

Date: October 3, 2014

Re: First Days at IPA - Sister Helen Martinez

SISTER HELEN MARTINEZ - UN REPRESENTATIVE - FIRST DAYS AT IPA

I can hardly believe I am here at IPA in the Big Apple! I received a very warm welcome from the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary here at West 97th Street. Finally met the two sisters with whom I will be working for the next six months, Sister Mary Margaret from Fargo and Sister Jansi from India who is working in Thailand. There is also a student intern from St. Rita's College in Brisbane, Australia.

There was a lovely prayer service prepared by Elsa for us. Afterwards, we had a little welcoming party. It was delightful to try some different foods. From the Philippines we had rambuttan: a fruit with a white soft flesh. Jansi brought some Khanom tako phueak: a traditional sweet from Thailand made with coconut, sugar, rice and flour and taro pieces in a banana leaf.

Also in the IPA office we share the space with Tori Larson who is the UNANIMA Executive Assistant for the other Religious at the UN. Sister Stacy Hanrahan is a CND from CT who is the representative for the CND - NGO Relationships at the UN.

Group on Girls which was located on E. 52nd Street at the Salvation Army Centre. There were representatives from Fordham University, the Dominican, Loretto, and Passionist Communities. There was reports and discussion around the early enforced marriages of girls. The American Bar Association is resolving to pass a resolution about this for 2015. The International Day of the Girl will be on October 10th. There should be a live broadcast for this event from the United Nations.

Learned about the United Nations Journal which is posted nearly every day and which gives an agenda for the day. We went to TD bank with the others to set up banking accounts. Monday is a holiday at the UN - so a day off to explore the city. We will get our UN ground passes on Tuesday. There will be a UN orientation three days for us. Then on the coming weekend it is off to Newburg for a team building exercise with Elena Hoye, the IPA Networker.

Blessings, Helen