

Report: Holy Trinity College, Harare, Zimbabwe

April 2 – April 30, 2016

We went to Zimbabwe to migrate a love of the Jewish people, so intrinsic to the charism of the Sisters of Our Lady of Sion to the Catholic African seminarians and lay persons at Holy Trinity College (HTC) in Harare. Indeed, we left our students in awe of what they had never heard about Jesus' Jewish first century world. Imagine students hearing for the first time about Passover, Shavuot, and Sukkot, the Shema, Jewish prayer and Jewish blessing? Imagine the shock of hearing that there are Jewish and Rabbinic parable parallels to Jesus'? Taught in a sensitive and interesting manner, imagine students nipping at your heels with questions as you try to leave the classroom, or waiting for you at the car as you are leaving campus, wanting more, even wanting ALL your notes. That was our experience!



We were able to plant the exciting and faith-deepening seeds of our charism at almost every level of student at HTC, over 80 students in all, including seminarian, diploma, and lay students. Marianne taught on the Pilgrimage Feasts, and Kathleen on the Parables of Jesus from a Second Temple Period. Comments of, "it is so important to know about what we have missed," and "now everything makes sense," are testimonies of how essential it is to know the Jewish context of our faith. Perhaps the best testimony of all, is the request of several fourth year seminarians to research on a topic related to Second Temple Judaism and the New Testament for their 30-page required theses!

We lived with and participated in the Spiritan seminary community (Congregation of the Holy Spirit), one in a cluster of four religious communities, including Redemptorists, Franciscans, and Jesuits. Father Sylvester (Superior from Malawi), with Father Flanagan (Ireland), and sixteen Spiritan and two Bethlehemite seminarians, made up our community. As we were their guests, we also gave five evening teaching sessions to them.



Each Sunday, we were invited to accompany Fr. Sylvester to Mass in various congregations the Waterfall area. We attended each one and received a special welcome each time. Especially impressive was the overflow of people worshipping. With pews full, people stood inside and sat outside. They sang full throttle in harmony with only drum and maracas accompaniment. We were witnesses to a living, faithful, joyful and generous people.