

An Unexpected Gift

OUR VISIT TO THE TRINITARIAN NUNS OF SUESA was marked by the opportunities to share with open hearts our common monastic journey with its questions, hopes, fears and joys. The love and trust between the two communities grounded this visit. Moreover, an unexpected gift that made our communion palpable was the visit of Ernesto Bustio, a priest-friend who hosts a shelter/hostel along the *Camino de Santiago* in the little town of Güemes.

Ernesto showed up one morning with a young Swedish couple and their little baby. The sisters announced that we were going to have the baptism of the baby as part of our morning prayer. Then Ernesto told us the story behind this couple: Solvor, who is the mother of the baby, had worked in the refugee camps in Kenya for a few years, and she also served among the Gypsies in Romania. After years of giving herself without seeing any real improvement in either situation, she lost hope. It was during this dark time that she walked the *Camino de Santiago*. During her stay in Güemes, talking with Ernesto and reflecting on the beautiful paintings of Gospel-discipleship in the chapel at the hostel, she found hope and a new joy for life. When she returned to Sweden, she shared the powerful experience with her then-boyfriend Jans. He was a communist, father of two young sons, who had taken-in three Afghan teenage boys he was hoping to adopt to prevent their being deported. When they married, they came to Güemes, and Ernesto brought them to the sisters' monastery in Suesa. There the stained-glass window of the Trinity and the community life of the sisters impacted Jans so much that, in Ernesto's words, "...just as she had found her hope, he found his faith!" Jans simply rejoiced in how compatible his communist identity was with his wife's Christian commitment. The depiction in the stained glass was to Jans so playful: God as three dancing women.

The baby was baptized Efraín Ernesto. Not only because of Ernesto Bustio but also in tribute to Ernesto Cardenal and Ernesto "Che" Guevara.



Reflecting on the experience: here is a couple who bring together in love what would have seemed irreconcilable and even tainted by conflict—Christianity and communism! with a vision of Gospel service open enough to nurture three young Muslim boys at home. Isn't this ecumenically inclusive witness a life-giving path for a world so fractured by fear, hatred and rejection?

As the Trinitarian sisters and the Weston brothers were named the 'godparents' of Efrain Ernesto, we prayed that we may nurture this vision of faith and inclusion in the family of God for the future and peace of our world. ■

