

JOYS OF MISSION

As a missionary religious sister I was so fortunate to have been invited, together with three other sisters of my congregation to come to Canada. I was excited to discover other places and eager to meet new people of different culture, but at the same time apprehensive of this chance to serve in a new country. I had no idea what would happen in the mission or about the people I would meet. The invitation was for us to be presence to the people and the goal was to be with the people, to visit and listen to them and to hear their desires and their dreams.

The journey from Nigeria to Canada stretched for miles and appeared endless, we left Nigeria on Tuesday at around 10 p. m and arrived Winnipeg on Thursday at 3 a.m. I doubted a bit whether the road we were on was the right one, despite it being a long journey we arrived at the Archbishop residence and felt warmly welcomed though we had not seen any of the residence jet. We stayed over the night in the convent and in the morning we had breakfast with them. It was a joy to see the retire priests, it was especial welcome for us who were new to the residence the priest and the staff were happy to see us, it was very uplifting.

Missionaries have language barrier, we would not speak French. Therefore, on Sunday we attended mass at St Thomas Catholic Church dressed with white habit, the mass celebration was a joyous one, attended by people of every age the young, the early, all eager to participate in the sacred mysteries. People asked us after mass, "please come back again!" "Adding, "it is nice that you come here. It was good to hear that from the people. God has His own way of touching our lives, making us feel God's presence with us, sharing the joys of the people.

However, my goal was to be present to people I spent my time visiting and giving communion to the residents at Tache center. To enhance my spiritual care, I took up a training in

clinical pastoral education, this course have invaluable influence in me and the people I come in contact. It is the training that has help me to experience faith in practise and how to live out my faith to the fullest. To trust that God is listening even when there is no response, to hope that spending time with God in prayer is actually more productive than getting some practical accomplishment in an extremely and perhaps humanly impossible situation.

I remember once at funeral of a one year old baby who had died suddenly of what appeared to be a simple cold, the child of two very active parishioners who had tried for six years to have this baby. The church was packed full, the parents beyond consolation. The priest took a long time after reading the gospel before beginning the homily and finally said 'if you think I am going to explain to you why little Matthew died, you are going to be disappointed, I do not really know why Matthew died. Even with hope in a loving God it makes little sense, but without hope it makes absolutely no sense at all. This experience have always guided my sense of dealing with what appears to be hopeless situation in my volunteer work as a spiritual caregiver, wherever I meet people in a great need of spiritual help especially people with social disability, as a missionary religious I am elated to be present to people listening to their hopes and dreams.

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