

Celebration of Mater with the Family of the Sacred Heart in Cuba

On Saturday, October 19, 2024 in Sancti Spíritus, Cuba, a retreat of the Sacred Heart Family was convened in preparation for the feast of Mater Admirabilis. It was attended by about 30 people who in one way or another have walked the path with the sisters, sharing the charism and mission of the Society.

This retreat took place in the midst of the difficult situation that Cuba is going through, with multiple crises plaguing the country: energy, the economy, food, health, social and educational issues, etc. That weekend, in addition to Hurricane Oscar passing to the east of the country, a massive blackout was announced for 72 continuous hours throughout the island, from October 18 to 21, with major effects at various levels.

For those who attended this day of prayer and fellowship, it was a true oasis of hope and trust in God. We had the opportunity to share about the history and symbols of the Blessed Mother, as well as to spend a long time of prayerful silence at Mary's side, a treasure of calm and serenity, the Virgin of the essential. We also reflected upon our commitment as a Sacred Heart Family by reviewing the profile of educators in the light of the 'Gift of Sophia' document. Most of those who participated collaborate on a voluntary basis in one of the projects promoted by the RSCJ, therefore, we encouraged them to heed the call of the JPIC Global Service Day. In general, they seek to support those who need it most, whether the elderly, children with disabilities, families of people deprived of their freedom, or people who are alone or sick.

Faced with the current reality, the group resonated with the desire to be bearers of peace and hope in our community, in a certain way this is the service they promised to provide.

In the afternoon, we ended the day with the Eucharistic celebration in the chapel of the Sacred Heart, located next to our house. Fr. Yoan Bonet, the parish priest, celebrated the mass thanking us for the effort and the opportunity to spend a day in prayer and contemplation listening to God, like Mary, who kept and meditated on everything in her heart.

Everyone was very grateful to have this space; at the end of the meeting some commented that they felt revived in the midst of difficulties by being close to Jesus, experiencing Mary's gaze, being filled with peace and tranquility, and recognizing faith in God. At the same time, they enjoyed learning more about the symbolism of the image of the Blessed Mother, as well as the values and characteristics that come with being part of the Sacred Heart family. Overall, it was a day of blessing.

Those of us who are part of the community at this time - Paola Paoli rscj (ITA), Susa Peris rscj (ESP), Maricruz Trigueros rscj (MEX), and Pilar Guallart rscj from Spain - confirmed the importance of continuing to encourage the journey and share the spirituality, strengthening the sense of being a Family of the Sacred Heart in this Cuban town.