



The ESL crowd on the shores of Lake Michigan.

A message from the ESL Director...

With this newsletter, I would like to take a moment to introduce myself. I am Fr. David Szatkowski, SCJ. I am the new director of ESL here at Sacred Heart. Just like so many of our students are new to English, I am new to directing. In these pages, we hope that you'll find out a little bit more about our hidden gem of a program -- English as a Second Language.

Over the past summer and fall, our students have worked hard on learning not only learning English skills, but also learning about US culture. They have had the opportunity to preside at liturgical events with the school, and also sample a bit of US culture including baseball, state fairs, and of course Old World Wisconsin. I hope you enjoy reading the words of our students and enjoy hearing about their experiences.

Sacred Heart School of Theology Safe Place of Learning and Prayer

Fr. Anicet Bazimenya, SCJ (Burundi)



In my first session of English learning, my conception towards Sacred Heart School of Theology, of which the ESL Program is one of this school's characteristics, is that this it's a safe place of learning and prayer. I was welcomed and as I stand here I realize that every moment was for learning and prayer, I think.

Indeed, I arrived August 2nd 2010; as soon as I was introduced to the ESL program, there was a pre-test to see my level. I was disturbed by the travels and I didn't know what I could do.

Little by little I got used to the English language and I put aside my French. I said to myself that it was now the strong moment accorded to me for learning and practicing English.

In class I received the books to practice and learn; I'm grateful for so much opportunity to improve my English and I'm proud of it.

Trips instructed me on how to make conversation with everybody. By Internet I searched many sites of English learning; it was another asset to increase my will to improve

my English. As long as I live, I'll connect on those sites: "Google/English learning" and "live mocha" are the first for me. The teachers keep all students in their gentle care and they kindle in us the feeling that we must speak English. So a big library, the bookstore, and many articles for reading prove everything that I have just said.

Sacred Heart School of Theology in Hales Corners is also the place of PRAYER. The morning and the evening prayers, Mass and Adoration were celebrated everyday. We doubly practice in English language and we increase our spiritual exercises. The seminarians helped us to enjoy the solemnity of the celebrations.

Finally, I owe thanks to the Nunciature of Burundi for helping the Burundians to have this opportunity to be in this place of learning and prayer. I would also like to express my thanks to the Sacred Heart Community, especially for its help to integrate us.

I'm grateful for the opportunity to stay in U.S.A. to learn English and to visit some cities (Chicago and Louisville) and meet my old friends.

My ESL Summer Program 2010 Teachers

Fr. Dieudonné Nkurunziza, SCJ (Burundi)

It is not very easy to talk about school and teachers when you are no longer studying; furthermore, when one's memory has already been wearied from an active professional life. However, I chose precisely to talk about this challenging topic, not because I am the best skilled to do so, but because of its interest for me. My main purpose is to give a brief depiction of my ESL teachers. In fact, they recalled to my weakening memory four teachers who positively influenced me both in primary and in secondary school because of their similarities: each one of them has a true copy in my ESL teachers' team, so that each description that I will give here may fit for two people: an image and her or his copy.



The first one I met when I was in primary school. In our country, primary school teachers are those people hired to complete the role of father and mother to “form”. By that I mean to give to the child a more complete shape as a human by means of training the child's thoughts and actions to be open to himself and his family, but also to his environment and others. They don't create a new man *ex nihilo*. Indeed, but their responsibility is so great that they have to perform the duty of printing their image upon the young man they are entrusted with, so that, for lack of being given a full human form, they might even change the docile and mild, childish spirit into a devilish man. Is the teacher always aware of what the student will keep for himself from all that is said or done in his presence? Unless he is exceptionally talented, no! Yet, the best teacher is he who, the more he says or does, and the more he has handed over to his disciples, the more there is of use for their formation, not the opposite. Thus, one of the best teachers I met was able to teach more by his joking, by his smile, by his teasing, but also while being stern or somehow intransigent. I admired such a teacher, the one who gives knowledge (English?) with the best of himself, and from the deepest of his being.

Another teacher who impressed me a lot is the one who apparently is no more, no less than a grandmother: teasing students, laughing, singing with them, but also admonishing them, and never hesitating to call them out; exactly as a grandmother used to do for her grandchildren in order to test if they have made some remarkable progress. Here is the mingling of love and concern, subjectivity and objectivity; a pure mixture which straightens without breaking, a very skilled procedure which conquers with sympathy while preparing to win over the whole personality.

I want now to talk about another teacher; may I say, a “hyena-mannered” teacher? Shy-like personality, he seemed to be afraid of the students' assembly, as if students would despise him or his word. Do students despise teachers? According to my culture, no! The teacher is the absolute master; every student reveres him, that's the common rule. This teacher looked to be shy, yet nothing could overcome his bravery to manage his course according to his secret plans, planned long before; *exactly as hyenas do when they have found a terrible prey: they don't give up, but they are cautious*. There are sometimes evil spirits hostile to knowledge: even the strongest ones are overpowered by this method, so that time after time, students were surprised with their unexpected progress. Now, just the last description and then I will be done: the “Mild Power” – I might say an owl. He used to be the right hand of all those I have already mentioned: was there the need to check over the plan, any complement for the course? Then he appeared: silent, calm, serious, to make the last touch.

What can I finally say? Everything has been set up. Just one or two words: the ESL teachers' team was meticulously matched. I encourage everybody to hold on to his or her strategy, in order to help foreigners to understand Americans more, and so that Americans can meet other people and discover other cultural riches.

About My Experience in the United States

Fr. David Dagsou, SCJ (Cameroon)



When I decided to come to the United States for the ESL program, I had just one thing in my mind: learn English. When I landed in the United States at the Chicago airport, I had a beautiful surprise. It was the first time for me at this big airport and my English was very poor. I got troubled and one girl who was looking at me intended to help me. I remembered she gave me her cell phone to call my confreres in the Sacred Heart School of Theology (SHST) to come and pick me up.

At SHST, where I spent three months, I benefited a lot. Besides the English that I first came to learn, I received three keys of progress: love of work, respect for time, and organization and planning. I want to write especially about those three keys.

To show objectively what I gained during my stay in SHST, I think it will be good at times to make comparisons with the country where I come from. I mean here Cameroon. In general in Africa people like talking about African Time. What does this mean, exactly? According to most views, African Time means we are excused if we are late. I do not know who has put this very bad thought in the mind of Africans. With this mentality, nothing we want to do is done on time. As the days go by, we continue to sink into poverty and we always blame the other people for our suffering. It really makes no sense to me. I was often very upset when I had something to do with a group. I lean on one example to justify what I am narrating here. I am an assistant priest in our Parish. There was a wedding in my Parish and I was invited to the wedding feast in the evening. On my invitation, they wrote 8:00 PM. I came on time like it is written on my invitation. Big surprise, I found nobody. I spent two hours waiting for the beginning of the feast.

I experienced the opposite here. During the three months I spent in the SHST, I did not notice anybody late. Everything was done on time. I am very glad.

While here, I noticed that when workers arrive, each one goes directly to his office and starts working. That is a great lesson. "Time is money" and it runs very fast. I think many countries in Africa do not understand yet the meaning of this thought. That is why we remain undeveloped. Every time we need help and we do not respect time.

Organization is the other key of progress I learned here. You should plan anything to gain time, and to do it on time and well. In general I remarked that Americans have many plans when they want to realize a project. It means they have plan A, B and C. If the first plan does not work, they have to try the second and the third plan. Anyway, one of the three plans will work. It is a great lesson for me. Now I understand why I have failed to realize some projects. May Almighty God open the hearts and minds of Africans to copy what the other people do in order to progress. This is my wish and my prayer at same time.

The third key I learned here is the love of jobs. The Americans I encountered and I talked with are very proud of their work. If you do well what you chose to do, you have to be proud because you're realizing your talent. I do not know the percentage of workers in the United States, but I think most Americans work. If you get a job, you must do what the employer expects of you. You have to put your heart in what you do. The success of where you are employed depends also on your contribution. It is not the same where I come from. I know that there is the problem of salary in most countries in Africa of course, but if you agree with your employer, you are called to do your duty and he has to pay you on time. Maybe there are difficulties between employees and employer here also, but I did not understand anything about this since I am here at SHST.

One problem remains. Now I have learned well how to do things on time, to plan, but I do not stay here forever. How can I practice what I learned with the people whose mentalities are different than Americans?

MARACAIBO: Beloved Land of the Sun

Sem. Mauricio Fernández-Boscán, Archdiocese of Milwaukee



I am Mauricio Fernández-Boscán, I am a seminarian of Saint Francis de Sales Seminary, I was born in 1982 in a beautiful city of Venezuela called MARACAIBO. This is the second-largest city in Venezuela after the national capital Caracas and is the capital of Zulia state. Maracaibo is nicknamed "The Beloved Land of the Sun". For about 390 years, Maracaibo remained separated from the rest of the country. Transportation was only possible across the lake by ferry or other marine transport.

The building of General Rafael Urdaneta Bridge over Lake Maracaibo was opened to public traffic in 1962. The project was completed in 40 months. Built under very difficult conditions, when completed, it became the longest concrete bridge in the world. The structure is in constant use and remains today as the most important link between Maracaibo and the rest of Venezuela.

Maracaibo was elevated to the status of Roman Catholic Archdiocese on April of 1966. Since November 2000, its Archbishop has been Ubaldo Ramón Santana Sequera.

Our Lady of Rosary of Chiquinquirá is one of the many popular devotions to the Virgin Mary in Venezuela. The image is most venerated in Maracaibo. The story of the discovery of the virgin dates from the 18th century.

An interesting aspect of the city is the humor and the musical culture of its people. The Gaita Zuliana is a traditional Christmas music from the region. It is known that Maracaibo was culturally separated from the rest of Venezuela for geographical and historical reasons. Lake Maracaibo kept the city separated from the rest of the country. Having been influenced by Andalusian colonists, people from Maracaibo use the term "vos" instead of the equivalent English "you."

In Maracaibo, the registered high temperature of the city is 41 °C (110 Fahrenheit), and the low 18 °C (60 Fahrenheit). Maracaibo has one of the best universities in the country. La Universidad Del Zulia is well known for its excellent law and medical schools. Other major universities and schools include Universidad Rafael Beloso Chacin and Universidad Rafael Urdaneta.

Besides me, Maracaibo has some very popular celebrities. In sports, Maracuchan baseball players are essential for Venezuela's successful career. Wilson Alvarez and Luis Aparecio are among the most popular. In medical research, the world got to know the diamond scalpel thanks to the Maracuchan Humberto Fernandez Moran. In the long list of Venezuelan beautiful women there are, at least, three Maracuchans: Ninibet Leal, Vivian Urdaneta, and Patricia Velasquez, who appeared in the first mummy film.



Fraternity in ESL Studies

Fr. Jean Marie Ngombou, SCJ

Among the characteristic elements of a human community, language takes up a very important place. If it is true that man is a social and relational being, his sociability necessarily passes through meetings and communication. In this case, the language becomes an incontestable factor of communion.

Our presence at ESL School during these months was motivated by the deep desire that each of us carried in himself to acquire knowledge of English, in order to respond better to his engagements: university academic studies the some, parish pastoral for others, teaching and research for others again. Beyond these priorities, however much praiseworthy, we constructed at ESL a notable fraternity beyond our differences. We come from various horizons: Brazil, Poland, Cameroon, Rome (Italy), Burundi, Colombia, Panama, Venezuela... and we showed a common interest in English. This interest has been carried and sustained by SCJ's community, and particularly by our teachers who knew how to associate "**le savoir faire**", which means operative and intellectual expertise, and "**le savoir être**", attitudes and positive dispositions, to stimulate our study.

The sharing of our cultural experiences, of the Gospels, the Eucharist celebrations, and the trips, permitted us every time not only to verify our level of advancement in English, but also to live moments of intense fraternity. If it is true that the environment contributes to the formation and the fulfillment of learners, it goes without saying that the fraternity lived at ESL and the perfect elaboration of the program met our effectively expectations. In such a climate, studying English has become a real pleasure and a place of solidarity.



Enjoying time together.



Cooking delicious meals.

“ESL, A Window to the World”

Fr. François Muway Mulem, SCJ (Democratic Republic of Congo)

The English as a Second Language program is a very nice and exceptional school I attended. A nice school because you have the opportunity to leave your country for the United States and experience another culture. Nice because you can meet American people, learn many things by yourself and change your image of Americans; for often, knowing them through the media you have many prejudices. But living with them, you get another feeling. Nice because you meet many students from other continents and countries. You share ideas, times and life; you live together in a family atmosphere.

It is an exceptional school because you can learn to speak in a short time; you learn many things, you receive much information that will help you to quickly improve your language. The teachers are competent, together with the volunteers and the members of the community; and they are always available to help you to grow and to go forward. There are computers with interesting programs for self-access lab work. Then the learning becomes easy and fascinating.

The ESL program is also a window to the world for everybody, for students through the American people we meet and connect with. English helps us to be open to the world. ESL students help American people to be connected to the world by discovering our countries and cultures. Many people do not know Africa well; most of them think that Africa is a country; that there is war everywhere. Through ESL activities, discussions, and the Culture Fair, they learn more about the African continent and about our different countries. Confusions, doubts, prejudices and ignorances are clarified.

At the end of the program, we are surely no longer what we were in the beginning. We are proud of our formation, and richer in knowledge and humanity because of the wonderful experience we had. It is good to thank the organizers of this program for their kindness and to encourage people to partake in this kind of experience.

Fr. François' first poem

THE ROOSTER

I am the rooster
And the best singer
Before I was egg
After I get wing and leg
Now I walk and fly
I can also cry

I always sing early in the morning
For some people it is nothing
With much pleasure I sing in summer
But against my will in winter
I woke them up every day
They do not pay

I live with the human
Man and woman
People pretend they like me
But they don't resist eating me
With me they don't use mercy
Then I cannot make them holy.



Fieldtrip to Milwaukee Public Museum

Fr. Krzysztof Paluch, SCJ POLAND (Stadniki)



On our fourth field trip, we went to the Milwaukee Public Museum. This is a great place. It's cool to go see the big bison, dinosaurs and other artifacts. There are 4 floors of exhibits. There are a restaurant, an IMAX theater, a planetarium, butterfly exhibits, exhibits that look like Old Milwaukee and houses in 30 different European villages (there is also Polish house), many skeletons and artifacts, a rainforest exhibit, a Native American exhibit, a Wisconsin woodlands exhibit, a Wisconsin archaeology exhibit, exhibits on North America, Africa, Latin America, the Arctic, Asia, the living oceans, Pre-Columbian America, the Pacific Islands and Egyptian mummies.

Milwaukee Public Museum is a combination of natural history, local history, local and world cultures' topics. It is a place where you can see what people around the world do and wear. You can learn about nature and step into the past.

The displays are tastefully set up in an easy – to - find and organized way where the experience of “being there” teaches you more than the written notes and comments.

I have several favorite exhibits. The Streets of Old Milwaukee are where you step in and walk around to see what Milwaukee looked like in the 18th century. The cobblestone streets and realistic-looking buildings were amazing!

They have a butterfly garden with hundreds of live butterflies. They let you try to perch one on your finger. It's not huge inside, but it's still very nice. And there's no additional admission for it. This is a fun exhibit! Love it!

The Rainforest is a two story exhibit which is all about the Costa Rican rain forest. Two stories, because on the second level you get to see the tops of the very tall trees. Fun, interesting!

Pleased to Meet You

Fr. Robert Jean Bigirimana, SCJ (Burundi)

After the two months I have spent in the USA, I had the opportunity to observe and learn many things. It would be almost impossible for me to tell everything in this article, but I'll try to summarize, noting what touched me the most.

In Burundi there are some Americans who live there, but personally I've never been in contact with them. Thus, what I knew of the United States came either from my reading or from information and pictures that I watched on television about the United States. It must be said that the books I read and the information I had about the United States did not come directly from the Americans themselves, but by non-American authors. All this information gave me an image of the U.S. as a large country developed economically, industrially and militarily. But it also gave me the impression that the American people were warlike and imperialist, who did not hesitate to start wars abroad, either for imperialist reasons, or for the simple reason to try their new weapons. This impression was



reinforced by a few American films that I saw in the past: **Rambo**, **Commando**... but also by some images of the Gulf War that I saw on television.

So before coming to the United States I had a good bias toward the U.S.A. regarding its technological achievements, but I had a bad prejudice about Americans.

Once arrived in the U.S., I had the opportunity to visit some cities like Milwaukee, Appleton, Madison and Chicago. What I saw of the buildings, especially in Chicago with its skyscrapers, has confirmed my information and my old readings. Although I am convinced that I saw very little of the whole reality, I can say already that the United States, its buildings, its highways, its parks..., are a technological marvel.

But for me, the great and pleasant surprise I got was through my contacts with the Americans. What kindness and helpfulness! Such simplicity, and what courtesy! I was pleasantly surprised at the airport already seeing how people were willing to help us. I was surprised and I continue to be today, seeing how our teachers and all the priests of our community are helpful and attentive to everything that affects his or her neighbor. I am amazed by meeting people on the street, in the store, in hospital; everywhere I see simplicity and courtesy and even humility in their relationships. I do not think I am wrong in concluding that such behavior reflects their greatness of spirit. At the same time I realize how wrong I was and how I had been unfair in my decision in respect of these people, so respectful of others.

I saw and learned many things during these two months, but probably not enough to know all of America, but I can tell already that the great lesson that Americans have given me, in addition to their language, is an example of love and respect toward one's neighbor, whoever he is. For this, I'd like to say in closing my article,

**Thank You very much Dear People for your kindness and I apologize for having thought ill of You before I actually discovered You!
God bless You!**

Studying a New Language

Fr. Fransiskus Xaverius Marmidi, SCJ (Indonesia)



It's not easy to study a new language. To study a new language is not only to know it. We need to let our mind be formatted by it. And with it we can communicate with new people and we can talk with them until we together feel loved, supported and safe.

In our English course, we have field trips once a week where we visit a place or a monument such as a museum, a church, or a festival, and we have to write a report in English from what we see, encounter, and observe. The most interesting for me is when we went to Mayfair Mall. It's a big mall in Milwaukee. As an assignment, we had to make conversation with some people there. It was the first time for me to learn English with people that I had not known before. I really appreciate my English teachers who planned this program.

After arriving at Mayfair Mall, I immediately approached a man cleaning his kiosk in the middle of the corridors on the second floor. "Good morning," he said. "Good morning," I

replied. He asked me what I was looking for. Maybe he thought that I would buy what he sold. He sold souvenirs and watches.

I introduced myself. "I'm studying English here and I have an assignment from my teachers," I said. He nodded. After the few minutes we talked together, I asked permission, "May I write or record our conversation?" His face was red. He was very angry at me, and said, "If you record our conversation, I will kick you." He carried off my tape recorder from my hand and checked it. I was very nervous and afraid. Fortunately, I had not turned it on when we had our conversation so he didn't find anything. And then he interrogated me. I said that I had come from Indonesia. I study in Rome. But I am taking this summer to study English at Sacred Heart Theology School for about three months.

Knowing I was honest, he told me that he has a friend who studied in the Vatican. His friend came to the USA to meet him four years ago. "Is the Vatican in Rome?" he asked. "Yes, it is," I said. "So, are you a priest?" he said. "Yes, I am," I replied. His face became soft. And then without my asking, he told me openly that he comes from Pakistan but he has been living in the USA for many years. Finally, we finished our conversation with nice appreciation.

From this experience I find that there is a challenge in studying English. But in a challenging situation, sometimes we precisely find fathomless experiences that make us grow. And finally I finish my English course with giving my great appreciation to SCJ's American Province, my teachers, and my community where I have lived for about three months.

Thanks

Br. Ferdinand SINZOTUMA, SCJ (Burundi)

It was a great privilege to spend two months as an ESL student. I want to extend my thanks to all the Sacred Heart School of Theology community for the attention which they have shown me. I want to thank the people throughout the length and breadth of this area, for their thoughtfulness, their cooperation and understanding.

It seems to me that as I go back to my country, I who came here as a foreigner, I now go as an American representative in my country. I want to tell my countrymen what you are, what I have seen, etc. There is ignorance about Americans in Burundi and I do not believe that most Americans are fully informed about Burundi.

I have had a remarkable summer at Sacred Heart School of Theology and in my understanding, the School has grown because of the presence of Burundians. Someone writes that we are the sum of our actions and motivation. These words resonate with me personally.

As a teacher in Burundi, I appreciate the premise that an individual's actions can result in a fantastic end product. Teachers have taken this even further.

I have learned that all members of Sacred Heart School of Theology are a remarkable group of individuals whose collective actions deserve my thanks and admiration.

I need to find the words to thank teachers for their actions and motivation in the classroom, the guiding that they play on a daily basis in their student's lives.

I also need to acknowledge just how much I have been shaped by my colleagues and friends at Sacred Heart School of Theology. I have a myriad of experiences, too many to mention, that have impacted on my life in a memorable and meaningful way.

I am extremely grateful for the role that everyone has played throughout the two months; they have been happy months that I will always remember fondly.



The ESL Program 2010

Fr Blaise NZEYIMANA, SCJ (Burundi)

Do you know the Sacred Heart School of Theology's English as a Second Language Program? Let me tell you about it. I didn't know about this program. I learned about it through the Vatican's Embassy in Bujumbura/Burundi. There was an opportunity for five Burundians to come to the Sacred Heart School of Theology to learn English. I took that opportunity and came to the School in July 2010. Unfortunately, I arrived two weeks late to where it is located, at the School of Theology.

Even if I was two weeks late at the Sacred Heart Monastery, I was happy, because people welcomed me with open arms. But, it was very impressive to hear the American English spoken on the way to the USA, and to hear people speaking in the Sacred Heart Monastery. They all spoke very fast and I did not understand anything. My English is so low, I thought, and I enjoyed this opportunity to learn English.

I never did think there would be a test before beginning class. But it was the first activity I did. The teachers wanted to know what my English level was and what way was better to teach me.

When I began class and knew the daily and weekly schedules, I appreciated how students study English Grammar and Pronunciation, and it was necessary for me to do homework and to write compositions in my journal. All those activities helped me to remember vocabulary and to speak English. It was very hard to understand what teachers said, but day by day, I understood a lot. All of the talking was an opportunity to hear people speaking and to speak myself. I still speak slowly now, but some people have said to me that I speak English good, even if I am not proud of my speaking. This means that I have to continue to practice speaking and writing. I think it would be good to stay somewhere where no one speaks my native language, only English. It is important for anyone to practice the language he is studying.

The teachers are excellent because they often give help to the students and they are proud of their improvement. I think that they don't teach to make money, but to rescue those who have difficulties speaking English.

The ESL program is located in the Sacred Heart School of Theology. There, students live with seminarians and have the opportunity to practice speaking English. They do this sharing meals and every time they meet together. Through Liturgical celebrations, students hear the seminarians' speaking and can imitate them.

For me, I have two difficulties with improving my English. It isn't easy to hear and understand what American people say fast, and to find appropriate vocabulary when I want to speak about something. I need a long time for improvement. And some other students expressed these difficulties, too. However, we all appreciate the ESL Program. It would be better to have practice in pastoral work somewhere, in a parish for example. Or, I think it would be good to live with an American family for one or two months.

So, I thank all the people working in the ESL Program. I hope that my English will improve more because of their help. I wish good luck to the people who will come to the Sacred Heart School of Theology to learn English, and to the future teachers who will teach them.



Major League Baseball

Fr. Wilfredo Corniel Castellanos, SCJ (Venezuela)



It was the morning of the first Monday in September, and we had no classes since it was Labor Day. Dawn arrived raining, and most of the morning the rain came and went. I was not worried because I knew that the rain could not ruin my day. It seemed incredible that I would go to my first major league baseball game. For many years I have followed baseball in my country; on television I saw the stadiums. Some impressed more than others.

It was time to leave. I had my ticket in hand, my hat and my camera, but all the excitement of being able to be there at Miller Park, one of the most recent baseball fields, with a stadium roof, or rather with a roof that can open and close, for this reason I did not care if it rained, because closing the roof, everything was solved.

We reached the parking lot, and there I had my first great impression: all the celebration that is done, the many families or groups of friends making food in the parking lot and listening to the game. We walked through the bridge connecting the parking with the stadium, and I could not believe how immensely large it was; I felt like an ant.

I looked at the front door and after queuing up to enter I was there at Miller Park and felt a great emotion. The game had not yet started.

The ambience inside the stadium was different from the parking lot. The Milwaukee Brewers would play against the St. Louis Cardinals. I was ready in my seat waiting for the voice to say play ball. Through the internal speakers of the stadium, a girl sang the national anthem, and I followed on the main screen of the stadium. After it jumped to the ground in the house and started the party.

The local team played very well but luck did not accompany them and they lost. For me it was a different experience, because in my country, baseball games are different, there is more passion in the fans. The local team has a lot of support, even if it is not the best, it has its fans. Before the end we went back home to avoid the traffic leaving the stadium. That night I was very happy because I had gone to my first major league game.

Staring at the Humble Jesus

Fr. Elis Handoko, SCJ (Indonesia)

*Love! It's about love and mercy!
And I'm so sure that this figure expresses
the interior love of God in a person named Jesus.*

Under the blazing sun, a woman was sitting on a rock. Her clothes were far from luxurious, no sandals on her feet. Her body was slightly bent, with her left hand on her chest and the right one embracing her daughter's back who was standing nearby her.

The daughter's posture was not so different than the mother's, shabby, thin, and glazed. She put her hands on her mother's right thigh. Her bare feet allowed her to stand in her mother's shadow,

perhaps to avoid the blazing sun of this summer! Maybe! I just think this.

They both were staring deeply at the basin, where a man was doing something. "That man is Jesus!" the visitor guide Marcie concluded, pointing toward the figure mentioned. This was the statue in the garden beside the Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist, in Milwaukee.

The statue depicts Jesus washing one foot of a woman. Jesus rolls his arms. He is kneeling on the ground. His body is bent over, lower than that of the woman and daughter. His sight is focused on the woman's foot. And the mother and daughter... they gaze simultaneously and calmly at what Jesus is doing to the mother's foot in the basin. They're still contemplating and they both have been staring at him for a while. In their contemplation, I find myself confronting in whom I believe. In their contemplating images, I find the God who is so humble and creative by pouring his mercy and love for the weak. In this model of God, I find "what I am" and "what I should be" by imitating Jesus in life.

In myself, I find that I have such a tendency to be like a Pharisee in the Bible that I oversee the attitudes of others, make a list of their weaknesses, and even judge them. As a human being, I recognize that I was born with certain weaknesses. In this long journey of life, I always ask the Lord that I may be aware of my weakness contemplating his humble and merciful heart in daily life.



All images in this issue by Fr. Elis Handoko, SCJ.
Thank you!