

Our Sacred Heart Story with the Potawatomi People in Kansas, 1841-79

Jenny Morfin, Partner in Mission, Session Two Feb 16, 2022:

Hello to everyone and thank you Molly for inviting me. For me it is a privilege to be able to share part of my experience within the different prism of the Sacred Heart. I have met many of you by interpreting many of your meetings, and through the Popular Education Network, La RED that Reyna Gonzalez invited me to help facilitate some years ago.

Today I stand in Yanaguana or “Land of the Spirit Waters”, now known as San Antonio, is the ancestral homeland to the Payaya, a band that belongs to the Tāp Pīlam Coahuiltecan Nation (pronounced kwa-weel-tay-kans). The Tāp Pīlam Coahuiltecan Nation is a collective of affiliated bands and clans including not only the Payaya, but also Pacoa, Borrado, Pakawan, Paguame, Papanac, Hierbipiame, Xarame, Pajalat, and Tilijae Nations. The Tāp Pīlam Coahuiltecan Nation populated lands across what is now called Northern Mexico and South Texas. Although these tribes are grouped under the name Coahuiltecan, they spoke a variety of dialects and languages. Some of the major languages that are known today are Comecrudo, Cotoname, Aranama, Solano, Sanan, as well as Coahuilteco.

I was born and raised in Mexico City and I am an alumni of the Sacred Heart school there. But where I truly lived the charism and the popular education methodology was in missions with the most disfranchised peoples in Mexico. There are 64 indigenous languages and many groups nowadays but they have blended with modernism and the poverty that brings to them. That is where I truly lived and felt the love of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Reading this book and taking in all the trauma we heard last session, has made it clear that the popular education pedagogy started since then.

So the colonization process was brutal in many ways, especially for the natives. Then slaves and all the dynamics to overpower them. So I read about all the processes of the RSCJ missionaries with the example of Philippine Duchesne building the boarding school, adapting to the culture, letting the children go back to their families, learning the language and even allowing and adapting some of the spirituality. But later on, they had to follow the government funding and rules, like having everything in English. They fell in thinking more with the mind and the masculine energy than with the heart of Jesus. The intentions were right but the pressure of the hegemonic power prevailed.

I believe that everything we're doing now may and must help change the course of trauma and have us live as better humans.