Pakistan

Sr. Eufemia Glenny writes about her mission in a Muslim country today. There are many challenges living in a Muslim country. We cannot speak openly about Jesus. The Muslim environment in a certain manner can influence our way of relating to each other and how we perceive reality. Many times we cannot help members of our Christian Community; we are a religious minority marginalized by our faith.

Involved as we are in different ministries for the service of the poor and the middle class, sometimes it is difficult to respond to situations that occur in everyday life. It is at these moments that we experience that Jesus was also marginalized and opted to share the world’s suffering, thus making us only one people. Despite the wounds that marginalization creates among us, we want to live the experience of a God who reunites us into only one people, when we welcome our brothers and sisters, independent of whether their religious creed be that of Muslims, Hindus, Christians or other religions.

It is nothing new to say that in Pakistan we are suffering from violence, whether it be terrorist, religious, ethnic or separatist. As Christians, we suffer much as part of a country that tries to survive in spite of different forces that tend to break up its integrity, as also when we are the target of terrorist attacks...

In the sorrow and uncertainty of the moment, we can feel the support of our brothers and sisters of different religions, human beings impelled by their faith, in search of a space to create a better life for all, to respond to the cry of the poor, which in reality is the cry of us all: “We wish to live!”
Myanmar

The FMM province of Myanmar opened a new community in a village called Maygon where the inhabitants lived by the lake-side and whose livelihood came from fish ponds and breeding of ducks.

The new FMM community was opened last year in a village called “Maygon”. Previously, these villagers lived near the lakeside where they owned fish ponds and also bred ducks for their living. However, they were forced to move from there as the authorities wanted to convert the place into a lake for public water supply to nearby villages. After the displacement only the church building remained in the old village. Although the displacement took place many years ago the people were unable to rise from their state of poverty, because the land allotted to them was neither fertile nor was there water. It was really a dry land. Naturally, these people who made their living out of water, did not know how to use such land were really like ‘fish out of water’.

In such a circumstance the women became fish vendors, they bought fish from fish pond owners from other nearby villages. Most of the men became jobless and they tended to drink or gamble. Adding to these problems, both education and faith formation of the children was neglected. As a consequence, many children could not read or write as the village school was not a standard one. We were invited by the Archbishop of Mandalay to this village and that is how our new community was started.

The children were on holidays and they were happy to be at our convent though it was very small and was not furnished enough to accommodate them. They had to have lessons under the scorching sun.

We first started to get acquainted with the people, the village, and the situation. Later, because the convent was very small and there was no place to welcome the visitors, we built a hut outside for this purpose. After getting to know the people, the village and the situation for some time, we began our apostolic activities promoting human development through character formation.
Every morning, all the four members of our community give tuition to the children. All the children come to the parish hall each night for studies and we help them there. They have regular Christian education classes now and we have also opened a preschool for younger children. Another group was formed for the children under twelve years of age. The people are poor but generous and they share with us whatever they have so that we have enough food to manage the kitchen. The people and village elders are very happy “Our dreams have come true” they said “as we have sisters now for the first time in our village; we have hope for a better future of our children”.

A Franciscan Mission in Nicaragua

Sr. Marguerite Deliot, missioned in the Province of Cuba, Mexico and Nicaragua, present an ffm mission in this country where she has been now for several years.

Nicaragua is a small Central American country. Its landscape is made up of volcanos and rivers. Its population is mostly poor peasants and herders. It is one of the poorest countries cut off after years under the Sandinista regime and now an authoritarian one.

The first ffm community in 1980. Today, we are in Managua, the capital, as well as in Bluefields on the Pacific coast and in Wapi, part of Rama parish. In this parish, the pastor has a hundred chapels! In Wapi, a large market place suburb, our main mission is the formation and support of Christians. We participate in the formation centre for lay people where we host mission weeks. We also support the local basic communities in their various choices and commitments whether it be in faith matters, in health, in education, social issues, etc.
At the moment with the Agricultural Youth Pastoral Team, Sisters Carmen, Rosita, and Maria work at evangelizing young people so they can in turn go out and evangelize other youths. They also work at empowering women through sewing workshops and Bible study groups in the various neighbourhoods.

**Our concerns?**

The low level of education, massive poverty, proliferation of sects, and the ravages of the drug traffic route which stops through the country on its way to North America…

**Strengths of this Church?**

They are a faithful and courageous people with a deep veneration for the Virgin Mary. A silent, contemplative, down to earth people who like to sing, celebrate, and express their hopes as well as their joys, all this despite suffering the destruction of a ten year civil war. We simply live with our Nicaraguan brothers and sisters. At times they amaze us. They are close to nature and to God with a powerful Franciscan spirit. It is seen in their simplicity, sense of sharing, adoration, and praise.