

## Evangelize in daily life

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February is the shortest month of the year. In this region of our beloved Amazonia, little by little the daily activities resume after the long vacation season. Back-to-school advertisements can be seen on the few commercial streets of Leticia. Children and youth are still on vacation the first three weeks, until February 20th when movement starts to be felt. In the morning one can see parents taking their children all the way to their school doorsteps, some of them with new uniforms, and others with mended ones but well washed; some of the children go happy to resume their courses, others tell me

that they would want vacations to be longer, since they like a lot to be at home and play with friends.

And as Leticia and Tabatinga go back to school, it is that I together with the pastoral team gather to plan the chronogram of visitations to the riverside communities of the Amazons. The first weeks have been the time for planning the methodology for the new path that we'll start with a new specific theme which consists of informing and raising awareness in the indigenous communities about the invisible slavery of the XXI century, which is human trafficking.

It was a time for searching material in the internet, request materials to the Network Against Human Trafficking of the Triple Border (Red en Contra del Tráfico de Personas en la Triple Frontera), read documents on the topic to be able to better transmit the message to people. As I read and get better informed on the topic, I become more passionate about it, because it is important that we all be informed, that we all unite to fight this invisible enemy that causes so much damage to our society, and which surround us without noticing it. Those most vulnerable in our society run the highest risk of falling in this mesh; people in conditions of poverty, violence, lack of communication and neglect, factors that facilitate the existence of this monster that silently destroys our society. The objective is to be able to reach children, the youth, and the families of the communities. Since these are different groups, we need to approach the topic in different ways.

In the middle of this preparation I started the first missionary trip. Magnolia, my teammate asked me to come along with her to visit three communities together with the missionary priest from the vicariate, Fr. Obdulio, who came to make a brief tour of Zaragoza, Libertad, Pto Triunfo, and Santa Sofía. It was a four-day trip, in which we visited families to inform them about the arrival of the priest, with whom each community would have mass at night

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for everybody, and one in the morning with children at schools. It was a time to closely experience other form of evangelizing: through Mass, the sermon, and the sacraments. I personally do not identify much with this form, but I respect it since it is the traditional way which a great part of our Church is accustomed to. As in any voluntary service, there are motivating experiences that one likes, and others not as much. I am certainly learning from all this time of mission.

Finally came the day of our first trip to the community of Nazareth. For this visit only Magnolia and myself went, since Sister Noelia had a problem with her knee and had to stay back to undergo therapy. We had a conversation with Valero SJ and told him about our need to take a projector and a laptop with us; very generous they lent us the equipment of the



community, so we had everything ready to start evangelizing with the specific themes about the world reality and about this triple border so vulnerable. The first day in Nazareth we agreed with the school coordinator to work on the topic of human trafficking, and organized groups by school grade and age, since the materials we prepared are different for children and youth. With children we cannot take on the topic directly; instead we work with them starting with the care of the body, and for that we use a beautiful video prepared in Brazil and translated to Spanish. With those of older age the topic is presented more directly and from life. With the help of the Vice Curaca, we gathered the youth of the community to talk about this topic. Thank God everything went well; now children and youth at least know about this issue, as well as their teachers, beginning a commitment to stay alert about situations that could take place within the communities regarding human trafficking.

Since God is good and providence works, always giving us lights and confirming calls, just before our visit to the second community "Arara" we had a reunion with Sor Genoveva, a Vicentine nun, and a committed person in this topic. Among the priorities of her community, it is precisely to battle this monster of the XXI century. The fight against human trafficking is part of the Defenders of Lives Organization (Organización Defensores de Vidas) which works in different countries of Latin-America, forming a worldwide network. The Vicentine nuns have developed materials to work mainly with school teachers, so they can become multipliers of this effort with students. Very generously, Sor Genoveva provided us with their materials; I briefly mentioned to her how we were taking on this task, and she told me that I had planned it well. I should mention that my little experience as teacher helped me in preparing this theme, certainly confirming my vocation in education. I believe that education and formation is very important, and a way to evangelize; also I like very much to think,

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search, and create ways so people can comprehend the message and draw their own conclusions from what they keep discovering, knowing, or learning.

We went to the Arara Community with improved materials and resources after the pilot experience of the first community. I feel the theme was better presented in this community, since teachers got more involved. There is still room for improving the methodology and materials, but I think that the first step has been taken; so now it is a matter of keep working and deepening in it. With these first visits I gradually confirm that the way I like to evangelize is precisely this one, through the themes of daily life which can relate how God talks to us constantly through what we live day by day.



*"I encourage all those who are committed to helping men, women and children enslaved, exploited, abused as tools of labor or pleasure and often tortured and mutilated."*

Pope Francis

*"Human trafficking is a crime against humanity."*

Pope Francis

These are phrases that encourage me from this mission to contribute a grain of sand to fight against human trafficking which keeps growing. It is an invisible slavery which therefore is not easy to battle, but much can be done by informing people and raising awareness so they will not fall prey due to

ignorance. This zone of the Triple Border is very vulnerable to such illegal activity, since there is little border control; the police and armed forces of the three countries are very reduced as to be able to fight drug and arms trafficking, much less can they fight human trafficking. The Church little by little is starting the community awareness work regarding these evils so people will not fall due to a lack of knowledge. Hopefully more people keep joining this Network Against Human Trafficking of the Triple Border so that together we can help reduce such ill in this part of our beloved planet.

I invite everybody who reads this small monthly story, friends, family, and CLC-CVX members, to discern if a way to evangelize could be precisely to get involved in this issue of human trafficking, which is, as Pope Francis says, a sore or an illness of the XXI century that is eating away humanity.

On weekends I help in the activities of the Marist community at Tabatinga (Brazil); we visit the community Umariáçu, where they are starting work in Xingu at the Tabatinga bairro with a mostly Colombian population. Weeks pass by like this, with activities, with sharing, with gatherings, with the other and with the Lord.

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Thank you for reading my short and simple stories, much from everyday life; thank you for accompanying me with your prayers, mails, whatsapps, and calls. As always I ask for your prayers so that I keep finding that face of Jesus in the life of this triple border.

Receive a hug.

Lore

*Original in Spanish  
Translated by Chartur Salvador Gonzalez-Ayala*