

***"I WELCOME THE GOD IN YOU AS I WELCOME THE GOD WITHIN ME"***



This statement is very apt when I think of my International experience. From the day one until now I experienced the welcoming nature of Philippines. My journey began with the gathering of temporary professed sisters from 7 countries. It was an amazing experience for me to meet different nationalities for the first time and to know the spirit of the Good Shepherd all over the world. I realize the interconnection among us as I was exposed to their culture. It was a time of fun and overwhelming experience. We shared our ideas, views and listened to our vocation stories. It brought us together as a family. Visit to the Philippines anthropological museum, churches and other places gave me the impact of multi-cultural learning. It has enhanced my understanding to go beyond my rational thinking and to get immersed in other's culture. The second experience is being in Quezon City for two weeks. I explored different communities and their rhythm of life. I was touched by the Baby's home (Heart of Mary Villa). When I was told of the stories of women and children, I could no longer control my tears. The presence of the God of Mercy is strongly felt there. The sisters really allow the wounded women to experience the mercy and compassion of God. The positive impact of the sisters facilitates the women to regain their dignity and worth. When I went to a funeral, I was taken up the statement by a woman when we were introduced as Good Shepherd Sisters. She said 'they are really the Good Shepherd Sisters'. It is true that we are known by our life's example. I also got a chance to be with the elderly sisters for a while. I attended a session on the 'Spirituality of the Aging'. Old age is the fulfillment of life. They are now 'the source of life inspiration and wisdom'. I experience them as the wise women who carried enough oil for the mission of the Good Shepherd in Philippines. They toiled hard and kept the light burn until now and passed on to the sisters. The spark of fire strengthens us in mission. The next chapter in my life in Philippines is 'Bukid Kabataan' means a place of children. This home is sheltered for the kids who experienced different abuses and abandonment. A new life has dawned to me as I entered this home of love. God's manifestation is revealed in unexpected ways. The environment allows me to get connected with every living creature. We begin our day with holy hour and prayer. I cherish this moment of time in meditation as I see the first sun rise view and chirping of the birds. It is a source of blessing from the God above. Then I admire the angelic smile of Sr. Rose (84 years old) every day. As we spend a little time in cooking some vegetables, Sister greets us very lovingly. A person who is grown in wisdom through the time. We always are on foot, getting ready for the unexpected programs. We have 31 kids, 12 staff and 4 sisters.

Many generous people come here to share their benevolence with our kids by bringing gifts, snacks, food items etc. we are always fed by the providence of God. I always recall these words that as we empty ourselves, God always fills in. We have a beautiful farm, where we get fresh vegetables and fruits. It is here I relished the work of our hands and fruits of the earth. I am also privileged to be with the kids who impressed me to be alive always. They teach me to talk, sing & write in Tagalog. Moreover they teach me not to carry any

presumptions but to live life to the fullest. Each one carries a bundle of stories filled with unpleasant experiences. They are happy always giving inspiration to others. Many visitors who come here, find God and meaning in their life. They are reminded of their responsibilities towards these children who have nothing to lean upon. No matter what their situations are, they are the shining stars, lighting up the sky. They have many aspirations and wishes in life and they work hard in studies too. The sisters, social workers and the staff make possible ways to cope with life situations. Different activities are being held for healing and reconciling with self and past experiences. The nature and the surroundings too participate in their growth and development. All the aspects of their lives are being dealt in a sacred space.

God is active and present in these kids. I am convinced of my call to this religious life as I find purpose and fulfillment in my mission. I am grateful to God for His choicest blessings upon me. I also thank Sr. Regina and team, Sr. Emma, and my province leader Sr. Sabina and team, Sr. Mariam for their constant support and accompaniment.

