

For a Fraternal World

Last year the earthquake, then a hurricane, then the disease of cholera ravaged Haiti. As a result, throughout the world an enormous wave of sympathy arose. We all want to be close to that people beset by misfortune. (Brother Alois, Rotterdam, Dec. 29, 2010)

Karl (Haiti) spent a few months at Taizé five years ago. He shared the following message a year after the earthquake of January 12, 2010.

While we are preparing to remember our brothers and sisters who are victims of this tragedy, we would like to renew our enduring trust in the light that guides the footsteps of the young people from five continents who come on pilgrimage to the little hill of Taizé.

I invite you again to pray for all those who, on this day of great sadness, did not hide their spirit of solidarity and generosity in coming to help these poor innocent people, these orphaned children who were crying, burying their relatives and clearing the rubble from their houses with their weak fingers.

Pray too for our brothers and sisters who are victims of cholera. Their houses were destroyed in the earthquake. Their fields were devastated by hurricanes. They had no hospitals, no water to quench their thirst.

Today, after a year in the camps where they still languish in abject poverty, they still hope for an emergency response, for a better tomorrow.

Pray finally so that the reconstruction of Haiti may begin with brotherhood, true love, and the urgency of clearing the rubble from the hearts of all those who hinder this process.

After the Latin American meeting in Chile, I spent two days in Haiti. Many years ago some of us were already there with Brother Roger, and since then the links with that country have become stronger and stronger. Twenty-five young Haitians attended the meeting in Santiago. (Brother Alois, Rotterdam, Dec. 29, 2010)

Iliana (Haiti)

I was already used to listening to the songs of Taizé and I had heard about the prayers and the meetings. But being present myself in Santiago was for me an extraordinary experience. What struck me most was the hospitality and communion during the meeting, in spite of the different peoples, cultures and traditions, and the sharing and trust that reigned.

The prayers together, so deep and touching, revived my faith and gave me courage. Now I keep on hoping, trying to live as a daughter of God in all these trials we are experiencing. Today I can testify in my community and in my country that I met God and I share his joy. I tell my friends that they can trust that God is faithful. I also tell them that we have thousands of brothers and sisters who pray with us and rely on our humble prayer.

Exantus (Haiti)

The meeting in Santiago, entitled "For a fraternal world," was an unforgettable moment, shared with young Latinos and young people from other continents.

If I say that this moment is unforgettable, that is because we live in a country torn apart for years by a crisis, a country that is facing too many problems. Yet, by sharing with others, we found that we are not alone. Everywhere, there are challenges that young people of my generation face and have to overcome. It should also be noted that the hospitality received in Chile in parishes and families shows that we are on track—and I come from a country where hospitality is our main characteristic, as a result of our history with other peoples.

We returned home with much joy in our hearts after attending a meeting full of spirituality, sharing and solidarity. We are determined to work more effectively with some young people from the Dominican Republic, who also want to join us to work for the happiness and prosperity of a more harmonious island, since we had the opportunity to have very friendly discussions with them in Chile.

In Santiago, Chile, joy characterized our second Latin American meeting. For many young Latin Americans, faith in God is linked to the joy of living, the joy of friendship, and the joy of meeting with others. It is not a facile joy, a flight from difficulties and suffering. (Brother Alois, Rotterdam, Dec. 28, 2010)

Amelia (Argentina)

The pilgrimage of trust was an experience of grace and communion lived in Christ, a God who became incarnate for love. In Chile we were welcomed with open arms. Hearts were ready to allow God to work according to his will, both in the pilgrims and in those who welcomed us. It was an experience of brotherhood in which all could share the joy of being children of God and therefore brothers and sisters now and forever.

What most astonished my heart was the atmosphere of hope I could breathe, every one of us, pilgrims laden with wounds, suffering and joy that united us in the hope of a better world, full of peace and love, a world in which we are all human beings living in the love of Christ and discovering in this our true calling.

Through this pilgrimage, the Lord also opened doors between brothers and sisters who live in lands close to one another, doors that strengthened bonds of friendship and communion, and that allowed us to further unite in prayer, prayer which bears fruit across the distances and is so efficient that it can make the invisible visible in each of us, making us sharers in Christ.

Francisco (Chile)

Taking part in the pilgrimage of trust in Santiago was a truly fascinating and new experience. I volunteered to help in the meal distribution during those days. One of the most rewarding things was meeting people from other countries. It was nice to share my life with people who had different languages, appearances, customs and cultures.

What impressed me most was the simplicity of it all, especially the moments of prayer. My heart burned within me, seeing myself surrounded by different people, singing in several languages, all with the same goal: to meet God. Never in all my life have I felt such a strong "presence" of God. I will never forget those moments.

It was really amazing to discover how God is manifested vividly in the richness of diversity.

During the meeting, I also took part in some workshops. The first was entitled "Hope and the humanitarian crisis in Haiti." It was impressive to hear the experience of young Haitians, and to discover the strength and the trust with which they faced the great difficulties their country, whose social fabric is torn, is going through. Another workshop was a source of inspiration for me: a meeting with some sisters who have been living an "adventure with Jesus" among the poor for several decades, in the most disadvantaged neighborhoods of Santiago. These life experiences are, without a doubt, signs of hope that encourage us to go beyond our borders. The days of meeting in Santiago allowed me to renew my faith and to realize once again that differences, rather than separating us, are channels to allow us to work together to make the earth a land of brothers and sisters.

Almudena (France)

By accepting to help prepare the Taizé meeting in Santiago, I agreed to be guided by the Lord, without knowing what would fill those five months. Preparing the meeting was a moment of grace, walking with the Lord, both figuratively and literally! Indeed, we made many pilgrimages to different parts of the diocese.

We spent five months visiting the parishes, working with people whom we gradually came to know. Five months of discovering an active Chilean Church, five months of depending as well on different preparation groups. Five months not always easy, with moments of fatigue, when the fruits of the preparation were hard to see....

They were also five months filled with visits to schools, universities and church movements to invite them to experience this meeting. An invitation sometimes scarcely understood, since these meetings did not fit into the usual pattern: coming together not to join a movement, but simply to pray; not to be seen and known as the best, but to live and share the joy of being Christian; not to remain together, but to go to the wellsprings and then return to our daily lives as a light of hope.