more Jesus centered
  - to be able to empower, facilitate the role of the laity and celebrate their missionary work
  - poor people do not have trouble believing in God; more a problem to believe in themselves and their abilities
  - one of the pressing needs of the times is for us to be able to share our apostolic spirituality: to be able to explain it simply and orderly and to share the devotions and practices that sustain it
  - people need a spirituality to sustain them in mission, otherwise they burn out and become conformists, part of a social group
  - involving people in the dialogue about the bigger mission of the Church
- 
- how we teach people to love God
  - all notice the great lengths the ST go to for just a small number of people

-efforts do give results over the long haul  
-always ready to hear confessions, Cenacle vocation was born in the confessional, ST as attentive, compassionate confessors, our confreres are simple ordinary people, no airs or pretensions, with a great simplicity of communication

### 3. What is the spirituality that sustains us in the mission?

-work brings us to prayer; prayer to see more need  
-attentiveness to Divine Providence, the providence of everyday life, to the signs of the times, to the orientation of the Church, sentire cum Ecclesia  
-constant prayer to the Holy Spirit  
-joyful celebration of the liturgy and prepared preacher of the Word  
-practicing and sharing Lectio Divina

### RESPONDING TO SPECIFIC QUESTIONS:

- A. Type of future leadership: a Council that ministers to us to enable us to minister to others; more professionalism in administration
  - a. Need for greater accountability
  - b. How to develop a culture of accountability
- B. Mission Plan – should have criteria for transitioning – reasons as to why we take a place as to why we give one over, process to prepare people for the change, process to take on new places
  - a. Why do we want to go to Cuba and Haiti?? There is so much need where we are.
  - b. What happened to our traditional work with priests?? One of the ministries that saved us from suppression.
  - c. Need for a better thought out ST mission plan for work with immigrant Hispanics in USA. We have A,B,C: we find them, bring them together as community and try to promote a worshipping community. What about D,E,F,G,H,I, etc.: how do we help them work for adequate housing, schools, health care, papers and protection. How do we plan for the transitions in the faith, as their children speak more English than Spanish? We are all doing the same type of work in the South. Good if we had a long range plan.
- C. Formation: what are we doing in formation? Inculturation, vocational call. Vocation formation programs are so far away that we know little about them.
  - a. What about monthly stipends and the vow of poverty? Use of credit cards. It seems that money is too easy with little, if any accountability. Very little development of poverty in the students, or teaching them to depend on the providence of God for all our needs.
- D. Spirituality: what happened to the provision that was made in the last General Cenacle for different styles of retreat? There is a felt need for a five day retreat in English.