January 17, 2016

This past week I attended the pastor’s meeting for Jesuit parishes in our province. If you happened to grab a 2016 calendar from us, you noticed the parishes are the focus. We are 16 total in number stretching from Puerto Rico to Denver, and Belize to St. Louis.

Our parishes reflect not only the geographical diversity of the province but also nearly every other category as well. They are in large metro areas and tiny villages; some are located in very poor neighborhoods and others in more affluent. We are ethnically and racially diverse congregations. Liturgies are celebrated in English, Spanish, Garifuna and Maya.

What we all share is faith in Christ. Those many communities are places where the sacraments are celebrated, the Word is proclaimed, the poor are welcome, believers of all ages are formed, charity is practiced, creation is reverenced, justice is sought, and the Good News is lived.

These faith communities reflect the wonderful paradox of the Church being very diverse and one at the very same time. They are a manifestation of God’s presence. To paraphrase St. Paul, There are many gifts, many peoples, many parishes; but the same Spirit that is in all and through all.

Fr. Dan White, S.J.