

2017 Interprovincial Experience of Charism and Mission

Final Report from Sister Edie Strong



A view of the capital city of Quito from high on the hill near the statue of Mary with Wings, the popular name for Mary of the Escatology.

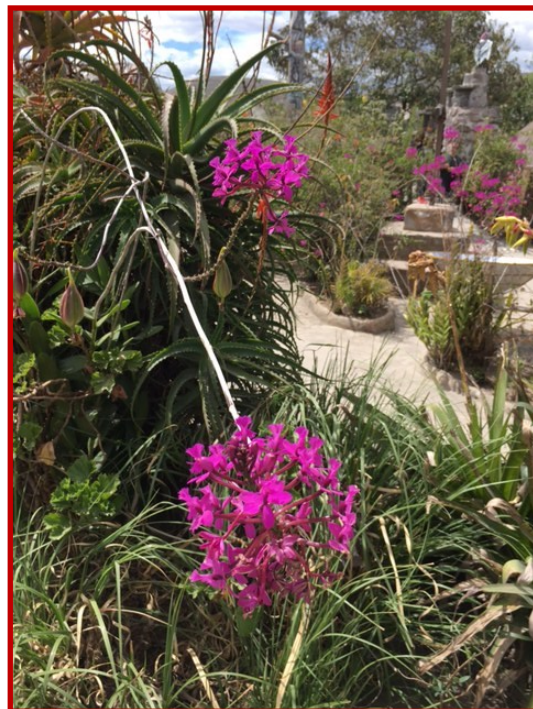
This is the final story of the 2017 International Experience of Charism and Mission in Ecuador. To round off our week of being with and for the poor people of Pedro Carbo and a not-so-near village, we were treated to a day and a half in the capital city of Quito. We had a very mild week in the 70s and 80s while in Pedro Carbo, located in the lowlands. I hear this time of year, the dry season, can be quite hot and humid. Quito, by contrast, is situated in the Andes. The winter temperature was quite cold there for the group last year. This year, again, we were treated to sunny skies and temperatures in the 50s and 60s.





To me, the most fascinating places we visited were the two monuments at the equator. Yes, there are two, not too far from each other. Indigenous peoples designated one long ago; the other was scientifically determined. There we could see the different pulls of gravity as draining water swirls in opposite directions depending on whether it is north or south

of the equator, and goes straight down the drain, with no swirl, right on the equator. We could experience the strength of the pull of gravity as we tried to walk on the equatorial line, picking up one foot to put in front of the other and getting off balance as that foot went into the gravitational field of the north or south to move to the front position. We saw a sundial made of a vertical flat stone and a horizontally placed nail show exact time. We realized there is no equinox there; sunrise is always at 6:00 am and sunset always at 6:00 pm. We learned how indigenous peoples lived, and learned of the culture that died with their civilizations.



We visited a huge statue of Our Lady of the Escatology (at least that is how I interpret the plaque written in Spanish) which overlooks the city of Quito, reminding the people of Quito and all of Ecuador, of Mary's protection. Fittingly, the statue stands on ground considered sacred by the Inca civilization that suffered enslavement and eventual annihilation by the Spanish Conquest.



The gigantic statue of Mary that overlooks the city of Quito. It depicts Mary as described in the Book of Revelations and stands on a sight sacred to the Inca civilization.



Many churches of the era of Spanish conquest dot Quito and remind of a time of enslavement and annihilation of indigenous peoples.

We, the little band of Sisters and Daughters of Charity, come home to living the charism among the people where God has planted us, hugely enriched by our days in Ecuador and realizing more fully that the arms of charity hug the whole world with the love of God.

~ Sister Edie Strong

