

PROVINCIAL NEWSLETTER



管区ニュース

July 26, 2017

Sacred Heart Spirituality Forum 2017 ~200 Years Crossing Frontiers~

From July 12th to 16th, we (Natsumi Izawa, Shell Olson, Chihiro Yamamoto, Yuriko Tezuka, and myself) were given the privilege of participating in the Spirituality Forum in commemoration of 200 years since Philippine Duchesne's arrival in America. It is said that this Spirituality Forum was initiated by the US Province, around 20 years ago, in order to study and deepen the Society's spirituality among its members. It is held once in three years, and in the early stage there were about 60 RSCJ participants, but since 2010, it began to be carried out throughout the Sacred Heart School network and has expanded to include teachers, associates, and alumnae. The project this time, true to its title "Crossing Frontiers," other Provinces and Sacred Heart school students (about 30) responded to the invitation,



turning it into a group of about 400, the largest scale project so far. In collaboration with the 4 RSCJ preparatory committee members, the school teachers who are associate members and alumnae committed themselves with outstanding zeal, taking up their allotted charges in preparing prayers, liturgy, lodgings, meals, and meetings. We were impressed by their initiative and collaboration with the Sisters from the start. They love the RSCJ with all their hearts and have studied the Constitutions and the General Chapter documents. The liturgy and prayers conducted by the music teachers were "apropos" and some of them gave presentations at the workshop on Philippine Duchesne and the Sacred Heart Religious Education. I became newly aware of the importance of sharing with our collaborators our Society spirituality as heritage and what we the Society members cannot achieve by ourselves becomes possible through good relationships with them.



On the first day, Catherine Mooney, author of Philippine's biography, explained how Philippine faced "racism" in her talk entitled "Lives That Matter: Philippine Duchesne and Solidarity Across Frontiers." The gist of her talk was on how Philippine groped to find the best means to carry out the ideal relationship of religious life and school education, struggling with doubts and confusion midst a cultural difference of France and America of the early 19th century. She throws on us, living in a modern era, the issue of how to live beyond boundaries. Midst her realistic struggle, what Philippine valued most was the poor, and finally only prayer was her answer. Though times have changed, in America the basic theme of racial discrimination persists in a new form.

The second presentation was delivered by Sr. Priscilla Solomon, CSJ. She was born in a family which traces its roots to Canadian natives, baptized at a Catholic school, and later became a Sister. At present she is engaged in a job involving Justice and Peace. With the theme on “All My Relation: Circle of Life,” she talked about “indigenous spirituality” which gives us a valuable awareness common to all involvements of humanity with nature, demonstrating



this fact by a method of prayer and by a sharing of her own experiences. I felt that Pope Francis expressed the same thinking in *Laudato Si* and I also was reminded of Japan’s Shintoism.

On the last day, Sr. Gerardette Philips, rscj, charged with initial formation in Indonesia and specialist in Islamic philosophy, gave us a talk on “Crossing Religious Frontiers: Discovering Anew the Interior Life.” Based on her own experience of prayer in the Philippines, she introduced the way of how a person encounters God, regardless of any religion. She also shared her rich religious involvements with other religions. She also touched on how she is facing various modern issues.



Finally, I will share information about this ciborium. It was a gift from Sophie to Philippine in America. Later when the Society was established in Cuba, it was gifted to Cuba from America. Then in 1961 it was gifted to Venezuela. This year, for the occasion of the 200th anniversary of Philippines’ arrival in America, it has been given back to the USC from Venezuela. It seems to be a symbol of celebration and reconciliation. At the offertory of the last Mass, it was offered up with a prayer of a Venezuelan Sister, which moved all present. Afterwards, there was a telephone message of thanksgiving from Sr. Barbara Dawson, Superior General, and Sr. Sheila Hammond, the USC Provincial, to the Venezuelan Provincial, which raised a big applause.

These were days when we were made to think about “Crossing Frontiers” from various angles, which cannot be conveyed here fully, but I hope you catch the atmosphere. A draft of the presentations will reach you soon. Please also look at the Society website which will give you live pictures and more information.

With gratitude, Mariko Watanabe, rscj



Sr. Young Hye Ryu (KOC) Sr. Natsumi Izawa
Sr. Chihiro Yamamoto, Sr. Mariko Watanabe