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EDITORIAL

In this number of SEDOS, we are able to present to a wider audience the conferences given at our Annual General Assembly by two superior generals who were both Secretaries of the Synod for Consecrated Life.

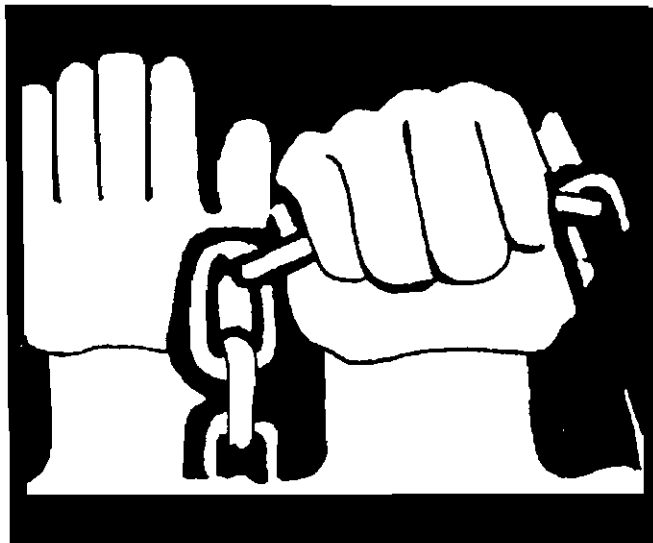
- Brother JOHN JOHNSTON, FSC., in his Conference, gave special attention to the Brothers in religious life and to new prophetic roles religious should assume. He believes that prophetic roles can only grow out of our daily life focused on Christ.

- Father MARCELLO ZAGO, OMI., pointed out many important convergencies emerging from the synodal process. The Synod stressed the indissoluble link between consecration and mission. He sees proclamation, services of justice, ecumenism and inter-religious dialogue as being among the outstanding missionary ministries in the future.

- Father MICHAEL AMALADOSS, SJ., gave a key address at the National Missionary Rally of the French Church in Lourdes at the end of last year. In his presentation he invites all Christians, lay and religious, to live their mission like Jesus: through prophecy and loving service.

- MICHAEL TRABER deals with new forms of communication. Electronic communication becomes even more elitist and selective. The result is a real danger that Africa will be forgotten by the media.

- One of the topics of our 1995 SEDOS Residential Seminar in June will be the Church in Indonesia. ANDRE WARK thinks that much of the future relationship between the religions there will depend on the next President to be elected.



Missionary Murdered in Guatemala

On 19 December 1994, Scheut Missionary Alfons Stessel, 65 years old, was shot and killed in Guatemala. He had attended a pre-Christmas celebration in the village, and was returning to the parish house alone when he was attacked by unidentified men and was shot once in the chest, and died almost instantly. The Provincial Rev. José Guerrero, CICM., was informed. When he arrived on the scene he found the parishioners praying and singing hymns, gathered around the body.

On Tuesday evening a Mass was celebrated in the parish of Tierra Nueva I, where Padre Alfonso had worked among the poor for the last six years. The parishioners said Padre Alfonso worked to conscientize them to fight the injustices they suffer daily, and demand their rights.

On Wednesday all the bishops of Guatemala, who were in a meeting in Guatemala City, concelebrated the Mass of the Resurrection, along with about 50 religious and diocesan priests. The Mass was attended by many pastoral workers from the poor urban areas, representatives of the Belgian and French Embassies, and members of the popular movements.

Alfons Stessel was born in Belgium in 1929. He entered the Congregation of the Immaculate Heart of Mary (Scheut Missionaries) in 1948. He was ordained in 1954, and was assigned to the CICM mission in Zaire (then called Belgian Congo), and worked there until 1986, when he was transferred to Guatemala. His murder is believed to have been carried out by a security forces-backed death squad. In the past year there have been numerous documented cases of Church workers being harassed and threatened with death by the increasingly active death squads. He is the fourth CICM Missionary to die violently in Guatemala since 1980.

Book on

African Synod Symposium:

THE KAIROS OF A SYNOD

2nd Edition can be ordered at SEDOS Secretariat in Rome.

OUR PROPHETIC ROLE IN A CHANGING CHURCH AND CHANGING WORLD

Brother John Johnston, FSC

(John Johnston, FSC., is the Superior General of the Brothers of the Christian Schools. He served as the Assistant Secretary of the Synod for Religious Life. This is a slightly shortened version of the Conference given on 6 December 1994, at the SEDOS Seminar).

THE EXPERIENCE OF THE SYNOD

Need for Clarification

In the late 1980's and early 1990's, I noticed that Superiors General were expressing, with increasing frequency and urgency, the need to clarify the identity, role, and mission of religious life in the Church and in the world today, a Church and a world which had changed dramatically in the previous three decades, and were continuing to change.

One of the most striking developments was - and still is - that of the participation of the laity in evangelisation, a phenomenon which John Paul II says in *Redemptoris Missio* is in the process of changing ecclesial life. Four out of five members of religious institutes are lay. The work of these religious - all of it - can be done and is in fact being done by men and women who are not members of religious institutes. These men and women, many of whom are very committed Catholics, are well aware that there is no need today to enter religious life to perform works or ministries that only yesterday were done predominantly by women and men religious.

In those moments of reflection several years ago, some of us were expressing the need to confront directly and honestly the gravity of the crisis of vocations to religious life, a crisis provoking us to ask whether religious life, as we have known it, has a future. The crisis is most evident in economically developed areas of the world and is more apparent in some institutes than others.

It is a fact that the vocation of Brothers is the vocation most adversely affected by the current crisis. My own institute has today considerably

less than half the number of Brothers it had thirty years ago. We have excellent statements about the value, relevance, and even need for our vocation. Nevertheless, every year the total number diminishes and the average age increases. I think, however, that Father Kolvenbach is correct when he says that the crisis in the vocation of Brothers is a reflection of the crisis religious life as such is experiencing: "This crisis", he wrote, "is possibly less manifest among religious who are also priests, since these manage to conceal it within their priestly commitments".

But, of course, we were aware also that the crisis was seriously affecting institutes of Sisters, as well as clerical institutes. We knew also that some Bishops, priests, and women and men religious themselves, were beginning to ask whether religious life is a form of life which contributed very significantly in the past, but has "had its day".

It is true that there are vocations at the present time in a number of countries of the so-called "economically developing" world and in countries recently liberated from Marxism. I think that young people are entering religious life in these countries for reasons similar to those which formerly motivated young people in countries that are now called "developed". One of these reasons, among others, is that there is an acute need for certain services, services which women and men religious can provide. I am not saying that there is anything necessarily wrong with this motive. But it does suggest that when these geographical areas become more "developed", they could have - unless corrective steps are taken - the same problems we are having today in economically developed countries.

But there was a third reason why we began to think of some kind of forum to consider religious life in the Church today: the need to strengthen "mutual relations" between Bishops and religious, as well as among all those who constitute the ecclesial community at every level. Several concrete problems of those years had convinced us of the need to review the lived experience of "mutual relations" in the Church.

At an Assembly in May, 1991, therefore, the Union of Superiors General decided to organise an international forum on religious life. We knew that there was a possibility that religious life might be the topic of the next Synod, but many of us preferred a forum which would permit full participation of large numbers of religious, as well as theologians.

Following that meeting the USG President, Vice-President, and Secretary discussed the idea with Cardinal Hamer, Prefect of the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life. He responded very positively, but he also informed us that he expected the Holy Father to choose consecrated life as the topic of the next Synod.

Nature of the Synod

It is impossible to understand the work of the Synod without some knowledge of its nature. During the dinner which followed the concluding Mass, the Holy Father, speaking spontaneously, reflected on the etymology of the word "synod". He reminded us that the root meaning is not only "meeting" or "assembly", but also "way" or "journey". He described the Synod as a long process of "walking with" and - to our great satisfaction - commented on the significant contribution women and men religious had made to the Synod "journey". He stated emphatically that he wanted women and men religious to continue "walking with" him as he prepared the post-Synodal Document.

The image of a "journey" is interesting and helpful. The Synod is indeed a long process, beginning with the announcement and concluding only with the publication of the Apostolic Exhortation, a process of at least four or five years. The Synod, therefore, is not over.

It is important to bear in mind that a synod is an assembly of Bishops. One can certainly argue in favour of an advisory body that is more representative of the entire ecclesial community, but that is not immediately pertinent. The recent Synod was a Synod of Bishops. It was, however, extraordinary in that a major effort was made to involve women and men religious. In addition to the 245 members of the Synod, there were 103 auditrices, auditors, and experts - by far the highest number ever - 60 of whom were women. Furthermore, for the first time, these participants were permitted to speak, not only

in the small groups, but also in the General Assembly.

My Hopes for the Synod

I personally brought to the Synod four major hopes: 1) that it recognise and affirm the contribution to evangelisation that religious life has made in the past, is making today, and can make tomorrow; 2) that it clarify the specific place, identity, and role of women and men religious within the ecclesial community; 3) that it provide clear directives for the creation and/or strengthening of structures to promote mutual relations and coherent pastoral planning among all those who constitute the ecclesial community; 4) that it call women and men religious to live their vocation - in all its dimensions - with greater authenticity.

Without hesitation I am able to say that my hopes and expectations were realised to an appreciable extent. In the time at my disposal this morning, I want to comment on some aspects of that October experience that I consider pertinent to the topic of this Conference.

I. RECOGNITION AND AFFIRMATION

Several years ago, the Conference of Bishops of a country that has witnessed very few vocations to religious life in the recent past, published a Pastoral Letter praising women and men religious, most of them elderly, and thanked them sincerely for their presence and services. But one searches in vain in that statement for any indication that its authors were really convinced that religious life is important, if not essential, for the future of the Church in that country and that God continues to call young men and women to be religious.

In an interview published in *Testimoni* a couple of years ago, Father Cabra remarked that during the Synod on Europe he was struck by the paucity of references to religious life. "Today", he said, "the most eloquent model is that of the laity. It is experienced with such urgency as to put other models in the shade... the impression is that religious belong to the past, the future belongs to the laity".

It seems to me, that in the very act of convoking this Synod, John Paul II sent a powerful message to the Church and to the world. That message is still being communicated through every step of the long process that is the synod. That message is, religious institutes still have something very important to offer the Church.

In intervention after intervention Bishops referred to consecrated life as GIFT - gift of the

Holy Spirit to the Church for the world. They acknowledged with admiration and gratitude the extraordinary contribution to evangelisation religious institutes and societies of apostolic life have made over the centuries and continue to make today. There was frequent mention of the number of women and men religious who have lost their lives in the service of the Church, not only in years past, but in our own day.

The dominant and prevailing tone of the Synod was positive. An impressive spirit of communion, characterised by mutual respect and friendliness, was evident in both the formal and informal contacts among the participants. There were some aggressive interventions, but a spirit of dialogue prevailed. Problems were certainly raised, but most of the Bishops decided that it was preferable to approach them indirectly rather than to transform the Synod into a problem-solving session.

Nevertheless, in a forthright and constructive manner, various Bishops challenged religious institutes to ask themselves honestly whether or not they were facing authentically and creatively the real issues and concerns of people, insisting that religious life will have meaning and a future only in so far as it responds to the critical needs of our day.

Our Own Attitudes and Feelings

It is probable that some of us have been accepting the decline of vocations as a "sign" that religious life is "finished". Others of us are hopeful, but find ourselves in a kind of ongoing depression, with which we have learned to live. Still others of us, when we think of what has happened in our institutes during the past three decades, are inclined to be judgemental, cynical, angry, or bitter. Some of us, perhaps, "survive" psychologically by adopting an attitude of stoical resignation.

To all of us - whatever our attitudes and feelings about the current crisis - this Synod - which is still in process - can be an experience of affirmation and encouragement. It can challenge us to refuse to play "victim" or to "curse the darkness", but to take responsibility for our lives and help our institutes to begin anew.

Consecrated Life

When the topic of the Synod was announced as "The Consecrated Life and its Role in the Church and in the World", the organisers stated that the expression "Consecrated Life" was to be given a broad interpretation, including not only religious institutes and secular institutes, but also societies of apostolic life, and, in an

"analogical sense", other forms of living baptismal consecration "differently" - some of them old, some of them new.

Questions were raised immediately about the precise meaning of the expression and even the appropriateness of employing it. Some considered the term inappropriate because all Christians are consecrated by Baptism; there were those who argued that the word does not play a central role in their particular tradition; others stated that if members of new forms of Christian commitment, including married members, are classified as "consecrated persons", what precisely is the specificity of "consecrated life"? Still others observed that diocesan priests are also "consecrated", finally some asked, if everybody is consecrated, what is the significance of the expression "consecrated life"?

It seems that the problem of how to call or categorise those who live their baptismal consecration "differently" has existed throughout history. It has never been easy and is not easy today to find an "umbrella" expression that captures with theological and canonical precision traditional and newly evolving groups.

I mention this problem because frustration with the lack of consistency in the understanding and use of the term "consecrated life" was voiced by numerous members of the Synod. Frankly, I would have been happier to have had "religious life" as the focus of the Synod, because it was not easy to remain attentive to the multiple forms that we were obliged to consider. The temptation to speak of a Synod on "religious life" was always there. Attempts to resist that temptation by simply substituting "consecrated life" for "religious life" were at times awkward, at times inaccurate.

Because a synod is not a theological congress and cannot be expected to resolve theological issues, many Synod Fathers requested a serious study of the difference, as well as the relationship, between baptismal consecration and the special consecration about which we have been speaking.

Identity of Religious Life

It has not been unusual to hear comments in recent years that the emphasis of Vatican II on the universal call to holiness, as well as its position that religious life belongs not to the hierarchical but to the charismatic structure of the Church, has contributed unwittingly to the confusion concerning the meaning and significance of religious life. Some think that the division of the faithful into clergy and laity leaves religious life without a real identity of its own, and that the crisis in religious life will not be resolved until there is a recognition of the distinc-

tive identity of religious life.

But not everyone accepts that interpretation of what Vatican II did, or at least intended to do. Some say that the Council presented two possible ways to classify members of the Church: from the hierarchical standpoint, everyone is either cleric or lay; religious life is not a middle way. From the charismatic standpoint, some Christians, both clerical and lay, are called to live their baptismal consecration as members of religious institutes (or other forms of consecrated life). It is possible, therefore, to identify three "categories" in the Church; laity, ordained ministers, consecrated persons.

According to this position consecrated life is not only a structure *in* the Church, it is a structure *of* the Church. The Church without consecrated life would not be the Church willed by Christ. *Lumen Gentium* affirmed this when it declared that religious life, "while not entering into the hierarchical structure of the Church, belongs undeniably to her life and holiness".

An impressive number of Synod participants expressed the need for further clarity regarding the precise identity and place of consecrated life in general and of religious life in particular. For that reason the Bishops asked that the study mentioned above include this topic. Needless to say, I hope that women and men religious will have the opportunity to contribute significantly to this study.

The Synod was strongly affirming of the vocation of Sisters and Brothers, reiterating the teaching of Vatican II that their vocation is complete in itself and that their ministries (that word was used explicitly) are in their very nature ecclesial.

Sisters

The interventions of the women participants, both in the General Assembly and in the groups, were of very high quality and recognised as such. But significant also was the contribution of the women to the impressive spirit of community and dialogue that developed during the month together. That constructive and cordial atmosphere was conducive to the development of a genuine consensus that women religious be given greater responsibility in the Church at every level - local, national, international - and that they participate in the preparation of legislation, especially when it concerns them.

I am well aware that the forward movement represented in the Synod was not sufficient to satisfy everyone. Nevertheless, I think that the experience of the Synod will have a positive and long-term impact on the participation of women - consecrated women particularly - in the life of the Church.

Brothers

In my opinion the most extraordinary sentence in the *Instrumentum Laboris* is that which asks the Synod "to resolve the question of the brothers' participation in the administration of clerical institutes and those with priests and brothers, in such a manner that this might be regulated by the particular legislation of individual institutes, with due respect for their nature and tradition" n. 32.

The Synod Secretariat itself requested Brother Pablo Basterrechea to make a fifteen minute presentation on the vocation of Brothers. Numerous participants intervened on the subject. A consensus was quickly reached that the existence of "mixed" institutes (priests and brothers) be recognised and that Brothers of these institutes be allowed to assume all posts of authority, if that is the desire and decision of the institutes. The position, however, of Brothers in institutes that are clerical in nature received less attention.

The *Lineamenta* devoted a page and a half (19b, 21) to the topic of Brothers, declaring that "the consecrated life of Brothers is today the most visible form of consecration in the variety of its charisms... Oftentimes the character of the lay consecrated life for men is not clearly perceived, given that many of the faithful think that it should be joined to the priesthood, while in fact it represents consecration in its utter simplicity".

I think it safe to say that many Brothers appreciated this extraordinary attention and welcomed the affirmation and encouragement. To some other Brothers, however, it seemed that those passages imply that the Brother's vocation is so strange that it requires extraordinary treatment to explain and justify it.

These particular Brothers know that their vocation is not well understood in the Church, but they do not experience any personal need to explain or justify it to anyone. They understand their vocation and are proud to be Brothers. They know that their vocation is "complete". I count myself in this second group of Brothers.

But I have other concerns also. How does one justify the statement: "The consecrated life of Brothers is today the most visible form of consecrated life... it represents consecration in its utter simplicity"?

Of the 82.2 per cent of consecrated persons who are not priests, only 9.7 per cent are Brothers. In what way do Brothers - more than Sisters - manifest consecration in its "most visible form"? In what way do Brothers - any more than Sisters - represent "consecration in its utter simplicity"?

The answer, I suppose, is the following: The Brothers are not priests. But men CAN be priests. Therefore, by not choosing to become priests, Brothers manifest consecration in its utter simplicity and give it its most visible form. That implied choice - a choice Sisters cannot make - seems to me to be the only thing that distinguishes the vocation of Brothers from that of Sisters.

But this line of reasoning is "curious" at best, "clerical" at worst. Underlying it, it seems to me, is an "uncomfortable" assumption that priesthood does somehow "complete" or perhaps "perfect" a priestless consecrated life.

Several years ago I suffered through the homily of a well-meaning Cardinal who praised the Brothers for having "sacrificed" becoming priests for the sake of a special vocation at the service of youth. I have never "sacrificed" becoming a priest! I chose to become a Brother because I felt a much stronger attraction to becoming a Brother than to becoming a priest - an attraction that was central to my discernment that God was calling me to be a Brother.

Sometimes the impression is given that God has called Brothers (some of them at least) to be priests, but that they have chosen to be Brothers instead. Or that they have been called to be either priests or Brothers and have chosen to be Brothers. Such positions are absurd theologically and in no way correspond to my lived experience.

We are Brothers because we want to be Brothers. We know, of course, that some people think that we have become Brothers because we are not capable of becoming priests. I do not doubt that there are some Brothers, particularly in clerical institutes, that are not capable of becoming priests. But it does not follow that they became Brothers because they were not capable of being priests. They had no significant attraction to the priesthood. They chose to be Brothers not because the life was somehow "second-best" for them, but because the life of the Brothers was right for them.

I never hear people asking whether the consecrated life of Sisters is "incomplete" because it lacks the priesthood. Why then do they ask the question about Brothers? Women and men religious who are not ordained priests constitute 82.2 per cent of consecrated persons. Our consecrated life is 100 per cent complete. We do not need to justify ourselves to anyone. *Lumen Gentium* is clear: religious life is open to women and to men, whether or not they are or will become ordained.

One more thought: we Brothers of the Christian Schools say in our *Rule*, in accord

with Canon Law, that we are "lay" and that we belong to an institute that is exclusively "lay". But we *never* refer to ourselves as "lay Brothers". We are Brothers. That is sufficient. I am pleased that some clerical religious are beginning (or are returning to an earlier tradition) to call themselves "Brothers". But I have no intention of calling myself a "lay Brother" in order to be distinguished from them. If distinguishing language is needed - I am not convinced it is - then they will have to call themselves "clerical Brothers" - because we shall continue to call ourselves "Brothers".

I am pleased that the Synod has stated clearly that the consecrated life of non-ordained religious - both women and men - is valid, full, complete, needed, and wanted in the Church of today and tomorrow.

II. OUR PROPHETIC ROLE

The *Instrumentum Laboris* states that consecrated persons have "a special prophetic role in the midst of the People of God, which is prophetic in its very nature" n. 64.

Prophetic, prophecy, prophets... Ask someone in the street what prophets do - and you will probably be told that they foretell the future. If that "someone in the street" knows the Bible, you might be told that prophets cry out to rulers and to all concerned: "Be converted... or face the consequences". Ask a religious and you might be told that prophets denounce all forms of injustice and institutionalised violence. The concept of prophecy is complex. It is important that its comprehensiveness and richness be accepted in its entirety.

Meaning of "Prophetic Role"

In her intervention, Sister Doris Gottemoeller, RSM, said that prophecy is not necessarily a matter of dramatic speeches and gestures, although some occasions call for them, but rather "a transparency to the divine which is the fruit of a life focused on Jesus and which is the real meaning of prophecy - speaking of God". To say that the Church is prophetic in its very nature is to say that we Christians must witness to the existence and presence of the loving God and to what we discern to be his will. This witnessing is expressed in proclamation, denunciation, liberation, solidarity, hope... Living this special prophetic role can be costly. It can bring upon us criticism, rejection, persecution, even death.

To live the role authentically, we must be

women and men of God. How easy it is to say those words. What a different matter it is to take them literally: to BE women and men of God; to be "religious people", to be "at home" in God's presence; to live in relationship with God, to "walk" with him - as Christians... as persons who really believe in Jesus Christ as the Way, the Truth, and the Life, and are totally committed to him, having made public profession to follow him and to be faithful to his teachings.

When Christ is the focus of our life, we learn to think, judge, and act as he wants us to think, judge, and act. More than that, we begin to understand what Paul meant when he said, "I live now not I, but Christ lives in me... For me to live is Christ". We grow in our prophetic vocation to show forth Christ to believers and unbelievers alike - Christ in contemplation on the mountain, Christ healing the sick, Christ blessing children.

In other words we make the loving and saving presence of Christ a visible and effective reality in the changing Church and changing world. That is our prophetic role. Several Bishops reminded us that our life makes sense only if Christ is truly at the centre. I think we need to hear that message frequently. We need to be reminded and encouraged to be women and men of prayer, persons in regular and frequent "contact" with the Lord, persons who devote time on a regular basis to reading and meditating the Scriptures, to spiritual reading, to theological study. Our daily Eucharist provides us the opportunity to renew, in union with Christ, our total consecration to the Trinity and our unconditional commitment to live wholeheartedly this specific way of living baptismal consecration.

Our Charism

This "specific way" is what we call, of course, our charism, that particular gift which our founders received from the Spirit, a gift that has been transmitted to us, and which now must be lived, safeguarded, deepened, and constantly developed for the service of the Church and of the world.

It is by saying YES to that charism - as interpreted by our Institutes - that we achieve integration and interiorisation of the elements that constitute our particular manner of living baptismal consecration. Very often we organise the various constitutive dimensions of religious life into three categories: consecration, mission, community.

Integration properly understood means that the dimensions have become one. We can "distinguish" them mentally, but we cannot "visualise" them, because they do not

exist in time or space. They are integrated, that is to say, they have become one and shape our identity as religious women or men. We are consecrated persons twenty-four hours a day, apostolic persons twenty-four hours a day, community persons twenty-four hours a day. We pray as apostles, we minister as consecrated persons, and we are always women and men of community.

We exercise our prophetic role, therefore, by living our charisms authentically. Synod Fathers reminded us that we evangelise first and foremost by being who we are supposed to be. But to insist on the primacy of "being" over "doing" is not to say that the choice of what we do or the particular service we render is unimportant. On the contrary. What we do is extremely important. We do not exist or give witness in the abstract. We witness as we act. What we choose to do, therefore, for whom we do it, with whom we do it, why we do it, how we do it - are matters of great importance and consequence.

To witness is to send messages. We can be sure that we are always transmitting messages, through who we are and what we do. When we choose to perform certain services for certain peoples, we inevitably send messages. We have to ask ourselves if the messages we communicate are those which we intend to send and are those which God wants us to transmit.

Choice of Ministries

What ministries are most appropriate for women and men religious? The answer depends on our charism. The Church must strive to bring Christ's loving presence to all aspects of life and to all peoples - and to enable the Church to fulfil that mission, the Holy Spirit has given to the Church a multitude and variety of charisms. It is on the level of each institute, therefore, that decisions have to be made in a process of dialogue and discernment, particularly among the members and their superiors. Priorities, of course, must be established - and for that purpose sound criteria need to be determined.

Several participants reminded religious that they are expected to be on the "front lines", in the "desert", on the "margins of society". They urged consecrated women and men to respond to "new needs" - including those of the poor - with the kind of creativity manifested by their founders. It is not difficult to construct lists of new needs: the search for meaning among so many young people today, family difficulties, unemployment, problems related to sexuality, ethnic and racial discrimination, immigration, refugees, illiteracy, homelessness, street children, drugs, political injustice, ecological neglect, AIDS...

But religious were challenged not only to serve the poor, but also to live among them,

inserted in their world - that is to say, to bring Christ's loving presence to the poor. Archbishop Orlando Quevedo of the Philippines, while acknowledging the difficulties and tensions that have often accompanied such initiatives, urged religious "to live and work among the poor in the footsteps of Jesus, poor, chaste, and obedient".

One of the most challenging of all the interventions was that of Cardinal Etchegaray, who reminded religious that poverty was central to their prophetic mission. He said that a valid *résumé* of Christian life is the radical choice that must be made between "two masters".

But while there was an appeal for new initiatives, there were strong calls also for renewed commitment to and revitalisation of some traditional apostolates, such as Catholic education. Catholic schools at all levels - at least those which deserve the name "school" and the name "Catholic" - were recognised as privileged means of evangelisation, of promotion of justice and peace, of preparation of the laity, and of helping the poor to free themselves from misery. Appeals were made for greater creativity and effectiveness in the use of contemporary means of social communication. Religious were urged to continue to bring the presence and service of Christ to the sick, the handicapped, orphans, youth in difficulty, etc.

Mutual Relations

Several Bishops spoke of the excellent contribution being made by commissions established to promote coordination and collaboration among Bishops, parish priests, parishioners, religious, members of new movements, etc. Others, lamented the lack of effective structures to promote dialogue and mutual planning, and the consequent lack of coordination of pastoral activities.

In my opinion there have been and are today faults on both sides. In the past many of our institutes tended to operate too independently. Of course we must always defend our internal autonomy. But we should not initiate or terminate apostolic activities or make transfers of personnel, especially those in key positions, without discussion with the appropriate local Church authorities.

But, needless to say, there will be occasional differences of opinions and even tensions. At such times, as several participants stated, dialogue is more important than ever. Father Timothy Radcliffe recalled that while the early

Church is described as "one in heart and mind", there were disagreements and quarrels. Debates and arguments, he said, can be signs of vitality - as long as there is mutual respect, acknowledgement of legitimate diversity, and a committed effort to learn from one another.

CONCLUSION

I return to a subject I raised earlier: the future of religious life. Several times during the Synod, as I listened to an intervention that I considered pertinent, insightful, and even inspiring, I found myself asking, "But will it make any difference?"

I answered my own question in the affirmative. I said to myself, "Yes, this Synod can help to assure that religious life has a dynamic future of service to the Church and to the world". But how can it help?

I said earlier that my hopes for the Synod are 1) that it recognise and affirm the contribution that religious life has made in the past, is making today, and can make tomorrow; 2) that it clarify the specific place, identity, and role of women and men religious within the ecclesial community; 3) that it provide clear directives for the creation and/or strengthening of structures to promote mutual relations and coherent pastoral planning among all those who constitute the ecclesial community; 4) that it call women and men religious to live their religious vocation in all its dimensions with greater authenticity.

I think that the Synod - and I am using the present tense because the Synod is still in process - is responding effectively to my expectations. I know very well that neither the experience of the Synod nor its conclusions will of themselves "solve" the vocation crisis - a crisis caused by numerous factors, factors that cannot, in my opinion, be pieced together to form a coherent "mosaic".

Nevertheless, what the Synod has done and can continue to do is to assist religious to recover their confidence, pride, and enthusiasm. When that happens, religious will begin again to communicate, not in word, but in daily life, that they are finding meaning, significance, and happiness in living their baptismal consecration in this particular manner. Potential candidates will SEE - and not just read - what authentic religious life is all about. I think they will once again begin to say YES to God's call to follow Christ as women and men religious.

LES NOUVEAUX VISAGES DE LA MISSION

Michael Amaladoss, SJ

Face aux changements du monde

Le monde a changé rapidement ces dernières années et il continue de changer. Les colonialismes politiques se sont effondrés. Il y a partout chez les peuples un désir croissant de démocratie et de participation. Cultures et religions connaissent une résurgence nouvelle comme sources d'identité pour les gens. Il y a une quête de libération et de plénitude de vie. La paix semble à portée de main dans beaucoup de régions de vieux conflits. On parle de la naissance d'un nouvel ordre mondial, avec promesse de liberté et de prospérité pour tout un chacun. Mais ces motifs de joie et d'espoir sont contrebalancés par des sujets de préoccupation. Les monopoles économiques ont remplacé la domination politique. Ce nouvel ordre moral ressemble beaucoup à un ordre économique soutenu par un ordre militaire imposé aux pauvres par les riches. Les gens se sont résignés à des discriminations sociales continues. Les médias créent un monde de rêve qui est aliénant pour un très grand nombre de gens. Tandis que la religion est reléguée à la sphère privée, l'économie et la politique réclament, dans la pratique, une autonomie absolue par rapport à l'ordre moral. Le fondamentalisme religieux et le chauvinisme culturel sont des sources de tension dans de nombreuses parties du monde. Les chaos des émotions succèdent aux prétentions de la rationalité.

Avec ses défis stimulants

Ce temps de crise est à la fois un défi et une opportunité pour notre mission, à condition qu'elle ait un but clairement centré. Après le Concile Vatican II, les expériences et les perspectives de la communauté chrétienne ont changé. Une nouvelle ouverture au pluralisme culturel, à la diversité religieuse ainsi qu'au développement humain et social, a remis en question nos attitudes et nos perspectives traditionnelles en matière de mission. Une

indifférence grandissante à la religion et une déchristianisation croissante n'ont pas seulement affaibli le dynamisme de la mission, mais elles ont fait du vaste monde le champ de la mission. La résurgence des religions en tout lieu remet en cause nos conceptions de l'histoire religieuse du monde. Des tragédies comme la Deuxième Guerre mondiale, ou plus récemment celle du Rwanda, nous font douter de l'efficacité de la mission.

A travers quatre thèmes

Mystère, sacrement, amour-don de soi, communauté : ce sont les nouveaux visages de la mission que j'aimerais évoquer. Ils sont reliés entre eux et ils peuvent s'éclairer mutuellement. Ce sont des aspects ou dimensions constitutives de la même mission. Gardant ceci à l'esprit, examinons-les l'un après l'autre.

I. LA MISSION COMME MYSTÈRE

La Mission s'origine en Dieu-Trinité

Le document du Concile Vatican II sur *L'Activité missionnaire de l'Église* fait remonter l'origine de la mission de l'Église à la mission du Fils et de l'Esprit Saint, selon le projet du Père. Ce projet découle de son amour comme d'une source.

(Dieu)..., «dans sa grande et miséricordieuse bonté nous crée librement, et de plus, il nous appelle gracieusement à partager avec lui sa vie et sa gloire. Il répand sur nous sans compter sa divine bonté et ne cesse de la répandre, en sorte que Lui, qui est le créateur de tout, devienne enfin 'tout en tous'» (1 Corinthiens, 15,28) (Ad Gentes, 2).

Le projet de salut est universel

Cette mission divine ou ce dessein universel de salut sont évoqués de façons diverses dans la Bible. Saint Jean, dans son évangile, parle de la Parole par qui toute chose vient à l'existence. La Parole est la vraie

lumière qui éclaire tout être humain, à qui il donne vie et grâce. Elle devient chaire en Jésus pour faire partager la vie abondante de Dieu (Jean, 1, 1-16). Saint Paul parle du mystère du projet de Dieu, qui veut que tout le monde soit sauvé (1Timothée, 2,4), réunissant en Christ toutes les choses du ciel et de la terre (Éphésiens, 1, 10), et réconciliant toutes choses en lui (Colossiens, 1,20). Il dit aux Romains que toute la création participe à cette réconciliation:

«La création elle-même sera libérée de l'esclavage de la corruption, pour avoir part à la liberté et à la gloire des enfants de Dieu. Nous le savons en effet : la création tout entière gémit maintenant encore dans les douleurs de l'enfantement. Elle n'est pas la seule : nous aussi, qui possédons les prémices de l'Esprit, nous gémissons intérieurement, attendant l'adoption, la délivrance pour notre corps» (Romains, 8, 21-23).

Saint Jean, dans le Livre de l'Apocalypse, présente *«un ciel nouveau et une terre nouvelle»* où Dieu habite avec son peuple. *«Voici la demeure de Dieu avec les êtres humains. Il demeurera avec eux et ils seront son peuple»* (21,3).

Et englobe toute la création

Ce qui est significatif, dans ces visions, c'est qu'elles embrassent **toute la race humaine et même la création tout entière**. Le concile Vatican II reconnaît cela. Dans son document sur *l'Église dans le monde de ce temps*, il déclare :

«En effet, puisque le Christ est mort pour tous et que la vocation dernière de l'homme est réellement unique, à savoir divine, nous devons tenir que l'Esprit Saint offre à tous, d'une façon que Dieu connaît, la possibilité d'être associé au mystère pascal» (Gaudium et spes, 22).

Dans l'action transformante de l'Esprit

Le pape Jean Paul II, dans son encyclique sur *La Mission du Christ Rédempteur*, désigne cette extension de l'activité salvifique de Dieu comme la présence et l'action de l'Esprit Saint, qui est *«universelle, sans limite d'espace ou de temps»*:

A laquelle nous participons

Ce mouvement universel de la mission de la Parole et de l'Esprit est **le contexte cosmique dans lequel nous devons situer la mission de l'Église**, c'est-à-dire la nôtre. Notre propre mission ne remplace pas la mission divine. Mais nous sommes appelés et envoyés pour la faire avancer et contribuer à son achèvement. L'Église est le symbole et la servante de cette mission.

L'action de Dieu nous précède

Quand Saint François-Xavier et les missionnaires qui le suivirent partirent pour l'Asie, tandis que d'autres partaient pour le *«nouveau monde»*, il y a 500 ans, ils voyaient le monde divisé en deux camps : un groupe de personnes sauvées parce qu'elles étaient baptisées, et un autre groupe promis à la damnation si on ne les rejoignait pas pour les baptiser. Aujourd'hui, nous ne partageons plus leur angoisse et leur sentiment d'urgence. Dieu n'a pas abandonné son peuple. Nous n'apportons pas le Christ là où il n'est pas déjà présent d'une certaine façon. **Le Christ et son Esprit sont là, partout, avant nous**, d'une façon qui nous est cachée. Notre tâche est donc de découvrir et de faire grandir cette présence et cette action.

Nous devons la contempler

Si bien que lorsque nous partons en mission, **notre première tâche est la contemplation : chercher à discerner la présence et l'action de la Parole et de l'Esprit**. Tout ce que nous souhaitons faire doit tendre à identifier cette présence, à la faire grandir et à fortifier son action. Dieu est déjà en dialogue avec ces personnes. Le service qui nous est demandé n'est pas de nous interposer comme intermédiaires, mais de faciliter ce dialogue continu. Nous devons respecter la liberté de Dieu qui est là, présent et actif, et la liberté des personnes qui répondent à leur manière. La mission n'est pas d'abord notre projet. Nous sommes au service du projet de Dieu.

Pour la découvrir

C'est dans ce contexte que nous devons réfléchir à la façon dont nous portons témoignage et dont nous proclamons la Bonne Nouvelle aux croyants des autres religions. **L'attitude fondamentale est une attitude de dialogue, respectueuse de leur liberté et du mystère de Dieu déjà à l'oeuvre en eux**. Comme Jean-Paul II nous l'a rappelé, l'unité entre nous qui faisons partie du même projet de Dieu est plus fondamentale et divine que ce qui nous divise, même au niveau religieux. Nous devons collaborer à la promotion des valeurs humaines et culturelles communes. Nous devons nous ouvrir à un enrichissement mutuel dans le mystère de la présence et de l'action de Dieu en nos vies. Nous ne devons pas hésiter à témoigner de nos convictions de foi quant au rôle central du Christ dans le projet de Dieu, et à accueillir ceux auxquels l'Esprit inspire le désir de suivre Jésus comme membres de la communauté de l'Église.

Comme un Mystère de vie

Etre en mission, c'est donc rencontrer un mystère qui embrasse l'univers entier, l'histoire tout entière, et l'ensemble des peuples : le mystère du projet de Dieu; le mystère de la lumière et de la vie de la Parole; le mystère de la puissance de l'Esprit; le mystère de la participation des êtres humains au mystère pascal, d'une façon qui nous est inconnue. Rencontrer le mystère, c'est regarder, contempler, discerner, écouter, apprendre, répondre, collaborer. Le monde fondamental d'une telle mission est le dialogue avec Dieu et avec les hommes et les femmes. Une telle mission espère, fait confiance. Elle est respectueuse. Elle n'est ni impatiente, ni agressive.

II. LA MISSION COMME SACREMENT

Jésus, le premier Missionnaire

La conscience que Dieu nous précède dans notre mission ne diminue en rien l'importance de l'appel qu'il nous adresse et le sens de notre envoi. Nous le comprendrons mieux si nous regardons la mission de la Parole incarnée, Jésus-Christ. Comme nous le dit Saint Jean, la Parole de Dieu qui était au commencement est devenue un être humain pour accomplir le projet de Dieu pour le monde (Jean 1, 14). La Lettre aux Hébreux nous le rappelle :

«Autrefois Dieu a parlé à nos ancêtres à plusieurs reprises et de plusieurs manières par les prophètes. Mais, dans ces jours qui sont les derniers, il nous a parlé par son Fils. C'est par lui que Dieu a créé l'univers, et c'est lui que Dieu a désigné pour entrer en possession de tout. Il reflète la splendeur de la gloire divine. Il est la représentation exacte de ce que Dieu est, et il soutient l'univers par sa parole puissante» (He 1, 1-3).

Annonce le Royaume

Jésus annonce le règne de Dieu, règne de liberté, de fraternité et d'amour, il le symbolise dans ses paraboles et ses miracles, provoque les personnes à répondre par la conversion et le réalise dans sa passion, sa mort et sa résurrection. Le bibliste indien, Georges Soares Prabhu, a bien résumé l'oeuvre de Jésus :

«Quand l'homme répond à la révélation de l'amour de Dieu en acceptant avec confiance cet amour, alors commence un mouvement puissant de libération des personnes et de la société qui traverse toute l'histoire humaine. Ce mouvement apporte la liberté, dans la mesure où il libère tout un chacun des manques et des

obsessions qui l'entravent. Il nourrit la fraternité car il donne à chacun la force d'avoir souci des autres, dans une véritable communauté. Et il fait advenir la justice, car il pousse toute vraie communauté à adopter les structures sociales qui rendent la liberté et la fraternité possibles» (3).

Et nous appelle à une transformation

Jésus lance donc un mouvement de transformation qui demande non seulement la conversion personnelle mais aussi le changement des structures culturelles, économiques, sociales et politiques. Nous sommes cette communauté aujourd'hui, nous qui sommes rassemblés ici au nom de Jésus et remplis de force par son Esprit.

Comment nous situer dans cette Mission?

Comment nous situons-nous par rapport à la mission de Jésus et de l'Esprit? Il y a deux façons de concevoir cette relation : une façon représentative et une façon symbolique.

- Nous pouvons considérer que nous représentons la mission de Jésus, dans le monde, exerçant ainsi une médiation entre Jésus et le monde. Nous sommes pour ainsi dire les ambassadeurs de Jésus dans le monde. Cela, c'est une façon.

- Mais nous pouvons aussi considérer que ni Jésus, ni son Esprit n'ont abandonné le monde; ils continuent à être présents et actifs au milieu des peuples. En nous - la communauté de ceux qui croient en Jésus et le suivent - son action, partout présente, acquiert une visibilité et une réalité symboliques. C'est pourquoi nous sommes appelés et envoyés dans le monde pour servir et promouvoir l'action permanente de Jésus et de l'Esprit Saint dans le monde.

L'Eglise est «sacrement du Christ»

C'est cette seconde voie que prend le deuxième Concile du Vatican lorsqu'il dit que *«l'Eglise est dans le Christ comme un sacrement, ou un signe et un instrument de l'union intime avec Dieu et de l'unité de tout le genre humain»* (Constitution sur l'Eglise *Lumen Gentium*, 1). Puisque l'Eglise n'est pas un objet physique mais une communauté humaine, nous aimerions parler d'elle comme symbole et servante plutôt que signe et instrument.

De façon permanente

Le dialogue entre Dieu et une personne humaine dans son groupe social, sa communauté, dure toute la vie. Les sacrements sont garants de cette relation et la rendent visible d'une façon humaine, socio-historique, aux moments clés de la vie personnelle et sociale. Ils ne sont pas exclusifs, au sens où ils seraient les seuls

moments où la relation serait vraiment réelle. En même temps, ils nourrissent la relation dans la durée.

Et concrète

Lorsque deux êtres s'aiment, l'amour n'est pas limité dans l'espace et dans le temps. C'est une relation continue. Mais **ils expriment leur amour de façon symbolique par des gestes et des actes variés**. Dans ces moments symboliques, ils ne font pas seulement l'expérience de la réalité de leur relation, ils nourrissent et renforcent cette relation continue.

Dans l'histoire quotidienne

Toujours et partout, Dieu continue à donner son amour et sa vie à l'humanité de multiples façons inconnues de nous. **La communauté ecclésiale symbolise, c'est-à-dire rend visible et célèbre ce dialogue de salut quotidien**, d'une façon humaine, socio-historique et confiante. En étant symbole de cette façon, elle témoigne de l'action de salut de Dieu parmi les peuples et la proclame. Elle est appelée et envoyée par Dieu lui-même pour être au service de cette action. C'est ce que nous disons lorsque nous appelons l'Église sacrement, dans ce contexte de la mission.

Témoigner et agir

Donc, lorsque nous disons que l'Église est en mission, nous pouvons définir le but de la mission de deux façons.

- L'Église-communauté doit être le symbole, la visibilité socio-historique du nouveau peuple de Dieu. Constituer de telles communautés de témoins partout dans le monde, dans chaque culture, dans tous les peuples, dans toutes les régions géographiques, est une dimension de la mission.

- L'autre dimension, la plus importante, est d'apporter notre collaboration pour servir et faire grandir l'action continue de Dieu lui-même, dans le monde et parmi les peuples.

Pour que Dieu transforme le monde

Ce sont là deux façons très liées de poursuivre l'unique but de la mission, la réalisation de *«ces nouveaux cieux et de cette terre nouvelle»*, qui est la promesse de Dieu à tous les peuples. On pourrait dire que c'est en se **mettant activement au service de l'action transformante de Dieu dans le monde**, que la communauté-Église deviendra un symbole et un témoin authentique de cette action.

Dans ses différentes dimensions

De récents documents d'Église ont souligné cette **conception large de la mission**. Le Synode des évêques, en 1971, a parlé de la promotion de la justice comme d'une dimension constitutive de l'évangélisation. Cela a été repris dans les récentes encycliques sociales du pape

Jean-Paul II. L'exhortation apostolique du pape Paul VI sur l'évangélisation, en 1974, parlait de la nécessité pour la Bonne Nouvelle de transformer chaque culture. L'enseignement du pape Jean-Paul II, de même que ses gestes symboliques comme la prière pour la paix avec les responsables des autres religions, ont montré la voie de la collaboration avec tous les croyants et toutes les personnes de bonne volonté pour promouvoir dans le monde les valeurs humaines et spirituelles que nous avons en commun. L'encyclique sur *La Mission du Christ Rédempteur* a de nouveau souligné ces multiples dimensions constitutives de la mission. C'est dans ce vaste contexte que l'édification de nouvelles communautés chrétiennes est une des activités nécessaires de la mission, mais non la seule.

La tâche propre de l'Église

Le pape Jean-Paul II a aussi insisté sur le fait que, même si nous sommes appelés à promouvoir le développement et la paix, la justice et la solidarité dans le monde, la mission de l'Église n'est pas d'apporter des solutions économiques et politiques pour un monde meilleur, mais **de travailler à la transformation spirituelle et morale de la société**. Après avoir dénoncé diverses situations d'injustice dans le monde, dans son encyclique sur la question sociale, *Centesimus Annus*, il poursuit : *«Ces critiques ne sont pas tant dirigées contre un système économique que contre un système éthique et culturel»* (n°39). Cela ne veut pas dire renoncer à l'action sociale et politique pour la justice et la solidarité, qui est une condition nécessaire à un témoignage réel et crédible, mais **souligner la contribution spécifique que l'Évangile apporte** en ce domaine. Parce qu'elle est sacrement, la communauté-Église ne peut se satisfaire de **proclamer** des principes moraux et sociaux; elle doit chercher sans cesse à leur donner une visibilité sociale, à **Leur donner corps** et à les faire progresser dans le monde.

N'est jamais achevée

C'est une tâche en évolution constante selon les circonstances de temps et de lieu. Une fois de plus, George Soares Prabhu a bien exprimé cela :

«La vision de Jésus... ne nous donne pas un modèle statique et préfabriqué à imiter. Elle nous invite à remodeler sans cesse nos structures de société pour réaliser aussi complètement que possible, dans notre temps, les valeurs du Royaume. Ainsi la vision de Jésus nous appelle à une lutte constante contre les structures démoniaques d'esclavage (psychologique et sociologique) érigées par Mammon, le dieu Argent. Elle nous appelle à une créativité incessante afin de produire pour chaque époque de nouveaux projets qui rendront la société de plus en plus conforme à la vision de l'humanité contenue dans l'Évangile. A l'horizon de l'histoire humaine tout en en faisant partie, s'offrant à nous comme un cadeau et nous provoquant comme un défi, la vision d'une nouvelle société apportée par Jésus est devant nous comme une

tâche à compléter, nous appelant à une révolution permanente» (4).

C'est une mission globale

Dans la Bible, nous voyons que le projet divin ne se réduit pas aux individus, mais s'étend à tout le cosmos. Ses dimensions sont globales. L'Église elle-même, comme symbole et servante de ce mystère est **appelée à être catholique ou universelle**. Une telle perspective globale semble plus que jamais réalisable aujourd'hui grâce à la vitesse et à l'extension des moyens de communication et grâce aux structures économiques et politiques actuelles; il est devenu possible de parler du monde comme d'un grand village. De telles possibilités constituent en même temps un défi, défi qui vient de plusieurs côtés. La tentation existe de ne pas respecter la diversité et le pluralisme des personnes et d'imposer un ordre politique et culturel unique, soutenu par un ordre économique dont les inégalités et l'injustice sont constitutifs. On peut par ailleurs entretenir des rêves d'utopie terrestre comme la société sans classes ou la société libérale. Comment, dans une telle situation, garder vivantes la liberté et la justice, la fraternité et la nouveauté créatrice?

Qui se joue aussi dans le Premier-Monde

D'autre part, comme nous l'avons déjà vu, notre mission concerne non seulement les personnes et les communautés, mais aussi les structures économiques, culturelles et socio-politiques qui les sous-tendent. Ces structures prennent souvent aujourd'hui une dimension globale qui fait que les effets en un lieu ont souvent leur cause ailleurs. Dans un ordre économique et commercial injuste, la pauvreté en Afrique peut être le résultat de politiques élaborées et imposées par l'Europe ou les États-Unis. La mission ne demande alors pas seulement un déploiement de charité pour alléger la pauvreté en Afrique, mais aussi une **exigence de justice dans les centres du Premier-Monde où s'élaborent les décisions**. Il est certes nécessaire d'aider à alléger la souffrance de peuples comme celui du Rwanda. Mais n'est-il pas encore plus nécessaire et urgent de protester contre les puissances qui ont dressé un groupe ethnique contre un autre dans une politique du «diviser pour régner», contre celles qui continuent à pratiquer un commerce des armes florissant en vendant des armes des deux côtés? Or ces puissances ne se trouvent pas en Afrique.

De façon très urgente

Il est plus important de s'attaquer aux causes qu'aux symptômes d'une maladie. Et si la Bonne Nouvelle s'adresse à tous et doit être prêchée partout, ne pouvons-nous pas dire que son urgence et sa nécessité sont encore plus grandes dans les régions sécularisées où les gens

ne semblent croire à rien si l'on s'en tient à leur pratique? C'est pourquoi certains disent que si **la mission est urgente partout, dans une perspective globale elle semble plus urgente dans le Premier-Monde**, et tout spécialement auprès des communautés chrétiennes de ce monde. La fait que le Premier-Monde est largement perçu comme chrétien ou post-chrétien rend le défi encore plus aigu et difficile.

III. LA MISSION A LA MANIERE DE JÉSUS

Notre façon de vivre la mission devrait être celle de Jésus : la prophétie et le service par amour.

Etre prophètes

Le monde dans lequel nous sommes envoyés en mission est un monde marqué par le conflit entre les forces du bien et du mal, non seulement dans le cœur des gens, mais aussi dans les structures sociales. C'est ainsi que proclamer la Bonne Nouvelle c'est faire un choix. Le pape Jean-Paul II a souvent appelé ce choix **l'option préférentielle pour les pauvres**. Dans le monde d'aujourd'hui, l'option pour les pauvres ne venut pas seulement dire s'occuper des besoins des pauvres. Elle **exige une confrontation prophétique avec ceux qui les rendent tels**. Car la pauvreté n'est pas une condition naturelle. Ils sont pauvres car ils sont opprimés. L'oppression est souvent structurelle, de sorte que les riches en sont les victimes tout autant que les pauvres et tous deux ont besoin d'en être libérés.

En vivant les béatitudes

Lorsque nous pensons aux prophètes, l'image qui nous vient à l'esprit est peut-être celle de gens debout dans la rue, proférant jugement et condamnation contre le mal. La prophétie authentique, à la manière de Jésus, donne plutôt **le témoignage d'une façon de vivre et d'une relation aux autres différente**. Une telle façon de vivre parlera plus fort que des mots. Le Sermon sur la montagne, dans l'évangile de Matthieu, est un appel de Jésus à la mission (5). Il propose dans les Béatitudes une image de la communauté chrétienne idéale : bienheureux les pauvres, les doux, ceux qui ont faim et soif de justice, les cœurs purs, les artisans de paix, ceux qui sont persécutés pour la justice, etc. Vient ensuite l'appel à la mission:

«Vous êtes le sel pour le monde. Mais si le sel perd son goût, comment pourrait-on le rendre de nouveau salé?... C'est vous qui êtes la lumière du monde. Une

ville construite sur une colline ne peut être cachée... C'est ainsi que votre lumière doit briller devant les hommes, afin qu'ils voient le bien que vous faites et qu'ils louent votre Père qui est dans les cieux» (Mat 5, 13-16).

Dans un style de vie évangélique

Jésus décrit alors ce que signifie ce nouveau mode de vie en contraste avec la pratique courante en ce qui concerne la colère, l'adultère, le divorce, les serments, la vengeance, l'aumône, la prière, le jeûne, etc. La première communauté chrétienne avait bien compris cela. Ils vivaient un partage et une fraternité qui attiraient l'attention autour d'eux (Actes 2, 42-47; 4,32-35). La communauté chrétienne aujourd'hui est appelée à être prophétique, pas seulement en paroles, mais encore plus par le témoignage. Elle est appelée à être le symbole du nouveau peuple de Dieu, à **proposer une alternative par un mode de vie qui incarne les valeurs du Règne de Dieu**. La vie précède les mots. Comme le dit l'ancien évêque de l'Église unie de l'Inde du Sud, Lesslie Newbigin: *«Il y a quelque chose, une réalité nouvelle qui appelle des explications et fait poser la question à laquelle l'annonce de l'Évangile apporte la réponse»* (6).

Sans craindre les réactions du monde

Choisir les pauvres et être prophétiques dans une situation d'injustice et d'oppression mènera inévitablement au conflit. La vie et l'action prophétiques de Jésus l'ont conduit à la croix. **Être en mission dans le monde c'est être prêt au conflit**. Mais l'attitude de Jésus face au conflit n'est pas de croire en n'importe quel pouvoir - économique, politique ou médiatique -, mais dans l'amour qui se donne de façon non violente.

Servir par amour

En ces temps postcoloniaux, nous ne cherchons probablement plus le soutien du pouvoir politique pour arriver à nos fins en mission, mais nous pensons encore en termes de pouvoir économique ou médiatique. **La seule puissance dont la mission ait besoin est la puissance de l'amour, qui se déploie dans le don de soi**. C'est la puissance de l'exemple plus que celle des mots. C'est la puissance du dialogue qui en appelle à la liberté de l'autre. Ce n'est pas la puissance de la domination. C'est la puissance de Dieu qui s'accomplit dans la faiblesse humaine. Matthieu rapporte la prière de Jésus :

«O Père du ciel et de la terre, je te remercie d'avoir révélé aux petits ce que tu as caché aux sages et aux gens instruits» (Mat 11,25).

De la même façon, Paul écrit aux Corinthiens :

«Dieu a choisi ce que le monde estime fou pour couvrir de honte les forts; il a choisi ce que le monde estime bas et méprisable, ce qui n'est rien à ses yeux, pour détruire ce qu'il estime important. Ainsi, aucun être humain ne peut se vanter devant Dieu» (1 Cor 1, 27-29).

C'est aussi le message de Marie dans son Magnificat (Luc 1, 46-55) et celui de Jésus quand il s'est vidé de lui-même pour venir dans le monde (Phil 2,7).

Sans s'imposer

Mais remarquons que, tandis que tous es passages parlent de faiblesse, d'humilité, de manque de sagesse, etc., ils se réfèrent à une situation de conflit où ils sont montrés comme les moyens les plus efficaces de la victoire. **Cependant La victoire ne consiste pas à vaincre l'opposant, mais à le gagner par une vraie conversion**. Si les structures injustes sont vaincues et mêmes détruites, leurs protagonistes sont transformés. Seuls ceux qui sont forts spirituellement et moralement peuvent s'engager dans un tel conflit non violent, ceux qui ont confiance et espèrent en la puissance de Dieu à leur côté et n'hésiteront pas devant le sacrifice suprême.

Au rythme voulu par Dieu

Une autre raison d'être humble, c'est que le **Règne de Dieu est une réalité eschatologique et non une utopie terrestre, historique**. Nous ne savons pas comment, quand et sous quelle forme le Règne de Dieu surgira dans le monde, même si nous sommes appelés et envoyés pour y travailler. C'est l'objet de notre espérance, garantie par la résurrection du Christ.

IV. LA MISSION COMME COMMUNAUTÉ

Une Église fraternité d'amour

Lorsque nous décrivons la mission comme transformation des structures culturelles, économiques et socio-politiques, dans la force de la Parole et de l'Esprit, il peut nous arriver d'oublier que le but ultime de toute cette activité est de faciliter la construction de la communauté humaine, **une communauté unie dans l'amour et le service**.

Une telle communauté cherchera à unir les peuples au-delà des divisions culturelles, ethniques ou autres, **sans supprimer ces pluralismes, mais en les intégrant dans**

l'amour et le service mutuels, respectueux des personnes et de leur liberté.

«Communauté-frontière»

La communauté-Église sera le symbole et la servante d'une telle fraternité. Ce ne sera pas une communauté alternative, sorte de société parfaite dont rêvait la chrétienté médiévale. On pourrait mieux la décrire **comme une communauté-frontière**. La meilleure façon d'expliquer ce terme 'frontière', c'est de se féérer à François d'Assise. C'était une personne frontière, qui choisit de vivre différemment des autres autour de lui pour incarner dans sa vie les valeurs de l'Évangile. Sa vie est ainsi devenue un défi pour ceux qui l'entouraient. Le défi qui consiste à être dans le monde sans être du monde. Malheureusement, au cours de l'histoire, ce rôle a été abandonné aux religieux. Je pense qu'il est nécessaire de refonder les communautés chrétiennes comme communautés-frontière, symboliques, prophétiques; **des communautés qui ne vivent pas hors du monde mais qui se consacrent à vivre les valeurs de l'Évangile dans le monde**. L'Eucharistie, non pas comme rituel mais comme geste d'amour, de partage, d'attention et de service mutuel, sera la célébration d'une telle communauté.

Ouverte aux autres communautés

Une communauté-frontière ne sera pas vraiment prophétique et porteuse de sens si elle n'est pas locale. Aujourd'hui, **la mission est la responsabilité de l'Église locale**. Si l'on considère la mission comme une réalité globale, alors ces communautés locales sont appelées à un service global en formant un réseau. Aujourd'hui, les facilités de communication rendent possible la formation de ce réseau. Cette vie en réseau entraînera **une présence mutuelle au-delà des frontières nationales et culturelles**, de façon temporaire ou permanente selon l'appel de chacun. Ce ne sera pas seulement une aide en cas de besoin mais tout simplement un symbole de la fraternité et de la catholicité de la communauté-Église, le support d'un échange de dons et le moyen de s'aider à grandir en s'encourageant mutuellement.

Avec une volonté d'échange

Aujourd'hui l'on peut dire qu'une telle présence ne doit pas être à sens unique et que nous devons être prêts aussi bien à envoyer qu'à recevoir des témoins. Ces témoins ne devront pas être considérés comme des individus isolés, mais comme des représentants de leur communauté, de telle façon qu'ils soient envoyés et reçus par les communautés locales. Un tel réseau peut être constamment actif par la communication et l'information

concernant les projets des uns et des autres, par une action prophétique s'attaquant aux problèmes universels et chaque fois qu'un événement local requiert une attention d'ensemble. De tels réseaux sont courants dans le monde séculier! Et il se peut que nous soyons appelés à collaborer avec ces réseaux lorsqu'il s'agit de la promotion des valeurs communes, humaines et spirituelles.

Pour former une communion de communautés

Nous avons l'habitude aujourd'hui de parler de l'Église comme d'une communion d'Églises locales. Nous pouvons traduire cela en termes anthropologiques et parler **d'une communauté mondiale de communautés**, animée par le même Esprit, rendant témoignage à la même Parole et, enracinée dans la même vie divine, appelée à se mettre au service du monde. Puisque la mission est universelle ou globale, nous devons faciliter l'émergence de communautés-frontière, vibrantes de vie et prophétiques, dans toutes les cultures et tous les peuples. D'un point de vue missionnaire, la présence et la qualité ont plus d'importance que le nombre. C'était certainement l'avis de Saint Paul lorsqu'il annonçait sa venue aux Romains après avoir parcouru toute l'Asie (cf. Rom 15, 19-23).

CONCLUSION

Alors que nous partons en mission dans le monde, appelés et envoyés par Dieu à la suite de Jésus, souvenons-nous que **La mission est d'abord le mystère de Dieu, Père, Fils et Esprit, actif dans le monde, mystère que nous sommes invités à contempler pour y apporter notre collaboration**. En tant que communautés en mission, nous sommes appelés à être **symboles et serviteurs du Règne de Dieu dans le monde**. Notre chemin dans cette mission est **le chemin que Jésus lui-même a pris dans l'humilité et l'amour qui se donne**. Notre stratégie consistera à **construire un réseau de «communautés-frontière» prophétiques**, tout autour du monde.

Quatre images de la mission : mystère, sacrement, amour et communauté. Qu'elles nous guident sur le chemin à la suite de Jésus, pleins d'espérance et dans l'attente de la réalisation de la promesse de Dieu: *«Maintenant, je fais toutes choses nouvelles!»* (Apocalypse 21,5).

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(Ici l'article est brèvement raccourci)

THE MARGINALISATION OF AFRICA BY THE INTERNATIONAL MEDIA

Michael Traber, WACC

This topic is so huge that no single paper can cover it. Nor is this the intention. The purpose is to stimulate discussions. The main observation I wish to make is that the world, including Africa, is constantly changing, and that the changes which have occurred in the last ten years have been radical indeed. We therefore want to situate our work in this changing context, both in terms of the trends emerging in journalism and the political shifts which have given rise to new interests at the expense of old ones.

Trends in News and Features

The use of the *word story*, rather than *news* and *features*, is deliberate. The story form comprises both. News and features are no longer journalistic categories in the strict sense. They have begun to merge, at least in print journalism. Three tendencies can be observed: the featurisation of news, a trend towards quick information in bits and bytes, and a changing new discourse.

A number of reasons account for the *featurisation* of news. The first is the media environment in which the *electronic media* play a dominant role. Most people get their news from radio and television which, in turn, has changed the role of the *print media*. The latter are now expected to supplement the electronic media by providing background analysis and in-depth treatment of news events, which, inevitably, they have to do in a feature style.

The second reason for the trend towards *featurisation* is the sheer complexity of many subjects. Take the environment. A news story is ill suited to inform readers about the complicated checks and balances which exist in nature to maintain an equilibrium, which at present is constantly threatened by human greed. Or take

Rwanda, news reports can inform about the genocide that has occurred, and television can show the respective pictures. But the public wants to know *why* this has happened, and what the conditions might be for it to happen elsewhere.

Alternative (or democratic) journalism has had to adopt the feature form in order to report

We now live in a multi-media world, and, as indicated above, in a world of computer-linked cheap telecommunication. Now there is an ever growing number of radio and TV stations, with programmes emanating from abroad, with many specialised services. The result is a multitude of fragmented publics.

on ordinary people (rather than only on the politically and economically powerful, and 'stars' of entertainment and sports). Ordinary people's lives, particularly in rural areas, are in a state of permanence, where few 'events' happen. Even in 'established' journalism the rules are now changing. There are now more reports on women, children and manual labourers than there were ten or twelve years ago.

A fourth reason is the change in the journalistic approach of weeklies, not to speak of fortnightly and monthly magazines. They represent the main market for the services here present. Good weeklies and monthlies dealing with social and political affairs want to inform their readers about current trends and likely developments in the future. This is a radical change from rehashing the news of the past.

A **second trend** is the informatisation of news, or news in bits and bytes. The spread of electronic mail is now in direct competition with agencies providing hot news. In fact, the big news agencies are now developing services which give a quick overview of the main events, either in the form of news summaries, or merely as the raw material for a news story. Information, or mere data in bits and bytes, is a whole new way of providing news.

Alternative news and feature agencies can no longer compete in these circumstances, less so today than was the case five years ago. But they must be aware of these developments, and perhaps restructure their services to meet new and complementary needs.

A **third trend** concerns news discourse. News discourse is the professional language of news. News is a report of an event or development which is put into a meaningful story by a

Even in 'established' journalism the rules are now changing. There are now more reports on women, children and manual labourers than there were ten or twelve years ago.

discourse (or specific use of language). The language of news depends partly on technology (hot-metal typesetting led to the story form of the inverted pyramid), partly on habits and conventions. For example, news discourse (particularly in the electronic media) constantly maps out the limits of a controversy, as much by exclusion as by inclusion. Each State and Church tries to define the limits within which free comment is allowed, limits which news discourse normally reflects. Multi-partyism in Africa has changed the news discourse, at least for the print media. An even more drastic change was introduced by alternative media and alternative news feature agencies: ordinary people and people's movements have become social actors by publicising their lives, their hopes and aspirations, a development contrary to the established criteria for news.

Stories (news and features) includes the notion of 'public' in three ways: they report on a public affair (event/development of public interest and importance), which is being made public or published (no news without a teller), thus creating a public or publics.

What is of importance, significance and interest to the public is slowly but constantly changing. In North Atlantic countries there is hardly any difference anymore between public and private affairs: the private lives of public officials come under relentless scrutiny. The importance of Africa for the world public has decreased substantially since the end of the Cold War.

The methods of making public, or publishing, are changing as well. We now live in a multi-media world, and, as indicated above, in a world of computer-linked cheap telecommunication.

The publics which the media create are now more and more fragmented. Almost every British household listened to BBC radio - and nothing else - during the years of World War II. The nation was truly the BBC's public. Now there is an ever growing number of radio and TV stations, with programmes emanating from abroad, with many specialised services. The result is a multitude of fragmented publics. Publics, however, are not made up of equal individuals, but of groups with unequal sources of power, many pursuing their own special interests.

The discussion of the changing public is important because of the media's traditional *raison d'être* of the provision of a public service. The mass media's primary accountability is to the public(s) for whose sake they exist in the first place. Such accountability becomes difficult if you no longer know your public.

The notion of public service is opposed to the view, now gaining ground everywhere, that the mass media are primarily business ventures. The commercialisation of the mass media is now vigorously pursued by transnational companies which are offering a great deal of trivial content from the perspective of Western culture. (They argue, for example, that violence is 'understood' by every culture and should therefore be part of transnational programming).

THE MARGINALISATION OF AFRICA BY FOREIGN, NON-AFRICAN MEDIA

An Anglo-Dutch Channel 4 production traced the reporting of the Ethiopian famine in the 1980's. *Consuming Hunger* came to the conclusion that the first extensive report on BBC television was purely accidental. The BBC had plenty of footage, but eventually decided to

broadcast Michael Buerk's report because it knew that rival ITV had just sent a TV crew to Ethiopia.

John Galtung pointed out that the mass media are subject to their own 'social cosmology'. News media, in particular, are inherently elitist. They have divided the world into important and unimportant countries and continents. There are *élite* countries and *élite* cities; the datelines Bonn or Tokyo are much more attractive to news editors than Honiara (Solomon Islands) or Ouagadougou. The same principle applies to the African media. Their *élite* countries are the homes of their former colonisers. Those who argue that proximity makes news should qualify their argument with the social cosmology of the news media.

When in the late 1980's the Soviet Union collapsed as one of the world's two super-powers, the immediate problem of the USA was not Eastern Europe but Western Europe and Japan. Both were economically stronger than the US; what role were they likely to play in a new 'world order'? The war of early 1991 in the Persian Gulf settled that. The USA demonstrated its military superiority (NATO played no role), while Japan and Germany, non-participants in the war, together with Saudi Arabia had to pay a high proportion of the US's war bill.

At the same time, the world was redistributed according to spheres of influence and trade. The US claimed for itself the whole of the Americas and the Middle East. It stressed its 'leadership' role for Europe and Japan (plus the Pacific rim). Europe was assigned to look after Eastern Europe, the Balkans and, in particular, the Russian Federation (but not the Asian Republics of the ex-Soviet Union). The US and Japan were to check on whatever imperial ambitions China might nurture, but clearly China was their market.

Two pieces are missing in this giant jigsaw puzzle: India and Africa. India is now up for grabs, because of its huge market potential (over 700 million people). Africa is now at the bottom of the heap and of little commercial interest, except for Southern Africa and Nigeria (and perhaps Zaire in the future). The US still feels obliged to show its leadership role in Africa, but at minimum cost for the US.

Another factor in the news interest and flow, which is usually overlooked, is the contributions that were provided by the Soviet agency

Tass, the Chinese *Hsin Hua* and the Yugoslave *Tanjug* in their coverage of Africa. All three carried feature services and special reports. *Tanjug* has now become the mouthpiece of Serbia, and the Chinese and Russian services have now reduced their coverage of Africa to a minimum.

1994 - THE YEAR OF AFRICA

Despite what I have said about the marginalisation of Africa by the international media it is evident that there has been a great deal of high quality reporting on Africa during 1994. Two events accounted for this: the freedom of *South Africa*, and the genocide in *Rwanda*.

South Africa has become the super-*élite* country of Africa for most of the world's media. This began on 6 February 1990, when Nelson Mandela was released from jail. Ever since, Western media, and British media in particular, have paid very close attention to events

In conclusion, my advice to African Churches and to Africa's social actors is: do not concentrate on the news media, nor on the lack of coverage by the foreign press. Concentrate on life. Work for and with your own people.

in South Africa on an almost daily basis. During the April elections, BBC TV (one of the two channels) reported from South Africa live almost all day.

One of the reasons for this extraordinary interest is the personality of Nelson Mandela. For the left, he replaced St Robert (Mugabe), who himself had replaced St Julius (Nyerere). Even on the 100th day of Mandela's presidency, every quality newspaper in Britain carried extensive background reports, and once again television gave South Africa the fullest coverage.

South Africa's story is of course unique, and a success story due largely to one man. Another success story, Eritrea, did not make the headlines and had poor coverage. It would be interesting to find out why this was so.

The genocide in Rwanda first produced shock, later genuine sympathy. Its highly complex story was difficult to cover and even more difficult to explain to readers and viewers. The British media certainly did a commendable job. In contrast to South Africa, however, there were hardly any talk shows on TV. One reason for this was that they could not find enough 'experts'. Background explanations were given by one single academic (Dr Ian Linden). The media played a significant role when charities began their appeals for Rwanda. They collected more money for Rwanda in a week than they had collected in almost two years for Bosnia.

HOW CAN AFRICA BECOME MORE NEWSWORTHY?

It is doubtful whether Africa will regain the geopolitical position it occupied in the Cold War in the foreseeable future. Tourism will not do it. Africa's raw materials will always be of considerable interest to the outside world, not least Japan. Africa's oil reserves and its rare minerals will always be of interest for news reporting, as is the economic and political situation in South Africa.

Africa's cultures will retain their interest, provided they are on better display. Art, music, dance and other cultural expressions are highly valued, at least by young people in Europe and by a European and Asian cultural *élite*. 1995 will be 'the year of Africa' in London, with dozens of events, exhibitions, concerts and so on.

Finally, Fortress Europe is worried about African immigration. As poverty drives Africans from their continent (so far, mainly from North Africa and the Horn), European Governments and the public will begin to panic. One can only hope that Africa's potential 'threat' will prompt the media to give more attention to the continent.

There are other, minor and often technical matters which make reporting in Africa difficult. For example, a single page of fax from Zimbabwe costs Z\$64, or approximately US\$17. Some Governments charge special, higher rates for telecommunications if used by media workers. And many Governments treat foreign correspondents like the local ones: they are merely a nuisance.

In conclusion, my advice to African Churches and to Africa's social actors is: do not concentrate on the news media, nor on the lack of

coverage by the foreign press. Concentrate on life. Work for and with your own people. Concentrate on the future rather than on the past. Consolidate your plan of action for the continent. Press releases are a poor substitute for live action. If what you are doing and saying is meaningful and credible, at least the alternative news and feature agencies present here will cover your words and, even more so, your deeds.

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THE MISSION OF THE RELIGIOUS AFTER THE SYNOD ON CONSECRATED LIFE

Marcello Zago, OMI

(Marcello Zago, OMI., is the Superior General of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate. He served as the Special Secretary of the Synod for Religious Life. This is a slightly shortened version of the Conference given on 6 December 1994, at the SEDOS Seminar).

I - DYNAMICS AND NATURE OF THE SYNOD

A Synod is neither a Congress of theologians, nor of religious. It is primarily an assembly of pastors, more particularly of Bishops and of a few Superiors General. There are listeners ("auditores") and experts, ("adiutores"), but their role is complementary. Moreover in a Synod one does not aim at a theology, but at a pastoral vision. Such a pastoral vision is achieved through a consensus, which can be reached only gradually. There is the remote consultation, especially of the Episcopal Conferences, that leads to the *Instrumentum Laboris*, which should constitute the Agenda. The *Relatio ante disceptationem* is written and presented, taking into account the *Instrumentum Laboris*, and aims at focusing the synodal exchanges.

The Synod, as presently structured, is an intensive ongoing formation session of a special kind, in which the actors are the members themselves; and it is a kind of "Chapter" in which, having started from very different experiences and visions, one arrives at a kind of theologico-pastoral consensus. It is also a thermometer of the life of the Church, made present in her pastors. It is a consultative body, which makes proposals to the Pope, so that, starting from these, he can formulate orientations for the whole Church. Indeed, the post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation could be considered as being the last phase of the Synodal Assembly itself. This pattern applies since the Synod on Evangelisation in 1974, which led to the Exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi* of Paul VI. The Exhortation is written under the authority of the Pope who, as he himself affirmed at the

closing dinner, avails himself of the Permanent Council of the Synod, made up of fifteen Bishops, of whom twelve were elected by the Assembly. The Pope promised to avail himself of the collaboration of religious men and women for its drafting.

I would now like to say something about the contribution of the religious (men and women) in its process. This contribution was considerable during the preparatory phase, at both national and international levels. The response to the *Lineamenta* was often prepared by mixed commissions of Bishops and Major Superiors. The responses of the UISG and USG and the conclusions of the Congress on Consecrated Life, organised in Rome by the USG in November 1993, had a considerable influence. All this was taken into account in the *Instrumentum Laboris*, prepared by a group of religious, whose task was to respect the material received.

Then there was the contribution of the consecrated persons at the Synod. The ten Superiors General are always listened to with attention on account of their international experience and of what they represent. During this Assembly the long and short inputs made by religious members or "auditores" or experts were of noteworthy value and impact. In the language groups, the consecrated persons *auditores/trices* or *adiutores/trices* participated with full rights and had their impact on the proceedings of the Synod. There was also the coordinating team of the Synod: the Cardinal relator and the three secretaries were all religious. One Bishop was afraid that the Assembly was in the hands of the religious on the coordinating team. In fact, and by expressed will, the coordinating team was at the service of the

Synod, as Cardinal Hume reported in his last intervention.

II - THE GREAT CONVERGENCES AT THE SYNOD

The Synod clearly *expressed appreciation* for consecrated life, for what it does and for what it is in the life and mission of the Church. Many Bishops recorded facts and experiences, showing how the members of consecrated life have contributed to the birth, growth and dynamism of their Churches. The Bishops of Africa and Latin America have largely given witness to this, but such witnessing was not lacking also from other continents.

The negative comments too, rather limited in number and in tone, were born of the same conviction, that the life of the Church is profoundly influenced by the life of consecrated persons. Such comments concerned the type of renewal and of choices made during the past few years, the relations with the hierarchy, the crisis of vocations, the insufficiencies and the infidelities in living the ideal of consecrated life.

Appreciation for consecrated life was linked with thanksgiving to God for such a gift and with the commitment to promote its esteem among all portions of the people of God. A distinction was made between the various institutional forms, which may be transitory, and consecrated life in itself, which in its theological dimension is permanent.

In defining consecrated life, *priority was given to being* rather than to doing, to its relationship with Christ, to its intimate belonging to the Church.

The following of Christ through the vows or through other sacred commitments recognised by the Church is regarded as central and as the basis of every form of consecrated life. Religious consecration is inserted into the baptismal consecration. Christ is not some idealised entity - He is the missionary of the Father and the Saviour of humanity. In consecrated life, therefore, in its various forms, the richness of the ministries and of the mysteries of Christ are being experienced and expressed. It has been presented as the way of responding, in a direct and undivided manner, to the love of Christ, a radical and stable way of living in Christ one's own life for the world. Mother Teresa of Calcutta affirmed: "We must fall always more in

love with Jesus. Love Him with all the strength of our body and of our soul. Our vows, our apostolate, our community life are the fruit of our love and of our union with Jesus. It is our aim to still the thirst of Jesus, crucified out of love for the souls, by working for the salvation and the sanctification of the poorest of the poor".

And Don Luciano Mendez, President of the Episcopal Conference of Brazil, stated: "Lord, our only option is for you. This special following of Jesus Christ characterises consecrated life. At the origin of every consecrated life, there is the personal calling of Jesus Christ. This strong bond of friendship for Jesus is the foundation, definitive and unforgettable, in the life of every consecrated person. It is to this personal call that the religious man or woman responds with the faith, the love and the total consecration of his/her life, assuming - in the variety of charisms - the mission and the way of life of Jesus Christ and entrusting to Him all the hope of their own effective fulfilment".

The Synod has affirmed the *indissoluble link between consecration and mission*. Every form of consecration is missionary and expresses itself in the mission. Even contemplative life has a mission within the Church and the world. This is why its presence is requested also in the young Churches. Thus, not only the active forms of consecrated life were underlined, such as religious institutes or institutes of apostolic life representing the majority of consecrated persons, but also the forms of monastic and contemplative life. For all the forms, emphasis was placed on quality and the priority of *being*, on commitment to holiness and spiritual life, on the authenticity of faithfulness to the vows, on fraternal and community life, on witnessing and life-style.

The call to holiness has been the most recurrent point throughout the Synod. It received numerous emphases: from the priority of seeking God to the following of Christ, from the radicality of the vows to a life of prayer, from asceticism to prophetism, from the witness of life to martyrdom. Several times the intuition of the Second Vatican Council was recalled, according to which "although the religious state constituted by the profession of the evangelical counsels does not belong to the hierarchical structure of the Church, nevertheless it belongs inseparably to her life and holiness" (*Lumen Gentium*, n. 44, §6).

It is a deeply felt demand of the consecrated person to be recognised for what he/she is and

not only for what he/she does. A number of times this demand has been echoed by the Bishops themselves. The request of the Fathers of the Synod is that the consecrated persons be what they should be, i.e. expression and stimulus in the life and holiness of the Church. This is not intended as a mere flight into interiority. Consecration and mission are interdependent. It is our love for Christ, realised through the evangelical counsels, that gives the drive and apostolic authenticity to our action. It is the face of Christ, discovered in the poor of many faces and of many needs, that incites to giving oneself. It is the need of salvation of today's humanity that stimulates the radicality of conversion.

This unity of life, to which every Christian is called, is the special contribution of consecrated persons to evangelisation. And this integration between consecration and mission does not only indicate the essential relationship between practicing of the counsels and apostolate, between prayer and action, between community life and missionary commitment. Much more than that: consecration is mission. Living the vows, brotherhood, the primacy of seeking God, and all the other values of consecrated life: all these are mission, they are inculturation, they are an evangelisation that transforms the culture in which they exist. It is like leaven in the dough of human society. Therefore, in truth, in the Church and in the world we are valued for what we are, more than for what we do, however without separating one from the other.

Mission is an essential component of every form of consecrated life, given as a gift to the Church, so that she may live and expand. Paul's insistence that charisms are for the good of the whole Body applies also to the various forms of consecrated life. The concrete expression of the mission of every form of consecrated life must take into account three components:

a) The particular charism of every Institute, which has its roots in the intuition of the foundation. In the course of the Synod, the theology of charisms, which was well developed in the *Relatio ante disceptationem* and in the *Instrumentum Laboris*, as a matter of fact, was however not significantly developed during the sharings. Their rootedness in the Founder, as well as their inculturation, were accentuated. For this reason creative faithfulness and discernment in the practical choices were underlined.

b) The needs of the local Church must be attentively considered, so as to respond to the urgent pastoral needs in conformity to one's charism. The Bishops of Africa, who were the most vocal in paying tribute to the mis-

sionaries of the past, insisted on this aspect, asking that no unilateral decisions be taken.

c) The new missionary challenges were indicated as a third element to be considered in the missionary commitments of consecrated persons, who always distinguished themselves in answering them. The Italian group developed the theological dimension of the challenges, called the "new areopagi". These are signs of the times, the voice of God challenging the Church. In response to them, God is the first actor, who arouses strengths and charisms. Various attitudes to respond to them were indicated: awareness of their nature and their theological sense, choice of priorities, responses with the suitable preparation and competence, while remaining faithful to the charism of one's founders, a deep communion with the other workers that are involved. Concerning the new challenges, reference was made to the missionary Encyclical *Redemptoris Missio*, nn. 32-38. To these, others were added and developed.

Response to the challenges is given through new ministries or missionary commitments, but also through a renewed and creative faithfulness to classical institutions such as schools, hospitals, etc. Choosing the poor of many faces was particularly stressed and it was further underlined in the contexts of its relationship to the growing poverty in the world, to the vow of poverty and to the eschatological witness of Christ being honoured in the poor. In the same way the mission *Ad Gentes* was shown as a choice field and was above all emphasised together with the frequent recognition of what consecrated persons have contributed to the founding and development of Churches. Mention was also made of the difficulty linked to the moment of transition, marked by the emergence of indigenous personnel and the reduction and removal of foreign personnel and financial aid. A strong plea was made to continue the presence of the religious in the Islamic countries, where the Church does not have indigenous roots. It was suggested that, over and above the presence of missionaries for life, every Congregation should develop forms of temporary service, similar to the system of *Fidei Donum* for diocesan priests and a programme of volunteers.

The content of mission is seen above all as *first and new evangelisation*, as an effort to reach the non-Christians and those who are no longer Christian.

- **Proclamation** as witnessing to and presentation of Christ remains the centre and foundation of missionary activity. But service to the poor, human promotion, inter-religious dialogue, ecumenism, which are all now generally accepted values and

secuted, contribute in an effective way to the mission of the Institute and of the Church.

b) Mission is a redemptive activity; it is a participation and an expression of the saving action of Christ. Therefore, it demands a communion and a participation in his life, from which every activity takes its meaning and its effectiveness. It is a profound unity between being and doing. In this unity are rooted some of the reflections on inculturation and on prophetism. Prophetism, for example, was situated in relation to the experience of God, whose will we must perceive and express for our time through life, works and words. Thus the authentic experience of the consecrated person is a factor of inculturation and a prophetic expression.

c) Mission is first of all communitarian, corporate. The individual member exercises his mission in the name of and in communion with his/her Institute. It is rooted in, and continuous with, the intuition and experience of the Founder, but has to be discerned and interpreted within the present day context.

d) The concrete incarnation of the missionary activity of an Institute must take into account three complementary factors: the charism of the Institute, the needs of the local Church in which one works and the challenges of the world, to be read in faith and in relation both to one's own charism and to the local Church. These three realities that confront each other help us to live a creative faithfulness in a complementary communion.

e) The mission *Ad Gentes* remains a privileged field for all the Institutes that can find life-giving expressions of their charism.

f) The poor must be the privileged recipients of the mission of consecrated persons. Poverty can be moral, cultural, religious, material, physical, etc. The categories of poor that were quoted are many: refugees, displaced persons, immigrants, the sick...

g) Every ministry, and such is any good work that springs from a charism, should also be lived in harmony with the growing Body of Christ, in our way of understanding and living the mission. Thus ecumenism, inter-religious dialogue, human promotion, the social dimension of the Gospel, must be integrated in every kind of ministry, from evangelisation to education, from charitable assistance to commitment to justice...

It seems to me that these emphases can have a considerable impact on animation for a new missionary impulse.

Communion, the Present Call for Mission

In the light of the most recent Synods, communion has become the horizon on which all are called to live their own vocation and mission within the Church. The communion which springs from the Trinitarian life and is a partici-

pation in Christ's Body can be described as the dynamic expression of the relation between all the components of the People of God.

It is not, therefore, only a question of hierarchical communion, even though this has a particular importance on account of the Bishop's role as promoter of the ecclesial unity and of all the charisms. The communion with the hierarchy has deeper requirements than pastoral agreements or contracts, which can sometimes darken the horizon and cool mutual relations.

Communion extends not only to the pastoral agents, but also to the other members of the Church, such as the lay people. Some of these can enter in a deeper way into communion with a group or an Institute, sharing its charisma, participating in the spirituality and in the mission.

Communion must further be lived between consecrated persons from different Institutes. I think that a step forward must be made in the collaboration between religious men and women, so as to be a sign for the Church as a whole.

Communion does not go without reciprocal tensions, which can be beneficial for the growth of all the parts of the Church. They can be justly appreciated and overcome through dialogue and with a suitable spirituality founded on faith, on mutual respect and such values as complementarity and interdependence.

In conclusion, I repeat what Cardinal Hume said at the end of his introductory report: "The future of consecrated life is decisive for the life and the mission of the whole Church. Its happy outcome depends in particular on its renewed and radical following of Christ, on its docility to the Holy Spirit, on its rootedness in ecclesial communion, on its missionary zeal in response to the challenges of today, on the faithfulness to the demands of consecrated life and to the charism that is proper to the Institute. This renewal of consecrated life is also a gift of God to His Church; a gift always to be prayed for, to be accepted and to be made to grow together. Pastors and members of all forms of consecrated life, we are corresponsable, with different but complementary duties. *De re nostra agitur!* The work is not lacking for us, neither during, nor after the Synod. Let us perform it under the love-filled look of Christ and with the grateful attitude of Mary".

orientations, remain essential.

- **Commitment for justice** is tied to the option for the poor, loved and served because of Christ.
- **Ecumenism** finds special protagonists among religious. Monasticism bears within itself the demand for ecumenism on account of its common roots and the priority of the spiritual. The spiritual ecumenism of prayer and of the search for God were underlined, without forgetting the various other dimensions and even the structural role which is proper to the religious. The presence of the religious fraternal delegates from other Churches was significant in itself; their contributions were greeted with gratitude and there was no lack of informal contacts.
- **Inter-religious dialogue** was underlined by a considerable number of members of the Synod. Their already existing commitment to it was recognised, because of their presence among the non-Christians. The importance of this dialogue was recalled, not only in the ordinary contacts of daily life but also through teaching, charitable and health institutions. It is a demand of Christian existence which ultimately finds its model in Trinitarian life.

For this reason, dialogue as a form of relationship is not only practised on an ecumenical and inter-religious level, but also within the Church, to develop a climate of communion, to foster mutual understanding, to overcome tensions, to promote cooperation.

Other fields of missionary endeavour for religious in today's world were likewise mentioned, such as evangelisation of culture and education, the world of communications, migrations, the world of health and suffering.

The Synod has also expressed a new *awareness of the importance of women* in the Church, particularly consecrated women, not only on account of their number and their missionary contribution, but also for the special sensitivity and complementarity they bring to the life and mission of the Church. "Feminism" is a sign of the times; one must recognise, according to the plan of God, its function in God's mystery of salvation and in the mission of the Church. Consequently, the contribution of the religious woman must be recognised at all levels, above all in those sectors that concern her.

There also emerged a concomitant theme: that of whether consecrated life is "lay" in

character or not. The idea of the status of the religious being different from the lay status, proposed by the *Relatio post disceptationem*, did not get the approval to two French-speaking groups. Instead there was a wide consensus for the use of the category of Institutes of Brothers and Sisters and for dropping that of "lay institutes". Even terminology can have important practical consequences!

The theme of *inculturation* found much resonance both in personal interventions and in discussions in the language groups. Its necessity for evangelisation was mentioned. The problem of inculturation was linked with that of renewal during the present time, and both lights and shadows were indicated. As was underlined, consecrated life is in itself a factor of inculturation, because it introduces and witnesses to Gospel values. The following conditions for inculturation were indicated: rootedness in Christ, creative faithfulness in living the consecration and the following of Christ through the vows, self-denial in service, an attitude of dialogue, knowledge of the culture and openness to its values... The Saints are often examples of genuine inculturation.

Every authentic charism can and should be inculturated. For this it is necessary to preserve its essential elements and the central nucleus of every charism. At the same time it is necessary to express it in different contexts, to enable it to become an intelligible sign and a response to the concrete challenges of a given cultural context. A few examples of inculturation that have been realised were indicated, such as the *Ashram* in India, the inserted communities in Latin America and Asia, a new modality of living the vows in Africa.

Particular attention was given to formation as a place of inculturation, both to reassert its importance and to indicate its deficiencies and its successful realisation. The questions of lifestyle and finances were often linked to inculturation.

Vocations to consecrated life have been a preoccupation of the Assembly in all its phases, by reason of the personnel crisis being experienced in so many parts of the Church and because of the pastoral insertion of consecrated persons in the Church and its relationship to the emergence of the laity. Their promotion must become a preoccupation of the whole Church at all levels, even though it is first of all the responsibility of religious men and women, through their exemplary life, their meaningful

apostolic commitments and through their concrete action in this respect. The promotion of vocations should be a dimension of every pastoral activity. A diocesan coordinating body for vocation promotion was proposed. Discernment, accompaniment and formation are essential elements to enable vocations to mature and to have a meaningful impact. The search for vocations in the Third World should only be allowed after a few years of pastoral service by the Institute in a given country.

Formation has progressively become a key aspect in connection with the future of consecrated life. Its integrality and graduality for the candidate was stressed, as was the need of suitable and well-prepared formators and the need for ongoing formation. The formation in a spirituality that is in harmony with the charism of the institute should be at the centre of the whole process of formation, so that the candidates may be guided towards giving themselves ever more fully to Christ and living in communion with Him, in accordance with their own vocation. The formation to the *lectio divina*, to the discernment of the signs of the times, to the sacramental life and to the various states and duties in the Church was likewise recalled. Initial and ongoing formation must be inculturated, i.e., must take cognisance of the context of the mission to which one is sent and of the changes in the personal growth of the person concerned and in the requirements of the community.

III - CHALLENGES FOR A LEADERSHIP OF OUR MISSIONARY INSTITUTES

After having taken part in the Synod and identified its most relevant convergences, I asked myself what could be the major challenges and opportunities for us, members of missionary Institutes, and in particular for us, leaders of such Congregations. I shall indicate three, regrouping them around the themes of charism, mission and communion. I define them as challenges and opportunities for our leadership.

Charism as Challenge to our Leadership

Over the last few years, the concept of "charism" has helped to understand the complex reality of the identity of our Institutes and therefore of consecrated life. The Synod has accepted this way of understanding consecrated life and has developed its content particularly in the *Instrumentum Laboris* and in the *Relatio ante disceptationem*, read by Cardinal Hume.

The Synod underlined some aspects of the specific charism of various Institutes:

- The rootedness of every charism in the Founder's experience;
- Its insertion within the ecclesial communion;
- The essential complementarity of its various aspects, in particular those of consecration - mission - communion;
- Its "corporate" requirements: the charism is given to the Institute and must be shared by its members;
- The permanent need of inculturation, i.e., of adapting to the times and the cultures, while preserving its essential elements. In this context the key terms are "faithfulness" and "creativity".

The Synod has also recognised the charism of consecrated life in its totality, recalling some of its common fundamental elements, e.g. the pneumatological, Christological, ecclesiological, missionary, anthropological dimension, etc. The consecrated life in the Church is permanent in this common meaning, while the particular forms can disappear without it being anybody's fault. On the other hand the particular charisms are distinct from each other and complementary. They can sometimes constitute families through spiritual and missionary affinities. Any levelling between them should be considered as a constant danger in the present, just as it was in the past.

Mission as Challenge in Animation

Most members of our Institutes are particularly sensitive to the calls of the mission. This aspect of their vocation makes them vibrate. The 1993 Congress of the USG on Consecrated Life placed mission in the first place, without however separating it from communion and from identity. The Synod, on the other hand, in all its documents placed consecration and communion in the first place. This order of things was for practical reasons. The order of presentation should therefore not be built up into a theory.

The Synod insisted on some aspects that seem to me important for our leadership and that could have a profound impact on the life of our Institutes.

- a) Mission is constitutive of every form of consecrated life, in all circumstances and for all those who concretely live their vocation. The aged, those who are at the service of the community, and even more so, those who are per-

"L'ISLAM LUTTE POUR LA SUPRÉMATIE"

INDONESIE

André Wark

Parmi les musulmans conservateurs, une variation d'un vieux cliché occidental fait fureur à l'heure actuelle : *Tous les groupes religieux sont égaux, mais le nôtre est plus égal que les autres*. L'expression est habituellement utilisée avec un sourire ironique mais le sentiment qu'elle indique est beaucoup plus sérieux. Selon beaucoup de dirigeants catholiques et protestants indonésiens, de telles plaisanteries apparaissent de plus en plus fondées sur la réalité dans un pays qui a été longtemps exalté comme l'une des sociétés les plus égalitaires du monde dans le domaine des religions.

L'Indonésie s'est longtemps enorgueillie de l'harmonie, inscrite dans sa constitution et respectée, entre les quatre religions majeures du pays : islam, protestantisme, catholicisme, et hindouisme-bouddhisme. Bien que gouvernant la plus nombreuse population musulmane du monde - 154 millions ou 85% de la population - le régime soutenu par les militaires a toujours réussi jusqu'à présent à contrôler le fondamentalisme religieux. En fait, peu de fêtes religieuses se déroulent sans que l'homme fort du régime, le président Suharto, ne réaffirme le besoin de tolérance dans toutes les religions.

La philosophie de l'harmonie religieuse apparaît impressionnante dans le principe, mais elle n'est pas toujours mise en pratique. Des dirigeants chrétiens disent qu'avec la récente irruption en politique d'intellectuels islamiques, il y a maintenant deux poids et deux mesures pour appliquer l'égalité des religions. Il ne fait aucun doute, disent-ils, que ce n'est pas le christianisme qui a la meilleure part. *"C'est la même chose partout en Indonésie*, dit par exemple le pasteur d'une paroisse évangéliste de sept-cents membres à Jakarta, *l'islam lutte pour la suprématie*".

Historiquement, le pouvoir politique de l'islam en Indonésie était sans relation avec son importance numérique. Au cours de sa présidence de 26 ans, le président Suharto a rarement permis aux musulmans orthodoxes de

pénétrer plus loin que la périphérie du domaine politique. Mais à la fin des années 1980, alors qu'on spéculait beaucoup sur la volonté des militaires d'effectuer un changement au sommet du régime, certains milieux ont commencé à dire que Suharto se tournait de plus en plus vers la communauté musulmane pour obtenir son soutien. *"Les intellectuels musulmans sont maintenant considérés comme les enfants chéris du gouvernement, alors que nous, chrétiens, sommes traités comme des enfants illégitimes"*, dit un chercheur catholique de Jakarta.

Les nouvelles réglementations religieuses donnent un certain poids à ces perceptions. Depuis 1987, les autorités du département de l'immigration ont commencé à restreindre le flux et les activités des missionnaires étrangers. Des sources de Jakarta disent qu'il est maintenant de notoriété publique que le gouvernement essaye de pousser dehors tous les missionnaires étrangers avant la fin de la décennie. Toutes les demandes de missionnaires pour des visas doivent être traitées par le département des relations publiques, connu comme une place forte de l'islam. Les autorités justifient cette initiative en affirmant qu'il s'agit de favoriser l'émergence de dirigeants religieux indigènes et de décourager la dépendance à l'égard de l'étranger.

Pourtant, depuis l'apparition de ces nouvelles réglementations, les dirigeants d'Églises affirment que le gouvernement a rendu encore plus difficile l'organisation de la formation des cadres religieux indigènes. En avril 1993, une directive nationale du département des affaires religieuses a sommé les Églises de ne pas ouvrir davantage d'instituts de formation théologique. Des branches de centres théologiques déjà en existence ont aussi reçu l'ordre de fermer leurs portes. Des sources disent aussi que l'une de leurs plus grandes frustrations est dans le fait que le gouvernement oppose de la résistance quand elles cherchent à faire enregistrer, à construire ou agrandir des bâtiments d'Église. *"Il en résulte que beaucoup d'Églises continuent à*

tenir des assemblées qui ne sont pas officiellement reconnues par les autorités", dit un dirigeant chrétien de Surabaya sur l'île de Java. "Cela signifie que ces assemblées ne bénéficient d'aucune protection légale, mais les autorités locales les laissent vivre tant qu'il n'y a pas de plaintes de la part des voisins musulmans".

Dans les régions à dominante musulmane comme Aceh, au nord de l'île de Sumatra, ou Ujung Padang dans le sud-Sulawesi, il est devenu pratiquement impossible de faire enregistrer des Églises. En contraste, presque toutes les villes de l'île surpeuplée de Java apparaissent très occupées à construire et agrandir des mosquées, le plus souvent grâce à des fonds gouvernementaux. A Malang il y a un projet de construction d'un *musyola* (centre islamique) dans chaque rue de la ville. Les Église ne peuvent pas construire des bâtiments à moins de trois cents mètres de tels centres. *"Même s'ils construisaient une mosquée en plein milieu de la route, personne n'oserait y toucher",* dit le pasteur de Surabaya.

En mai dernier, le gouvernement a introduit une politique non écrite qui interdit aux groupes d'Église l'utilisation de bâtiments publics tels que des hôtels pour l'organisation de services religieux. A Surabaya, rien n'indique pour le moment que les autorités aient commencé à appliquer cette politique. Mais à Jakarta, la majorité des assemblées ecclésiales qui se tenaient dans des hôtels ont vu leurs contrats dénoncés sans explication. Selon un missionnaire britannique de Java, l'attitude culturelle de déférence vis-à-vis de l'autorité gouvernementale fait que beaucoup de chrétiens indonésiens répugnent à s'élever contre de telles violations de la liberté religieuse. *"Les Indonésiens subissent encore des lois très strictes de censure. Quelques-uns osent élever la voix, mais la plupart ne veulent qu'on dise qu'ils font des histoires et enveniment les affaires",* affirme le missionnaire.

LA CROISSANCE DES ÉGLISES

Dans un tel contexte, la croissance phénoménale des Églises chrétiennes en Indonésie depuis une trentaine d'années est citée souvent comme l'un des accomplissements du christianisme au XX^{ème} siècle. Il est ironique de constater qu'une grande partie de cette croissance est due indirectement au coup d'Etat de 1966 qui a vu triompher l'armée sous la direction de Suharto sur le président Sukarno, alors que beaucoup jugeaient que les communistes

étaient sur le point de renverser le gouvernement.

Le coup d'État fut suivi par une sévère répression des communistes. Les nouveaux maîtres militaires du gouvernement demandèrent aux Indonésiens de prouver qu'ils n'avaient pas de tendance socialiste en les obligeant à choisir l'une des quatre religions majeures du pays. Le décret amena des millions d'Indonésiens à s'identifier au protestantisme et provoqua des mouvements de renouveau authentique au Timor occidental, dans l'Ambon, le Kalimantan, l'Irian Jaya et quelques parties de Java.

Les statistiques officielles du gouvernement prétendent encore que 85% de la population est musulmane, que les protestants sont 8%, les catholiques 3%. Selon un certain nombre de sources, un recensement de 1992 dont les résultats n'ont pas été publiés révélerait que le nombre réel des protestants et des catholiques est beaucoup plus élevé et atteindrait peut-être 20% de la population (ou 36 millions de personnes). Selon les mêmes sources, les résultats du recensement n'auraient pas été publiés par peur que des tensions ne surgissent avec les musulmans.

Les communautés musulmanes du pays cherchent à augmenter leurs nombres en utilisant des techniques de conversion qui rappellent celles des évangélistes chrétiens, notamment l'utilisation de tee-shirts et d'auto-collants. Des efforts dans le domaine social ont provoqué aussi la naissance d'hôpitaux musulmans et d'autres projets de développement. Une méthode importante de propagation de l'islam est la politique gouvernementale de "transmigration" : des familles de l'île surpeuplée de Java sont déplacées dans des îles moins peuplées. Cependant, les familles choisies pour cette "délocation" sont presque toutes musulmanes et sont installées souvent dans des régions à forte population chrétienne.

On peut trouver un exemple du fonctionnement de cette expérimentation en "ingénierie sociale" sur l'île d'Ambon, au nord-est de Java. Jusqu'au milieu des années 80, la population locale composée de membres d'une minorité ethnique était très majoritairement chrétienne. Aujourd'hui, les musulmans forment 50% de la population et ont obtenu nombre de positions politiques clés.

Une autre stratégie utilisée a suscité l'inquiétude dans beaucoup de régions rurales : c'est la pratique connue sous le nom de *Hamilisasi* ou "imprégnation". Des rapports

reçus de dirigeants d'Église du centre de Java, de l'Ambon, et de Timor Oriental disent que certains leaders musulmans encouragent les adolescents musulmans à "engrosser" de jeunes et souvent naïves adolescentes chrétiennes. Une fois enceintes, les filles sont forcées à se convertir à l'islam pour que les garçons puissent les prendre en mariage.

De leur côté plusieurs dirigeants musulmans ont accusé les protestants d'essayer de christianiser la communauté islamique. Certaines méthodes des évangélistes ont assez souvent aggravé les tensions religieuses et ont eu des conséquences tragiques. En novembre 1992, Les musulmans de la ville javanaise de Pasuruan ont incendié trois Églises après que des pentecôtistes aient commencé à distribuer des tracts considérés comme diffamatoires pour l'islam. Un autre groupe pentecôtiste a été accusé d'avoir provoqué une vague de protestations anti-chrétiennes sur l'île de Sumatra, à majorité musulmane, après avoir mis des tracts évangélistes dans des boîtes de biscuits offertes à la vente.

L'avenir

La question maintenant dans l'esprit de beaucoup de chrétiens est de savoir si davantage de concessions faites à l'aile conservatrice de l'islam résulteront en une érosion correspondante des droits religieux des Églises chrétiennes. Les sources ecclésiastiques pensent que la réponse à cette question dépend en grande partie de l'élection présidentielle de 1998. Suharto garde le silence sur le sujet, mais on estime un peu partout qu'il ne se représentera probablement pas à cause de son âge avancé.

Les candidats virtuels les plus probables à sa succession sont le vice-président Try Sustrino et le ministre de la Recherche et de la Technologie, B.J. Habibie. Les deux personnalités peuvent représenter deux scénarios très différents pour l'avenir.

Malgré leurs hésitations à faire des commentaires trop développés sur la question, beaucoup de dirigeants chrétiens estiment que Sustrino, ancien chef militaire, sera plus à même de défendre les droits des groupes religieux minoritaires s'il devient président. Les forces armées de la nation, qui tiennent en mains les cartes décisives de l'élection présidentielle, ont jusqu'à présent toujours neutralisé l'extrémisme religieux chaque fois qu'il a surgi.

Habibie, fondateur de l'association des intellectuels musulmans, est supposé bénéficier

d'un très large soutien dans l'électorat musulman. Son association inquiète beaucoup de groupes d'Église, car on dit ici et là qu'elle essaye sournoisement d'islamiser la constitution du pays, le système juridique et l'armée. Habibie s'est toujours défendu de ces accusations.

Quel que soit le candidat qui gagne, il est improbable que les extrémistes musulmans puissent facilement gagner du terrain dans le domaine politique indonésien. Contrairement à la Malaisie où l'islamisation a été imposée par des Malais musulmans politiquement puissants, l'islam indonésien est très divers et fragmenté. Par conséquent, les Indonésiens sont plus sensibles à une idéologie nationaliste qu'au fondamentalisme, selon la plupart des dirigeants chrétiens que nous avons interrogés.

La croissance du christianisme dans l'archipel donne aux chrétiens indonésiens de nombreuses raisons d'être optimistes. Pourtant aucun d'entre eux ne nie que l'Église ne jouit pas aujourd'hui de la même liberté qu'autrefois. *"Les choses deviennent plus difficiles, nous devons le reconnaître"* conclut un enseignant chrétien de Java. *"L'Église passe toujours d'une crise à l'autre. C'est comme une spirale, mais aujourd'hui la spirale semble être devenue plus étroite : Chaque nouvelle crise est plus rapprochée de la précédente..."* L'enseignant ajoute : *"L'Église est forte, mais nous ne savons pas où cela mène"*.

Ref. *Églises D'Asie*
Supplément EDA, No. 187





mission moments

Cardinal Lorscheider: QUESTIONS ON THE SYNOD PROCEDURE

Report of an interview granted by Cardinal Aloísio Lorscheider to Journalist Walter Ludin, OFM.Cap., in Assisi.

Ludin:

Is the new theology of the excluded in competition with the traditional Liberation Theology?

Lorscheider:

It is a further development of Liberation Theology. And the "option for the poor" has become the "option for the excluded". The poverty of the poor has increased. More and more people are regarded as worthless and are excluded from society. In contrast to this we emphasise the value of each person.

Ludin:

In the life of the Basic Christian Communities the Liberation Theology or the theology of the excluded is put into practice intensively. In recent years it has often been said that they are in a crisis.

Lorscheider:

A few years ago many Basic Christian Communities were discouraged. The main reason for this was that they had become too much involved in politics. They had relied on a party that lost the election. This defeat taught them a lesson. The Basic Christian Communities realised that they should not rely on a political party. In the meantime they have recovered and their numbers are increasing.

Ludin:

Brother Cardinal, so far you have taken part in every Bishops' Synod in Rome. What are your experiences with this institution?

Lorscheider:

The Bishops' Synod has not ful-

filled the great expectations. I think a Bishops' Synod ought to last six weeks instead of four. Then we Bishops would have time to draw up our own Document instead of handing over our material to the Holy Father. As long as the present procedure is followed we cannot expect much of a Synod.

Ludin:

It has already been suggested that the Synod should elect the Pope. What do you think of that?

Lorscheider:

For the time being it is still best that the Cardinals elect the Pope. But I think we should start with the voters from below: at first, as it happens with us, let the people elect the deans. Later one could also vote for the Bishops. And later still one could get to electing the Pope, but surely not in this century any more. At elections the people of God exercise their rights.

Ludin:

Do you hold the opinion then that democratic structures should exist in the Church?

Lorscheider:

The Church is not a democracy, she is a community. Vatican Council II has given an impulse towards this "communio" theology, but it is being adopted only slowly.

Ludin:

What is the role of the Pope in a Church that understands herself essentially as a community and not, in the first place, as a hierarchically structured institution?

Lorscheider:

He is the centre of unity. The meaning of this can change in the course of time. That is why we have

to ask ourselves anew, again and again, how the Pope can fulfil his task. A process of reflection on this is happening. It is a good process. One must not disturb it. We shall see how far it comes from the Holy Spirit. For it is the Holy Spirit who ultimately guides the Church. Not only the role of the Pope, also other structural questions need to be reflected on anew by the Church today: not what was established by Christ Himself, but everything that the Church has instituted by herself in the course of her history. We must have the courage to reflect on it, and we must involve the whole people of God in this reflection, also the laity. It is only when everybody has a say, that we have really the Church. Only those structures that are personal and humane are good structures. The faithful feel: "My word counts. I enjoy that. It is worthwhile to get involved. I want to do my best".

Ludin:

And finally the question that I ask every Bishop of the Third World: What do you expect from Christians in the rich countries?

Lorscheider:

More solidarity. You give us much material help. This is something beautiful. But it is not enough. What we need is a new world order in the political, economic, and social sphere. The Christians in Europe and in the USA have a great responsibility in this. They must exercise pressure that conditions change in favour of the Third World. This must happen very fast, for time is running out.

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LE NOUVEAU CARDINAL VIETNAMIEN EXPRIME SES VUES SUR LES TÂCHES DE L'ÉGLISE AU VIETNAM

(VIETNAM)

Le 28 novembre 1994, deux jours après que le pape Jean Paul II lui eût conféré la dignité de cardinal, Mgr Pham Dinh Tung, archevêque de Hanoi, a fait part de ses premières impressions dans une interview accordée à Radio Vatican. Il a d'abord déclaré que la dignité qui lui était accordée était un honneur pour son Église mais que lui-même la considérait comme une nouvelle responsabilité qu'il devrait exercer aussi bien dans le contexte de l'Église universelle que dans celui de l'Église du Vietnam. Cependant, c'est à celle-ci que le nouveau cardinal a consacré ensuite l'essentiel de ses déclarations.

Pour Mgr Pham Dinh Tung, dans les années à venir, l'Église du Vietnam devrait avant tout s'efforcer de s'adapter à l'évolution dans laquelle est entré le peuple vietnamien depuis déjà quelques années, évolution couramment appelée "dôi moi" (renouvellement). Cette rénovation lui est certes imposée par l'évolution du monde mais, au Vietnam, indéniablement, elle a pris une forme particulière due aux conditions historiques propres à ce pays. L'adaptation de l'Église au renouvellement de la société vietnamienne exigera d'elle une série de tâches qu'a énumérées l'archevêque de Hanoi.

Le souci prioritaire de l'Église devrait être la formation de la jeunesse qu'il faut préparer à affronter l'hédonisme et le matérialisme ambiants introduits au Vietnam à travers les bandes vidéo, les films, les journaux étrangers toujours plus nombreux. Cette invasion dont le pays a été longtemps protégé par son isolement, est en train d'ébranler le monde de vie traditionnel du peuple vietnamien. L'Église devrait aider les nouvelles

générations à vivre ce passage dans des conditions moins traumatisantes.

Vient ensuite une autre tâche nécessaire si l'Église veut rejoindre l'évolution de son peuple. Elle consistera à donner une dimension nouvelle à la vie chrétienne des laïcs en lui faisant transgresser les limites strictes du sanctuaire ou de la paroisse. Le cardinal a parlé avec émotion de la ferveur et de la régularité de la pratique chrétienne au Vietnam en ajoutant qu'elle ne peut suffire. Voici venu le temps de l'engagement du laïc; les conditions historiques lui sont favorables. Les chrétiens ont des responsabilités vis-à-vis de leur peuple et il faut qu'ils les assument.

Cette tâche de l'Église à l'égard de son peuple, a conclu le cardinal, ne pourra se réaliser que si l'Église réalise les deux conditions que Jésus réclame de ses apôtres: "*Qu'elle soit une et sainte*".

Des représentants des milieux catholiques présents aux élections des conseils populaires

Des élections pour les conseils populaires des provinces, des districts et des communes ont eu lieu sur tout le territoire du Vietnam le 20 novembre 1994. 43 millions d'électeurs se sont rendus aux urnes pour élire 3,109 conseillers pour un mandat de cinq ans dans 1,025 circonscriptions. A Hô Chi Minh-Ville la participation électorale a atteint le taux exceptionnel de 99,59 %, certains arrondissements ayant voté à 99,99 %.

Les conseils populaires sont des assemblées délibératives, dont la principale fonction est de choisir les membres du Comité populaire, l'exécutif local qui détient le véritable pouvoir de décision. Le scrutin était organisé par le Front de la patrie. L'électorat avait le choix entre 4,759 candidats, qui avaient fait campagne depuis plusieurs mois. Près de 75 % d'entre eux étaient membres du parti communiste. Tous les autres, sauf 33 candidats indépendants dont le nombre s'est réduit au moment des élections, ont été présentés par diverses organisa-

tions de masse (syndicats et associations diverses) qui toutes sont dans la mouvance du Front patriotique, ce qui relativise l'indépendance des divers candidats.

Un certain nombre d'entre eux ont été présentés au suffrage des électeurs en tant que représentants des milieux catholiques. Aux élections aux conseils populaires provinciaux, pour chaque province, un représentant des catholiques figurait sur la liste des candidatures. A ce niveau, seuls des prêtres ont sollicité les suffrages de la population. Il n'y a eu ni laïc ni religieuse. Il n'en a pas été de même aux élections des arrondissements et districts. Ainsi à Hô Chi Minh-Ville, les 15 candidats catholiques présents dans 13 arrondissements se répartissaient ainsi: huit prêtres, une religieuse, six laïcs dont une femme.

Certains avaient, au cours de la campagne qui a précédé, exposé leurs motivations publiquement. Interviewé par l'organe du Comité d'union du catholicisme, un prêtre, candidat au conseil provincial de Khanh Ho a répondu: "*Je me présente aux élections en qualité de citoyen de religion catholique. Le fait que je sois prêtre constitue pour moi un avantage, car connaissant clairement les aspirations de nos compatriotes catholiques, je suis plus à même de les refléter au sein du conseil populaire...*". Un autre candidat au conseil populaire de Hô Chi Minh-Ville insiste sur le service du bien public: "*Chaque représentant a sa voix propre*", a-t-il déclaré, "*mais elle doit toujours rester la voix de la collectivité*".

Les résultats ont été connus deux semaines plus tard. La proportion des élus chez les représentants des milieux catholiques est très importante. Ainsi sur les candidats aux conseils populaires d'arrondissement, trois seulement n'ont pas recueilli assez de voix pour être élus: une religieuse et deux laïcs.

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COMING EVENTS

March 28

JUSTICE AND PEACE COMMISSION (UISG/USG)

PEACEMAKING - A CHALLENGE FOR THE CHURCH

Place: Fratelli Cristiani, via Aurelia, 476

9:00 hrs. - 16.00 hrs.

WORKING GROUPS

February	27	Haïti
March	30	World Debt (French)
April	20	World Debt (combined, Fr. Eng.)

Place: SEDOS Secretariate; via dei Verbiti, 1

Time: 16:00 p.m.

May 30 - June 3

SEDOS RESIDENTIAL SEMINAR

PHILIPPINES - INDONESIA - PACIFIC ISLANDS

Divino Maestro (ARICCIA)
