

MBARARA WORKSHOPS

There has been a series of workshops in Mbarara this last December and January. The workshops began with Sr. Maureen O'Connor dmj meeting all the young sisters in Uganda for a three day sharing on prayer, social justice and ecology 28th-30th December.



The theme of the first part was “knowing Jesus”, the definition of mystical prayer. It was an open time of sharing different experiences of prayer and posing any questions. She helped us to understand the need for silence and contemplation and some methods of prayer drawn from the mystic saints.

In the next part of our workshop Sr. Maureen introduced us to ecology and helped us to see how we human beings misuse the resources of the Earth, the more we tamper with nature the more it also affects us and the whole world. She also explained how the Earth has evolved and its part in a wider universe.



The last day was about Social Justice and our call as DMJs to stand up against injustice and become the voice of the voiceless. One particular stress was on unfair way some governments and big corporations are taking land from the poor. The challenge is “What can we do?”

All in all, the workshop was enriching and challenging. We are very grateful for the opportunity and appreciate Sr. Maureen’s generous giving.

From the 10th to the 15th January, fifteen young DMJs from different countries and communities in the Africa Province gathered in Emmaus community, Mbarara for an Icon workshop which was given by Sr. Annette Lawrence dmj.

It was a very good opportunity for us to be together. What we had on our minds when we heard about this Icon workshop was just to draw images, but it was rather a more prayerful and deeper experience.

Out of fifteen, only one had ever touched a paint brush. As we began writing the Icons, some of us were scared and stressed when they would feel that things were not coming out as they should, but Sr. Annette kept on encouraging us and told us to do “what we see and not what we think we should see”. She stressed that Icon writing is prayer.



Through her inputs, Sr. Annette helped us to know more about Icons; how to interpret them and how to pray with them. For this we are very grateful. We discovered that every detail on an Icon has a meaning.

It was stressed that being an iconographer is more about prayer than artistic skill.





At the end, with our Icons in front of us, each one shared how her journey with her Icon has been during this past week. It was a memorable experience for us because none of us could believe the outcome. We believe that some of us, when given the chance, will be able to develop this spirit and become Iconographers. We concluded with the Eucharistic celebration during which our Icons were blessed.

We are very grateful to Sr. Annette and we thank her for spending her time to share her gifts and experiences with us; not forgetting Sr. Marie Claire who was also with us encouraging us and making sure that all we needed was provided.



After Icon workshop, the community and country bursars gathered for a bursar's workshop which was to begin three days later.

Sr. Annette led us through a five day sharing and practical work on accounts. The bursars each got a chance to share her experience as a bursar. With our constitutions as guidelines, we went through what the vow of poverty means to us individually and as a Congregation and how to be good stewards.

During the course of the week, the bursars learnt how to prepare a spread sheet, how to use it, how to check balances of our accounts and how to make our annual budgets. Some basic skills on computer housekeeping were also acquired. We even managed to produce a handbook for Community Bursars in the Africa Province!



To all those who contributed to the success of these workshops, thank you very much and may God bless you. We hope that more opportunities like this will be provided for us in different areas.

