



MISSIONARY SERVANTS OF THE MOST HOLY TRINITY

OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE NOVITIATE

HOLY TRINITY



MISSION PLAN: OUR LADY OF GUADALUP NOVITIATE

FEBRUARY, 2016

Dates for this Mission Plan: This Mission Plan will cover the Novitiate Year of 2016-2017. Given that the Novitiate year doesn't fit exactly into the Fiscal Year which is from June to June, I believe that the Mission Plan would serve best if it basically covered the Novitiate Year which now will be from September to September.

Names of the Mission Program Director and persons that collaborated with the development of this plan:
Ray Riding, ST

Novitiate 2015-2016 has been held in Holy Trinity, Alabama, with the two novices Victor Manuel Perez and Ernesto Sandoval. Being that both Victor Manuel and Ernesto were in the States, it was decided to move Novitiate to Holy Trinity for this year. Besides the obvious factor of Holy Trinity being where we were founded providing the very special environment of Holy Trinity, one of the main reasons was because one of the novices does not have legal status in the States and it was thought that it would be better to have Novitiate in the States in case for one reason or another he would leave then he would not find himself outside of the country. And if he did make his First Profession of Vows, then if he were to continue his formation in one of our formation houses outside of the USA, there would be a much better chance that he would stay.

What worked well. Being in Holy Trinity did provide not only the place, but the spirit and atmosphere of where Fr. Judge formed his first missionaries. Such things as Fr. Judge's chapel provided a special place for praying, sharing, reflecting, forming our lives in Novitiate in our Charism and spirit. The presence of the STs both in the cenacle and mission of St. Joseph and those that have come to visit Holy Trinity has been a special blessing. Besides the presence and contributions of the STs that have supported Novitiate throughout my years as Novice Director, like Dennis Berry and Steve Vesely, because of being in Holy Trinity we have also had the presence of men like John Skrodinski and John Edmunds who have also given the Novices different workshops, etc. The presence of the Cenacle Family has also been a blessing. The MSBT sisters at BTR and the MCA have played a big part in Novitiate this year and in the formation of our novices in our charism. The difference here in Holy Trinity is that in Mexico the relationship with the MCA is greater and here it is with the sisters. The apostolate of the novices, which was visiting the Hispanic community in the trailer parks where most of them live, provided an experience that was not so much parish orientated, although they also participated very actively in the pastoral of the parish at Holy Trinity.

We continued to implement the curriculum in the areas of formation which the above mentioned complemented in a very positive way.

The challenges. With the blessings definitely came challenges. Along with the novices getting acquainted and accustomed to a new place and environment, the Novice director too was doing the same which at times made at least in the beginning not a smooth transition into the life of Novitiate in Holy Trinity. And the very blessings that I mentioned above of being immersed in our history, spirit, charism and being surrounded by the STs in the Cenacle and mission of St. Joseph and the MSBTs in the retreat center and in the very grounds of the parish and its pastoral, also turned into a big challenge. At times the blessings turned into distractions for the novices and even escapes from the life, spirit, discipline of the “desert experience” called Novitiate. This had to be faced several times and still does at the time that this is being written. I feel that that has been one of the biggest if not the biggest challenges here this year in Novitiate. There had been at least some talk about the possibility of doing Novitiate for this coming year in Costa Rica, since the only two postulants for Novitiate will be coming from our prenovitiate there and since they both are Haitian to have it in Costa Rica would eliminate all of the at times difficult and complicated immigration process; but, after the above mentioned challenges, I would say that it would be best to have it in Huitzila.

Another challenge is forming a formal Formation Team. I say “formal” because I have been in dialogue with and accompanied by different STs and MSBTs in talking about and taking council about the novices and with other persons involved with the novices, like the psychologist Sandy Halperin who, like Raúl Alvarez in Mexico, sees the novices weekly for both group and personal sessions and I have also consulted with Raúl Álvarez by SKYPE. But I have not been able to form a formal Formation Team that would meet at least monthly on a regular basis.

Action steps that are proposed for the next fiscal year. For this past year, there have actually been two Novitiate budgets: “Novitiate Holy Trinity” and “Novitiate Huitzila”. And in this next fiscal year there will only be one budget for Novitiate: in Huitzila. Novitiate year 2016-2017 will begin about two months later than usual, due to the present Novitiate year in Holy Trinity starting later. This will mean that there will be an over-lap when the class arrives for 2017-2018. In other words, I will be directing two Novitiate classes for a few months in 2017.

Another action step has to do with the apostolate for the novices. Since the community opened the mission in Sta. María Ajoloapán, the novices, instead of doing their week-end apostolates in the local parish and in other communities around, have been asked to accompany Paco Nuñez in the mission. For the most part what that has meant is that the novices accompanied different parish groups and parish celebrations. Now that Frank Conkle is there, I believe that we would have to dialogue with them in regards to the apostolate, to possibly take them into other apostolic works in the mission.

Another very important action step would be to form once again the Formation Team for Novitiate that will include both STs and MSBTs if available and lay people both of the MCA and others.

And for this coming year, we will continue to work on implementing more and more the curriculum and the renewed Manuel.

I think that this is all for now. If there are any questions or doubts, etc. I would gladly receive them and respond to them.

Novitiate Mission Plan
Submitted by Fr. Ray Riding, ST