

Skills

Niche

SHEC was conceptualized out of the desire to follow Jesus Christ more intensely. Christ came into the world and lived among the poor of Palestine. He lived simply with them; he proclaimed the good news to the poor. He addressed their human needs such as healing, food, land and others. In order to follow his footsteps, the Rogationists went out from the four corners of their comfortable seminary and began to live with the poor. This first started on week ends of the school year 1998. Later on, after five years of living with the poor without introducing programs and pretending to be their saviors, the Congregation began to assign two of its priests to live literally with the poor of Malibay, Pasay City. After their immersion, they started to organize the people; they helped them to form their own organization and to address their own concerns. Only then the programs on housing and others were formulated and acted upon by the people.

SHEC is peculiar because of the following: foundation that is based on the optic of the poor, radical living with the poor, comprehensive approach in promoting the total human well being of the poor and capacitating the poor to be on their own.

First, SHEC wants to follow Jesus from the eyes of the poor. This time, Jesus is seen not from the dogmas formulated by well known dogmatic theologians, nor from the perspective of the west which is most of the times, anchored on the dichotomy between matter and form. But simply, Jesus is seen from the perspective of the struggling, awakened poor who want to liberate themselves from the bondage of poverty. This makes a lot of difference because Jesus is known not from how others have interpreted him but how he has revealed himself to the lowly. Thus, in order to fully know Him, one has to know the poor, live with them and learn from them. Only then can Jesus be understood as a compassionate God, liberator of the oppressed as testified in Ex 20:2-3, and proclaimer of the Kingdom of God especially to the poor as seen in Lk 4:16-21. There are only a few religious groups in the world which follow Jesus Christ based on this perspective. In the Philippines, there are only some religious groups like the Third Look at Jesus Movement, Franciscans, Camilians, Passionists, Rogationists and others. But SHEC, as a group, not as individuals, is one of a kind which strictly follows the biblical Jesus from the perspective of the poor by living literally with them.

Secondly, Jesus radically lived with the poor. From his majestic heavenly kingdom, he came down to live with the poor. Jesus Christ chose to be born as a poor person. He was a companion of the widows, the orphans, tax collectors and sinners during his time. SHEC literally follows Jesus in this aspect. From the moment of its inception, SHEC was established among the poor in Pasay City. The Priests assigned lived with the poor. Until now, they are still living with them. Their house is situated right at the heart of the shanties along the creek of Tripa de Gallina. According to Sr. Rosanne Mallilin, from the National Secretariat for Social Action of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines, as far as their record shows, there are no other groups in Manila

which live among the poor communities. There might be some of them around. But SHEC simply is. There are some religious groups which render service to the poor but they just visit the poor for a short period of time. Most of the times, this is done through their immersions. But after that, they return to their respective conclaves or convents. Whereas SHEC lives with the people it serves through and through.

There are several religious groups which work with the poor. Among the better known groups are those of Mother Teresa of Calcutta in Tondo, Manila and that of Fr. Beltran in Smokey Mountain, also in Tondo.

Thirdly, SHEC strives to address the concerns of the poor in a comprehensive manner. Jesus Christ treated the poor during his time as persons and not as souls or bodies separately, but as total human persons. When he forgave sins, healing of the body was also included. He considered a person in its totality. SHEC, in this respect, also strives to address the needs of the poor by considering their total human well being. Thus, in its development programs, integral human programs are developed such as values formation, housing, education, livelihood, etc. Most of the assisting groups in Manila have their specific program as their main focus. For instance, Habitat for Humanity is working only for building socialized housing for the poor. SHEC also works for housing but this is together with livelihood, education, values formation and other programs in order to fully support their monthly amortizations in housing. There is also the *Gawad Kalinga* (GK). They also work for the low-cost housing together with livelihood, values formation and other programs. They encourage housing beneficiaries to render sweat equity instead of letting them pay for their houses. Literally, the beneficiaries do not pay anything for their houses. Like GK, SHEC is more or less the same. The only difference is that SHEC requires the housing beneficiaries to pay their houses in a longer period of time at an affordable rate. This is to let the poor put more value on their houses when they are exerting more effort to look for money to pay their houses. This is SHEC's way of empowering the poor, thus, dignifying them. Besides, SHEC gives the beneficiaries the possibility to own their lots or housing units after full payment. This is to develop the security of tenure. Caritas-Manila also has comprehensive programs for the integral development of the poor human persons. But unlike SHEC, they do not have housing component at this time. This is just to show the differences in principles of the different assisting generous groups. This deserves esteem.

Finally, SHEC believes in the goodness and giftedness of every person. SHEC aims to empower the awakened poorest of the poor. This means facilitating them, capacitating them, enabling them in order to become sustainable. To carry this out, SHEC follows a five-year program. It starts with immersion, then community organizing which includes leadership trainings, actual implementations of plans, finally, phase out. SHEC prepares and helps people to be on their own. Dole out system is not allowed. People are encouraged to work and not to depend on others. It forms active leaders and participative members. In the end, SHEC leaves the people when they can already stand on their own. For this reason, SHEC is transient in nature. It goes to where it is needed as inspired by the Holy Spirit.

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Administrative and legal

SHEC came into existence because of the permission granted by the Philippine-Indian Delegation Council of the Rogationists of the Heart of Jesus in 2003. This was spearheaded by Fr. Bruno Rampazzo, RCJ, Major Superior of the Rogationists in Asia. Since Pasay City belongs to the jurisdiction of the Archdiocese of Manila, permission was sought from His Eminence Gaudencio Cardinal Rosales, DD. Knowing that such work is meant for the poor, permission was at once granted in collaboration with the respective parish priests around the areas covered.

After seeking the support of the Religious Superiors, registration of SHEC was made in Securities and Exchange Commission. This gave SHEC the legal personality to operate and make transactions with different concerned agencies Likewise, operating in Pasay needs permission from the City Mayor. Gladly, the permit was granted.

In seeking partnership with other agencies, some memoranda of agreement were done. This happens with big institutions like *Pondo ng Pinoy* Community Foundation, Inc., Habitat for Humanity-Philippines, Social Housing Finance Corporation., Inc.

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