



Generation

“Pope Francis, it’s me Patty” – A Member of Generation X

By Patty Vila, SouthFloridaReporter.com, Cuba Expert, Sept. 23, 2015 - As a Cuban-American woman that belongs to the **Generation X** community (born during 1966 - 1976), it has been fascinating to watch and hear comments from Pope Francis’ visit to Cuba.

On Monday morning I was on a live local morning TV program with Maria Elena Alpizar, Vice President of the “Women In White Movement” also known as “Las Damas De Blanco.” Although she and I disagree on some issues, one thing that brings us together is our commitment to human rights and freedom. Six people from Miami called in to give their opinion on the meeting the Pope had with Fidel. It was five against one in favor of the meeting.

I felt their pain through the phone. They felt as if the Pope had slapped them in the face. The phrase “STILL DIVIDED” kept coming to mind. The divide continues from Little Havana to Cuba all the way up to Congress where the Congressional Republicans hope Pope Francis would leave his liberal views in Rome.

The two exchanged books, spoke about climate change and the challenges facing the world. While living in Cuba, the CNN Havana crew went wherever Fidel went. Lucia, Rudy and I got to know him well.

No one ever knows what is discussed behind closed doors. Who are we to judge? From having the experience of working for CNN, NBC News and Oprah and the opportunity to sit in high-level confidential meetings, the public is never privy to private conversations. The Pope perhaps did bring up the issue of Human Rights. My sources in Washington and Havana assured me this subject has been in discussion. It’s all

in the perspective on how one analyzes the current situation. For me, the fact that this is the third Pope that goes to Cuba in less than twenty years is a blessing and a beacon of light for the Cuban people.

I had tears in my eyes when Pope Francis spoke from the heart to **The Millennials** (born from the 1980 – 2000). The message was clear. “Don’t give up on your dreams. Keep hope alive! Always be capable of creating friendships.”

I said similar words to a young, 21-year-old Cuban man living in Havana who is the nephew of a friend of mine. I had the opportunity to meet him while I was in Cuba two months ago. With a desperate look on his face, he told me, “I want to leave here. I don’t want to live here anymore. I want to move to the states and build a future.” I shared positive words of encouragement and told him to study, learn English and learn as much as he could in his trade. I assured him this was the beginning of a positive transition and to please be patient. Obviously, I was worried he may try to immigrate illegally but his family and I were discouraging him from doing that.

My parent’s generation: **The Baby Boomers** (born between 1946 – 1964). The best gift I ever gave my parents was when they visited me in Cuba. Dad said it was the best vacation of his life. He got in touch with his roots, saw his family and spent time with me. Looking back, I realized this is one of the best moments I ever had with my father. He passed away in December of 2014 needing a liver transplant. He had Nash. His trip was one of reconciliation. For my mother, it was a different story. It was one of closure. Mom left when she was 13 years old and never saw her father again.

I want to express my feelings to all those that, after half a century, returned to close whatever emotional embargo they felt, to connect with family, their childhood, a lost lover and their country. Pope Francis used his third and last mass on the island to call for a “revolution of tenderness” and renewal of faith. I know it won’t be easy for some but I ask you all to try and do that for the Cuban people – our Cuban family living 90 miles away.

Please join us on Thursday night at tinta y cafe 268 SW 8th street at 6:30pm, September 24th

Come hear testimonials from people that visited Cuba that had not been there in 50 years.

Please RSVP at tintaycafe@aol.com

Ultimo Jueves Invite Septemeber

Space is limited