JUST SOUL

This year, on the 24th of January, the sisters of the Zimbabwe Region combined Mary Ward week with the celebrations of the 400th anniversary of Mary Ward's insight of the Just Soul. All the sisters and the Mary Ward associates were invited to the event. Many of them gathered in the Mary Ward Children's Home hall at Amaveni to celebrate. The six tertians had been tasked with the preparation of the event. Prior to the day they had done a thorough research from different books on Mary Ward’s life history and the booklet Living the Just Soul today.

The first presentation was held by Sr. Kudzanai, who gave an introduction and brief explanations of the great events in Mary Ward’s life history, which are the Glory Vision in 1609, the interior experience known as Take the same as the society in 1611 and the Just Soul “vision”. After her speech, Sr. Kudzinai gave the platform to Sisters Regina and Tendai Chirume who presented their input in form of a play. Sr. Regina acted as Mary Ward and she was asked by Barbara Bapthorpe (Sr. Tendai) to give detailed information on what actually happened on that 1 November 1615 and what was her understanding of the whole event. Mary Ward clearly described it as an intellectual deep insight of a soul adorned with threefold virtue, namely freedom, justice and sincerity. She integrated these in her mind and saw them as the means of personal sanctification leading to happiness of the member and to a more fruitful apostolate. Mary Ward emphasized that the vision of the Just Soul was not only for herself but to be passed on and lived also by the coming generations.

After the play, Sr. Tendai Chirhomoh took over with a poem on the virtue of freedom. In her poem Sr. Tendai brought the idea of Mary Ward that we must not live in fear but live in freedom. This freedom in Mary Ward’s concept has a threefold dimension: freedom from attachments to earthly values and things, freedom for any kind of good works and freedom to refer all to God. After her poem Sr. Tendai called Sr. Josephine to come forward with her presentation on justice, which is another of the virtues of the Just Soul. Sr. Josephine told the audience that for Mary Ward Justice meant doing works of justice, in innocence. There is a deep connection with God, with oneself, with others, and if Mary Ward had lived in our times, she might have added, with nature. Sr. Josephine also talked of the injustices and corruption that have mushroomed in churches and in the society. She said that Mary Ward challenges us, the 21st century women and men, to live with transparency and with open hearts, to do justice, to seek justice and to be just in our world as Mary Ward's followers and friends.

The last speaker was Sr. Valeria who gave a speech on the virtue of sincerity. Sr. Valeria challenged the audience to be people who are authentic and truthful, in all matters. She told the people to show themselves as they are quoting one of the Mary Ward’s sayings that they should “be such as they appear and appear such as they are”. She also said people should empty themselves and live a life of sincerity in total freedom as children of God.

After all the presentations, Fr. Musvevereki (who is also a Mary Ward associate) said a thanksgiving mass. In this mass the children of the Home also took part and pupils from Mary Ward Primary School Mbizo did the dancing.

Mass was followed by a delicious lunch which ended with the cutting of a big cake inscribed “Living the Just Soul - 400 years - today”. It was “interiorised” with the greatest pleasure.

By Sr. Thoma von Dahl and Sr. Josephine Nyikadzino