

Daily log
CIB Symposium 2010
Sister Nancy Bauer, OSB
Entry: September 9, 2010

Hola! Day 2 of the Symposium was “Spanish Day.” The Spanish-speaking Sisters had prominent roles in the Liturgy of the Hours and the Eucharistic liturgy, which was celebrated in — you guessed it — Spanish. So it was fitting that the keynote speaker was from Mexico and that she delivered her talk in her native language. Sister Maricarmen Bracamontes gave an impassioned address entitled, “The Place of Hope in Benedictine Spirituality,” in which she challenged us to be “conspirators of God’s mercy” in a world in which too many people live in poverty and oppression.

Sister Maricarmen was born in Culiacan, Sinaloa, Mexico. In 1980, after completing studies in General Medicine, she entered a Benedictine monastery in Mexico City. In 1992, she was a co-founder of Monasterio Pan de Vida in Torreon, Coahuila, Mexico, where she also helped establish St. Scholastica Center for the Integral Development of Women (CEDISME). At CEDISME, she gives workshops and classes in social analysis and biblical spirituality with a gender perspective. She is also completing a Doctor of Ministry degree from Catholic Theological Union in Chicago.

Sister Maricarmen identified situations in our world and church that “clamor for hope” and then named elements in Benedictine life that nourish and strengthen hope, including the following:

- ❖ Benedictine spirituality is eminently biblical and is centered on forming relationships of love — with God, with self and with others.
- ❖ Benedictine monastic life “strives to create the conditions that foster the human integration of all the elements of our beings”: cognitive (mind); affective (heart); ethical, moral (the will and all of its strength); and religious (soul).
- ❖ It is a lifestyle that “allows compassion to flower.”
- ❖ It is a lifestyle that helps people develop the quality of never losing hope in God’s mercy.

I would summarize Sister Maricarmen’s message this way: the Benedictine way of life has the capacity to transform those who live it into effective “witnesses of hope.”