



*Youth and  
Mission*

## SEDOS RESIDENTIAL SEMINAR 2018

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## **SEDOS BULLETIN 2018**

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## Youth and Mission

Dear Readers,



The recent SEDOS Residential Seminar at Ariccia was once again a wonderful meeting of people full of enthusiasm for the mission and the youth of today. It was held

from 30 April to 4 May 2018, and opened with a ritual in the open air, entitled *Weaving our Lives with God*. Sr. Rachel Oommen, ICM, who prepared this short introduction with others, wrote the following words in the opening prayer: “As we start our Seminar, we are looking at how God is working with each one of us and inviting us to bring what we have. This is a grace-filled time where with a clear purpose we gather to deepen the theme ‘Youth and Mission’ from a universal perspective. We come, as we are, from the four corners of the world, ready to place the strands of our life thread in the hands of the weaver God, wisdom Sophia.”



Indeed, the seminar became a fine loom with all kinds of aspects on youth in relation to mission. The reader can find all the talks that were given at this Seminar, in order of appearance. The only talks that do not appear here are those of the young missionaries who

spoke in a panel discussion guided by Br. Paul Bednarczyck, Vicar General of the Congregation of the Holy Cross. They openly shared the challenges they had met to enter religious life and to become a missionary.

Each day there was a specific theme: the spirit of the youth today, the way to evangelize the young people today, and the accompaniment in vocational discernment.

In the morning the lecturers gave two inputs, and in the afternoon there was a moment of personal reflection, sharing in groups, and then bringing the results in the bigger group in a creative way. The Eucharist was then a good moment to cool down, to internalize, and to pray to the Lord.

One evening Fr. Timothy Radcliff’s video on *The culture and the vocation to consecrated life: between possibilities and difficulties* was shown. Another evening the movie *Silence* was shown. And the last evening we had the entertaining sounds of a local youth group of about 30 members, called “Diapason”, who are part of the *Musical Association of the Roman Castles*. The evening ended with a common festive gathering around food, drinks, with music and dancing. During these days the participants drew closer to each other and began weaving their lives and dreams together. The closing talk was given by Cardinal Lorenzo Baldisseri, Secretary General of the Synod of Bishops. He spoke to us about the ongoing preparations towards the Synod on Youth that will take place in October at the Vatican, and his specific role during the election of Pope Francis.

The next Seminar will be held at Domus Pacis, Assisi, from 28 April till 2 May, 2019, with a theme on Interreligious Dialogue.

*We hope to meet you all again there!*

*Sr. Veronica Openibo, SHCJ*

## Opening Address

Good evening dear members of SEDOS family and welcome to 2018 annual seminar on Youth and Mission. We have been eagerly looking forward to this seminar that is closely related with the Synod of Bishops on Youth and Vocation ministry that will be coming up in October 2018. Some



**Sr. Veronica Openibo, SHCJ**

of us were privileged to take part at the CICALSAL Congress on Vocational Ministry that took place 1-3 December 2017. Many of us may not be able to attend the special synod of bishops that will be taking place at the Vatican in October 2018 on Young People, the Faith, and Vocational Discernment. Today we are here to begin the SEDOS annual seminar on Youth and Mission.

I listened to a TED talk recently on *“Why it’s worth listening to people you disagree with”* by Zachary R. Wood (April 2018) the brief summary of the talk says:

*We get stronger, not weaker, by engaging with ideas and people we disagree with, in order to find a common ground. Wood makes the case that we can build empathy and gain understanding by engaging tactfully and thoughtfully with controversial ideas and unfamiliar perspectives. “Tuning out opposing viewpoints doesn’t make them go away... to achieve progress in the face of adversity, we need a genuine commitment to gaining a deeper understanding of humanity.*

For me this is the crust of the conversation Pope Francis is challenging us to have with the youth: How do we gain that deeper understanding of the young people of today in order to invite them to a genuine commitment to vocational discernment of Jesus’ mission? This is central to Pope Francis mission with youth - going out, seeing and calling!

### **My experience of Youth in Mission**

I would like to share my experience of working with young people (18-30) for nine years in two higher institutions in Nigeria. They wanted to: be seen and heard, be talked with not to, participate, share from the depth of their hearts not asked to keep quiet while the elders decide, be trusted, accompanied and mentored not only monitored. young people want to be called to use their potentials, they want us to be sensitive to the challenges of their developmental age and the contests that life brings. Above all, they crave for us to share our knowledge and appreciation of God in practical terms: deep faith sharing, to be present to them not just doing for them. Our mission with the youth is that of presence with all its ramifications and limitations in every complex situation. Young people ask for ‘authentic witnesses’ not just teachers or elders.

### **Liturgy of the Eucharist**

I remembered going to Mass at Villanova University Chapel one Sunday evening. The church was packed with students, lecturers and parents. The celebrant was very attentive and sensitive to the pastoral needs of the youth. He touched their hearts in the sermon. I cannot remember what he said but I saw from the students’ gestures that they solely listened, understood and were proud of preacher. How do we touch hearts in our preaching? Pope Francis has invited us to change our complacent pastoral attitudes. Youth and Mission!

## **Young People, the Faith, and Vocational Discernment**

Our Holy Father on 13 January 2017 presented the 25 paged Preparatory Document of the synod said:

“My Dear Young People, I am pleased to announce that in October 2018 a Synod of Bishops will take place to treat the topic: “Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment.” I wanted you to be the centre of attention, because you are in my heart. Today, the Preparatory Document is being presented, a document which I am also entrusting to you as your “compass” on this synodal journey...(the words which God spoke to Abraham)...are words of a Father who invites you to “go”, to set out towards a future which is unknown but one which will surely lead to fulfilment, a future towards which He Himself accompanies you. I invite you to hear God's voice resounding in your heart through the breath of the Holy Spirit. **Powerful, isn't it?**

The key words here are: **go, set out towards a future which is unknown, will surely lead to fulfilment, a future God accompanies, to hear God's voice resounding in your hearts through the breath of the Holy Spirit.** I feel we are being called too to be genuine witnesses to accompany the Youth in our Mission.

As the Preparatory Document focus on three areas: young people in today's world, discernment – accompaniment and pastoral activity

– **going out, seeing and calling**, it is responding to the quests of young people of today. The questions at the end of the Document challenges one to reflect and discern. For me, the response to Youth and Mission is in another document, “Gaudete et Exultate”– the

Apostolic Exhortation on the “Call to Holiness” (in Today's World) by the Pope on 9/4/2018. James Martins SJ identified *Top Five Takeaways* from this document (in American Magazine 9/4/2018)

1. **Holiness means being yourself** –to be a saint means to be being myself
2. **Everyday life can lead to holiness** – in small gestures
3. **Two tendencies to avoid: Gnosticism and Pelagianism** – a know it all and or obsession with the law, doctrine and prestige
4. **Be kind** – avoid gossip, stop judging, bearing false witness or ruthlessly defaming characters
5. **The Beatitudes are a roadmap for holiness** – the be attitudes –of Jesus' own life in meekness, peace-making, helping and serving, forgiving and understanding, seeing and acting with mercy.

An example of holiness in action: A message I received recently from Joanna Ewart-James, Freedom United Joanna on 25 April 2018 ([team@freedomunited.org](mailto:team@freedomunited.org))

1. **What will be our roadmap for working with the Youth in our Mission as we explore and live the focus of the synod: Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment?**
2. **How can we continue to evaluate our progress?**
3. **When would we be able to say:**

**WE DID IT!**

We pray that enveloped in God's light, may we be beacons to those in search of light. Sheltered in God's

peace, may we offer shelter to those in need of peace. And embraced by God's presence, may we be present to others at this seminar and always. Amen (*adapted from Rabbi Rami Shapiro*)



Emilia Palladino

## Millenials

### La cultura giovanile contemporanea tra diritto e rovescio



#### Emilia Palladino

Ogni cultura giovanile che si rispetti ha le sue ambivalenze più o meno pronunciate, così come del resto sono ambivalenti gli stessi giovani: in equilibrio precario fra il *già* e il *non ancora*, le spinte interiori che sentono sono a

volte opposte, così come sono contraddittorie le pressioni sociali e culturali che insistono su di loro.

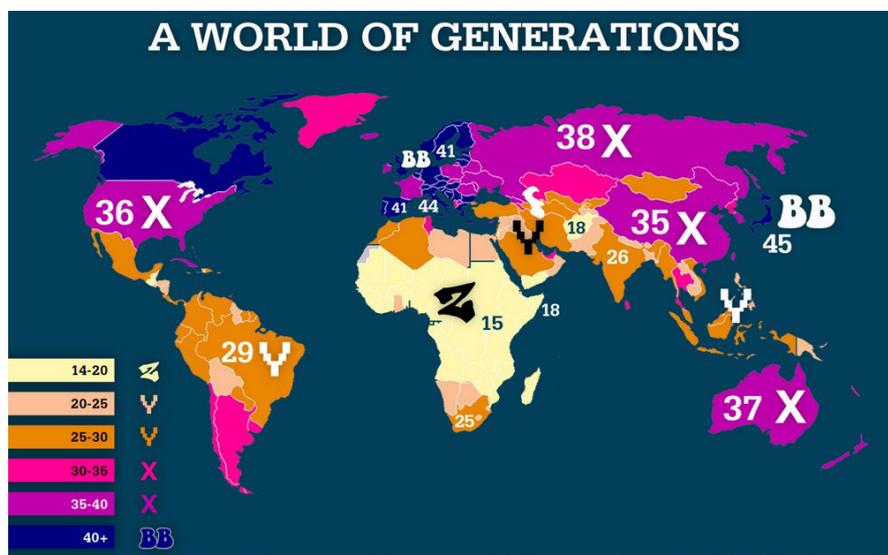
La nostra epoca storica aggiunge alle caratteristiche tipiche dell'età giovanile, sue proprie connotazioni, che rendono perciò sempre attuale

il discorso sui giovani. In questo breve contributo, allora, si cercherà di delineare i tratti principali della cultura dei Millennials, definendone i contorni e manifestandone le ambiguità e le ambivalenze, cercando però di offrire una visione positiva e propositiva della loro presenza nel mondo contemporaneo. Non

si vuole infatti in alcun modo favorire quella forma particolarmente odiosa di profetismo di sventura denunciato da Giovanni XXIII<sup>1</sup> per la quale il futuro è percepito sempre peggiore del presente e molto peggiore del passato. La realtà del domani dipenderà in larga parte da come costruiamo insieme il momento attuale.

Per la prima volta nella storia del mondo convivono sul territorio terrestre 4 generazioni: la prima e più vecchia è quella dei *Baby boomers*, nati tra il 1940 e il 1960; segue la Generazione X, i cui componenti sono detti anche *X-ers*, nati tra il 1960 e il 1980; i Millennials o Generazione Y, *Y-ers* dei nati tra il 1980 e il 2000; infine, la generazione Z dei nati tra il 2000 e oggi, i più giovani che sono presenti sul pianeta.

I Millennials sono numerosissimi: solo negli



Età media degli abitanti di ogni regione del mondo

Stati Uniti sono 80 milioni e nel mondo sono due miliardi e mezzo.

Rappresentano la prima generazione nata e cresciuta con la tecnologia.

I primi computer

sono stati costruiti poco prima della loro nascita; sono *connessi*, il più possibile e si rico-

<sup>1</sup> Giovanni XXIII. 1962. Discorso *Gaudet mater ecclesiae* per l'apertura del Concilio Vaticano II. 11 ottobre. [www.vatican.va/content/johnxxiii/it/speeches/1962/documents/hf\\_j-xxiii\\_spe\\_19621011\\_opening-council.html](http://www.vatican.va/content/johnxxiii/it/speeches/1962/documents/hf_j-xxiii_spe_19621011_opening-council.html)

noscono in uno stile individuale molto marcato, rifuggendo nella maggioranza dei casi, da modelli precostituiti e imposti dall'esterno, per cercare una dimensione esistenziale e progettuale che sia loro propria. Nel 2030 costituiranno il 75% della forza lavoro globale.

Dai sociologi che studiano la condizione dei Millennials, il modo in cui pensano, agiscono e scelgono, sono stati spesso tacciati di essere la generazione più narcisista della storia. Nel 2013 il Times raccoglieva questo dato con un articolo scritto da Joel Stein che si guadagnò la copertina e che è facilmente reperibile online<sup>2</sup>.

Nell'interpretare la tendenza dei Millennials ad essere così narcisisti da aver nel *selfie* e nei conseguenti post a sfondo egocentrico, il loro più marcato tratto distintivo, alcuni sostengono che in realtà i social network abbiano amplificato una tendenza già presente nella società e nella cultura soprattutto occidentale, ma che non l'abbiano "inventata".

Questo costringe gli adulti attuali – cioè quanti appartengono alla generazione precedente, gli *X-ers* – ad un serio esame di coscienza: se i Millennials sono così egocentrici, non è forse dovuto al fatto che la generazione dei loro genitori, abbia fatto dell'egocentrismo un valore e quindi del narcisismo un atteggiamento concreto?

In realtà, non è così semplice rispondere a questa domanda, in quanto la descrizione dei Millennials pare sfuggire ad ogni possibilità di essere catalogata.

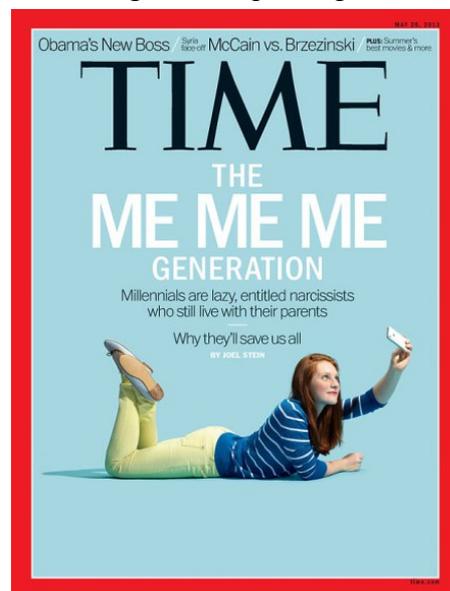
Un'espressione infatti della generazione Y, opposta alla percezione del loro egocentrismo, è la reazione di solidarietà e altruismo, unita ad un serio impegno civico, che i giovani americani hanno avuto di fronte all'ennesimo attacco con armi che si è perpetrato da un ex-studente ai danni degli studenti e dei professori di una scuola. Questa volta, la tragedia è avvenuta in un liceo di Parkland in Florida il 14 febbraio 2018, dove Nikolas Cruz ha ucciso 17 persone<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> Stein, J., 2013. «Millennials: The Me Me Me Generation. » Time. May 20. (time.com/247/Millennials-the-me-me-me-generation/)

<sup>3</sup> 2018. «Florida school shooting: at least 17 people dead on 'horrific, horrific day'.» The Guardian. 15 febbraio. [www.theguardian.com/us-news/2018/feb/14/florida-shooting-school-latest-news-stoneman-douglas](http://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2018/feb/14/florida-shooting-school-latest-news-stoneman-douglas)

In quell'occasione è nata l'iniziativa *March for our lives*, in cui all'attivismo contro la lobby americana delle armi, si è unito un forte sentimento di identificazione con le vittime di queste stragi. L'ondata emotiva provocata dalla tragedia ha unito giovani e meno giovani in una medesima protesta che ha portato a marciare a Washington circa ottocentomila persone, insieme a molte altre che contemporaneamente hanno manifestato in altre città americane e del mondo. Ne è nato un movimento composito che ha allargato i propri orizzonti da una manifestazione contro qualcosa, ad un movimento socio-politico a favore dei giovani e del loro futuro<sup>4</sup>.

Alcuni opinionisti<sup>5</sup> hanno salutato questa iniziativa come la più concreta dimostrazione di quanto i Millennials non siano poi solo egocentrici e narcisisti, ma sappiano impegnarsi per le cose in cui credono e spendersi per valori importanti, la cui realizzazione non intendono affatto lasciare ad altri – mentre loro "fanno i propri comodi" -, anzi impegnandosi a fondo perché il futuro, che saranno i primi ad abitare, sia migliore di questo presente.



Copertina del Time, 2013

<sup>4</sup> Il sito istituzionale del movimento è [marchforourlives.com/](http://marchforourlives.com/).

<sup>5</sup> Cfr. T. Kreider. 2018. «Go Ahead, Millennials, Destroy Us.» The New York Times. [www.nytimes.com/2018/03/02/opinion/go-ahead-millennials-destroy-us.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/02/opinion/go-ahead-millennials-destroy-us.html)

## Generati dalla Vita per corrispondere all'Amore

Generare significa parlare di vita, ma oggi non è cosa scontata. Infatti, il nostro tempo è fortemente a rischio di sterilità, non solo per l'inverno demografico che sta dilagando in modo molto veloce, ma soprattutto per l'incapacità di uscire dalla propria stagnazione e andare verso l'altro da sé. C'è tutto un sistema di ripiegamento per la paura di venire contaminati da tutto ciò che è minaccia e pericolo per sé stessi.



Sr. Bruna Zaltron

Oggi, come non mai, siamo in piena crisi antropologica, iniziata e perseguita negli ultimi secoli con l'illusione di poter vivere in modo diverso il nostro essere umani. L'uomo postmoderno che ha emarginato Dio vuole affermare sé stesso al di sopra di tutto con un sorta di delirio di onnipotenza. Vige l'idea del "self-made man", dell'uomo che si fa da sé e che è origine e fine di sé stesso, padrone della sua vita e del mondo. E così paradossalmente l'uomo che voleva essere libero e padre della propria vita, si è ritrovato orfano e senza fratelli. L'esito di questo è sotto gli occhi di tutti e non c'è contesto che sia esente dall'insoddisfazione che può bruciare l'esistenza e diventare *male di vivere*.

Nessuno di noi è il Creatore di sé stesso. Nessuno ha la capacità di dare inizio all'esistenza. Veniamo da Qualcuno. Siamo messi al mondo. C'è un grembo che ci ha generati nell'amore e tutti partecipiamo a questo processo di procreazione continua che ci rimette continuamente al mondo e fa nascere la nostra umanità più piena giorno dopo giorno.

La cultura odierna ha trasformato i legami in catene dalle quali occorre liberarsi in nome di un diritto all'autorealizzazione, che vede il

vincolo come un ostacolo, anziché come un'opportunità. L'autosufficienza è illusione e questo inganno ci ha resi più schiavi di prima, anestetizzati e indifferenti verso gli altri. Al contrario, si è liberi legandosi a qualcosa e in relazione a qualcuno, non tagliando i legami.

È un debito di gratitudine che ci fa responsabili e, quindi, desiderosi di restituire, anziché soggetti di diritti. Che cosa abbiamo che non ci sia stato dato? Noi rendiamo quello che ci viene offerto come dono

primariamente. Diventiamo capaci di donare se siamo

capaci di ricevere. Questo nel segno della gratuità e della gratitudine.

Entrare in questa dinamica generativa ci aiuta a crescere nella consapevolezza di essere generati da un dono d'amore per diventare capaci a nostra volta di generare umanità. Generati e fecondi. Siamo chiamati a vivere l'umano quale manifestazione del divino dentro al mistero dell'Incarnazione che è assunzione della propria umanità. Per essere autenticamente cristiana, la nostra esistenza è chiamata ad essere continuazione dell'incarnazione del Verbo. È il farsi carne di Dio che ci ricorda la sua logica, che assume la nostra stessa carne. Benedetto XVI descrive Dio come un "compagno dell'umano, che offre piste di senso e di luce, un Dio della gioia, della pienezza, che si trova frequentando fino in fondo l'umanità". Dio si è svelato pienamente, si è reso incontrabile e accessibile nell'umanità di Gesù. Giochiamo pertanto la nostra credibilità sulla capacità di rendere pienamente umano l'uomo, aprendolo a quel Dio che si è svelato e si è reso incontrabile nell'umanità di Gesù<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Cfr. COZZA R. *La custodia dell'umano. Nuovi orizzonti per la vita religiosa*, EDB, Bologna 2014.

Questa è la maturità della fede che è delle persone adulte. Ma questa generazione rinnega l'identità strutturale dell'adulità che è quella di sapersi dimenticare di sé in vista della cura degli altri. Oggi le madri vogliono essere e apparire come le figlie e come loro si atteggiavano. Lo stesso per i padri, che rinunciano a sé stessi per mimetizzarsi nella cultura giovanile dei figli. Si insegue l'eterna giovinezza non rendendosi conto che viviamo una vera e propria paralisi dell'educativo. I giovani non trovano davanti a sé adulti con i quali poter entrare in un salutare rapporto di conflittualità educativa. *«La domanda di padre che oggi attraversa il disagio della giovinezza non è una domanda di potere e di disciplina, ma di testimonianza»* (M. Recalcati). Ai giovani mancano riferimenti, modelli che sappiano essere e mostrare come si diventa adulti, cioè capaci di crescere, di diventare responsabili del bene degli altri, forti nell'affrontare la realtà attraversandone le inevitabili contraddizioni e fatiche. E dove non c'è cultura dell'adulità, non c'è neppure cultura vocazionale. Quando gli adulti vengono meno alla loro vocazione all'adulità sono sempre meno capaci di generare vocazioni. Per questo, assumere l'umano come vocazione e compito da realizzare diventa una necessità sempre più forte e necessaria per riuscire non solo a crescere nella consapevolezza di essere generati, ma soprattutto per imparare a corrispondere a questo Amore che rigenera continuamente la nostra esistenza e ci fa capaci di restituire a nostra volta. Tutto questo è frutto di cammino. È il movimento, il cammino, il luogo dell'esperienza della fede. In nessun luogo troviamo la verità, perché la verità è nel cammino.

Nessuna tappa segna l'arrivo: piuttosto, è sempre una ripartenza. Avviare processi, non occupare spazi ci ricorda Papa Francesco (E.G. 223). Per questo dobbiamo aiutare i giovani ad entrare in una dinamica generativa che li aiuti a<sup>2</sup>:

✓ riscoprire i desideri del cuore

- ✓ nascere
- ✓ avere cura
- ✓ corrispondere - restituire

### **Riscoprire i desideri del cuore**

Desiderare significa dare spazio al desiderio di infinito che abita il nostro cuore, a questa scintilla che abbiamo il dovere di coltivare in noi, contro le schiavitù legate ai bisogni mai saziati. Desiderare non è soddisfare bisogni o cercare piacere, ma ha a che fare con le stelle, con l'altezza che ci libera dalla prigione della contingenza e dalla reazione semplice degli stimoli che abbiamo intorno. *Da de sidus: mancanza di una stella, di un punto di riferimento; è la nostalgia di una pienezza che abbiamo in qualche modo provata.*

Oggi si è confuso il bisogno con il desiderio. Siamo bombardati da tutta una serie di stimoli che creano necessità e ci rendono succubi e schiavi di bisogni che riempiono nel tentativo di saturare, di farci sentire sazi, ma che provocano sempre più fame e vuoto. I desideri al contrario ci aprono e rimandano a qualcosa di più grande della quale vediamo solo una parte, è qualcosa che ha una forte attrazione verso la pienezza di vita.

Quali domande abitano il cuore dei nostri giovani? Che cosa cercano veramente? Ai discepoli che lo seguivano Gesù chiede: "che cercate?"; a Maria che piange perché gli hanno portato via il maestro domanda: "Chi cerchi?".

Infatti, la prima cosa che Gesù chiede ai primi discepoli non è obbedienza o adesione, osservanza di regole o formule di preghiera. Ciò che lui domanda è un viaggio verso il cuore, rientrare al centro di sé stessi, incontrare il desiderio che abita la profondità della vita, perché il desiderio è il luogo di incontro con la verità di sé stessi e con la verità di Dio. Dio lo si incontra all'interno del proprio desiderio che Lui stesso ha acceso in noi. Agostino, da poeta, ha saputo dirlo come pochi altri: *"Ci hai fatti per te, Signore, e il nostro cuore è inquieto fino a quando non riposa in te!"*<sup>3</sup>. Il desiderio di Dio è costituito dalla fame e dalla sete autentiche della persona umana.

<sup>2</sup> PAPA FRANCESCO, *Plenaria del Pontificio Consiglio della Cultura*, 7 febbraio 2015.

<sup>3</sup> S. AGOSTINO, *Confessioni*, Lib. 1, 1. 1 - 2. 2; 5. 5; CSEL 33, 1-5.

Gesù lo dice bene: “*Non di solo pane vivrà l’uomo, ma di ogni parola che esce dalla bocca di Dio*” (Mt 4,4; Dt 8,3).

Gesù, maestro del desiderio, fa capire che a noi manca qualcosa, che una assenza brucia: che cosa manca ai nostri giovani? Manca orientamento, gioia, gusto di vivere, amore, senso della vita...? È per questo vuoto da colmare che ogni figlio prodigo si rimette in cammino verso casa. L’assenza diventa energia vitale che motiva e fa muovere. Il desiderio, come il bisogno, parte da una mancanza. Il bisogno è puntuale e fisiologico e muore una volta soddisfatto; il desiderio invece è strutturalmente aperto, ma non si esaurisce con la sua soddisfazione, esso ci introduce in un orizzonte più grande e ci mette in cammino. Il desiderio di pienezza è anche esperienza concreta di “vuoto”. Senza questo vuoto non c’è vita, esattamente come l’utero è un vuoto vitale, che rende possibile la vita. Educare è aiutare ad abitare, a stare dentro ai propri vuoti che si temono e dai quali vorremmo fuggire, perché sono benedetti e riempiti, colmati da Dio.

### Nascere

Il desiderio, quel movimento che ci porta ad aspettare, a cercare, a sperare a un certo punto viene fecondato nel mistero dell’incontro. Si mette al mondo sempre in una dinamica di decentramento: mi lascio fecondare dalla vita per essere tramite della vita che va oltre a me. Non creo la vita, ma posso consentire il suo passaggio. Mettere al mondo senza pretendere di essere origine assoluta significa ricevere e restituire. È farsi tramite, è rendersi strumento per un fine. Ricevere, trasformare, restituire qualcosa che entra nel mondo andando oltre noi stessi e consentire a qualcosa di nuovo di poter esistere<sup>4</sup>.

Due movimenti per far nascere: concepire e mettere al mondo che presuppongono la capacità di decentrarsi e accogliere.

*Concepire* etimologicamente da *cum capere* che significa prendere presso di sé, accogliere,

contenere. Concepire è fare spazio all’altro, a ciò che non è “io”.

Questo non è a senso unico: io consento di venire al mondo e l’altro consente a me di conoscermi sotto una nuova luce, di diventare ciò che non potevo sapere di essere. Io genero qualcuno o qualcosa che a sua volta, mi genera come persona e in questa reciprocità ciascuno regala all’altro un pezzetto della sua verità. Reciprocità non è solo apertura rispetto all’altro, bensì capacità di farsi regalare da questo altro la nostra propria verità. Io ricevo dall’altro una parte del mio essere me stesso che non potrei estrarre da solo. Senza l’altro, che lascio essere come altro, non so nemmeno chi sono. Ogni relazione profonda è generativa, perché ci fa essere quello che altrimenti non saremmo stati.

Nella logica della generatività la storia non è una linea retta lanciata verso il futuro, ma una spirale che tiene insieme la ripetizione ciclica e la novità rigeneratrice. Questo è tipicamente femminile. Il tempo che la donna vive non è ripetitivo e fisso, lineare, ma ciclico, ha un inizio, uno sviluppo e una pienezza: una spirale il cui movimento va amplificandosi. Il corpo della donna ha il suo tempo, tempo in cui è fecondabile ed è segnato dal sangue. Ella può portare nel suo grembo un “altro” essere dandogli la vita. Un corpo vulnerabile al desiderio dell’altro, alla sofferenza dell’altro, alle emozioni dell’altro (spesso non si sanno più gestire le emozioni proprie e tantomeno si sa come reagire a quelle degli altri...siamo analfabeti emozionalmente). Corpo dice fragilità: il nome proprio dell’umano, il suo distintivo, la sua natura. La fragilità è drammatica e commovente insieme, segno di debolezza e simbolo dell’uomo in quanto creatura. È povertà e ricchezza. È sgomento e bellezza. È un avversario con cui fare i conti e non sempre è così facile anche per i nostri giovani. Fragile è tutto ciò che si può rompere, spezzarsi, che richiama il nostro limite, la caducità del tempo che passa. Eppure, come scrive Antonietta Potente: “*La necessità e il limite ci rendono amici, ci rendono mendicanti cioè capaci d’aver bisogno della compagnia degli altri, della sapienza degli altri; solo una persona*

<sup>4</sup> Cfr. MAGATTI M. – C. GIACCARDI, *Generativi di tutto il mondo, unitevi! Manifesto per la società dei liberi*, Feltrinelli, Milano 2014.

*che riconosce, che vive il limite può essere una persona comunitaria*"<sup>5</sup>.

Aiutiamo a trasformare e trasfigurare il limite perché diventi spazio della potenza di Dio quando promuoviamo la capacità di capire che la forza d'animo presuppone la fragilità. Forte è colui che sa di essere debole, che conosce e assume la propria realtà di limite. Produce vita solo ciò che è assunto (Padri della chiesa).

*Mettere al mondo* è un'esperienza grande, ma dolorosa e impegnativa perché c'è un legame insopprimibile tra amore e dolore. Senza dolore non trasmettiamo incarnazione: "*partorirai con dolore*" (Gen 3,16). Ogni cosa che nasce passa attraverso una strettoia e le doglie del parto. Le gioie fecondano, i dolori fanno nascere.

Generare vita nel dolore, far vincere la vita anche a prezzo di dolore, significa riconoscere e accettare la sofferenza come una dimensione strutturante la relazione, la vita fraterna, la vita apostolica perché li sottrae all'egoismo, ne verifica la libertà e li apre alla gratuità.

Ogni incontro vero modifica sempre coloro che lo vivono, e questa trasformazione ha sempre il suo costo. Finché la scelta del "tu" non comporta anche la disponibilità alla rinuncia e alla sofferenza per il suo bene, quel tu mi appartiene ancora poco. Per le cose grandi siamo capaci di grandi sofferenze e passioni.

Anche nelle relazioni, e perfino in quelle più belle, dobbiamo lasciare alla sofferenza il diritto di esistere. Scriveva Lewis: "*Qualunque sia la cosa che vi è cara, il vostro cuore prima o poi avrà a soffrire per causa sua, e magari anche a spezzarsi*". Per che cosa soffro in una relazione mi rivela che cosa cerco in quella relazione; per che cosa soffro in una realtà mi dice che cosa cerco, che cosa mi aspetto da quella situazione.

La fuga dalla sofferenza ha sempre come conseguenza un indebolimento dei legami. Le donne della Passione, ai piedi della croce, sono il segno di -un amore che sfida la morte, che ha la forza di rimanere, di perseverare, in una situazione di dolore, solo in nome dell'amore e

della pietà, solo per il fatto di aver legato la vita a quella di un altro.

### **Avere cura**

Non basta mettere al mondo pur con il dolore, dobbiamo prenderci cura per far crescere, far stare al mondo, sostenere quanto è fragile. Nella sua radice latina "*cura*" contiene in sé una intera frase, un'azione che la qualifica: *cor urat* – scalda il cuore. Per scaldare bisogna toccare, stare vicino, abbracciare: è l'abolizione della distanza, è il farsi prossimo; ma ha anche un altro significato da *kau* osservare (da qui saggezza). C'è un legame con lo sguardo, ma anche con la sapienza: il conoscere non solo con la testa, ma con la totalità di sé. La cura riscalda e trasforma lo sguardo. Infatti, prima che una azione è una forma dello sguardo, un modello di relazione, è fonte di energia e novità. La cura ci consente una conversione del nostro sguardo oggi più che mai necessaria. Il nostro modo di guardare il mondo ha bisogno di essere guarito perché sia capace di guardare senza violenza, senza possedere. E' il senso più profondo della castità.

La cura è uno stile di relazione. Non è un laccio, un vincolo (anche se l'alterità pone un limite all'io; oggi siamo allergici a ciò che lega: relazione = *re - ligo*), ma una relazione che continuamente viene rimessa al mondo, fatta essere e durare. La cosa interessante è che l'energia spesa nella sollecitudine della cura ritorna moltiplicata dall'effetto di reciprocità, dalla novità che il legame sempre regala. Coltivare non è sorvegliare, controllare... richiede pazienza, *patos*, *passione*, *coinvolgimento emotivo*, *tenerezza*. La tenerezza è una qualità umana e umanizzante. Chi è duro si difende. L'essere duri è l'opposto dell'essere teneri, ovviamente. La durezza ci porta a chiuderci, a difenderci, a non farci toccare. In questo modo pensiamo di evitare di ferirci, ma non incontriamo nessuno.

La ferita che ci rende vulnerabili, è uno squarcio nella nostra superficie, nella nostra stessa pelle; uno squarcio che ci svuota, una menomazione dolorosa che può essere letale; ma anche una "feritoia", un taglio che rompe la corazza dell'io. La corazza si apre così all'esterno e all'alterità, lascia passare una luce nuova, che altrimenti non troverebbe un varco;

<sup>5</sup> POTENTE A., *La religiosità della vita. Una proposta alternativa per abitare la storia*, Icone Edizioni, Roma 2004.

lascia intravedere un oltre, che altrimenti resterebbe celato.

### **Corrispondere – Restituire**

Lasciar andare è un passo difficile e doloroso eppure straordinario perché da questo passa la vita, il suo fluire, la sua sorpresa. È saper farci da parte per far vivere l'altro anziché soffocarlo nella protezione. Se amiamo chi o quello che mettiamo al mondo non possiamo che desiderare la pienezza dell'altro e il distacco è la condizione. Il figlio potrebbe non essere come lo hai sognato tu, ma resta tuo figlio; non lo scegli. Gli amici si scelgono, i fratelli, le sorelle si accolgono. Perché un figlio viva, la madre deve lasciarlo andare: quando nasce, quando impara a camminare, quando sceglie la sua strada, anche quando questa strada lo porta lontano e perfino quando lo porta alla perdita.

La legge dell'amore è sempre pasquale: occorre consentire al distacco, all'assenza, al lasciare, al consegnare anche quando il cuore sanguina e senti che questa si strappa da te.

Il rapporto con l'altro che la generatività porta con sé ci espone inevitabilmente alla ferita; a nessuno sono risparmiate alcune inevitabili difficoltà evolutive e relazionali legate al mistero del tempo e dell'alterità. Crescere ha la sua fatica, comporta crisi e passaggi che richiedono un attraversamento intelligente, perché esse siano al servizio della maturazione di ciò che è autenticamente umano in noi. La crisi fa parte della vita, e ne fa parte integrante poiché segna un momento di passaggio, di cambiamento cruciale nel quale l'individuo deve affrontare situazioni inedite e fare scelte nuove, e perciò difficili. In ogni crisi si perde qualcosa, legata all'equilibrio precedente e questa perdita è irreversibile; il soggetto si rende conto di quello che perde prima di sapere quello che trova. In questi frangenti dobbiamo affrontare la fatica di *"perderci per ritrovarci"*: è un processo di morte e rinascita, doloroso ma ricco di possibilità inaspettate, che ci porta a scoprire capacità e forze fino a quel momento latenti dentro di noi; da quello che sembra essere un angoscioso tunnel senza uscita, si rivela come una straordinaria occasione di sviluppo. È solo la crisi che ci può permettere, percorrendo il territorio

dell'incerto e della mancanza di sicurezze, di arrivare a costruire a poco a poco il nuovo equilibrio. Dobbiamo restituire alla crisi il suo potenziale evolutivo di trasformazione.

Una forma di distacco, di morte per la vita, è il *disincanto* come lo chiama Bonhoeffer. Disincanto è fare esperienza e tollerare senza rancore e senza rassegnazione che anche il legame più bello, più solido e libero produce scorie: momenti di tensione, di conflitto, di lontananza, una certa insoddisfazione rispetto alla comprensione che vorremmo (nei rapporti interpersonali, in quelli comunitari, nel rapporto con i superiori, con i preti con i quali collaboriamo...).

È proprio accettando il disincanto che impariamo a passare per la porta stretta dell'amore vero, della carità, in cui lasciamo l'altro libero di essere sé stesso; in cui - pur desiderandolo migliore - gli concediamo anche i suoi limiti, in cui impariamo a riconoscerlo ed accettarlo come è e non per come lo vorremmo.

È la logica eucaristica del dono, del sacrificio, della risurrezione/comunione. È la costante dinamica nella quale si vive la fase in cui predomina l'amore che dona e l'amore che riceve: ci si sente innamorati, attratti, gratificati, compresi ... il momento in cui ci sentiamo capaci di fare grandi cose per Dio, per il mondo intero...; la fase in cui subentrano il limite, la delusione, l'amore che muore: si vive insoddisfazione, tristezza, solitudine, disillusione, solitudine e dove l'obbedienza si fa difficile e la tentazione è quella di abbandonare; la fase in cui la relazione risorge ridiventando comunione autentica e piena dove le prove, le crisi, le ferite, gli stessi peccati si rivelano nelle mani salvifiche del Signore occasioni per squarciare il nostro cuore. Il rifiuto di questo mistero porta sempre con sé la chiusura e la fuga dalle situazioni e dalle relazioni e provoca l'inaridimento e la sterilità. Quando ci nutriamo dell'Eucarestia, nutriamo in noi la capacità di fecondare in vita i momenti di morte che sperimentiamo ogni volta che ci sentiamo feriti e ridimensionati nelle nostre attese che sono molto spesso pretese.

È un cammino che va accompagnato quello che ci fa passare dall'innamoramento all'amore attraverso la ricerca, la lotta, la cura della relazione con il Signore.

Attraversare il disincanto, ma per andare oltre: da ciò che mi aspettavo che tu fossi, a come sei; da come avrei desiderato, a come tu hai potuto... Ti prendo in casa così, imparo ad amarti così. Con pregi e difetti. Questo vale nei nostri rapporti fraterni, vale nei confronti della comunità come corpo, vale prima di tutto per ciascuno in rapporto a sé stesso.

I generativi non sono persone già compiute, perfette: conoscono la contraddizione, i fallimenti, i ripiegamenti, l'incoerenza. Il loro modo aperto di andare incontro alla vita li espone a delusioni, ferite, tradimenti. Non sono esperti, ma fundamentalmente testimoni. Il testimone trasmette ciò che ha ricevuto, conosciuto, fatto proprio e lo consegna.



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## The Role and Challenges of Evangelization for the Youth in the Multicultural and Pluralistic World of Today



Br. Paul Raj

### Introduction

In this presentation, I shall begin by briefly listing the essential elements of Evangelization and move on to deal with the Multicultural and Pluralistic context of the world today.

After highlighting the role of evangelization for the youth, I shall reflect elaborately on the challenges of evangelization for the leaders of Religious Congregations, for the youth and for the Church as a whole. It is fitting that in a session of this kind, I deal more with the challenges than with theology of Evangelization and Missiology. Each section of the challenges of Evangelization also contains propositions and points for the direction of our energies for the future. Hence the purpose of this paper is only to kindle the sacred fire in us. Then become fire that kindles other fires (Lk 12:49). Because Consecrated life, more than ever today, is called to become a fire that ignites other fires and “lights up the heart” (Benedict XVI)

### 1. Evangelization – A movement from the periphery to the centre?

The Conference of Religious of Ecuador sums up the introduction I wished to write here: “we are to draw near the people of our time in a new manner, with a new language and new attitudes; we are to know how to dialogue and allow ourselves to be enriched by the questions of contemporary men and women; offer them, through our witness and our words, way that is inspired by freedom, truth and love”. I wish to add here a world marked by pluralistic- multi-cultural, multi-

ethnic and multi-religious- contexts. That brings us directly to our topic: in evangelization we encounter this pluriformity or pluralistic world and the Church. There is no more mono-cultural reality now.

This calls upon us, as a result, to see and respond to the world as it really is. We harm our people and deceive ourselves if we misread the shape of the world now emerging around us. In this pluralistic world how do we enter for evangelization is the main purpose of this paper.

### 1.1. The Aim and the Content of Evangelization:

In 1975, Pope Paul VI said that, “there is no true evangelization if the name, the teaching, the life, the promises, the kingdom and the mystery of Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God are not proclaimed” (Evangelii Nuntiandi (E.N), no. 22). The constant worry of the Church has been this: “At every new phase of human history, the Church, constantly gripped by the desire to evangelize, has but one preoccupation: whom to send to proclaim the mystery of Jesus? (E.N.22).

The content and the aim of evangelization has been proclamation. “This proclamation - kerygma, preaching or catechesis - occupies such an important place in evangelization that it has often become synonymous with it; and yet it is only one aspect of evangelization”.(E.N.22) As some of our congregations and Provinces decline in number, there is a danger that we become rather inward looking, self-protective and insular and the impulse to evangelization weakens in us. Can each one of us here say that “the members of my Order are totally deputed to evangelization”? We need to quote Pope Paul VI again and remind ourselves

that "... the Order would undoubtedly sin against itself if it turned away from this missionary duty"<sup>1</sup>.

Our present understanding of evangelization has been transformed by the insights of Vatican II, E.N and the intense reflection of recent years. Before Vatican II the thrust of evangelization was on bringing the Gospel to the non-Christians, a movement from the center to the periphery. Today it is another movement: from the periphery to the center in which the "new churches" give witness and help to evangelize<sup>2</sup> "older churches". Some say that in Christianity the progress of evangelization over 2,000 years has been extremely limited. Catholics account for just 16% of the world's population<sup>3</sup>. Catholic Church is one of the long lasting, most effective and functioning organizational structures in the world.

## **1.2. Rediscovering the Early Christian Vigour:**

In many respects, our situation is like that of the first Christians, who had the task of bringing the Good News into a world of contrasting religious and philosophical currents. We need to rediscover the vigour of the early Church and be inspired by its action, so that our proclamation of the Gospel will be credible and compelling to the pluralistic world. A 1980 Consultation on World Evangelization (COWE) conference held in Thailand said that an estimated 11,000 distinct people groups lie beyond the reach of any existing Christian community and are said to be capable of being evangelized only by cross-cultural evangelism<sup>4</sup>. The aim of this Consultation was to develop realistic strategies for reaching the so far unreached people. St. John Paul II expressed the urgency of evangelization in this way,

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<sup>1</sup> This was a reminder by Pope Paul VI in 1970 to the Dominicans: "The Dominican order would undoubtedly sin against itself if it turned away from this missionary duty".

<sup>2</sup> Letter from the Master of the Dominican Order. October 1988, Bro. Damian Byrne, O.P.

<sup>3</sup> As of 2010, there are 1.1 billion Catholics in the world. Catholics comprise of 50% of all Christians worldwide. (Pew Research Center).

<sup>4</sup> The 1980 meetings on evangelization was the Consultation on World Evangelization (COWE) called by the Lausanne Committee on World Evangelization at Pattaya, Thailand, June 16-27.

"The gospel message should be made relevant to all peoples, cultures and languages. It must be new in zeal, method and expression". How do we rediscover?

Because the times have changed. "The contemporary culture has reached a point where it turns off what is not immediately accessible. Our society prefers to listen in sound bites, rather than in semesters. Slogans replace thoughtful explanations. Entire generations have become disassociated from the support systems that facilitated the transmission of faith'. "Autonomy convinces us that fidelity to faith only restricts us. The popular absorption with constant activity leads us to believe that unless we are always busy and hectic we are behind schedule"<sup>5</sup>.

Thus, the favorable socio-economic, political and cultural preconditions for the 19th century missionary enterprise have been radically altered today. And that is why our role and responsibility have become more challenging today.

## **2. Multicultural and pluralistic world context today**

The Church says that, "*Evangelization is a complex process made up of varied elements: the renewal of humanity, witness, explicit proclamation, inner adherence, entry into the community, acceptance of signs, apostolic initiative...*" (E.N. 24). I would like to focus here on the aspect of the 'entry into the community' which essentially means the multicultural and pluralistic context of today. The E.N. also has stressed that, "*the relationship between the Gospel and culture has become the focus of intense reflection...*" (c.f.,E.N.20). It presupposes a special sensitivity on the part of the evangelizer to evangelize in a culture other than his/her own. Some among us come from a totally pluralistic context. My opinion is that the progress of evangelization can be hampered by one's failure to appreciate other cultures. Our history is full of many instances. Kenneth Cragg said, 'Our first task in ap-

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<sup>5</sup> Archbishop Wuerl, Pastoral Letter Disciples of the Lord: Sharing the Vision. A Pastoral Letter on the New Evangelization. pp.10-11, Sep 10, 2010.

proaching another people, another culture, another religion is to take off our shoes for the place we are approaching is holy. Else we may find ourselves treading on people's dreams'. The cultures are many, the religions are many; we differ in language, religion and culture. But these differences are a gift, not an obstacle.

### **2.1. Evangelization open to Pluralism:**

Evangelization today must accept living in an alternative manner that is open to true pluralism, recognizing that the Spirit works in different ways to build up the Church and to develop the life of our peoples. Ours is a world in which no individual, and no country, exists in isolation. And the time is coming when no Institute in the Church can exist in isolation. We are all consumers in the same global economy and in the same global spirituality. It is 'Glocalization' now, more than 'Globalization'. We are all influenced by the same tides of political, social and technological change. As José M. Arnaiz says, "*Peoples and cultures are increasingly hybrid. And we all know that Globalization is making us more familiar with diversity.*"

Due to migration and exposure to different peoples in the schools, work place, church and market, even people in the villages are more exposed to different cultures and religions. Pluralism has become order of the day. There is a great mobility of people today in the world and the desire to go around the world to learn and discover many things. Thus, for most people and especially the youth dealing with cultural diversity is not a problem. It is good to ask ourselves: Is it really a problem for us, religious and the missionaries of today?

## **2.2. Culture and Multiculturalism**

### **2.2.1. What is Culture?**

When defining culture in a wider perspective, it represents a way of life and when defined in narrower terms it refers to belief system, values and practices. It is the narrower definition which tends to predominate most of the time. We cannot "*speak of cultures as neatly separated, internally coherent wholes. Cultures in fact may be more like clusters of heterogeneous elements with varying ori-*

*gins.*"<sup>6</sup> A compartmentalized view of culture presents us a very static idea of culture. It robs off the essential feelings from culture. Arbuckle says it aptly, "*that culture is not one facet of life along with, for example, religious, political or economic activity... On the contrary, culture is the complete set of feelings affecting all behaviour of individuals and groups to some degree.*"<sup>7</sup> It appears that these feelings cannot be quantified easily. The inner experiences and feelings of being part of a culture cannot be easily explained or understood. But it is something precious and important. Evangelization has to keep this very precious element in mind in all its processes.

### **2.2.2. What is Multiculturalism?**

Multiculturalism did not really require a serious study, as it caused no serious concern for long for anyone. But when vulnerable by the attempts at homogenization and cultural nationalism it has become a subject of study and discussion. In religious life too, multiculturalism caused no serious concern for anyone for long.

The world today is sadly divided by ideological conflicts, over enthusiastic nationalism, racial discord, ethnic cleansing and intercultural tensions. It is becoming a real impossibility for people of different cultures to live side by side with respect and justice. It assumes greater importance today than ever before to define multiculturalism. But it is difficult to offer a satisfactory definition too.

The way culture is conceptualized and understood has significant bearing on the understanding of multiculturalism. "Multiculturalism is often an emotive word, 'a buzzword with almost as many meanings as there are mouths to utter it'"<sup>8</sup>. For Conservatives diversity of cultures is to be tolerated; they would consider multiculturalism as a disruptive force.

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<sup>6</sup> Rajeeve Bhargava, "The Multiculturalism Framework" in Mapping *Multiculturalism*, Kushal Deb (ed.) (Jaipur: Rawat Publications, 2002), p.89.

<sup>7</sup> G. Arbuckle, *From chaos to Mission: Re founding Religious life Formation* (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1996), pp 38- 39.

<sup>8</sup> R. Hughes, *Culture of Complaint: The Fraying of America* (New York: Oxford University Press,1993), p.111.

The liberals have become cultural pessimists to the extent that they emphasize cultural diversity but do not see any unity between cultures.

We can explain multiculturalism in two senses: Firstly, it merely refers to societies containing many cultures which are in interaction with each other; it does not help us to distinguish one society from another. Virtually every society today is multicultural. Secondly it is also used to refer to a desired end-state, as a way of referring to a society in which different cultures are respected and the reproduction of culturally defined groups is protected, and social diversity celebrated<sup>9</sup>. "*Multiculturalism brings together a set of issues that relate to the need for community, a sense of belonging to it, the importance of a secure sense of identity, of status and recognition, of particularity, and the need to recognize and maintain difference with others,*"<sup>10</sup> For us the members of religious congregations, multiculturalism offers an ideal platform to reach out to various cultures, languages, peoples and nations in its service of love and human promotion.

### **2.2.3. Witness by Multicultural Groups of Religious:**

I would like to place before you some conclusions from the findings of the study done among the Consecrated Persons. It shows the slow assimilation of the religious into the 'culture' with its positives and negatives. The data shows that many religious are beginning to see themselves as one with the culture and some see themselves as embedded within the culture but are unaware that the dynamics of culture pose a significant threat to religious life. I am of the view that we need prophetic religious who will pay attention to the cultural forces shaping our world and religious life; a prophetic role in encountering the 'cultural threats' to religious life. There is a sense of hope that multicultural communities offer a

way out. In a study on the Consecrated religious in India, more than 91 per cent of the respondents agreed that multicultural co-existence among the religious is a great witness to the message of Jesus Christ. They also agreed that though there is resistance to multicultural life among them due to friction between various group identities, they want to rise above these divisive tendencies and fashion a multicultural future for religious life<sup>11</sup>. Another finding from a US study says that, "the religious today more and more believe in moving away from being "set apart from the culture" to being "grounded in it". It is needed today to know that if the religious are to fulfil their espoused function as prophets, their prophetic role requires significant distance or closeness from/to the cultural forces<sup>12</sup>.

### **3. The role of evangelization for the Youth today**

Amidst growing criticism about today's missionaries (liking for fast & easy things, misplaced priorities, "migration" symptom and short-term commitment etc) I wish to emphasize the other side.

The experience of internationality and multiculturality touches the core of the person of the young missionary. But this is not an easy process. It does not only demand of the missionary a total change in outlook and behaviour, but also a disciplined and self-driven life. This new atmosphere calls for a new common spirituality, a relationship of equality and justice, and a desire to eliminate cultural and racial discrimination. The youth are ideological and motivated and hence this suits their vision.

Secondly the young value new, unique and exciting experiences. But the fear of encountering the unknown-- new cultures, food habits, languages, and religions -- creates difficulties for them. This enthusiasm for the new and the desire for far-away experiments have to be

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<sup>9</sup> Sarah Joseph, "Do Multicultural Individuals require a Multicultural State?" in *Mapping Multiculturalism*, Kushal Deb (ed.) (Jaipur: Rawat publications, 2002), p.159.

<sup>10</sup> Rajeev Bhargava, "The Multicultural Framework", in *Mapping Multiculturalism*, Kushal deb (ed.) (Jaipur: Rawat publications, 2002), p.87.

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<sup>11</sup> Paul Raj., *Culture Over Christ? A Crippling Challenge in Indian religious Life*, ATC, Bangalore, 2014.

<sup>12</sup> David J. Nygren and Miriam D. Ukeritis, *The Future of Religious Orders in the United States: Transformation and Commitment* (Westport: Praeger Publishers, 1993), p.158.

capitalized for the subsequent formation and preparation.

In addition to the call of evangelization there appears to be an inner urge in the youth of today to respond to the call of the multicultural plurality. However, there are inner conflicts too. As Pope Francis told *La Repubblica*, the beginning and the end of life today can be times of equal desperation. The elderly are too often trapped in loneliness, while the young are “*crushed under the weight of the present [without] a memory of the past and without the desire to look ahead to the future by building something.*” We need to identify what are the *weights of the present* under which our youth are crushed and release their potential for evangelization. According to some, for us religious two or more things tend to inhibit us from volunteering for the work of evangelization. One is an ignorance of languages and its study and the other is love of one's country!

#### **4. The challenges of evangelization in a pluralistic and multicultural world context today**

I would like to list the challenges of Evangelization under different categories for the sake of easier follow up and explanation. Hence, I shall begin with the challenges for the Leadership teams in Religious congregations, then move on to the challenges for the youth of today and the evangelization and finally end with the challenges for the Church as a whole. Each of this section does not exhaust all the existing challenges but only identifies the major ones.

#### **4.1. Challenges for the leaders of Congregations and General Councils**

##### **4.1.2. Short term missionary commitments:**

For a stable and effective evangelization, the need of authentic personnel for mission ad gentes is essential.

Stable here means youth or lay or religious missionaries committed in the missions for a long term. There are various types of commitments, but the increasing possibility of short-

term missionary work is posing a great challenge for the future of religious congregations as a whole. This is a great challenge for the Leaders of various congregations.

#### **4.1.3 Directing the Orders in the path of Mission ad Gentes:**

More than ever today it is extremely important for the Heads of Orders to take conscious and bold steps to plunge into evangelization. There are some orders who were primarily ‘missionary’ in its origin and by charisma have drifted away to easier and more familiar ones. They have to search their hearts and return to their ‘origins’ to its ‘purity’. St. Dominic never achieved his ambition to be a missionary to the non-Christian world but he directed the Order to this path. St. Louis Marie de Montfort wanted many times to go to the non-Christian world; he could not because the Pope forbade him. But their congregations are in over 90 countries now. The leaders have to give a push or be ready to be pushed by the Gospel.

#### **4.1.4. Promoting Multiculturalism in Religious Life:**

There is some kind of concealed multicultural tensions in religious life in some parts of the world. A research study indicates that there is a complex dynamic of unconscious racism. “*Younger members of religious orders acknowledge that members of ethnically distinct populations find incorporation into their religious order to be quite difficult. Older members, while believing they are open to minority participation, cannot easily adapt to the cultural demands that heterogeneity in a religious order requires. Ethnically distinct groups feel their culture to be, not unwelcome, but generally unrecognized*”<sup>13</sup>. There are other studies too that depict these changing realities of today.

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<sup>13</sup> David Nygren and Miriam Ukeritis, *The Future of Religious Orders in the United States: Transformation and Commitment* (Westport: Praeger Publishers, 1993), p. 249. These cultural tensions could spread to the religious of other nations and cultures. But I have not come across any serious study done on this for a mention here.

#### **4.1.5. Effective Integration of diverse identities into a cohesive unit:**

It is normal that “in a multicultural society different ethnic groups compete for resources and attempt to assert their own cultural rights in order to establish, preserve and augment respective ethnic identities...”<sup>14</sup> Religious life is not free from this. Any congregational set up which is multicultural by nature is going through such moments of cultural assertion and denial either openly or covertly. However effective religious integration of diverse ethnic (race, language, tribe, nationality, culture etc) identities<sup>15</sup> into one united and cohesive unit remains one of the principal pursuits of religious orders today. A cursory look at the religious orders shows that when interests of diverse cultural groups clash with each other, it affects and weakens the process of community building and missionary dynamism.

#### **4.1.6. Promoting Celebration of Diversity:**

Another area that needs the attention of the Leadership today while handling multicultural communities is the openness to celebrate diversity. The multiculturalism proposed by an Indian author is very useful for the future of religious life, when he says “...*differences that are nurtured lead to diversity and diversity that is celebrated is the “springboard for creative change within our lives.”*”<sup>16</sup> This is a great challenge for the religious orders. This challenge calls upon the leaders

of religious congregations to establish communities which are creating, guaranteeing, and encouraging spaces within which different identities can grow at their own pace. At the same time, it means creating a public space in which these communities are able to interact<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Narendra Bokhare, “Multiculturalism and the Question of Indigenous Communities in Canada” in Kushal Deb (ed.) *Mapping Multiculturalism* (Jaipur: Rawat Publications, 2002), p.245.

<sup>15</sup> There are several definitions of the concept ethnic, but a common denominator among all is “a distinct cultural identity such as race, language, religion and caste/class”. Cf. Narendra Bokhare, p.245.

<sup>16</sup> Nighat Gandhi, “The Feminization of Politics” in *The Hindu*, Sep 15, 2002, Magazine section, p.4.

<sup>17</sup> B. Parekh, cited by H. A. Giroux, “Insurgent Multiculturalism and the Promise of Pedagogy” in D. T. Goldberg (ed.) *Multiculturalism: A Critical Reader*

and enrich and thus work for human promotion.

#### **4.1.7. Establishing International/ Intercultural Communities:**

In the context of our divided world scenario, it is very relevant and a testimony if people of various nations, cultures, races and linguistic groups live together in unity and harmony. It is a collective and powerful witness. While on the one hand Congregations are reflecting on International Community (formation houses, mission houses and Intercultural communities at the places of the origin etc.) in order to find ways and means to sustain, perpetuate and transmit the Charism and Spirituality to the future generations, it is also necessary to read the multicultural signs of the times today. It simply means that multicultural missionary ventures and multi-racial apostolic efforts are going to be the future colour of our Evangelization and of our congregations too.

#### **4.1.8. Vocation for Internationality:**

Today, there is a need for an international and inter-congregational approach to the work of evangelization. In the context of what we have been reflecting so far, to give a great impetus to mission ad gentes, we need to promote vocations for internationality and interculturality.

The Superiors have to take great care in nurturing this vocation to Internationality in their entities. We know that those who enter into such communities must have the particular grace of missionary vocation (cf. Fraternal life in Community (FLIC), no.2c). Persons with aptitude for this type of evangelization have to be prepared to enter into such communities. Multicultural living is not easy. Everywhere, there is the challenge of inculturation. Cultures, traditions, and the mentality of a particular country all have an impact on the way fraternal life is lived in religious communities. The ‘movements of large-scale migration in recent years have raised the problem of the co-existence of different cultures, and some reactions. These issues certainly have

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(Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1994), p.336 as quoted in G. Arbuckle, *From Chaos to Mission*, p.164.

repercussions on pluri-cultural and multi-racial religious communities, which are becoming increasingly common'. (FLIC, no.4a).

## **4.2. Challenges for the Youth**

### **4.2.1. To Counter the dominant world model:**

We are aware that globalization has caused much “fragmentation” and “homogenization”. It claimed that it is unifying people, but actually it has created much division due to competition. These distractions have largely affected the youth. A challenge now is how to keep the youth of today ‘at peace’ and to give them time to reflect. Pope St. John Paul II’s Message to youth expressed this fear: “... *do not yield to false illusions and passing fads, which so frequently leave behind a tragic spiritual vacuum!*”. This consumeristic, capitalistic and volatile world has its effects on our mission, evangelization and on the evangelizer.

### **4.2.2. Over exposed but ‘underfed’:**

The youth of today are exposed to numerous languages, cultures, and religions. They are 24/7 connected to the ‘real’ world and exposed. But being “exposed” does not necessarily mean being “knowledgeable”. They are exposed to most worldly realities but in the areas of faith, Church and heavenly things are ‘underfed’. This is a great challenge to deal with this type of youth and offer them a description of the “Church” and “Kingdom of God” which is more comprehensible and closer to their hearts.

### **4.2.3. Long term commitments:**

There is a craze for the temporary. Permanence is laughed at today. This is applicable for missionary commitment too. We are witnesses of the “shortening” of missionary engagement today, as opposed to a lifetime commitment in one mission territory in the past. The young missionary today is challenged to prove his or her own long-term commitment to evangelization.

### **4.2.4. ‘Mission-mind’ of the Young Missionary:**

We are aware of the phenomenon of young missionaries leaving their overseas-mission early and going back home dissatisfied. We have a history of high level of committed, patient and long-standing missionaries of the past; they were conditioned by the acceptance of the realities of those times in which they lived. But a young missionary today, one working in remote Island or South Sudan or in Syria when faced with difficulties and uncertainties, cannot help but compare him/herself with other young missionaries working/living in the cities with study and all the modern means to communicate etc.

### **4.2.5. Living as an International/Intercultural Community is also a mission:**

In the context of evangelization, living as an International/Intercultural Community is itself a mission. First and foremost, the members from various cultures and nations living happily and cohesively the one Charism and spirituality under one roof is an effective testimony to the world (John, 13,35; Acts 2: 42).

It is a witness through life more than through words or deeds. So while thinking of forming an international community for evangelization, it is important to keep in mind that this life of internationality/interculturality itself is a mission called for by the Church and the world today. It is very adventurous and heartwarming for the youth today to live in multicultural, multilingual and multi-ethnic communities.

### **4.2.6. Youth and Media for Communication:**

The phenomenon of media explosion has changed the parameters of media ministry. Today for most young men and women the social networks are not just a means of communication but rather they have become the “home” in which they “dwell”.

### **4.2.7. Transmigratory and ‘Supermarket’ Church:**

Another challenge for the youth is the attitude of moving from one Church to another. This occurs because some youths are confused

by others to the extent that they cannot remain in their Churches but rather seek for what they cannot get. Seeking and searching is not bad. But moving from one church to another and easily swayed by strange doctrines are not good signs. This is a challenge that the Church and the youth have to focus on to halt the menace of 'supermarket' Church and seeking unattainable "miracles".

#### **4.2.8. Establish relationships as the core of all ministry and outreach to youth:**

The needs of young people of today are symptoms of human neediness. The need for relationship is the most central for all their longings. Relevant relationships, lived out in authentic and tangible community are the basic aspects for all true and effective ministry. Building relationships with young people demands time, efforts and real interest. We can see that the churches today which are focusing on building and sustaining relationships and community spirit are drawing great numbers!

#### **4.2.9. Engage with the real needs of young people in culturally relevant ways:**

To reach the hearts of the young generation with the liberating news of Jesus Christ, we need to go beyond our 'time-tested territories' to meet them where they are and accept them as they are. If they do not gather in the Church anymore then as someone said, 'we need to go where they gather'. We need to understand deeply all issues related to the real needs of young people and to seek to develop answers that are relevant both culturally and spiritually. Mission to young people is in many cases a cross-cultural venture and must be undertaken in the spirit of openness and humility.

### **4.3. Challenges for the Church**

The effects of all those we have listed above, including globalization are not limited just to the civil world but to the Church as well. The Church does not exist in isolation. And so what are the challenges for the Catholic Church?

#### **4.3.1. Encourage Witnessing by Multicultural Groups of Religious and Laity**

Distancing themselves from the cultural forces that pose significant threat to the fabric of the Church and to Consecrated life in particular, the authorities at the same time will have to strive to build and promote multicultural communities that are great witnesses to the teachings of Jesus Christ. The Church has already called for a positive appreciation of the diversity. It exhorts: "*Respect for every person and every race is respect for basic rights, dignity and fundamental equality. This does not mean erasing cultural differences. Instead it is important to educate to a positive appreciation of the complementary diversity of peoples*".<sup>18</sup> It is imperative that the Church keeps creating multicultural communities and witnessing at the same time.

#### **4.3.2. Education in Culture for all in the Church:**

It is important for us to know how culture has been a resource and a danger as well: as a resource against cultural nationalism, communalization of culture and racial and linguistic fanaticism; as a danger when it promotes regionalization, racial and linguistic chauvinism, cultural divisions and imposes dominant cultural values. We also know that communalizing cultural identities is dangerous for the future of religious life and evangelization because these identities are not permanent or eternal. The caution of Alexander Duff, the chief architect and theorist of missionary education in India is relevant here. He was a strong critic of cultural fanaticism-caste. He says that a Christian government should 'solemnly resolve to have nothing whatever to do with racial chauvinism'. He was aware that caste could only be exterminated by "the mighty power of the Spirit of God"<sup>19</sup>.

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<sup>18</sup> *Church and Racism: Towards a More Fraternal Society*, Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace (Guwahati: Don Bosco Publications, 2001), p.58.

<sup>19</sup> See Duncan B. Forrester, *Caste and Christianity: Attitudes and policies on Caste of Anglo-Saxon Protestant Missions in India* (London: Curzon, 1980), p.57. See A. Duff: *What is Caste: How is the Christian Government to deal with it?*"

### **4.3.3. Facilitating more profound Ecumenical Dialogue following the example of Pope Francis:**

In 1971 the result of Pope Paul VI meeting in person the patriarch of Syrian Orthodox Church was a document called “The Common Declaration on Christology.” A confession was made on 31st of October 1999. Then in 2011 Roman Catholic Church leaders met the leaders of the American Reformed Church, Presbyterian Church of United States of America and United Church of Christ, USA for a discussion on the Sacrament of Baptism and some common understanding was arrived at. Pope Francis has been a champion of Ecumenism: “Ecumenism is a contribution not only to the unity of the Church, but also to the unity of the human family (cf. EG, n. 245). Pope Francis and president of Lutheran World Federation (LWF) with one mind decided that the festival of 500th anniversary of Reformation should be celebrated together- and decided to conduct united celebration on Oct 31st, 2017. In a common prayer service in Sweden on Oct. 31, 2016 they both issued a joint statement, expressing thanks for the “spiritual and theological gifts received through the Reformation” and “*begged forgiveness for our failures and for the ways in which Christians have wounded the Body of the Lord and offended each other during the five hundred years since the beginning of the Reformation until today.*” The topic “From Conflict to Communion” was introduced in that celebration. Brethren from other Churches also acknowledge that all these are due to the sincere efforts of Roman Catholic Church. Can we prepare our young to work towards this communion? This demands education and sound formation. The concern of our Mother Church is clear: “At this point we wish to emphasize the sign of unity among all Christians as the way and instrument of evangelization. The division among Christians is a serious reality which impedes the very work of Christ... We considered it necessary to recall to all the faithful of the Catholic world that *“before all men can be brought together and restored to the grace of God our Father, communion must be re-established between those who by faith have acknowledged and accepted*

*Jesus Christ as the Lord of mercy...*” (Evan. Nun. no.77).

### **4.3.4. Itinerancy - Apostolic Mobility:**

This is an area we need to reflect seriously. The history of Religious life in the Church teaches us that when the stability of Benedictine Monasticism was threatening the authenticity and dynamism of Consecrated life, the Franciscan mobility came to the rescue and posed a great apostolic challenge in the Church. Apostolic mobility was a key element in St. Dominic's evangelical method. It seems that even in houses of the order he had no room that he could call his own. This mobility today can become an apostolic tool which enable us to go forth, to “go to the nations” to be with and among the people.

### **4.3.5. Capacity Building is the need of the Hour:**

It essentially means preparing our missionaries. Time has come to invest on persons especially on personnel destined for evangelization. In the past, good will alone was enough. But today we need the help of those skilled in Social Psychology, Cultural Anthropology, Comparative Religions, Languages etc. to help us devise new methods of evangelization for today. A failure to avail ourselves of such skills will impoverish the work we do. Evangelization has become in a way complicated today due to various factors!

### **4.3.6. Promoting collaboration with the laity in the work of evangelization:**

This is an old topic but coming repeatedly these days in many forms and forums. We read, in *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, “*As far as possible the laity ought to provide helpful collaboration for every apostolic and missionary undertaking sponsored by their local parish*” (10). In some cases, the first efforts of Missionaries (Religious and Priests)<sup>20</sup> ended in failure. But later on, a completely new method

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<sup>20</sup> The story of evangelization of Guatemala by Bartolome de Las Casas is worth noting here: the efforts to evangelize the people of Venezuela ended in failure. Later in Guatemala because of the ferocity of its people he evolved a completely new method of evangelization in collaboration with the Christian Indian Traders.

of evangelization in collaboration with the laity brought about abundant fruits and success. The laity were the key to the first evangelization of many areas. We should not forget that God was there before we arrived!

#### **4.3.7. The Challenge of Pluralism:**

Pluralism poses vast new challenges for the call we have received to proclaim the Gospel in our world today. It is important to reflect on the challenges this pluralism brings, as well as how it affects evangelization. ‘Pluralism is no longer only an intra-Christian phenomenon. It encompasses the non-Christian religions whose numerical importance continues to grow with the arrival of new immigrants. We cannot forget also the philosophical positions of non-believers, agnostics, or even atheists who, have become increasingly vocal in debates on civil society’<sup>21</sup>.

**4.3.8. Ensuring that the Image of Church-as-Family of God becomes a Reality Everywhere:** The idea of ‘family’ is very strong in Asian and African Continents. This aspect is stressed in a sustained manner, it can do wonders. In a fragmented world of today the families are subjected to deep turmoil. This has been repeatedly emphasized in many pronouncements. Over-coming divisions among the peoples of Africa was one of the challenges identified by the Synod Fathers during the *First Special Assembly for Africa of the Synod of Bishops* in 1994 (cf. *Ecclesia in Africa* no. 49). It also came up during the *Second Special Assembly for Africa* (October 2009). In adopting the image of Church-as-Family of God, the Synod Fathers opted for values such as care for others, solidarity, warmth in human relationships, acceptance, dialogue, trust and unity (*Ecclesia in Africa* no. 63). This will effectively counter the ideologies posed by splinter churches.

**4.3.9. Migration and Development:** Migration is a universal human phenomenon and that it requires dialogue and diplomacy to deal

with it adequately. The Church is aware that there are various types and cause factors of migration some of which are positive and can meaningfully contribute to development at various levels of human existence. Other types of migration have only led to negative consequences such as criminality, brain drain, spread of disease, estrangement from family life, human trafficking, prostitution, etc. Uncontrolled and undisciplined migration, coupled with the human trait of jealousy and greed, has resulted in antagonism and prejudice. In short, migration calls for a serious concerted action by the Governments, the Church, NGOs and Religious Congregations. It has serious implications for Evangelization too.

#### **4.3.10. Conversion to Community:**

This challenge is similar to the Church becoming as a family of God. It is important that individuals become involved in the Christian community as part of their decision making process. This may involve a small group, a seeker event or a social outing. Today people make decisions based on their experience within the community. The evangelistic process is more of a community affair than a one-to-one encounter. Evangelization is also an experience of a two-stage conversion: they become converted to the community—over a period of time they begin to identify with the community and feel a sense of belonging. At this point they may be a member of the community without having made a commitment to Christ. The next stage is making a conversion to Christ. Such a process is very profound, personal and life-transforming.

#### **4.3.11. “Gospel of prosperity” without the cross:**

In addition to ‘sheep stealing’, ‘transmigration’, and ‘Supermarket’ syndrome we also face the challenge of ‘gospel of prosperity’ without the cross. In some African countries Catholic youth including primary school children getting involved in cult activities promising moon for them; we have Broad Way Preachers promising a gospel of prosperity

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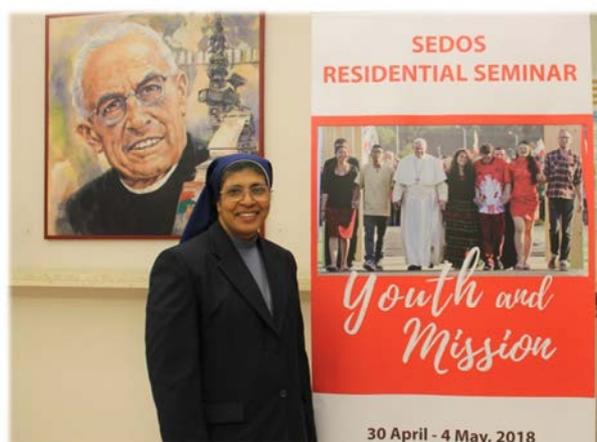
<sup>21</sup> The Episcopal Commission for Doctrine of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops in a document, “The Essential Elements of Evangelization Today” 2013.

without the Cross<sup>22</sup>. This is a great challenge for the Catholic Church and for Christian youths. Many of their teachings and beliefs don't pass the test of Biblical standard. Youths are easily carried away by this error. Added to that the mass media (particularly of the First world) shapes the appetites, beliefs, and prejudices of much of the rest of the world—including Catholic young people—and with few exceptions, these media are no friend to the Catholic faith. The Church has to confront these intelligently. We know that millions of Catholics in some of these nations are baptized and even catechized, but- Jesus Christ?

### 5. Conclusion:

At the end of this presentation I believe that pluralism will remain both a challenge and must be at least a part of the solution. In our efforts at evangelization the affirmation of pluralism and multiculturalism will mobilize the dialogic possibilities of cultures, to sort out the resistance. There is a need for persons from various cultures living together to witness and evangelize. A collective and concerted effort based on 'consensus for common values' and on the teachings of Jesus Christ, would certainly supersede cultural differences whereby cultures are so transformed and remade into a 'new creation'. I wish to conclude saying that our efforts at global evangelization in the coming decade must address, what strategies for reaching the unreached can be recommended? What kind of Church can become the bearer of the witness to the Kingdom? What motivations can impel us to cross boundaries in the work of evangelization? How shall we equip our personnel for this task? What structures are appropriate?

## Ariccia, Sedos Residential Seminar 2018



<sup>22</sup> In a survey, Forbes has released the 20 richest pastors of the world for 2017 and not surprisingly, many Nigerian pastors made the list.

*Michael Papenkordt*

## **The Evangelized will Evangelize - the Role of Lay Missionaries Today –**

### **1. What moves me to be a Lay-Missionary?**

#### **Who am I?**

Michael Papenkordt – German – Married – two Kids + 1 Grandchild – Live in Germany – since 1986. We belong to what is now called “The institute for World evangelisation” or short “ICPE Mission”

#### **What does ICPE do?**

The ICPE Mission is an International Association of Christ's faithful with Pontifical Right (and is the missionary expression of the Glory of God International Covenant Community.)



**Michael Papenkordt**

We are a lay missionary organization.

Today we run different ministries in a few different countries.

But it all began with a 4-months School of Evangelisation. These programs we still run today in New Zealand and India.

Today there are many different/similar programs, but then we were among the first.

- Mostly young people from all over the world
- Lectures in the morning – practical work in the afternoon
- Communal and private prayer times, liturgy and mass
- Small groups and sharing partners – shared rooms
- Aim: not so much a bright mind but a changed person with a burning heart

#### **What moved me/ moves me to be a lay missionary?**

- Testimony of two catholic lay men, who talked to me about Jesus, even in a pub and even with a beer
- Lecture during an ICPE-School Rome 86
- Grace of God and His calling
- I guess if you do what you do for any other reason than God's calling you will either have a very hard time or just do your own thing.

### **2. How do I evangelize youths?**

I would like to share a few things, I think we learned or discovered along the way.

#### **A foundational building block:**

Evangelizing youths is not about changing them, but changing **us/me** (not just something on the outside, not just something I do ... but my heart)

We do not like it!

We prefer to change structures, programs and others.

#### **A foundational building block of our schools**

Schools changed then and now. They are different in NZ and India, but basic characteristics remain.

Finally, the person who has been **evangelized** goes on to **evangelize** others. Here lies the **test of truth**, the touchstone of evangelization: it is **unthinkable** that a person should accept the Word and give himself to the kingdom without becoming a person who bears **witness** to it and **proclaims** it in his turn. Evangelii Nuntiandi 24

It says “evangelized”. It does not say “sacramentalized” or “catechized” or “trained to do many good things“!

The world in two halves: the ones that evangelize and those who need to be evangelized.

Everyone knows instantly which of the two halves is his.

“Test of truth – touchstone” - A Touchstone is a piece of fine-grained dark schist or jasper formerly used for testing alloys of gold by observing the colour of the mark which they made on it.

The one who accepts the Word becomes a person who bears witness and proclaims!

Here lies the key. We witnessed it again and again

“Person” not only ordained priests and theologians!

The problem we have in the church is not so much, that the church does not evangelize, but rather that people evangelize who have not been evangelized themselves.

### **Philip “evangelized” - Witness or Reporter**

Then Philip began to speak, and starting with the scripture he proclaimed to him the good news about Jesus *εὐηγγελίσατο αὐτῷ τὸν Ἰησοῦν* evangelizavit illi Iesum Act 8,35

It is not the good news “about” Jesus, but Jesus it’s the good news in person “He evangelizes Jesus to him”.

Evangelizing is not telling a story or speaking about something or someone. Evangelizing is an event and an encounter.

The good news everyone can read and talk about it to others. But to evangelize Jesus to someone you can only after you encountered him.

Being Christian is not the result of an ethical choice or a lofty idea, but the encounter with an event, a person, which gives life a new horizon and a decisive direction. (Deus Caritas est 1)

Evangelizing is not proclaiming something, but someone!

Do you know what a vaccination is?

If someone goes out to evangelize without having experienced his own Pentecost and his own Damascus he will vaccinate the people with “hear say” and opinions against the actual gospel.

**... and you will be my witnesses Act 1,8**

We are called to be witnesses not reporters. A reporter cannot evangelize. He can only talk about the gospel.

I had met many reporters of the gospel. Schoolteachers, Relatives and even some priests. People with good hearts and good intentions. But my life changed, when I met witnesses.

You will be NOT you should be! (→ the evangelized will evangelize!)

A witness is only a witness when he witnesses i. e. Speaks. (EN 24 ... bear witness AND proclaims)

### **The personal Testimony is key and core**

Not the structure, the plans and methods (they change like fashions)

Generation X (born 1965 - 1980) → Gen Y (1980 - 2000) → G Z (1995 – 2010)

My grandfather, my father, me, my son and my grandson – different generations - born with the same basic hearts desire: to know and to love God (I. The life of man - to know and love God K<sup>3</sup> 1)

While man looks for better methods God looks for better man

The personal testimony involves you. But it involves you not the way the hen is involved in the egg production. It involves you like the pig is involved in the ham production: the pig dies. We need to die to ourselves so Christ can live in us.

I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me Gal 2,20

Jesus never asks a lot of us – never! He always asks everything!

We are not called to be Postmen! The postman delivers messages he neither knows nor experiences.

Testimony is always personal!

Not about others and what I heard or read

Woman: “I have no testimony”

### Get close - πρόσελθε καὶ κολλήθητι

Then the Spirit said to Philip, ‘Go over to this chariot and join it.’ πρόσελθε καὶ κολλήθητι Act 8,29

κολλάομαι → To join, connect, become one, get in touch, get involved

Not: get a specialist – give him a book – invite him to a youth event ...

Evangelize! You! Now!

Not only youth evangelize youth!

→ Ingeborg an older lady (70+) meeting 6 teenagers weekly and forming them, disciplining them

### Kerygma! Not Catechesis!

Catechesis is important and beautiful. Our church has a wonderful great and rich treasure!

But Kerygma must always come first and even a lot of wonderful Catechesis can never replace or substitute Kerygma

If start with catechesis the kerygma has no place and you will find people trying ... but without the New Life Jesus talks about to Nicodemus.

People who have been sacramentalized but not evangelized will give catechesis – only.

### Dynamis and Moria

For the message of the cross is foolishness (μωρία) to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power (δύναμις) of God.

God decided, through the foolishness (μωρίας) of our proclamation (κηρύγματος), to save those who believe. 1Cor 1,18+21

Foolishness! Might be easier for the lay than for the studied.

But the one who wrote this was highly trained!

We need to be bold enough to NOT enhance the Logos of the cross with our wisdom. It drains it of its δύναμις – its power

Truth has its own inner beauty!

He is the Word and we are the voice

Fr. Francis Martin: “Be the carpet on which the Word can walk right into the heart ...”

The Word “happens”, it is performative not just informative.

the performative character of the word (Verbum Domini 53)

### Content of the Kerygma:

This is a very, very compressed form.

1. God’s unconditional Love
2. My need for salvation and my inability to save myself.
3. Accept the only savior: **Jesus**, who saved me by His **Death, Resurrection and Glorification**.
4. Respond personally with faith and conversion – confess Him as YOUR savior YOUR Lord
5. Ask and receive from Jesus a new outpouring of the Holy Spirit that will seal the evangelizing process.
6. To join an evangelized and evangelizing community to continue the process of growth.

### 3. How do I make youths evangelize?

#### Emmaus

You don’t - I don’t!

You can’t – I can’t!

If you try, you will end up pulling and dragging ... and reminding ...

It has to be Jesus - Emmaus

Tell the youths about your Emmaus encounter

#### Koinonia

Koinonia is not an institution but a reality that is part of the New Life.

They will not do, what you do not do.

If you are not excited, they will never be.

They will not live, what you do not live – in your heart!

For your heart teaches louder than your words and your actions.

Your heart always wins the teaching contest.

For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. Mt 12,34

That’s where the redeeming power wants to reach you – Today!

Salvation, redemption and healing is a package deal! (σωξω see dictionary)

It is hard work, very challenging, it is not efficient. But it is without alternative, it is God's design it remains

- the greatest tool of evangelization and
- a wonderful tool to find out how much the gospel really reached us.

By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another. J 13,35

Do you want the youth to know that you are His disciples?

Do you REALLY want the youth to know that you are His disciples?

We know love by this, that he laid down his life for us—and we ought to lay down our lives for one another. 1 Joh 3,16

Here we see and discover what is actually meant by “love”:

Jesus laid down his life – we lay down our life (ideas, dreams, desires, etc.) for one another.

Koinonia does not just happen, when people live under one roof.

“But I do not have the time ...”

We are so busy ... With what actually?

Not the church of Christ has a mission, - meaning: we are busy maintaining the church and if time and energy permit we also include evangelisation ... -

but the mission of Christ has a church

We need to move from maintenance to mission

### **One way to learn how to evangelize**

To evangelize you learn (only) by evangelizing - not by thinking, reading or talking about it

So take them to evangelize.

Teach them how to give testimony and how to pass on the kerygma.

If you want to grow in your faith share it!

If you want the youth to grow in their faith, help them share it!

Jesus is the rock! Don't make him a pebble!

Youth appreciate challenge, truth and a radical life.

Give them something to admire and to aspire to!

### **Beginners, Disciples and Apostles**

We are beginners!

The theologian realizes that, the deeper he enters into the mystery of God

Teach as beginners! Not as masters

Attitude and heart

Always a disciple! Even as a mature and experienced apostle, one is always a disciple!

Take my yoke upon you, and **learn** from me (μάθετε ἀπ' ἐμοῦ) Mt 11,29

**Go therefore and make disciples of all nations**, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age. Mt 28, 19-20

Jesus did not say: "Go and evangelize!"

He said: "Go and make disciples!" Teach them to become what you are: disciples – evangelized and evangelizing

Not because we have to!

For the love of Christ urges us on ... ἡ γὰρ ἀγάπη τοῦ Χριστοῦ συνέχει ἡμᾶς 2 Cor 5,14

“Yes, yes ... but we need something for now, something quick ... something we can organize and

delegate and set in motion ... and remain the way we are.”

Do you really think the tree will grow faster only because you need him urgently?

Either the love of Christ “urges us on” or Christ will try to work on us and our communities until we are there – clay in the hands of the potter.

If we want the youth to be evangelized we will need our hearts to be changed – or everything remains the way it is – with new structures and efforts but same results.

Ultimately there is only one thing that keeps us from evangelizing and really being clay in the potter's hand – today: our pride – my pride.

Allow me to finish with the last verse of John 17, where Jesus in a way summarizes his mission – the mission he passed on to us:

I made your name known to them, and I will make it known, so that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them. John 17,2



## *Ariccia, Sedos Residential Seminar 2018*

*Br. Paul Bednarczyk, CSC*

## **Learnings from Vocation Ministry in the US.**

Good morning. My name is Bro. Paul Bednarczyk, and I currently serve as the First Assistant and Vicar General for the Congregation of Holy Cross. Prior to my election in the summer of 2016, I served in vocation ministry for 23 years, 14 of which were as the executive director of the National Religious Vocation Conference (NRVC), the professional organization for religious vocation directors in the United States. Although a national organization with official recognition from the US Conference of Catholic Bishops, NRVC has approximately 1300 members, which also includes an international membership that represents 16 countries. It is an organization that has been a catalyst, resource, and advocate for religious vocations since its inception in 1988.

In 2009, in collaboration with the Center for Applied Research in Apostolate (CARA) at Georgetown University, NRVC published a landmark study on recent vocations to religious life in the United States. No study of this magnitude in the country had ever been done before on religious vocations. Why did we do this research? We did this study simply because we had no hard data about who and how many were coming to religious life today as well as what types of religious institutes were successfully attracting members. What we had instead were only opinions and anecdotal evidence.

The intended goal of this research was to discover best practices in vocation ministry so that religious institutes could develop well-informed vocation strategies and plans.

I am well aware of the multitude of intricate complexities involved in contemporary vocation ministry and religious life. At the risk of

sounding like an alarmist, I think you would agree with me that in light of our current reality, the question of new membership and its implications for the future of our congregations in some parts of the world take on a heightened sense of urgency. I do not make this statement cavalierly. I say it realistically with a sense of regret, while at the same time being fully aware that the diminishment of religious congregations and the emergence of new communities have been part of the continuum of religious life since the beginning.

My presentation this morning is divided into three parts. First, I will explain the study design and then I will review the six best practices for vocation promotion. I will also support these practices with findings from the study. Finally, I will share some concluding reflections.

Before I continue, however, I would like to make three disclaimers regarding the study.

**1.** This research was done before the Vatican's apostolic visitation to the women religious in the United States and the Congregation of the Faith's doctrinal assessment of the Leadership Conference of Women Religious in the United States. Because the study was released in the midst of it, the media was trying to tie the two together, but the study had nothing to do with any of the investigations.

**2.** This study is simply a snapshot of who is coming to religious life today and why they choose to stay. It is not necessarily a predictor of who will come in the future. Generations, like the world we live in, change and it will continue to change. That is what generations are supposed to do. We cannot be dismissive of it nor can we fight it. We just need to deal with it.



**Bro. Paul Bednarczyk**

3. Finally, I hope this study can serve as a more realistic benchmark for future vocation statistics. The tendency is to compare today's reality in religious life with where we were in the 1950s and 60s. For us in the United States, there were a number of ecclesial, sociological, and cultural factors that contributed to the huge swell of vocations during these decades. The reality, however, is that this was an anomaly in religious life as opposed to a norm. There will always be a small percentage of the Catholic population who will respond to this unique call to service and consecration in the Church.

There were four components to the research project. The first phase of the study surveyed every religious institute and society of apostolic life, including monasteries of contemplative nuns, the new or emerging communities of consecrated life, and some public associations of the faithful seeking canonical recognition.

Out of the 976 surveys mailed, we received a 60 percent response rate, which is extraordinary for such a survey. We estimate that the responses account for well over 80 percent of all men and women religious in the United States.

The survey was designed to gather statistics about the institute's membership, the numbers in initial formation, basic information about vocation promotion and formation, and data about the institute's ministries, styles of community life and prayer, and their practices regarding the religious habit.

We also asked for the names and contact information of those in initial formation as well as those who had professed perpetual vows from the previous 15 years. This list served as the mailing list for the second survey, which is the second phase of the study.

Of the 3,965 new members surveyed, we received a response rate of 40 percent. This survey asked what attracted the new members to religious life and their particular institute, what did they find was most helpful in their discernment process, and what are their attitudes and preferences regarding prayer, community life, ministry, and the religious habit, and what sustains and challenges them in religious life.

Three focus groups consisting of these new religious comprised the third phase of the

study. These groups were intended to gain further insight into understanding the attitudes and experiences of the newer members, and to help in identifying "best practices" for vocation ministry.

During the final phase of the research, site visits were made or interviews were conducted with vocation and formation personnel of eight selected institutes that have experienced some consistent success in attracting and retaining new members.

I am proud to say that this study has spurred interest around the globe and has prompted similar research in France, Australia, Great Britain, Ireland, and Canada. Over the years I have presented this study's findings to audiences in England, France, Ireland, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand and I have discovered that although it is American based, the results cross borders giving evidence of similar trends internationally.

If you are interested in learning more about this research as well as other important studies pertaining to religious vocations, I would recommend that you go to the NRVC website at [www.nrvc.net](http://www.nrvc.net).

While these best practices have been supported by our research, I need to mention that the research also strongly suggests that the example of our members and the quality of religious life in the community have the most influence on a person's decision to enter a particular institute.

Let us now move on to the best practices.

### **1. Being proactive about vocations in the institute**

Some religious institutes have taken a casual or *laissez faire* attitude about vocations. If new members come, fine, but if they do not, these institutes simply manage and carry on. In other words, new membership is not really a top priority. Not surprisingly, such institutes are not necessarily attracting vocations.

What our study has found is that for those institutes that are attracting or retaining vocations, at some point the religious congregation made a decision to do something about new membership. In some cases, the decision came from a chapter or assembly and in others' it

came from charismatic leadership. Their proactive stance was supported with an appointment of a vocation director/and or team, an allocation of financial resources for vocation ministry, education of leadership and community membership about contemporary vocation promotion, and the development of a vocation plan. In other words, vocations became a community priority.

This is where leadership is extremely important. If leadership is not convinced that there is a future for the congregation, then it will be extremely difficult for them to convince their membership.

I also need to emphasize that good intentions, sophisticated marketing campaigns, and an investment of resources may bring candidates to the door, but what will these women and men find when they enter the door? As I said previously, the example of the members and the quality of the prayer and community life and/or ministries of the institute is what most attracts and retains new membership. Any effective vocation ministry, therefore, needs to be done in tandem with an institute's ongoing, authentic renewal of consecrated life.

## **2. Creating a culture of vocations**

The institutes that have had success in vocations are characterized by having a "culture of vocations." In other words, future membership is not just the responsibility of the vocation director. All members are involved in and supportive of the community's vocation efforts. In fact, some of this support is also found in the institutions and ministries sponsored by the institute.

This culture is often nurtured by leadership, membership, communications, and development working together. Leadership and the vocation director communicate regularly about vocations in newsletters, emails, and community meetings. They regularly invite community members to participate in "Come and See" retreats, vocation fairs, mission trips, discernment days, and by serving as mentors with those who are in discernment. The members also play an important role by praying for vocations, inviting young people to consider a

vocation, and by simply witnessing to the joy and contentment in their own vocation.

Speaking of which, 85 percent of the newer religious indicated that they were attracted "very much" to their institute by the example of its members, their joy, down to earth nature, and their commitment and zeal. To rebuild a vocation culture within our congregations must begin with all members prayerfully pondering and reflecting upon the fullness of their own vocation, and to pray for the grace to embrace that vocation wholeheartedly.

## **3. Vocation Director and/or Team**

The research has shown a positive correlation between having a vocation director, especially one who is full-time, and having new members in initial formation. Having a full-time vocation director is also positively correlated with having a higher retention rate. Ironically, less than half of the surveyed institutes indicate that they have a full-time vocation director. Having a vocation team is also positively correlated with having new members.

None of this should not be surprising. I would like to share a parallel example. Speaking as a former high school administrator, if I were faced with diminishing enrollment in my school, I would not make my admissions or recruitment officer part-time. If my goal is to increase the number of students in my school, I would develop an admissions plan and invest greater resources and personnel in the area of recruitment.

The study also highlighted the important role the vocation director plays with the discerner. Most new members (60 percent) report that the vocation director or team provided "very much" encouragement when they were considering their institute. In addition, 70 percent found it very helpful to meet regularly with the vocation director.

This was also supported by comments made in the focus groups. The new members appreciated very much a quick and personal response to their initial inquiry. They were also grateful when vocation directors were not pushy, but rather helpful and supportive in their honesty about religious life and their institute.

Several new members expressed their dissatisfaction with vocation directors who give them a sales pitch or pander to them. Examples include promises of travel and assurances that they could do anything they wanted in terms of ministry. These new members saw this as contrary to authentic discernment. And they are right.

#### **4. Use of Media for Vocation Promotion**

According to our study, those who reported that they use the Internet for vocation promotion are more likely to report having new members. The younger the candidate is, the more likely he or she will say that websites, especially those of religious institutes, CDs, DVDs, videos, and print and online materials were helpful to them in their discernment.

When we think about it, this makes sense as younger potential candidates have had little if any exposure to men and women religious. Often it is through the Internet and evermore so with social networks that young people are introduced to religious life, learn more about it, and if inclined, begin to explore a vocation by investigating various religious institutes.

As an example, 10 years ago the NRVC launched the [vocationnetwork.org](http://vocationnetwork.org) website. Since then they have had over 5.5 million site visitors and over 50,000 inquiries seeking more information through [Vocation-Match.com](http://Vocation-Match.com).

Because many potential candidates are media savvy, they often do their homework before approaching a religious institute. It is recommended that community websites or other media be tested with a target audience first, as impressions of what may work will be different for older people. Likewise, all websites need to portray an honest and authentic portrayal of the religious institute, for it will only be counterproductive in the future if the website does not match the reality of the institute.

Finally, although media is a helpful portal to a religious institute, what is most important is the personal contact and what the potential candidate encounters when he or she meets the institute and its members. For example, communicating initially by email is effective, but it has its limits. At some point, email corre-

spondence needs to lead to a face-to-face meeting for good discernment to take place.

#### **5. Discernment Programs**

The survey found that religious institutes that sponsor discernment programs, retreats, “Come and See” experiences, and ministry and mission experiences are positively correlated with new membership and higher retention rates. Likewise, live-in experiences and discernment house are also related to having members in initial formation.

The new member survey indicates that those who participated in such programs found them to be very helpful in their discernment. It also puts them in relationship with members of the religious institute, which can help build an emotional bond between the candidate and the religious institute. This is especially true for younger potential candidates as these experiences provide them with their first prolonged exposure to women and men religious. This younger generation, in particular, are “hands on” learners. They learn more about religious life through personal experiences of prayer, community, and ministry. In these cases, once the experience is over, it is important for some theological reflection take place. In other words, to have the vocation director or team member process with the candidates what the experience was like for them, how they may have experienced God, and whether or not they are being called to the next step in their discernment.

#### **6. Target Groups**

Our research shows that those religious institutes that sponsor vocation promotion and discernment programs directed toward university students and young adults are more likely to have newer members. Although the relationship is not as strong statistically, targeting high school students also appears to have an impact on attracting and retaining new members.

Newer members have said that they learned about their particular religious institute through a friend or advisor at a university chaplaincy. It is important, therefore, to place

our most vibrant religious in ministries that bring them directly into contact with our target group. If this is not possible, then as men and women religious, we need to be proactive and creative in our ministry of presence to this target group, whether it is worshipping at a young adult Mass in the parish or volunteering in a ministry where young people serve.

It is important to note that 40 percent of the men and almost 50 percent of the women surveyed first considered religious life prior to 18 years of age. More than a quarter of the women considered it before they were 14. The research seems to concur with the anecdotal evidence of a trend of men and women considering a religious vocation at a younger age than was the case a few years ago.

### **Study implications for religious congregations**

Ultimately, what did we learn from our research about the current states of vocations in the United States?

Some of the more significant conclusions are as follows:

1. Three fourths of institutes of men (78 percent) and two-thirds of women (66 percent) have at least one person currently in initial formation. However, half of these institutes have no more than one or two in formation. About 20 percent of the responding institutes have more than five in formation. This is the first time in the history of the American Church that we have more men in religious formation than women.

While these statistics may sound sobering, we need to rejoice in that in a culture that is often in conflict with our Catholic values, there are women and men, albeit in fewer numbers, who still choose to respond to God's mysterious invitation to live the evangelical counsels of chastity, poverty, and obedience, as we know it. They not only love the life; they live it with vitality and joy and eagerly look to the future with tremendous hope.

2. New members at this time are drawn to religious life primarily by a sense of call and a

desire for prayer and spiritual growth. To only a slightly lesser degree, they are attracted by a desire to be of service and to be part of a community. They want to live in a community, preferably in larger groups of eight or more, or medium sized groups of four to seven and to live only with members of their institute. They want to deepen their own prayer life, sacramental life, and Catholic faith by attending daily Mass, praying the Divine Office, and engaging in devotional practices together. They also want to work with members of their own institute in an institution sponsored by their institute. These are not radically new ideas. In fact, I would conjecture that they are probably the same reasons that many of us came to religious life.

3. The most successful institutes that attract and retain vocations are those that live together in community and have a strong Catholic identity witnessed by their type of prayer and sacramental life, by where they minister and live, and by what they wear. They also work together in common apostolates.

I would propose that the most urgent question for us today is the future of consecrated religious life. In light of the demographics we just heard, when the question is put to us within this context, I believe the challenge of the future becomes more global, more inclusive, and more confrontable for religious institutes than we have previously thought. Many of our communities have courageously faced the life question of building a future already in the long and sometimes painful process of consolidating, reconfiguring, and merging of provinces/monasteries/ and or institutes into new entities that will continue to meet the needs of the Church and the People of God.

As I said, the vocation question, and specifically why there are not more, is both multifaceted and complex. That being said, I would like to present one perspective for your consideration.

If I may indulge the jargon of our consumer economy, when we attempt "to sell" the idea of a religious vocation today, we find ourselves in a very competitive market. For instance, fifty years ago, if a woman wanted to

serve the Church, religious life was the only option. Since opening wide the windows of Vatican II, not only have the ministry options for lay women widened, but what we sometimes fail to realize is that new and different forms of consecrated life have also emerged and continue to grow. As a result, religious life has become one of many options for consecrated life in the Church today.

Although still relatively small in number, secular institutes and consecrated virginity are gaining more notice with Catholic women in the United States. Similarly, the rapidly growing ecclesial movement, such as Focolare, Communion and Liberation, the Emmanuel Community, Schoenstatt, and many others, allow for consecration in different forms of membership as well. And then there are the non-canonical groups, some ecumenical, some mixed-gendered, and some mixed with married and celibate members, who also allow for some form of consecration. My point is that all of these groups already draw from the same shrinking pool of men and women, who may practice their Catholic faith to various degrees of intensity, but who are becoming less and less steeped in their faith and tradition, as was suggested by a most recent study on young, Catholic adults called “Going, Going, Gone.”

Please do not understand me. I am not in any way diminishing the validity and rightful place of these varied groups and forms of consecration in our Church. Rather, I am simply making the point that religious life is no longer the only show in town.

I think that because of this changed reality, some of our members have been mistakenly duped into thinking that consecrated religious life is less valid, less relevant, less important and less viable. Our study has clearly shown that it is not. As I said before, the good news is that there are women and men who still choose to respond to God’s call.

Although we have benefited from visioning the future of religious life, we must realize that in many ways the future is already happening, as is evident in the emerging, new forms of consecrated life. Admittedly, it may be more comfortable to engage in theoretical and intellectual imaginings about what religious life will become, but at this point, we need to deal

with the uncomfortable, which is the essential and urgent issues of the present day. The results of this study invite us to do just that.

While this research is currently nine years old, subsequent, similar studies and surveys on religious life in the United States have consistently confirmed our findings with slight variations. I am pleased to know that the National Religious Vocation Conference plans to do a 10 year follow-up study to this research.

In light of this research, I believe that two essential questions need to be discussed by both leadership and by the membership at large within a particular institute.

### ***1. Why do we want vocations?***

Do we want vocations to maintain our present institutional commitments and ministerial commitments? Do we want new members to make us “feel good” knowing that the life we have chosen is worthwhile after all? Is it about self-propagation? Or as one Brother said to me when I was vocation director, “make sure you find someone to push my wheelchair when I’m old.” Instead, I would hope that we want candidates because we believe that our charism and prophetic witness are gifts to the Church, and without it, the Church would be a much poorer place. I would hope that what we have to offer the Church and the People of God is valuable, and that younger people today can find similar enrichment and fulfillment in religious life as much as we have found.

Our response to this question gives direction to the next.

### ***2. If we say we want vocations and a future for our congregations, what sacrifices are we willing to make in order to ensure that future?***

We are men and women of the gospel who have freely chosen to follow Jesus Christ in a most radical way by living the vowed life. The gospels teach us that new life, rebirth and resurrection awaits us at the end of the long road to Calvary, which is a road of sacrifice, letting go, and yes, suffering. What is it that God asks us today to sacrifice or to let go of in order to bring new life to our institutes? Is your religious institute able to provide, or maybe

even more directly, is it willing to provide for what the contemporary candidate is looking for in prayer, community, and identity? If you are, then what is it that may need to be sacrificed, on the part of both individuals and the congregation, in order to provide for a future with new membership?

Questions can provoke fear, because questions may lead to change. But asking questions is not a sign that one lacks faith. As difficult as these questions are, nevertheless, their answers are necessary if we desire to invite a new generation to religious life.

In addition to the best practices of vocation ministry that I shared with you earlier, I would infer from this research, that if any religious community is to attract new members, three additional things also need to be in place.

First and foremost, there is a need to define a clear identity for women and men religious. As we all know, the creation and reinforcement of a religious order's identity goes well beyond wearing a religious habit, blessed ring, or community pin. While the diversity of lifestyle and ministry you share in your various institutes is important, on the other hand, what are the non-negotiables in your life? What makes the life of a religious priest different from his secular counterpart? What makes the life of a religious sister different from that of a consecrated secular or consecrated virgin, and how would a younger woman, interested in religious life, recognize that? How does a religious brother define himself in terms other than being a non-ordained religious, a male nun, or not totally like a priest?

Our research suggests that if religious congregations are to attract new members, there is a need to educate young people, who live in a diminishing Catholic culture, about what a religious is. To do this effectively assumes the need for clarity. But it is not just about the articulation of that clarity; more importantly, it is about demonstrating a consistency of an established identity of a religious institute with the lived reality of the members. If, as our study shows, a younger people wants to deepen their Catholic faith and spirituality by exploring religious life, if their experience of community does not meet their needs, then they will simply go to another reli-

gious community where their Catholic identity will be nurtured and supported.

Secondly, if a congregation makes vocation ministry a priority, education of the general membership about the profile of the contemporary candidate is essential. Although it is extremely difficult to put this younger generation into neat little boxes of liberal or conservative, traditional or progressive, this research does provide us with some consistent data about what they are seeking.

Our research shows that younger entrants, in evaluating their religious institutes, gave vocation efforts a lower rating. What resources do you put in vocation ministry? Do you have a full-time vocation director? Does he or she have a budget, an adequate office with a computer, etc.

Thirdly, the study invites us to deeper questions about the consecrated life and how it is lived in our institutes. Some of the questions may make us uncomfortable. For instance –

-How do we define and live out community today? Given the energy, idealism, hopes, and desires of our young people, would they find our community life as it lived today nurturing and life-giving?

-Is our personal and communal prayer reflective of our Catholic tradition? As a community, is our prayer life a priority? Is it properly planned or do we simply say prayers together in a rote and routine fashion? How does our communal prayer deepen our personal relationship with Christ?

-How do we give public witness to our vowed life and is it effective for today's world?

-Do we have a balance of prayer, community, and ministry in our life?

Sometimes we may resist the deeper questions, because questions can lead to changes. But asking questions is not a sign that one lacks faith.

Both the world and the church have changed dramatically from when many of us first entered religious life. From this changed world and church is from where our candidates come. While the largest cohort of religious in the United States were formed and transformed by the radical renewal of religious life initiated by the Second Vatican Council, this

generation of new entrants has been shaped by a different experience of Church. As I said earlier, generations change. That is what generations are meant to do. We should not fear that reality. No matter what we may think of this younger generation, their spirituality, their hopes, and their values, we cannot ignore them if we want a future.

*Perfectae Caritatis* challenged the religious of the world to read the signs of the times. Today's young Catholics are themselves the signs of our time and they beckon to be heard, included, and welcomed. What will be our response to them? If we are to be true to our religious commitment, we must be there for these young people, even if it means we change, make personal sacrifices, and be willing to be changed in the process.

In a world of uncertainty, relativity, and transition, I do believe that God is presenting us with a graced moment. But as the history of religious life attests, this is not the first time religious have faced turmoil. Social, political, or ecclesial adversity was never foreign to their experience or ever beyond their grasp of God's good grace. They rose to the challenge and inspired generations by their resiliency and unflinching faith.

Let us pray that together in this graced moment, we will continue the remarkable legacy of religious life and embrace the challenge of new membership with bold courage, transforming creativity, unmoving fidelity, and profound openness to the Spirit that dwells in and among us.

Thank you for your kind attention.

## Ariccia, Sedos Residential Seminar 2018



## TÉMOIGNAGE

Ana Slivka, FMM

### **Jeunesse + Mission = Un avenir d'espoir**

Le monde de la jeunesse a toujours été un monde qui autant provoquait que fascinait. Aujourd'hui il continue d'être un monde attirant, urgent, défiant et parfois gênant tant dans l'Eglise comme dans toutes les autres domaines de notre histoire et de toute notre existence. C'est alors avec joie et pas mal de curiosité que je suis arrivée à Rome pour participer du séminaire sur la Jeunesse et mission. L'évènement a été ma toute première expérience du SEDOS et je peux dire qu'il a largement dépassé toutes mes attentes.

Même en faisant partie de la génération Y (ceux qui sont nés entre 1980 et 2000), je me suis sentie parfois un peu "vieille" en écoutant des intervenants parler sur les jeunes d'aujourd'hui. La technologie, la science, la perception du temps et même des questions sur la foi, la vie, la moral, les valeurs de base – tout cela est aujourd'hui dans une constante évolution et dans un changement permanent et super rapide, qui va souvent un peu dans tous les sens possibles et impossibles, comme nous l'a présenté le monde des jeunes d'aujourd'hui la première intervenante Emilia Palladino, professeur à Pontifical Gregorian University, avec le thème la Culture de La jeunesse contemporaine: entre la droite et le contraire.

Bruna Zaltron, professeur à Claretianum, nous a fait voir la beauté et le désespoir des nouvelles générations du côté psychologique. Générés par la vie pour correspondre à l'amour, nos jeunes vivent au coeur d'une société en pleine "crise anthropologique", qui vit son délire irréal de la toute-puissance de l'homme. L'humanité a simplement oublié l'importance des relations génératifs où l'autre

m'aide à devenir ce que je ne peux pas devenir par moi-même.

Le travail en groupes ce jour-là a été sur nos propre fragilités, nos limites et notre incapacités de changer. Eh oui, ce ne sont pas (que) des jeunes qui doivent grandir, murir et "dégonfler", comme ils aiment de dire.



**Ana Slivka est la personne au centre**

Le jour suivant a commencé avec une question assez inconfortable. Paul Raj, l'Assistant Général des Frères de Saint Gabriel nous a parlé sur Le Rôle et les Défis de l'évangélisation pour les jeunes dans le monde multiculturel et pluraliste

d'aujourd'hui. "Notre responsabilité envers l'évangélisation a changé: ce n'est plus faire des discours, mais écouter. Ce n'est plus raconter ce que j'ai lu ou ce que l'Eglise dit, c'est parler de ce que je crois, mes convictions et expériences personnelles de Dieu. Et si je n'en ai aucune?"

Michael Papenkordt de l'Institut pour ... nous a emmené un pas plus loin. Avec une passion contaminante il nous a parlé sur le rôle des laïcs missionnaires aujourd'hui, en laissant très clair que seuls "les évangélisés vont évangéliser". C'est beau et au même temps terrifiant d'entendre que pour évangéliser aujourd'hui nous n'avons pas besoin d'être un excellent théologien, mais d'avoir un cœur brûlant et que avant de changer nos structures vaudrait mieux changer nous-mêmes.

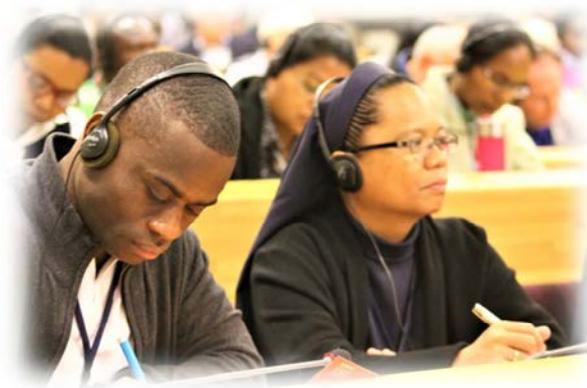
Vers la fin de notre séjour à Ariccia nous avons reçu un vrai cadeau en accueillant à la table ronde de jeunes missionnaires religieux qui nous ont partagés leur fascination pour être missionnaire aujourd'hui. Ils nous ont rappelé l'importance de prendre le temps pour décou-

vrir et connaître les jeunes. Et ils ont raison car être formateur c'est aussi, d'après eux, se laisser changer, se laisser interpeller par les jeunes, se déplacer et vivre une mise en cause constante.

Comme nous a dit Cardinal Lorenzo Baldiseri, notre invité spécial: "Nous devons développer une mentalité différente et croire dans l'avenir. Oui, il faut considérer le passé, mais il faut aussi oser un avenir créatif et laisser la

Que cet excellent séminaire nous aide à tous de savoir nous arrêter, pour mieux écouter Dieu dans nos jeunes et partir en mission avec eux, pour un monde meilleur et un avenir plein d'espoir.

vie avancer. C'est le seul chemin pour arriver à ce que Dieu dit à son peuple dans le livre du prophète Jérémie au chapitre 29: "Car je connais bien les plans que j'ai pour vous; des plans pour votre bien-être, afin de vous donner un AVENIR D'ESPOIR".



# Questions for the Discussion Groups

## 1 May 2018

### IT

- 1) La nostra relazione con il cambiamento.
- 2) Quanta fiducia abbiamo nel giovane? Quelli che noi conosciamo!
- 3) Come sono vissute nelle nostre realtà le fragilità, i limiti... a livello personale e istituzionale?
- 4) Quali sfide sento prioritarie in un cammino formativo?
- 5) Che cose possiamo mettere in atto per avviare processi di "trasformazione" e crescita umana e spirituale.

### FR

- 1) Notre relation avec le changement.
- 2) Quelle confiance avons-nous dans les jeunes? Ceux que nous connaissons!
- 3) Comment la fragilité, les limites, sont-elles vécu dans notre réalité ... sur le plan personnel et institutionnel?
- 4) Quels défis est-ce que je considère prioritaire dans un voyage formatif?
- 5) Ce que nous pouvons faire pour lancer des processus de «transformation» et de croissance humaine et spirituelle.

### EN

- 1) Our relationship with change.
- 2) How much confidence do we have in the young? Those we know!
- 3) How are the fragilities, the limits, lived in our reality ... on a personal and institutional level?
- 4) Which challenges do I feel prioritize in a formative journey?
- 5) What we can do to start processes of "transformation" and to stimulate human and spiritual growth.

### SP

- 1) Nuestra relación con el cambio.
- 2) ¿Cuánta confianza tenemos en los jóvenes? ¡Aquellos que conocemos!
- 3) ¿Cómo han vivido la fragilidad, los límites, en nuestra realidad ... a nivel personal y institucional?
- 4) ¿Qué desafíos me siento priorizar en un viaje formativo?
- 5) ¿Qué podemos hacer para comenzar procesos de "transformación" y crecimiento humano y espiritual

## 2 May 2018

### IT

- 1) Attualmente come rispondono le nostre congregazioni alle sfide e alle realtà multiculturali?
- 2) Quali sono il piano d'azione e le strategie che proponi per promuovere la diversità multiculturale e affrontare le sfide poste dalle nuove realtà?
- 3) Come possiamo formare una testimonianza kerigmatica?
- 4) Come può il kerygma avere più spazio nella nostra vita e nel lavoro, nel convento, nella comunità e nelle riunioni?

**FR**

- 1) Actuellement, comment nos congrégations répondent-elles aux défis et aux réalités multiculturelles?
- 2) Quels sont le plan d'action et les stratégies que vous proposez pour promouvoir la diversité multiculturelle et relever les défis posés par les nouvelles réalités?
- 3) Comment pouvons-nous former un témoignage kérygmaticque?
- 4) Comment le kérygme peut-il avoir plus de place dans notre vie et notre travail, dans le couvent, la communauté et les réunions?

**EN**

- 1) Presently how do our congregations respond to the multicultural challenges and realities?
- 2) What are the Action Plan and Strategies you propose to promote multicultural diversity and to meet the challenges posed by the new realities?
- 3) How can we form a kerygmatic testimony?
- 4) How can the kerygma get more room/space in our life and work, in the convent, community, and meetings?

**SP**

- 1) ¿Cómo responden nuestras congregaciones a los desafíos y realidades multiculturales?
- 2) ¿Cuáles son los planes de acción y las estrategias que propone para promover la diversidad multicultural y para enfrentar los desafíos planteados por las nuevas realidades?
- 3) ¿Cómo podemos formar un testimonio kerigmático?
- 4) ¿Cómo puede el kerigma obtener más espacio en nuestra vida y trabajo, en el convento, la comunidad y las reuniones?

**3 May 2018****IT**

- 1) Dove ti sei sentito sfidato, personalmente e come membro della tua comunità, da questa mattinata di presentazione e discussione?
- 2) Dove ti sei sentito affermato, personalmente e come membro della tua comunità, da questa mattina alla presentazione e alla discussione?

**FR**

- 1) Où vous êtes-vous senties interpellées, personnellement et en tant que membre de votre communauté, à la suite de cette présentation et de cette discussion en groupe?
- 2) Où vous sentez-vous affirmé, personnellement et en tant que membre de votre communauté, à partir de cette présentation matinale et de cette table ronde?

**EN**

- 1) Where did you feel challenged, personally and as member of your community, from this morning presentation and panel discussion?
- 2) Where did you feel affirmed, personally and as member of your community, from this morning presentation and panel discussion?

**SP**

- 1) ¿Dónde se sintió desafiado, personalmente y como miembro de su comunidad, de esta presentación de la mañana y de la mesa redonda?
- 2) ¿Dónde se sintió afirmado, personalmente y como miembro de su comunidad, en esta presentación de la mañana y en la mesa redonda?

## Summary of the Evaluation

### 1. What are you taking with you from this Seminar?

Qu'est- ce que vous prenez avec vous, à la fin de ce Séminaire ?

Che cosa porterete con voi da questo Seminario ?

Que es lo que te llevas de este seminario?

- **EN**- I am aware that only a truly evangelized person can become an evangelizer. The encounter with Jesus is important for proclaiming and witnessing. The self-awareness: I received my vocation, my mission and the experience of youth participation. I also learned to give more time to youth, listening to them to win them over with a tender heart.
- **FR** - La confirmation que la « vocation » est un « don de Dieu » qu'on doit recevoir avec la gratitude au Seigneur. Mission, et dépasse toutes les connaissances de ce monde — Attachement au Christ ; Kérygme précède la Catéchèse — L'authenticité, Crédibilité, Multiculturalité, Renouveau de notre espérance. Faire confiance aux jeunes, dans la dynamique de les attirer vers le Christ.
- **IT** - È Molto importante questa visione della gioventù. In particolare, la relazione di Emilia Palladino. Il clima di fraternità tra noi. La multiculturalità che è emersa in tutti gli ambiti e che è una realtà che tocca profondamente la Chiesa e tutta la nostra società. La grande professionalità e competenza delle traduttrici che hanno fatto un lavoro fantastico. Il coro *Diapason* che ha cantato molto bene.
- **SP** – In formación - reflexión inter disciplinar, complementario, calidad de las ponencias; Riqueza de la inter-nacionalidad: diverges perspectivas. Desafío personal: Volver al amor primero.

### 2. Quelles sont les articles que vous n'aimeriez pas mettre dans votre valise?

What items you do not wish to put in your suitcase ?

Quali articoli non desiderate mettere nella vostra valigia?

Cuales artículos no te gustaría llevar en tu maleta?

- **EN** – Imposing attitude on others, preconceived ideas, biases about youth and the wrong notion about youth, etc., I do not wish to put these in my suitcase.
- **FR** – Garder l'espoir au milieu des crises de vocations, les yeux fixés sur Jésus Christ, le Maître de la Mission. Ceci se reformule en un appel pressant pour revigorer notre zèle et nos stratégies d'apostolat auprès des jeunes; Fatalisme, Désespérance, Découragement, Manque d'enthousiasme — Lourdeur dans les pléniers je ne veux pas mettre dans ma valise.
- **IT** – Non desidero mettere nella mia valigia disperazione e scoraggiamento
- **SP** – Sentimiento inicial de no pertenecer porque no estoy en el liderazgo y los jóvenes no son confiables. Estos no quiero poner en mi maleta.

### **3. What concrete actions are you going to take to make SEDOS known?**

**Que ferez-vous concrètement pour attirer des nouveaux membres vers SEDOS?**

**Quali azioni concrete metterete in atto per attirare nuovi membri verso SEDOS?**

**Qué harías tú, concretamente, para atraer nuevos , miembros á SEDOS?**

- **EN** – Share the input of this workshop with others, In our various websites, we will write a report of the Seminar to make SEDOS known.
- **FR** – Nous nous engageons de parler de SEDOS. Nous partagerons nos expériences personnelles de SEDOS avec nos confrères de nos communautés et instituts.
- **IT** – Attirare nuovi membri verso SEDOS e prevedere di trattare il tema della Teologia della Missione in uno dei prossimi Seminari.
- **SP** – Promoverlo más desde USG y UISG.

### **4. Do you have suggestions for improvement? If yes, in which area?**

**Avez-vous des suggestions en vue d'amélioration ? Si oui, dans quel domaine ?**

**Avete qualche suggerimento per migliorare ? Se si, in quale ambito?**

**Tienes tu algunas sugerencias en vista de mejorar? Si es si, en que ambientes?**

- **EN** – Time management of speakers, especially plenary with group presentations. Limit to 3-4 questions only; Allocate each group to discuss one question mandatory and the others options. Hence we will get an in-depth understanding of one question from a few groups rather than each group trying to respond to all of them superficially. Moderators to give clear guidelines and time frame for the presentations.
- **FR** – Un thème d'aussi grande importance dans l'église devrait attirer le besoin de découvrir les horizons pour recevoir des approches des intervenants nous a semblé occidentales. L'occident est en crise de vocations, dit-on ; Nous avons parlé des jeunes, sans faire intervenir les jeunes eux-mêmes. Faire intervenir les jeunes aurait élargi et approfondi notre réflexion.
- **IT** – La condivisione in gruppo è molto importante e fruttuosa. Il resoconto dei gruppi in plenaria è stato troppo lungo. I gruppi non hanno rispettato i tempi e il moderatore non è intervenuto per far rispettare i tempi.
- **SP** – Cuidar los tiempos para que haya reflexión personal. Mas directiva y control tiempo en el plenario; Mirada positiva hacia la juventud.



*Ariccia, Sedos Residential Seminar 2018*

**Announcement:**

# ***SEDOS AUTUMN SEMINAR***

***Contribution of Women Religious to Mission***

**12-13 October 2018**

**Speakers:**

**Catherine Marin**

*“Place” of Women Religious in History.*

Catherine Marin is a lay person who teaches at the Institut Catholique de Paris and is Directrice-adjointe of the Department of the History of the Church.

**Sr. Marie-Hélène Robert**

*The Sense of Collaboration in Mission  
- From Mary to Lydia, a Biblical Perspective -*

Sr. Marie-Hélène Robert, OLA, is theology professor at the Université Catholique de Lyon.

**Sr. Kathleen Mc Garvey**

*Realities and Struggles of Women Religious in Mission*

Sr. Kathleen Mc Garvey, OLA, has worked in Abuja/Nigeria, where she set up a program of inter-religious dialogue with Catholic and Muslim women. She also has taught missiology at the Gregorian after her thesis on this subject, and is now Provincial in Ireland.

**Panel of Male and Female Congregations that cooperate in doing Mission.**

*The Contribution of Women Religious in Joint Mission*

**Languages:** Italian, French, Spanish and English.

**Place and schedule:** see later on SEDOS website.

***An initiative of SEDOS with the cooperation of JPIC of USG/UISG.***

(Subscription starts at the beginning of September, write at [redacsed@sedosmission.org](mailto:redacsed@sedosmission.org) )