



Oblates Sisters of the Most Holy Redeemer

The participation of two members of the General Team of our Congregation, for the first time in the Santa Marta group meeting held in El Escorial - Madrid, allowed us to know directly the meaning and potential of this group, so close to the Congregational Charisma.

The contents of this meeting and the subsequent one, held in 2016 in Rome, have given us knowledge of experiences, new data and information of interest for the **42 centers and projects that the Congregation carries out in 15 countries and 4 continents**¹.

To inform that **the Congregation** of Oblates Sisters of the Most Holy Redeemer, from its beginning in the mid-nineteenth century, has as its goal the rapprochement, shelter and accompaniment and integral support to women in the context of prostitution and / or victims of trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation, in order to defend their rights and walk with them a path of liberating evangelization. A mission, which in its permanent research to recreate itself in new ways faced with the challenges that reality shows, has incorporated in the last years actions of awareness and incidence on these realities of violation of the rights.

One of the initiatives that emerged from the personal contacts established within the framework of the meetings of the Santa Marta Group, **has been the path of rapprochement, trust and collaboration with the Argentine Federal Police.**

There, as in many other countries where we are, the sisters and the teams of the projects detect situations of violence and trafficking that, if they were put in the hands of the police, could lead to investigations to penalize the traffic networks and to recognize the rights of victims. However, the levels of corruption and distrust are so high that in many countries these approaches and collaboration with the security forces are almost impossible.

But in Argentina, thanks to the mediation of the general team of the Congregation, has been possible to build bridges of trust! Specifically in 2017, from the first approaches and exchanges of views on the reality of prostitution and trafficking, has been finally carried out concrete actions of great social impact.

Las Hermanas Oblatas of Argentina have actively collaborated in the Conference held in the city of Buenos Aires "**Todos contra la Trata**", assuming several presentations and interventions. A Conference of awareness and training to the agents of the Police Force whose success has motivated the celebration of other conferences in the other two zones where the Congregation works against trafficking: Rosario and Ríos Gallegos, opening this time participation to the rest of society. In addition, new seminars are being planned in other areas of the country, always offering the congregational experience of contact with reality and approach to women, as a basis for awareness and a police intervention respectful with the victims.

Is also very important, the incipient exchange of confidential information that is taking place between project's team and the links of trust of the federal police, for the investigation of specific cases of victims. A start that we hope will bloom next year.

Also, in three Schools that the congregation has in Argentina, a pedagogical Ideology has been elaborated with a transversal axis, from the Oblates values and pedagogy, the education in values

¹ More information: <http://www.hermanasoblatas.org/nuestra-mision/proyectos>



that sensitize and prevent prostitution and trafficking. Is an itinerary that develops in all subjects and levels, since 2 years old to 16 years old, with an impact on more than 3,000 students and their families. For example, the students of the superior courses have designed advertising spots against trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation, have given workshops to students from other schools and have even incorporated awareness in small theatre plays also represented in other schools in the city in order to awaken young people about this new slavery in our society. The Congregation has created the "Serra -Schönthal Foundation" as an open, plural instrument with a future perspective at the service of women. Its mission is a commitment to solidarity with women who practice prostitution and / or are victims of trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation, as well as the denunciation of structures that do not respect Human Rights proclaimed by the United Nations.

The Foundation has created a fund, still very incipient, to offer grants for training, awareness and empowerment of these women. Within the modalities of access to the Fund has been included as a new profile for applications, support for the start of a vital project, aimed at women who have been victims of trafficking or are in a process of change after leaving prostitution.

In the context of caring for victims of trafficking, we want to inform that at Congregational level, steps have been taken to involve the different networks that make up the Talitha Kum International Network. The creation or consolidation processes of several networks have been facilitated by assuming Coordination or other support functions in: Mexico (Red Rahamin), Brazil (Red un grito pela vida), Colombia (Red Tamar), Guatemala (Red Ramá - América central) and the Dominican Republic (Red Ramá Dominicana); Argentina and Uruguay (Red Kawsay) and Spain-Italy-Portugal (Red Renate).

At the same time, there are several residential projects for the integral care of victims in several cities in Spain and Italy, with a large volume of Nigerian women, but also from other countries. In the case of Italy, women from Eritrea or Ethiopia begin to arrive, victims in the migratory channels where refugees are intertwined due to armed conflicts and / or humanitarian causes, with obvious signs in their bodies of situations of extreme violence and exploitation they have had to suffer in their immigration process.

To more information about the Congregation and our actions in the web: www.hermanasoblatas.org and the social net Facebook: Hnas. Oblatas del Santísimo Redentor.