

Theological Reflection Paper #: 1**Name of Student: Anisabel Palma****Date of Theological Reflection: February 10, 2022.****Prologue/Context**

I am doing my *practicum* at the Church of Saint Mary in Willmar, Minnesota. I have been working at this area faith community for eight years as their Director of Hispanic Ministry, Spanish RCIA and Spanish Adult Faith Formation. This Field Education experience is giving me the opportunity to create a program exclusively for Catechumen, adults preparing for baptism. Currently, we prepare them along with the people requesting First Communion, Confirmation or those who are joining the church from a different Christian non-Catholic faith. A program targeting catechumen will give us the opportunity to focus on the theological, catechetical, human and pastoral needs of the unbaptized, which most of the time are different of the people already baptized.

Description of the Present Event

After evaluating my options for Site Supervisor, I asked my pastor to be my Site Supervisor; we do not have much time for 1:1 meetings and I saw it as an opportunity to have deeper conversations with him. He accepted, but at the same time, he mentioned a co-worker. Initially, I had passed over her because this year she has a heavier work load as she is doing the work that just a few years ago was done by four different people; to my surprise she said she was willing to serve in that role if that was my desire. I took my time to pray and ponder whom to choose as my Site Supervisor. I remembered our pastor had shared with us he speaks with people in terms they understand and care and not always his own perspective but giving an opinion that is closer to what they may like or expect to hear. In the other hand, my co-worker and I have had what I would call authentic conversations, where she shares even what I do not like to hear, if she considers it is important to advance our ministry and the kingdom. She is not shy to present a challenging position before me. Therefore, I decided to have my co-worker as Site Supervisor instead of my pastor.

Be Aware/Reflecting Critically on the Practice

Why I wanted to have my pastor as my Site Supervisor? Why I wanted to have 1:1 time with him? Why I assumed my co-worker would not have time for me as she is doing the job four people used to do before the pandemic? When she signed her yearly contract she knew what the work would entail; they may have done some changes that I am not aware of; why do I think I know better than she does? Why do I prefer to assume things about people instead of asking them? Do I fear rejection? Why do I avoid to be rejected? Why do I think the approach my pastor follows to relate with people is not authentic? Is not it a way to enculturate de Gospel?

Theological Framework/Accessing the Christian Tradition and Vision

While I was trying to understand why this woman accepted to be my Site Director knowing how I know how busy she is, I encountered in the office of readings of today the answer. "It is not surprising that she was more effective than he, since as John says, God is love, it was absolutely right that she could do more, as she loved more." That is a quote from the books of Dialogues by Saint Gregory the Great, pope in reference to Saint Scholastica, the sister of Saint Benedict, when she asked his brother to stay

longer in her company but he refused then she prayed to God who sent a heavy downpour of rain that none could venture out.

Thinking Theologically/ Integrating or Dialectical Hermeneutic to Appropriate Christian Story/Vision to the Ministers' Stories and Vision

My co-worker, moved by her much love, is willing to take on one more responsibility. Since that day, I have noticed that from time to time she stops by my office checking on me; especially when she notes things gets complicated as we face the day-to-day challenges of parish ministry. Two days ago, I thanked her generosity, as she was getting ready to the craziness of doing faith formation in three parishes on the same day. She said, we needed to help each other if we want our ministries to thrive. How good, how delightful it is for brothers and sisters to live in unity! (Psalm 133.) My co-worker has setup an example for me if I want to grow my humanity. Lay ecclesial ministers demonstrate the qualities of human maturity needed for fruitful ministry with the people of God.¹

O Lord, that, following St. Scholastica example, we may serve you with pure love and happily receive what comes from loving you.²

Leading Faithfully/Responding

I need to open myself more to others, especially to the other ministers around me in the parish. I need to make time to define my fears, bring these to the Lord and conquer them. I need to find a path that leads to others and find out directly from them where they are in regards to any specific topic instead of assuming I know their stances.

¹ The Alliance for the certification of Lay Ecclesial Ministers, p. 22.

² Concluding prayer from the Office of Readings, Proper of Saints: 1372.