

MINISTRY OF PEACE AND RECONCILIATION

As a Claretian missionary assigned in a suburban neighborhood in Las Palmas in the Island of Gran Canaria, I am called to be the author of Peace and Reconciliation. I try to live and embody this reality with simplicity and hope, fostering communion, like the Samaritan, along the paths of exclusion, abandonment, and poverty, in a very stigmatized reality such as immigration. The suffering of these vulnerable people - the immigrants – resonates in a special way both in my Claretian community and in the two parish communities that we are fortunate to share. We aspire to stir up the values of the kingdom: peace, reconciliation, justice, life and rights for all; without a doubt we assume a prophetic and transforming position. In our way of approaching and living the mission, we seek a new paradigm that respects the dignity of each person.

Therefore, to embody peace and reconciliation from and in this reality requires me and my missionary community to weave networks of communion with others, especially with all those that put the human being at the center, and to be creators of a community of equals, of brothers and sisters, without racism or xenophobia, a community that is more fraternal and solidary. Knowing that I am an active part of a much wider community entails committing myself in solidarity to the neighborhood, to the city in response to what is happening today in our increasingly inhuman world and as a concrete way of identifying ourselves with "the joys and hopes, the sadness and anguish of the men and women of our time, especially the poor and those who suffer".

Our brother Casaldáliga challenged us, the believers, with a prophetic proposal: Do we want to save the system, or do we want to save humanity? From the concrete point of view of accompanying migrants, the last and the abandoned by this inhuman system, it is clear that we want to be for and save humanity, and we position ourselves, also today, on the side of the most vulnerable. This requires a continuous discernment in order to consistently attend to the real needs of our brothers and sisters. Unfortunately, lately, we have been spectators of grotesque situations within the ecclesial reality itself. To believe in peace and reconciliation is to work and fight for it without throwing in the towel even in times of conflict, which are not few. Hope, while we work for this fraternity that is still far away, is the best experience that we are moved by that creative Spirit that makes everything new.

The truth is that we still have some challenges ahead of us. First of all, to be brothers and sisters and to embody fraternity from this ministry of Peace and

Reconciliation, and not only in the reality of migration. We need to be tireless seekers of that which is essential, for our God is Father of all humanity, including the poor migrants that we exclude. It is urgent to focus more than ever on the fact that we are all persons endowed with intrinsic and extrinsic dignity that no one can deprive us of.

Secondly, we must promote, on the one hand, a spirituality of communion that enables us to feel the other, the different one, as a brother, as "one who belongs to me", to know how to share his joys and sufferings, to perceive his desires and attend to his needs, to offer him a true and deep friendship. And, on the other hand, it is urgent to progress in the spirituality of "open eyes" to see and make our own the pain and suffering of others, as well as to detect the life that emerges at the margins of our society.

And finally, to grow in solidarity, to continue the secular exercise of sharing what we are and what we have, in all directions and in all areas of existence, especially with the most disadvantaged, and in particular, with those that our world, with its dehumanizing policies, makes to suffer so much.

@benicmf