

Maryland, Lagos, Nigeria,
7th September, 2014

Dear sisters,

Greetings to you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. We thank the Lord for his constant love, mercy and kindness towards us.

We are glad to write to you about all we have learnt and gained this month during our programme. At the beginning of this month, we talked about chastity. This topic was given by Sr. Hortense Dossoumon. In her definition of chastity, she made us to understand that chastity is also:

- to live out differences
- to accept distance
- to be able to get in touch with inner freedom

We also looked at sexuality, this energy that tends towards life and communion. We also understood that a perfect sexuality does not exist and that our sexual life is marked by failures. In other words, we have to be conscious of our weaknesses.

On the 5th and 6th of August the vow of poverty was discussed. This theme was elaborated by Sr. Francisca KARUWI. We had a review of our lived experiences of this vow. Some of the keywords of this vow are renunciation and dependence.

On the 7th of August, our eyes were opened to the management of property. This theme was moderated by Sr. Daniela Bellini. According to the social doctrine of the Church, we saw that the source of goods, its universal destination and how these goods can be shared.

The Management of Property in our Institute was also a part of this theme.

From the management of goods, we moved into COMMUNITY LIFE. This was given by Sr. Victoria Zirra. Unveiling this topic, Sr. started with culture, relationship and communication. We looked at some barriers of cultural differences:

*Language *non-verbal communication *silence *laughter *stereotype *Judgemental attitude *lack of understanding.

We did not only look at the barriers, we also learnt some tips on building inter-cultural living in a community which are:

- Be aware of your own cultural background
- Treat people as individuals
- Do not assume that each one knows everything about his/her culture
- Treat people with respect
- Be aware that cultural difference exist
- Be advocate to those who are treated badly because of the place they come from.

The benefit of inter-cultural living was also given to us but let us look at COMMUNITY LIFE:

Community is a place that is meant to be a sign of witness, listening to God and others in prayer.

We also understand that in community, evil is everything that breaks relationship. When we respond to evil with a same reaction, that makes us enter in community evil. What then can we do in the face of community evil? We are to:

*Manage conflicts

*Block mechanisms which propagate evil

*Supporting

*Transforming: evil can be transform into a moment of grace through forgiveness which keeps and make the community grow.

We ended community life with a very important slogan: "AS YOU SPEAK, LISTEN TO YOURSELF", because when we speak to others about the ideals, we are also speaking to ourselves

We looked at the community and apostolic plan by Sr. Daniela. Here, we saw what it means to project (PLAN), aim of the PCAL, and point of reference for PCAL, processes of decision and community spiritual discernment (CSD). The Community should always be searching for the will of God with the participation of all in reflection. What stood out for us is that we must learn to seek the truth with a free heart and a responsible attitude in charity.

The theme on forgiveness was given by Sr. Josephine ENENMO, here, she took us back to root causes of our wounds, how to accept them and be engaged in the path of forgiveness which is necessary for our spiritual and human growth. We continued with this theme to the 20th of August, on this day, we had penitential celebration followed by the sacrament of reconciliation

Justice, Peace and Integrity of creation was the delivered by Sr. Veronica ONYEANISI. We started with sketches of drama on the various injustices that are found in the society and she explained what justice and peace means: respect of one's right, Equity, fair treatment, freedom, responsibility and so on. We also discussed some of the social injustices in our society, what the church says about it and its challenges.

The topic on interreligious dialogue was given by Sr. Felicia DUNKA. She made us to understand that interreligious dialogue is the responsibility of all. The various forms of interreligious dialogue includes: theological exchange, dialogue of life, dialogue of action and dialogue of religious experience.

Sr. Felicia DUNKA discussed another topic with us which is "New Technologies". Some of the things that we have gained from this topic is that these "New technologies" are gifts, and that we should know how to use them for the evangelization today. We have to be attentive in using them so as not to become "objects of these objects"

On the 27th of August, the topic was on "On going formation" this was given by Sr. Antoinette ABIWU. Ongoing formation is a process of continuous conversion, a means of gradual identification with a Christ like attitude towards the Father. This involves the biological, spiritual and psychological processes. It renews us for service. Bearing in mind the importance of ongoing formation, this has to be part of our daily life so as to help us to grow.

On the 28th of August, we treated 29th and the last theme of the session which was on child protection. This was prepare by Sr. Gabrielle Farrel, this brought our awareness on the United Nations convention on the rights of the child. We also looked at various forms of child abuse and the ways by which we can prevent these abuses.

We had time for integration In between these different themes. The aspect of recreation was also not left out. On Every Saturday evening, we had either recreation or watched films for relaxation.

We had days for outing; on the 16th, we went to the Pauline's library and to our Sisters in St Mary's Convent Lagos (first OLA Community in Nigeria). On the 24th, a visit was made to ABEUKUTA, a town not so far from Lagos, there we visited the presidential Library of the former president of Nigeria, OBASANJO, the hospital, the OLA Community and OLUMO Rock.

From the 1st to the 7th, we had a one week retreat that gave us the opportunity of having a time of silence and prayer with the Lord

Dear sister, we thank God for His grace and protection over us throughout our programme. We thank especially the Nigeria Provincial and her Councillors for all they did to make us comfortable.

We also thank our facilitators, translators, all her sisters that came to share their knowledge and gifts with us and all who made the programme a huge success for us.

THANK YOU!
AKPÉ!
ECHÉ!

MERCI!
BARKA!

CHOUCRANE!
AWANOU!

ASSIDA!
NAGODÉ!

DALU!

GRACIAS!

KRA GANYE!

MÔ!



AT ABEOKUTA COMMUNITY



AT OLUMO ROCK



AT THE PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY