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Day Two at the Ignatian Family Teach-In

Tim Dulle | Nov. 18, 2012 NCR Today
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After a long day that began with a prayer service commemorating "prophets of a future not our own," which in this case meant various lay people whose witness had inspired members of the Ignatian Family, and ended with an emotional night time prayer service in a park adjacent to the United States Capitol, day two of the Ignatian Family Teach-In for Justice has come to a close.

In the morning session, student speakers shared on their own experience of the Jesuit Martyrs of El Salvador, and another spoke of his own experiences in the Dominican Republic while encouraging students present to work at ensuring their school sold only ethically made clothing. These students bookended keynote speaker Merlys Mosquera Chamat, the regional director of Jesuit Relief Services in Latin America and the Carribbean. The first lay person to hold such a position, Chamat told moving stories about her work with refugees and internally displaced persons in South America, and Colombia in particular, calling attention to the long history of conflict there and its toll on residents of the country.

Following the morning session were the breakouts. A wide variety of speakers ranging from Tony Cube of the USCCB's JFI campaign speaking about the bishop's priorities regarding immigration reform, to the Catholic Mobilizing Network's performance of their one-act play "Dead Man Walking" allowed attendees an almost dizzying array of choices (the full list can be found at: http://ignatiansolidarity.net/iftj/breakout-sessions/ [1]).

The afternoon portion of the day began with students splitting up by state and receiving a brief lesson in legislative advocacy, with the idea that each delegation with pay a visit to their elected officials during February, which has been dubbed ?Ignatian Family Advocacy Month.? The evening?s keynote speaker, Jesuit Fred Kammer, director of the Jesuit Social Research Institute and former president of Catholic Charities USA brought down the house with a wide ranging talk on living what has long been called ?a faith that does justice.? Moving seamlessly from an in-depth explanation of God?s commandment to institute a jubilee year found in that always radical set of texts, the Hebrew Scriptures, to Pope Benedict?s *Caritas in Veritate*, Kammer showed students and attendees how Christians have a non-negotiable call to care for the *anawim* (the widow, the orphan, and the stranger), ?whose very existence was an affront to the Israelites? relationship with Yahweh.?

After a solemn candlelight prayer service commemorating every Jesuit murdered for the past three decades, attendees made their way toward the Capitol to end the night raising white crosses and singing ?presente? in commemoration of those whose witness had resulted in their death, a long time staple of the School of the Americas protest which has carried over to Washington.

With only Sunday?s morning mass remaining, the core of the Teach-In has now ended, and most delegates seem excited to return to their respective schools with a new appreciation of their common cause.

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Links:
[1] http://ignatiansolidarity.net/iftj/breakout-sessions/