

II Meeting Hospitallers in Africa

From December 8 to 16, 2017, in Dapaong (Togo)

Dear Sisters,

With our greetings we send you the information regarding our experience since we arrived at Dapaong.

We started the meeting on December 7th with all the sisters present.

The first moment was animated by the communities of Dapaong and Korboungou who welcome all of us with the traditional gesture: a dance and a drink of water with flour, a traditional drink called "eau farineuse", served in a calabash which is offered to the foreigner or visitor to make them feel at home. Who offer the water drink first and afterwards all those who have arrived. In this way is "all Africa who welcome to those who arrive". After this the visitors are asked about the family.

After the evening prayer and supper in community all of us went to rest as all of us have had a long journey.

On the 8, solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, we started the day with the morning prayer, with this we praise the Lord for the presence of the Virgin Mary for her YES and for being a model for each one of us.



We work in one of the meeting rooms of the Diocesan Pastoral Centre which is near the community of the Hospital Yendoube, where we are staying.

The Superior General initiated the work with a few words of welcoming reminding us of the journey done since our first meeting in Ghana.

In her message, the Superior General underlined the centrality and importance of the accompaniment dynamic during the process that we have already done and still in progress. An accompaniment animated by the two attitudes mentioned by Pope

Francis in the document "Escrutad": availability to live in "obedient exodus" dynamic, and wisdom of an "attentive vigilance", with courage to follow the way and capacity to read the signs of God. Each one of us is called to take seriously our role in this process.

After the message each sister had the opportunity to feedback those aspects which touched us more deeply.

Once this first part was finished, a dynamic for the introduction of each other took place, helped by a picture and the values that each picture represented, some of these values are rooted in the African culture. With these values in mind we shared how we live in the community.

In the afternoon Fr Augustine, Vicar general of the Diocese came to welcome us on behalf of the Bishop.

He shared some physical, cultural, social and spiritual aspects of the geographical area where we are now and the evangelization history of the Diocese; as well as some of the challenges that the Diocese is facing regarding the evangelization as local and universal church.

At the end of the day we celebrated the Eucharist, we entered the chapel in procession with a lighted candle that symbolized the light that we are called to be. In the offertory the provincial superiors carried the flag of the different countries where the Congregation is present as well as the flag of the Vatican, symbolizing the unity of the Church.

After supper the children from St Monica and St Augustine's home animated the evening with some cultural dance and different songs. We ended the day with a song to Mary by the group of children who animated the evening.



Date 9, Sr Anabela Carneiro, General Superior, presented the theme of Restructuration/Revitalization of the Congregation; she started reminding us about all the activities and events that have taken place since the beginning of this process. With the circular that Sr Camino wrote on 2007 the first step of sensitization started.

Sr Anabela helped us to be aware of the positive aspects as well as the concerns that this project arises in each one of us. The information/formation has sensitized us and has helped us to initiate the journey; we have also verified our fears and anxieties.



In the afternoon, Sr Andrea Calvo, General councilor, presents the process of Restructuration/Revitalization in Africa. A meaningful moment was the first meeting which took place in Elmina, Ghana in 2014 and the setting up of the Commission CHAF (Hospitaller Commission of Africa); these has helped the sensitization and to get to know the different presences of the Congregation in Africa.

At the end of the day, we have the visit of Fr Dieudonne Bantaguete, parish priest of Saint Monica of Dapaong, the parish where the community belongs; he welcomed the sisters and he expressed his gratitude for having this meeting at Dapaong and specially chosen this parish.

Date 10, We shared the Eucharist in Saint Monica's Parish; the community's parish is very much alive and joyful in the expressing of their faith; at the end of the Eucharist the parish priest invited the major superiors to come up to the presbitery and presented them to the people, he also introduced the rest of the sisters who participate in the meeting and come from different countries.

The theme of this day is the Initial Formation of the Congregation, Sr Asuncion Riopedre is responsible of this area and she introduced this theme as something very passionate and challenging.

We worked in groups to share the reflection done previously, regarding the Superior General Circular Cong. 14 and the conclusion of the formator's meeting held on 2015.

Date 11, this day we visited some of the care structures: Paediatric Hospital Yendube (God is here), this is the reference hospital for this Region, and it has various services: general medicine, nutrition, post-natal unit, laboratory, pharmacy, prevention, production of spirulina (nutritional seaweed) very rich in proteins is a complement food for malnourished children and convalescent adults.



We also visited the Paediatric Health Centre of Korbongou which is about 12km from Dapaong, this centre has admissions, laboratory, pharmacy, vaccination and consultation. This same day we visited the Mental Health Centre which have the following services: consultation, occupational therapy, home visits, psychological follow up, outreach visits near the frontiers with Benin, Ghana and Burkina Faso, these services that the sisters and co-workers do are the only ones in the region, as the nearest one is at Lome, capital of Togo, about 650km of distance.

In the evening we finished the works related with the initial formation sharing the different proposals for the stages of formation.

Date 12, we started this day with the morning prayers followed by the Eucharist.

During the morning we continue with the reflection on initial formation, focusing in the proposals regarding the numbers of formation centres for the different stages of formation in Africa.

In the afternoon Sr Anabela Carneiro, General superior, present the topic "The animation and government service in the Congregation".

We started working on personal level and in groups, reflecting on some questions that would help us to be more conscious about the richness, difficulties and challenges in the animation and government service.

Afterwards, Sr Anabela presented the reflection about the strength in the practice of leadership within the teaching and gestures of Pope Francis.

We ended the day with the evening prayer and the supper in community with a moment of very animated recreation.

The 13 was dedicated mainly to do some visits.

We initiated the work of the day with the Lektion Divina in different groups.

After that, according to the agenda we visited the structures of the Association "Vivre dans l'esperance"

We started visiting the Health Centre Magui, for the service of people suffering from HIV, it's opened as well to attend other areas of health such as pregnant women, pharmacy, consultation, laboratory etc. with the aim of eliminating the stigma of those living with HIV.



This centre has also outreach services: domiciliary visits, sensitisation, education to the families regarding the problems and prevention of the stigmatization.

Next we visited the farm which belongs to the Association, where they produce corn, carrots and other vegetables. There is as well a farm for: fish, goats, sheep, pigs and chickens.

All these have the aim first of all for a good diet of those coming to the Association, as well as getting some income by selling the products.

Afterwards we visited the Administration building where there is a sewing workshop where some young girls from the Association learn sewing; there is as well a library and small shop to sell some of thing they produced.

In the evening we visited Saint Monica Family Home for young children and girls (boys are here until 7 or 8 years old) and St Augustine's Home (for boys from 9 years old) depending on the development of the child.

In both homes, according the African family culture the elders boys take care of the young ones.

In St Augustine's family home there are some young boys who finished licenses studies and now they are working to help the Association. One of them is working on projects management another one in the area of agronomy. There is a group that are study at the university.

Días 14 y 15 de diciembre. Durante estos dos días nos acompaña en nuestra reflexión el P. Basile Aka, religioso de Don Orione, Superior provincial de Costa de Marfil, Burkina Faso, Togo y Benin. Los temas expuestos fueron: El rol de la Superiora de Comunidad y la Formación Inicial en la Vida Religiosa.

Después de la iluminación de dichos temas, reflexionamos y compartimos en grupos un caso práctico referido a como ejercer la autoridad en la Comunidad, así como el discurso del Papa Francisco a los participantes en la "Plenaria de la Congregación para los Institutos de Vida Consagrada".



Día 16 de diciembre. Realizamos una salida en grupo para visitar el centro de los religiosos de Don Orione (donde atienden a niños con discapacidad física), el centro Pastoral Diocesano y la Catedral de Dapaong. También visitamos al Obispo Emerito Monsenor Jacques Anyelunga.

Por la tarde nos reunimos, de nuevo, para hacer la conclusión del encuentro de estos días.