

## Recognize

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*"To care is more than an act; it is an attitude. Therefore, it embraces more than a moment of attention. Represents an attitude of occupation, interest, responsibility and the affective involvement with the other." Leonardo Boff*

With this new quote, I want to start this sharing that shows the importance of the care of a person, of trying, through this ministry, to reach the hearts of persons with whom I've shared, I now share, and with those that are arriving in this journey. Lives filled with dreams but also sadness and frustration. Lives sometimes in need of listening, of closeness, of presence, of an extended hand, lives filled with wisdom and love.

This month of November, after finishing the visits to the communities and gathering the preliminary data for the evaluation of the general situation of the riverside communities in the Leticia vicariate, as a pastoral team we were able to get a general vision of the strengths and weaknesses that are present in this zone of the Amazonia.



Regarding quality-of-life, if we take into account the way these communities enjoy their activities, their families, their environment, and everything they live on a day-by-day basis, we can say that the riverside communities are a happy people, even with the shortcomings they apparently experience under my western viewpoint. They are children that laugh

with simple things that life present, such as climbing trees to gather fruits, play soccer, etc. Mothers enjoy preparing meals for their children, bathing them; and even when tired after a day of work, fathers have a look of love for their children and happiness of bringing food to their homes. It is then when I can say that these persons are rich because they value what they have and enjoy it.

Briefly, I'll share what I mentioned in a previous story, but this time with evidence. For some years, the church (bishops, priests, religious women/men and lay people) has neglected the accompaniment of these riverside communities perhaps due to the decrease in religious vocations, probably also due to the increase in population and parishes, or maybe due to the ease to stay in Leticia. The answer will need to be determined by the vicariate authorities.

The catechists are of older age, which difficult the interest of young people and children for catholic religion practice. For some time, catechists have not had formation or been updated, nor hasn't been spaces opened for new catechists or facilitators. The evangelizing in this zone has been limited to the sacramental and to catechism. Despite of this context, it is amazing how, of the ten communities, four that are totally catholic have not allowed the entrance of other religious practices, claiming that they are catholic and will die catholic. Is very nice to hear this, at this same time that confronts me as a catholic as to what to do to reactivate and put up-to-date the faith in these communities.

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We had a meeting with the bishop of Leticia, and he encouraged us to continue the pastoral work. Now the moment is coming to determine the path to follow. In the mean time, given the necessities, as a team we are trying to see what could be more urgent, and how can we sustain the work that can be done. We have decided to organize a catechist's gathering with new prospects, young and adults interested in getting formation and in reviving the fire of the faith in their communities. It is very important that they themselves express their needs. After this gathering we can define and prioritize the activities to follow in the pastoral work for next year 2017.

I also visited the community of Zaragoza with sisters Noelia and Magnolia, to accompany and prepare those persons that showed interest in getting baptized during the Christmas holiday pastoral visitations ("misiones"). Throughout 3 days we were visiting families and having conversations on the commitment and the importance of the baptism sacrament.



In addition, I had the opportunity to help in the workshop on social ministry organized by the Leticia vicariate, under the topic "Western Thought, Globalization and Social Resistances". It was an experience that allowed me to get closer to all those who minister in the different parishes of Leticia, and to motivate them to support the riverside communities.

This month I was able as well to help with the mapping of Fe y Alegría (Faith and Joy) organizing the data of the surveys done by Pablo SJ and Robby. This allowed me to roughly learn about the situation of Fe y Alegría in the Amazonia, in particular of the two countries for which I organized the data (Ecuador and Peru).

This was a time of limited visits to the communities, and more of a time to recognize the path followed these months, to recognize the faces of the people with whom I've shared, to recognize the care of God throughout this daily journey, and to recognize how God has been manifesting in all the work done and in the work surrounding me.

A time to get recharged and prepared for the month that comes with force for the holiday pastoral visitations and for the Christmas season, which always better disposes our heart, and prepares us to keep trying to be coherent with the personal callings to serve others.

I send you all a big hug with love as always, thanking your follow-up and company in this mission.

Lore