

MIENTRAS TANTO

One Day In Person/Zoom Assembly Learning & Fellowship Event

“Mientras Tanto” - meaning “Meanwhile” - is the theme of our Synod Assembly Learning Day this year, from The Acts of the Apostles, Chapter 9, “Meanwhile, Saul...” It is the story of Saul’s encounter with God on the road to Damascus and his encounter with Ananias who heals him. It is the story of Saul’s transformation from the tormentor of Christians to the world’s evangelizer. Meanwhile, it is also the story of Ananias’ transformation as he heals the person he once feared. During our Synod Assembly Learning Day, we will dwell in the reality that many stories are occurring at the same time, that God’s presence is in many places and the Spirit is working within many people and communities.

Dr. Luis Torres-Hostos, Founding Dean of the School of Social Work at The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley, will facilitate three participatory conversations to explore what we are doing, and what we can do, “meanwhile.” We will start by agreeing on some group norms to ensure that the conversations proceed without judgment and in a spirit of reflection. Some of the questions we will address are: Who are the “Paul’s” and the “Ananias” in our lives, who are our tormentors and our healers (*or who is causing harm and who is bringing healing*)? How can we remain focused solely on our promised future when “meanwhile” God’s children are suffering? How do we make life better for all of God’s children? How do we say “**Yes, Lord!**” like Ananias did, rather than becoming paralyzed by inaction or by fear that the “Saul” in our life will strike us down?

Meanwhile, worship will go on throughout the entire day. We’ll begin with a gathering hymn in the morning, trusting that our dwelling in Scripture and our conversations will serve as witnesses to God’s work in our world in many peoples and places all at the same time. We’ll close our day with a brief sermon and communion, acknowledging our unity as the body of Christ across time and space, and even between the two geographic and one online location of our learning day. If you’re joining us by Zoom, we recommend having some communion elements available! We’ll worship in both English and Spanish and will have materials available in full in both languages.

These are profound questions that all of us struggle with, often on a daily basis. Engaging in honest, genuine, non-threatening, and non-judgmental conversations **together** and in the context of worship will help us all to live our Christian lives more fully, *meanwhile*... Join us!

