



CLERICALISM

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SEDOS

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Frontcover image: detail from Sistine Chapel

Editorial



Dear Readers,

The articles in this SEDOS Bulletin deal in one way or another with the problem of “clericalism” in the Church.

Although priests are supposed to be the “servant of the servants”, as said during the ordination to the priesthood, they tend to let themselves be served rather than to serve. Actually, the lay people are part of the problem as they like to serve the priest, instead of serving the needy, and to make the priest feel important. The priest is there to show them what it means to be “the servant of the Lord”, to which all are called.

The first article is by Jesuit Fr. Poulouse Mangai who writes on the of Prof. Kurien Kunnumpuram’s contribution, SJ, regarding the insights of Vatican II and the challenges facing the Indian Church. His theory is that if the Church in India wants to be relevant and responsive in the world of today, it should free itself from this clericalism. “In order to avoid the pitfall of clericalism, it is important that priests understand, embrace and live out servant-leadership after the example of the Son of Man who came ‘not to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many’ (Mk 10:45)”.

This example of the serving priest after Vatican II is concretized in the way the Popes from that time on have lived and worked more as “pastors” than as “lords”. Fr. James Kroeger, MM, recalls the important contributions of the three “Vatican II” Popes who were canonized by Pope Francis. Joy, evangelization, and mission are fundamental aspects of the Church and of every priest, sister, brother, and lay person.

In order to realize the ideals of Vatican II also on gender equality, the local Church needs new structures because the present one is too vertical and patriarchal, according to theologian Silvia Martinez Cano. She states that, “Probably, if women were fully integrated into the organization of the Church

not only at the sacramental level but also at the executive level, this organization would be different”.

Religious can encourage priests to be part of the bigger Church, and not only of their small parish. Pier Giorgio Taneburgo, OFM Cap, tells with joy in his heart how the Church in Albania is becoming a “spiritual family”.

The last article is by the young hand of Fr. Gebremeskel Shikur Kirato, IMC, who relates the history of the diocesan priest Giuseppe Allamano who founded two missionary Congregations: the Consolata Missionary Institute and the Consolata Missionary Sisters. His health was not strong enough for him to become a missionary, but he worked as a priest to promote missionary vocations in, and the missionary responsibility of, the Church. According to Allamano “Every priest by his ordination is a missionary; for a priest who shares the priesthood of Christ, a diocese is too narrow to exercise his mission, so a priest should be open to the whole of humanity”.

The Document of this SEDOS Bulletin is taken from the French Catholic daily newspaper *LA CROIX*. It gives us **Ten Guidelines on How To Counter Clericalism:**

- 1) *Put priests in their rightful place*
- 2) *Put the laity in their rightful place*
- 3) *Recall the equality of all through Baptism*
- 4) *To publicly assume the faults of the Church*
- 5) *Organize places for debate in the Church*
- 6) *Use freedom of speech*
- 7) *Govern dioceses in a more collegial manner*
- 8) *Give responsibilities to the laity*
- 9) *Involve more women in the training of priests*
- 10) *Place women in positions of authority*

These guidelines sum up many of the proposals made by the different authors of our selected articles. An English version of this document, as well of the articles in other languages, can be found on the SEDOS Website.

Enjoy the reading!

To Be a Relevant and Responsive Church

The Indian Church in Need of Liberation from Clericalism

Introduction

I consider it a privilege to be invited to contribute to this festschrift that felicitates Prof. Kurien Kunnumpuram, SJ, an accomplished theologian and passionate teacher. As a visiting professor he taught two ecclesiological courses— *theology of the church* and *theology of the magisterium*—at Vidyajyoti, Delhi in the years I was an undergraduate Student of theology. As a professor he commanded the respect of all students. His thinking and teaching were both marked by sound learning, lucidity, rigour, solidity and depth. He wanted to see the reformatory process of the church initiated by the Second Vatican Council more fully realized in the life and practice of the church in India. With this aim and focus, he taught and wrote with passion and commitment. The Conferences he gave as well as his theological writings aimed at the radical renewal of the church, the Indian church in particular, in its internal life and Organization and also in its mission *ad extra*. He knew that without such renewal, the church would increasingly become irrelevant for the Indian people. Only a transformed church could read and relevantly respond to the signs of the times. This ecclesial and ecclesiological passion of Kunnumpuram is behind the choice of the topic of this essay in his honour.

The Challenges before the Indian Church

Dehumanizing poverty and iniquitous distribution of economic resources, caste-based social Organization and all attendant evils, and difficulties involved in proclaiming the gospel in a multi-cultural and pluri-religious environment are some of the perennial challenges before the church in India. There have been substantial reflections on how the church may face these challenges

as it carries forward the mission Christ has entrusted to it. In recent times the church has come face to face with some other intimidating challenges. I have in mind some explosive developments during the past two or three years—developments which had been for a long time waiting to erupt. These include, *inter alia*, the more recent accusations and reports of i) irregularities in the administration of the temporal goods of the church, in which the accused included members of the episcopate, ii) sexual exploitation of minors and vulnerable adults by clerics, and iii) legal proceedings, which led to the arrest and judicial confinement in jail, against a bishop accused of repeatedly raping a senior religious woman.

These issues revealed not only the personal failures of the priests, bishops and religious involved but also—and this is more serious—the inability of the church-system in India to deal with these and derived issues in a proactive, fair, transparent, prompt, effective, and dignified manner. Often the authorities involved either sought to take refuge in their not having ‘canonical powers’ or tried to push the ball into someone else’s court. Can we say that the authorities saw these happenings merely as canonical-legal cases? The church failed miserably and also in public view, thereby, taking a nosedive in its credibility as an effective Organization and a public moral voice. It all pointed to a vacuum of moral and spiritual leadership in the Indian church. To some extent the church became the laughingstock of the people of this country.

Ordinary believers, lay people of goodwill, were shattered by these happenings. They felt let down, hurt and disillusioned. These developments also raised doubts in their minds about the faith—practical and also

doctrinal and theological doubts. Can we believe our bishops, priests and religious when they teach us religion and morality? They seem to be teaching what they themselves don't practise. Maybe they don't believe in what they teach? The church authorities were reactive in their approach to the problems. The victims in these cases did not get the compassionate support and understanding that they deserved from the church of Christ. Apparently, there were also attempts to shoot the whistle-blowers. Was it that the authorities were flummoxed and overwhelmed, and did not know what to do?

Financial irregularities, sexual exploitation of minors and vulnerable adults, accusation of rape of a senior religious woman by a bishop, absence of a fair and effective system to deal with such cases are real issues that need to be addressed. But there is a deeper issue which underlies all these and many other issues. That is clericalism.

The Evil of Clericalism

Writing mainly in the context of the media reports of widespread sexual abuse of children by clergy in many countries and the way the ecclesiastical authorities dealt (or did not deal) with the issue, a Jesuit journalist of India explains what clericalism is all about. It is "the sense of entitlement, the lack of accountability, and the arrogance of power. It is the smug awareness that 'whatever I do, no one can touch me.' It is this attitude seemingly held by the clergy and the upper echelons of power, as though they belong to a superior caste, which lies at the heart of this sickness." He also referred to the "corrupt System of governance" in the church that "can weaken and even destroy the very fabric of the Church."¹

A 1983 Report submitted to the Conference of Major Superiors of Men (CMSM) in the United States offers a fairly detailed analysis

¹Myron J. Pereira SJ, "Rebalancing the Church's monarchical structure. Will the laity manage to change older Systems of governance to clean up sex abuse mess?" <https://international.la-croix.com/news/-rebalancing-the-churches-monarchical-structure/9319>, posted on 25 January 2019, accessed on 31 January 2019.

of the phenomenon of clericalism in the church, especially in the United States.² It gives a working definition of clericalism "as the conscious or unconscious concern to promote the particular interests of the clergy and to protect the Privileges and power that have traditionally been conceded to those in the clerical state."³

It has "attitudinal, behavioural and institutional dimensions." The Report lists its main manifestations: "an authoritative style of ministerial leadership, a rigidly hierarchical world view, and a virtual identification of the holiness and grace of the Church with the clerical state and, thereby, with the cleric himself." Even though one cannot altogether exclude religious men and women and lay people from its stranglehold, it is basically a problem among the members of the ordained clergy. However, the Report points out that clericalism is not a necessary consequence of priesthood but its diminishment and distortion.⁴



<https://oumclive.org/about-oumc/worship/traditional-service/>

Seán McNully understands clericalism as "the abuse of clerical power with regard to the people of God" and compares it to "the iceberg of which pedophilia is the tip. Exercising sexual power over minors is a small part of the larger abuse of exercising inappropriate power over the whole people of God."⁵ McNully is speaking from the context of the Catholic church in Ireland. He considers that the issue is not only the

²"In Solidarity and Service: Reflections on the Problem of Clericalism in the Church," *The Jurist*, Vol. 43 (1983), 430-449.

³ *Ibid.*, 431.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 432.

⁵ Seán McNully, "The Culture of Clericalism," *The Furrow*, Vol. 57, No. 6 (June 2006), 364.

personal and Professional failures of individuals but also systemic. John J. Dubay brings a psychological component to the phenomenon of clericalism when he says that “clericalism for many is an addictive way of life.”⁶ Addiction Controls the life of the victim who in turn becomes powerless. The victim is not willing to give up addiction and make his/her life richer and fuller. The victim is even unable to see the reality—the elephant in the room—and opposes whoever speaks the truth and exposes the reality.⁷ However, the addiction of clericalism is not to be seen as having affected only individuals. McNully and Dubay both agree that the problem is more of a systemic nature. Such a System tends to defend itself always, seeks to control its members and demands compliance from them, tends to dehumanize those who make up the System and even affects their ethical integrity.⁸

Pope Francis is deeply aware of the evil of clericalism in the church, which he denounces at every available opportunity. In *Evangelii gaudium* he wrote:

Lay people are, put simply, the vast majority of the people of God. The minority—ordained ministers—are at their Service. There has been a growing awareness of the identity and mission of the laity in the Church. We can count on many lay persons, although still not nearly enough, who have a deeply rooted sense of Community and great fidelity to the tasks of charity, catechesis and the celebration of the faith. At the same time, a clear awareness of this responsibility of the laity, grounded in their baptism and confirmation, does not appear in the same way in all places. In some cases, it is because lay persons have not been given the formation needed to take on important responsibilities. In others, it is because in their particular Churches room has not been made for them to speak and to act, due to an excessive clericalism which keeps them away from decision-making (no. 102).

The pope knows that clericalism tries “to replace, or silence, or ignore, or reduce the

People of God to small elites” and the results is that “we end up creating communities, projects, theological approaches, spiritualities and structures without roots, without memory, without faces, without bodies and ultimately, without lives.” The pope says that this is manifest “in a peculiar way of understanding the Church’s authority, one common in many communities where sexual abuse and the abuse of power and conscience have occurred.” This is the problem with clericalism, “an approach that ‘not only nullifies the character of Christians, but also tends to diminish and undervalue the baptismal grace that the Holy Spirit has placed in the heart of our people.’” He continues: “Clericalism, whether fostered by priests themselves or by lay persons, leads to an excision in the ecclesial body that supports and helps to perpetuate many of the evils that we are condemning today. To say ‘no’ to abuse is to say an emphatic ‘no’ to all forms of clericalism.”⁹

Clericalism does not fully explain the sex abuses in the church and the disinclination of the authorities to deal with them as justice demands. But it is definitely a major contributing factor. The sexual predators of innocent children exploit the power and trust they command as ‘sacred persons’. Because of the culture of clericalism, the bishops and religious superiors easily identify with the priest-predators rather than the abused children and their families.

Reflecting on the phenomenon of clericalism in the church, Jose Puthenveed points out: “Clericalism may command a superficial deference, but it blocks honest human communication and ultimately leaves the cleric practicing it isolated.”¹⁰ He also highlights how it negatively affects the Bishop-Priests relationship in the local church:

⁹ Pope Francis, “Letter to the People of God” (20 August 2018), http://w2.vatican.va/content/ffrancesco/en/letters/2018/documents/papa-francesco_20180820_lettera-popolo-didio.html, accessed on 1 October 2018.

¹⁰ Jose Puthenveed, “The Disease of Clericalism in the Ordained Clergy,” *Asian Journal of Vocation and Formation*, Vol. 30, No. 1 (Jan-Jun 2006), 35.

⁶ John J. Dubay, “Clericalism,” *The Furrow*, Vol. 48, No. 6 (June 1997), 373.

⁷ John J. Dubay, *Ibid.*.

⁸ Cf. *Ibid.*, 375.

A bishop caught up in a clerical mode of functioning seldom enjoys the kind of fraternal relationship with his priests that both he and they need in Order to meet the draining needs of pastoral care and to assuage the burden of loneliness inherent to celibacy. Episcopal clericalism often finds expression as arrogance and at times as pompous arrogance in an unconscious manner.”¹¹

Needless to say that the adverse consequences of the breakdown of normal bishop-clergy relationship are quite damaging for the unity of the local church, for its liturgical life, for its pastoral care of the faithful, and for its mission in the world.

Clericalism is a lie. Its source is not in Jesus Christ, nor in his gospel of God’s reign. It is an undesirable intrusion from a culture alien to the message of Jesus. The culture of clericalism is directly and destructively opposed to priesthood, both the ministerial priesthood of the ordained and the common priesthood of all the faithful. It also contradicts the true nature of the church. In order to liberate the church from the stranglehold of clericalism, it is important that we capture the true essence of the church.

True Nature of the Church

In order to be relevant and responsive, the life and practice of the church must always be true to its origin and at the same time creatively attentive to the needs of the time. The church being a community of fallible men and women, false developments and accruals are always possible. Therefore, it is imperative not to idolize the church in its phenomenological concretions. We must refrain from defining its nature from how it actually appears in history. The church has a fundamental nature, which is not its own making but received. Every structure, every System, which is in vogue in the church must be tested against its authentic nature.

Some fundamental elements and perspectives are given to the church at its

decisive origins in Jesus Christ and in the apostolic community created and guided by the Spirit of the risen Christ. However, the nature of the church may not be understood statically but in a dynamic sense. The church expresses itself in varying forms and shapes across geographical and cultural differences and over time. The nature of the church is permanent, but the historical forms are not. These varying forms and shapes must, however, be in dynamic congruence with the evolving nature of the church. Without this congruence, the church will lack authenticity and fail in its mission to be a prophetic witness to and an efficacious instrument of the saving work of Christ today. The historical church has always been wanting in this regard, even in the apostolic times as is evident in the NT epistles. Heresy, disunity, corruption, and manipulation have always been present in the church, sometimes to a lesser degree and sometimes to a greater degree. The holy people of God, whether of the first covenant or of the second covenant, has always been sinful and rebellious and so in need of purification, renewal, and reform. To renew itself, while remaining true to its authentic nature, the church must constantly return to its origin, its source.

The foundation of the church is in the concrete act of God’s saving work in Jesus Christ. The church is of the Lord in its origin and must always be. The NT gives different images of the church with different emphases, tensions and at times mutually conflicting. The NT church was not a perfect church. In fact, a perfect church never existed in history. The message of the NT continues to be the criterion to judge the church today and at any time. The *raison d’etre* of the church is its mission to continually proclaim the message of Jesus to itself and to the world. The NT message and tradition have to be re-read and re- interpreted critically from the living context of the people of God and according to the signs of the times. The rereading and the re-interpretation must be done always in the light of Christ’s Spirit, who is a living reality within the church. It is the Spirit who sustains the church in the truth of Christ.

¹¹ Ibid., 37.

To save the church as church calls for a new vision of the church, a new way of being church. Contemporary efforts at the renewal of the church calls for a retrieval of the pneumatological ecclesiology implicit in the New Testament.

A Church that Lives from the Spirit

The church had its beginning in the Pentecostal Spirit. The birth, the growth and the expansion of the church has been in the power of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit constitutes the church, animates it and guides its course. Referring to St. Paul, *Lumen Gentium* says, “The Spirit dwells in the church and in the hearts of the faithful, as in a temple” (LG 4; cf. 1 Cor 3:16; 6:19). The Spirit constitutes individuals as Christians and the church as the community of faith, hope and love. Apart from the Spirit nobody is a Christian, and apart from the Spirit there is no church. The NT presents the church as a Spirit-filled community on a missionary pilgrimage. The church journeys as a fellowship of Christ in the power of the Spirit. This is our faith, which is true today just as it was in the NT times.



The Spirit empowers Christians, through manifold charisms, to participate in the life and work of the church. Jürgen Moltmann points out:

Every Charisma is both gift and Charge.... The Spirit descends upon the talents and potentialities which an individual possesses and activates them for the kingdom of God, for the liberation of the world. ... Through the Spirit the whole of life—a person’s profession, his political responsibilities, his relationships in the family, ...—is taken possession of by Christ and quickened for the liberation of the world. ... Charismatically, the whole people of God is involved religiously, politically and socially in the all-embracing

liberation movement of God.¹²

The vitality of the church depends on the charismatic gifts the Spirit showers on its members. But we are aware how ecclesiastical structures and personnel can either promote or discourage the charisms of the faithful, from the parochial level to the level of the universal church. It grieves the Spirit when the many and varied charisms that the Spirit generously bestows on people are not allowed to mature and bear fruits in the church. Fostering the varied charisms of Christ’s faithful is a sacred duty of the pastors in the church. Cardinal Suenens stated in the aula of the Vatican II:

Pastors must make efforts to hear out with open heart, and again and again enter into living dialogue with laymen who, each and every one of them, is enriched with his own charismatic gifts, and most often has a greater experience in the life of today’s world.... The complex of charismatic gifts and ministries cannot actually build up the church, or serve the church, except in the liberty of the sons of God, which after the example of St. Paul every pastor ought to protect—and also promote.¹³

Wherever in the church honest efforts are made to promote the charisms of Christ’s faithful and to bring them to fruition in the church’s life and mission, we can affirm the dynamic presence of the Spirit, who animates the church.

The Spirit guides the church not only through its pastors but also through its prophets. When prophets are silenced, the Spirit who is the source of prophecy is stifled. Paul cautions us against disregarding the gift of prophecy. “Do not stifle the Spirit or despise the gift of prophecy with contempt; test everything and hold onto what is good and shun every form of evil” (1Thess 5:19-22). Prophecy directs the church to repentance of hearts, to renewal of structures and to new experiences and adventures. A church that looks at whatever is different from the already

¹² Jürgen Moltmann, *The Future of Creation*, Tr. Margaret Kohl (London: SCM Press, 1979), 108.

¹³ Cited in Michael Novak, *The Open Church* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1964), 150-51.

known with suspicion and decides to suppress it without testing seeks its security not in the Spirit but in its structures and establishments.

The Spirit given to us is not of slavery but of freedom. The Spirit frees us from all sorts of fear—fear of one another, fear of the new, fear of changes. The Spirit helps us to open ourselves to new experiences, welcome one another and test one another's views. Such an environment is possible only when we trust in the Spirit's abiding and enlivening presence in the church and in its members. An environment of trust and freedom in the church is a clear sign of the living presence of the Spirit. "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom" (1 Cor 3:17). Reflecting on "The Indian Church of the Future" Kurien Kunnumparam writes:

The Indian Church of the future will be a Community of radical freedom. Freedom is one of the parameters of the Kingdom of God which Jesus proclaimed. ... One important aspect of freedom is the freedom to express one's views fearlessly and frankly. ... Today the most effective way of arriving at truth while respecting the freedom and dignity of the faithful is through honest dialogue. And the pastors of the Church have a duty to foster it. ... The Church of the people will be a participative community. All the faithful will have a say in the making of decisions in the Church.¹⁴

The Spirit liberates us from servile Submission to law equipping us to follow the law of the Spirit in freedom. The freedom the believers experience in the church is a measure of the freedom the church grants to the Spirit in it.

The freedom of the children is not an antinomian licence. It is a freedom for righteousness. Those who are guided by the Spirit are free. Those who are not, are slaves to self-indulgence and do not inherit the life of the kingdom of God (cf. Gal. 5:18-23). The Spirit dwells in us, makes us God's children. The Spirit infuses a new and fuller life into us today, liberating us from the slavery of self-

indulgence to the freedom of God's sons and daughters. Paul reminds the Christians at Corinth: "Do you not realise that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you and whom you received from God?" (1 Cor 6:19). We live by the Spirit; so we ought to walk by the Spirit. The Spirit leads us out of enslaved Service to law to a new Service, that of the Spirit (cf. Rom 7:6; 8:2). The law of die Spirit is love which does not enslave us but, on the contrary, empowers us.

The Spirit moves our freedom to noble acts of love, and we offer ourselves as a living sacrifice dedicated and acceptable to God (cf. Rom 12:1). The Spirit of God invites us and the church to be vehicles of freedom and justice. Guided by the Spirit, the church participates in the liberation of men and women from all that enslaves them. It participates in the struggles of the poor and oppressed for life and bread. The discerning church is able to recognise the movements within the church which affirm the freedom, equality and dignity of marginalized groups and classes as vehicles of the Spirit's action. Jürgen Moltmann says, "The community of Christ is a community of free and equal people (Gal. 3.28f.), who in the charismatic diversity of their gifts and vocations live with one another and for one another, and in the unity of the Holy Spirit together serve the kingdom of God in the world."¹⁵

Towards the Future

Even though Vatican II did not explicitly speak about clericalism in its documents, the bishops were aware of the reality of this evil entrenched in the pre-conciliar church and its theology and wanted to liberate the church from its stranglehold. The conciliar vision of the church offers the basics for a shift towards a de-clericalized church, though in a seminal form. Accordingly, our focus must shift from the church as a hierarchical institution to the more democratic concept of the church as the people of God. In this vision, the church is a sacrament of the reign of God in the world. It

¹⁴ Kurien Kunnumparam, *The Indian Church of the Future* (Mumbai: St. Pauls, 2007), 24, 25, 26.

¹⁵ Jürgen Moltmann, *The Source of Life: The Holy Spirit and the Theology of Life* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1997), 97.

is the privilege of the church to be at the Service of God's reign.

In order to avoid the pitfall of clericalism, it is important that priests understand, embrace and live out servant- leadership after the example of the Son of Man who came "not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mk 10:45). The church hierarchy must embrace the spirit of Jesus' servant-leadership and get rid of every image that is contrary to the servant-shepherd image of Christ. "Priesthood is not about your Status, but about serving people by proclaiming the good news and attending to their religious needs, and the commitment to and solidarity with the poor or oppressed."¹⁶ The church is a humble servant of the people of the world and so are its leaders. Kunnumpuram lays much emphasis on this gospel ideal of leadership and authority as Service and its special significance in the Indian society and culture:

Ours is a country in which the priestly caste has for centuries oppressed and dominated over the Dalits. It is also a country where the rich and the powerful have been exploiting the poor and making them totally powerless. As a prophetic community, the Indian church needs to raise her voice in Protest against the abuse of power and authority in the secular society. One way to make its protest credible is precisely to ensure that in the Church there is no place for power and domination over people. This calls for a return to the gospel ideal of leadership.¹⁷

What does such leadership style enjoin upon the bishop? *Pastores Gregis* has some indications:

This requires of the Bishop an attitude of Service marked by personal strength, apostolic courage and trusting abandonment to the inner working of the Spirit. He will therefore strive to adopt a lifestyle which imitates the *kenosis* of Christ, the poor and humble servant, so that the

¹⁶ Mary L. Gautier, Paul M. Perl, Stephen J. Fichter, *Same Call, Different Men. The Evolution of the Priesthood since Vatican II* (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2012), 196.

¹⁷ Kurien Kunnumpuram, *The Indian Church of the Future* (Muxnbai: St. Pauls, 2007), 29.

exercise of his pastoral ministry will be a consistent reflection of Jesus, the Servant of God, and will help him to become, like Jesus, close to everyone, from the greatest to the least. ...

...Unless the episcopal office is based on the witness of a holiness manifested in pastoral charity, humility and simplicity of life, it ends up being reduced to a solely functional role and, tragically, it loses credibility before the clergy and the faithful.¹⁸



Indian bishops commit to renewal of Church, society (Indian's bishop conference 2014)

What is spoken of the bishop here applies, *mutatis mutandis*, to the priests as well. As *Presbyterorum Ordinis* (PO) says, priests are consecrated, set apart, for the work of God. They are witnesses to Him and "dispensers of a life other than that of this earth" (no. 3). However, as the document says a little later, they are, "together with all Christ's faithful, disciples of the Lord, made sharers in his Kingdom by the grace of God's call. For priests are brothers among brothers and sisters with all those who have been reborn at the baptismal font. They are all members of one and the same Body of Christ, the building up of which is required of everyone" (no. 9).

The church must increasingly become the dialoguing church envisioned by the council. In the very introduction, *Gaudium et spes* expresses the desire of the church to enter into dialogue with the world on all problems faced by humanity (cf. *GS*, 3). The council promotes dialogue as an ordinary way of the church in its inner life and in its external relationships. The church cannot promote the spirit of

¹⁸ John Paul II, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Pastores Gregis* (16 October 2003), no. 11.

dialogue in the world for resolving conflicts, advancing common good, and strengthening human solidarity unless it promotes the same spirit in its inner life (cf. *GS*, 92). Within the church, the Council desires dialogue between the younger and older generations (cf. *AA*, 12), among lay- people (cf. *GS*, 43), between priests and people (cf. *AA*, 25), and between the bishop and the priests (cf. *CD*, 28). The priests must be willing to listen to the people whom they serve. The council recommends that young Christians and seminarians be adequately trained for dialogue (cf. *GE*, 1; *OT*, 19).

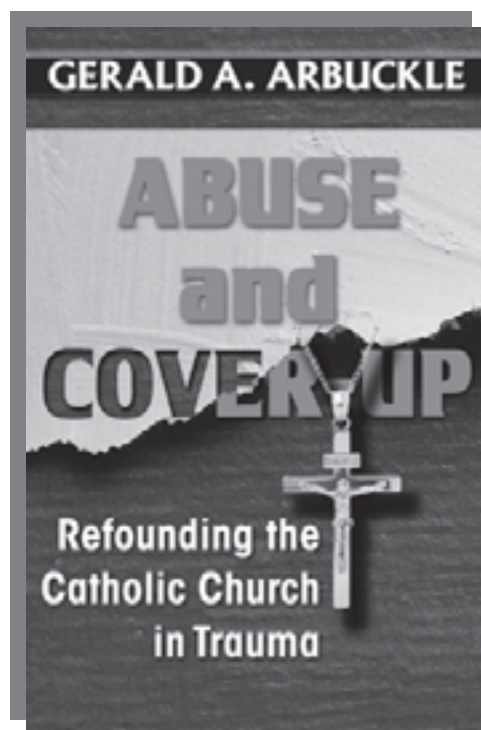
It is important that the laity claim its legitimate space in the ecclesial affairs. Myron Pereira suggests that bishops “share power and leadership with lay people.” He feels that “lay Catholics should be welcomed, not as an ad hoc response to the current crisis but as a fundamental structural support for a fully synodal Church.”¹⁹ He quotes the church historian Massimo Faggioli: “Our best path is to reclaim from the institutional Church those ecclesial spaces that belong to the people of God, and not to the hierarchy.”²⁰ The Indian church has to take strong and effective measures to become the people of God. The hierarchy is a charism of Service not a power structure in the church. The laity should be recognized for what they are, namely, the church. When the potentiality, resources and charismatic gifts of the laity are played down, the church cannot effectively announce the good news and anticipate the reign of God.

Conclusion

Clericalism is a deep-rooted sickness in the body of the church. It goes with and is reinforced by legalism, authoritarianism and centralization. This is true for the Indian church as well. The Indian church needs a radical conversion, a continual *metanoia*. Ordination does not exalt the ordained to a lordly Status or to a holier domain. The primary truth is that in the Lord’s church all

are equal. In the church we need a culture of free, frank and fearless dialogue in an environment of equality. The ecclesiastical processes must be fair, prompt and transparent. The protection of the weak and vulnerable members of the Christian community — children, adolescents, young adults, women, the poor — need priority. The victims of sex abuse by the clergy need compassionate and sympathetic understanding. The rights of the accused come only after that. Victimization of those who dissent — many a time, not always, theirs is the prophetic voice of today — must end. There must be in the church a willingness to listen to them. An invitation to trust and dialogue is more helpful than show-cause notices. Finally, the way forward is the way of the Master, which is the way of the beatitudes.

(Ref.: *Jnanadeepa*, Vol.24 N° 1 Jan- June 2020, pp.8-26.)



(Gift from ORBIS Books)

¹⁹ Myron J. Pereira SJ, “Rebalancing the Church’s monarchical structure. Will the laity manage to change older systems of governance to clean up sex abuse mess?” See footnote 1.

²⁰ Ibid..

Three Vatican “Pope-Saints”

Our beloved Pope Francis is well into his eighth year as leader of the universal Church. Elected on March 13, 2013, he was officially inaugurated on the solemnity of Saint Joseph on March 19. These past years (2013-2020) have been filled with intense activity. The most recently compiled Vatican statistics from Rome (March 19, 2018) illustrate Francis’ very many pastoral involvements.

The Vatican 2018 data noted that Francis had made 22 international trips, traveling 154,906 miles—equivalent to six journeys around the world. In addition, he has made 18 pastoral visits within Italy and 16 parish visits within his diocese of Rome. He has canonized 880 saints, created 61 cardinals, led 219 general audiences which include catechetical reflections on various themes: sacraments, Church, family, mercy, faith, Christian hope, and the Mass. He has prayed the Angelus and Regina Coeli with visitors 286 times.

In addition, as of 2018, Francis has issued 42 major documents, including the encyclicals *Lumen Fidei* and *Laudato Sí*, apostolic exhortations *Evangelii Gaudium*, *Amoris Laetitia*, and *Gaudete et Exsultate*, as well as the bull *Misericordiae Vultus*. He has called four synods of bishops and declared two special years on consecrated life and on mercy. He has attended or announced three World Youth Days (Brazil, Poland, and Panama). And this list of activities (extending from March 19, 2013-2018) needs to be augmented by adding his continuing pastoral engagements in recent months and years!

However, one remarkable “achievement” that was not included in the statistics issued by the Vatican Press Office is that Pope Francis has canonized three popes: John XXIII, Paul VI, and John Paul II. While this presentation does not delve into the merits of

popes canonizing other popes, it does highlight a unique contribution of Pope Francis. And, in the mind of this author, it is significant that all these three “pope-saints” were active participants in Vatican II. Thus, one could validly assert that Pope Francis has not simply canonized three “Vatican II Popes”; he has also canonized the legacy of the Second Vatican Council.



[\(https://yourhappycamper.wordpress.com/2014/04/27/modern-day-pope-saints-the-canonization/\)](https://yourhappycamper.wordpress.com/2014/04/27/modern-day-pope-saints-the-canonization/)

This piece now turns to presenting a “brief glimpse” or “quick snapshot” of these canonized saints; it highlights their missionary contribution and illustrates the admiration that Pope Francis has for each of these three new saints.

Saint John XXIII: Joyful Pope

Pope John XXIII, along with John Paul II, was declared a saint on April 27, 2014, Divine Mercy Sunday. Over the years of his short

pontificate (1958-1963) John XXIII became a beloved figure worldwide; he was popularly known as “Good Pope John.” He is remembered for the convocation of the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965); his annual feast day on October 11 is fixed to commemorate his opening of Vatican II on October 11, 1962. Each year as the Church celebrates this saint, we are asked to recall the pivotal role of Vatican II in the ongoing life and mission of the Church.

Angelo Giuseppe Roncalli, the fourth of thirteen children of peasant farmers, was born in the village of Sotto il Monte in Northern Italy on November 25, 1881. He entered the seminary as a young boy. Significantly, at the tender age of fifteen he began writing his spiritual diary, which was published as *Journal of a Soul* shortly after his death. Undoubtedly, Pope John’s aim in life was to be a holy priest. One could validly say that he always tried to be a saint—and he made it!

Papal Contributions

Beginning his pontificate at age seventy-seven on October 28, 1958, Angelo Roncalli brought a whole new pastoral and personal style to the papacy. Describing the person and contribution of John XXIII during his visit to Bergamo on June 3, 2013 (50th anniversary of John’s death), Pope Francis noted that John XXIII’s life is a lesson in how obedience and trust in God lead to interior peace.

Pope Francis said: “The whole world recognized Pope John as a pastor and father, a pastor because he was a father.... It is so beautiful to find a priest, a good priest, filled with goodness.” He was “an effective weaver of relationships and a solid champion of unity, both in the ecclesiastical community and outside it.” He was always “open to dialogue with the Christians of other churches, with representatives of the Jewish and Muslim worlds and with many other people of good will.”

Pope Francis said that John XXIII’s decision to convoke Vatican II was the result of a

“prophetic intuition” based on his “love for the Church’s traditions and his awareness of the constant need for renewal.” The Council and Pope John’s “offering of his life for its success” Francis said, are “a bright beacon for the journey that lies ahead.... Let yourselves be guided by the Holy Spirit. Do not be afraid to take risks, just as he was not afraid.”

Genuine Spirituality

John XXIII’s outlook is, in fact, a spirituality that he communicated to the world. He took the call to holiness seriously throughout his entire life. His profound trust was evident in his simplicity, patience, gentleness and affability, qualities manifested in all his varied writings.

John XXIII could be very forceful in asserting his conviction that the Christian faith should result in deep, joyful hope. In his opening speech to the Second Vatican Council he said: “We feel we must disagree with those prophets of gloom who are always forecasting disaster, as though the end of the world were at hand” (quoted by Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium* 84). He believed that divine providence was renewing humanity and, through a perceptive reading of the “signs of the times” (cf. EG 14, 51, 108), one could discern that by God’s designs a new order of human relations was emerging in the contemporary world.

Daily Decalogue of John XXIII

In his homily on October 11, 2006 commemorating the opening of Vatican II, Cardinal Bertone quoted what is widely known as the “Daily Decalogue of Pope John XXIII.” The following are some excerpts:

(1) Only for today, I will seek to live the livelong day positively without wishing to solve the problems of my life all at once;

(2) Only for today ... I will not criticize anyone; I will not claim to improve or discipline anyone except myself;

(3) Only for today, I will be happy in the certainty that I was created to be happy, not only in the other world but also in this one;

(4) Only for today, I will adapt to circumstances, without requiring all

circumstances to be adapted to my own wishes; (5) Only for today, I will devote ten minutes of my time to some good reading....”

Pope John’s Deca-logue continues: (6) Only for today, I will do one good deed and not tell anyone about it; (7) Only for today, I will do at least one thing I do not like doing; and if my feelings are hurt, I will make sure that no one notices; (8) Only for today, I will make a plan for myself; I may not follow it to the letter, but I will make it.... (9) Only for today, I will firmly believe, despite appearances, that the good Providence of God cares for me...; and (10) Only for today, I will have no fears. In particular, I will not be afraid to enjoy what is beautiful and to believe in goodness....” We marvel at John XXIII’s wisdom and seek to put it into practice—each and every day!

Saint John XXIII, a holy man with a great heart, radiated an infectious optimism and joy. Radically open to the Holy Spirit, he certainly helped renew the Church, seeking to transform us all into a truly joyful community of Jesus’ missionary-disciples!

Saint Paul VI: Pope of Evangelization

On World Mission Sunday in 2014, Pope Paul VI (1963-1978) was beatified in Rome. The choice of the occasion was significant! First, on Mission Sunday, the Church focuses on her missionary vocation and identity. And, when elected, the new pope specifically chose the name “Paul” because he saw himself preaching the Gospel to the whole world, following Saint Paul’s missionary dynamism. Secondly, the date marked the close of a special Synod of Bishops on the family; it was Paul VI who established the synod of bishops in 1965 to assist the Church in both reading and interpreting the signs of the times. The canonization of Paul VI was celebrated on October 14, 2018 at the close of the Synod of Bishops that was devoted to the youth and vocations. Indeed, the parallels between the events of 2014 and 2018 are quite striking!

Missionary Initiatives.

Aside from expressing his “core identity” with the chosen name “Paul,” Giovanni

Montini accomplished much to bring the Gospel message to contemporary humanity. Sharing John XXIII’s vision of Church renewal, Paul successfully concluded Vatican II and systematically implemented its missionary vision. In addition, Paul VI presented his “dialogical” vision of the Church in his first encyclical *Ecclesiam Suam* (1964). He established the Vatican office, now known as the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, on Pentecost Sunday 1964.



(<http://pixabay.com>)

Paul, the missionary pope, initiated papal travels, literally covering the globe. His most extensive missionary journey in November-December 1970 brought him to Asia with visits to eight countries. While in Manila he met with 180 Asian bishops, a pivotal event in the foundation of the Federation of Asian Bishops’ Conferences. In addition, Paul VI vigorously promoted the growth of authentic, inculturated, local churches.

Evangelii Nuntiandi

Pope Paul will always be remembered for his 1975 apostolic exhortation, *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (EN), *Evangelization in the Modern World*. This was the first papal document to flow from a synod (the 1974 world synod focused on the theme of evangelization). This beautiful document, as fresh today as when it was written, asserts that: (1) evangelization is the vocation proper to the Church; (2) the Church’s mission continues the mission of Jesus; (3) evangelization is a multi-faceted reality; and, (4) evangelization includes a commitment to full human development and social justice.

Paul VI asserted: “We wish to confirm once more that the task of evangelizing all people constitutes the essential mission of the Church....Evangelizing is in fact the grace and vocation proper to the Church, her deepest identity. She exists in order to evangelize” (EN 14). “For the Church, evangelizing means bringing the Good News into all strata of humanity” (EN 18). EN became the *magna carta* for Catholic evangelization in the last quarter of the second millennium of Christianity. Without doubt, EN is one of the most important ecclesial documents of the post-Vatican II era. EN boldly addresses the topic of evangelization in the modern world.

Pope Francis’ Affirmation

Evangelii Nuntiandi is the most quoted document in Pope Francis’ 2013 apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*; it is quoted on thirteen different occasions. One finds that Pope Francis, beginning early in his pontificate, regularly quotes and praises EN. In 2013 Francis said that EN includes words that “are as timely as if they had been written yesterday” (May 17); he called EN “a very full text that has lost nothing of its timeliness” (June 13). As Francis described evangelization, he asserted that EN was “that basic point of reference which remains relevant” (July 27). The pope went even so far (June 22) as to describe EN as “to my mind the greatest pastoral document that has ever been written to this day.”

Pope Francis reiterated his great admiration for Paul VI and EN on June 16, 2014 when he opened the pastoral convention for the Diocese of Rome. In reference to EN, Francis stated: “Still to this day it is the most important post-Conciliar pastoral document, which hasn’t been surpassed. We should always go back to it.” Undoubtedly, EN is the fertile soil from which Francis drew much as he authored his *Evangelii Gaudium* (as well as using other material from Pope Paul VI). Francis appreciates Paul VI, because he affirms that the testimony of Paul VI “feeds us the flame of love for Christ, love for the Church, and gives us the momentum to announce the

Gospel to the people of today, with mercy, patience, courage, and joy” (June 22).

Parallel Insights

Popes Paul VI and Francis share several common perspectives. “Let us preserve the delightful and comforting joy of evangelizing” (EN 80); “let us not allow ourselves to be robbed of the joy of evangelization” (EG 83). All Christians are challenged to be “evangelized evangelizers” (cf. EN 15) who are truly “missionary disciples” (EG 120); their spirituality must reflect “the fervor of the saints” (EN 80) and emerge from “a renewed personal encounter with Jesus Christ” (EG 3). Popes Paul and Francis are truly “kindred spirits”—afire with the fire of evangelization. We try to catch the same “Gospel Fire”!

Saint John Paul II: Global Missionary Pope

The Catholic Church worldwide rejoiced as Pope John Paul II was beatified by Pope Benedict XVI on May 1, 2011 and then canonized by Pope Francis on April 27, 2014 in Saint Peter’s Square in Rome. Catholic and secular media covered the events from a wide variety of perspectives, emphasizing the many and diverse contributions of this 264th pope of the Catholic Church whose pontificate extended over 26 years (1978-2005).

Startling Statistics

When John Paul II died on April 2, 2005 the Reuters News fact sheet noted some remarkable statistics regarding his pontificate. He traveled a total of 775,231 miles around the world; this is 3.24 times the distance from the earth to the moon. John Paul II read aloud, before audiences in the millions, more than 20,000 addresses. As pope he issued more than 100 major documents, including 14 encyclicals, 45 apostolic letters, 14 apostolic exhortations, and 11 apostolic constitutions. John Paul II beatified 1,338 and canonized 482 people, more than all of his predecessors in the last four centuries combined.

Undoubtedly, one of the major emphases of John Paul II was his focus on the renewal of the Church in her missionary identity and commitment. When his mission encyclical *Redemptoris Missio* (Mission of the Redeemer: RM) was published on December 7, 1990 [25th anniversary of the mission document of Vatican II, *Ad Gentes*] Cardinal Daneels of Brussels wrote: “this document best exemplifies who this pope is; it is the fruit of his mission in every continent. There is nothing better to define his pontificate than to say: he is a missionary pope.”

Commitment to Missionary Evangelization

In RM (1) the pope described his missionary commitment: “From the beginning of my Pontificate I have chosen to travel to the ends of the earth in order to show this missionary concern. My direct contact with peoples who do not know Christ has convinced me even more of the *urgency of missionary activity*....” John Paul II echoed his explicit pastoral choice in his Message for World Mission Sunday in 1981: “My trips to Latin America, Asia and Africa have an eminently missionary purpose.” Everywhere he went John Paul II emphasized a central point: “I wish to invite the Church to *renew her missionary commitment*” (RM 2).



<https://dioscg.org/>

The pope was concerned that “missionary activity specifically directed ‘to the nations’ (*ad gentes*) appears to be waning.... For in the Church’s history, missionary drive has always been a sign of vitality, just as its lessening is a sign of a crisis on faith” (RM 2). John Paul II made the faith-mission link very explicit when he noted: “*Mission is an issue of faith*, an

accurate indicator of our faith in Christ and his love for us” (RM 11).

Saint John Paul II did everything in his power to renew mission, because he continually asserted that mission is at the heart of the Church: “the Church here on earth is missionary by her very nature” (AG 2). He was deeply convinced that “missionary activity renews the Church, revitalizes faith and Christian identity, and offers fresh enthusiasm and new incentive. *Faith is strengthened when it is given to others!*” (RM 2). Pope Francis said of John Paul II: “I think of him as ‘the great missionary of the Church’,” because he was “a Man who proclaimed the Gospel everywhere.”

Missionary and Saint

The choices of the dates for the beatification (May 1, 2011) and canonization (April 27, 2014) were certainly not accidental; both are the Feast of Divine Mercy. John Paul II had a deep commitment to this devotion as it was propagated by Sister Faustina Kowalska, a fellow Pole. One can also note the intimate link with mission. Is not missionary evangelization all about proclaiming God’s abundant love, compassion, and mercy? Mission is grounded in being so filled with God’s loving mercy that one wishes to proclaim it to the world. Mission makes God’s merciful love contagious.

One might assert that for his missionary commitment and insights John Paul II “deserved” to be declared a saint! However, the canonization process is not quite that simple! Yet, the Church celebrates the life of this saint, because she has been gifted with an extraordinary apostle of Jesus Christ, who used *every opportunity* to spread the message and person of Jesus. We rejoice to pray: Saint John Paul II, renew our missionary hearts as members of Christ’s Church!



Second Vatican Council
(<https://dioscg.org>)

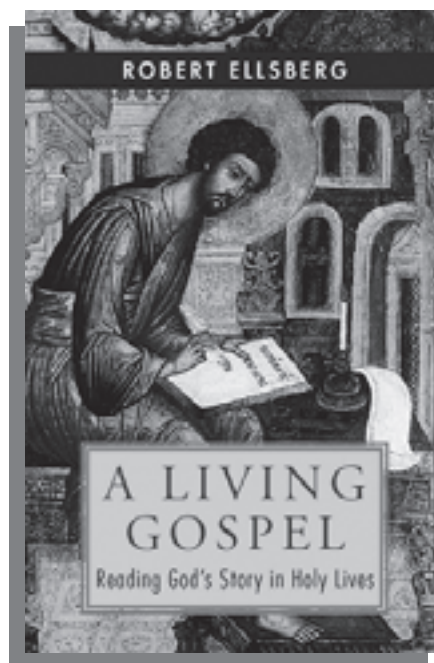
Living in a Remarkable Era

As Catholics today we are truly privileged to live in a fascinating time of the Church's history. We recall that it is precisely six decades ago (1958-2018) that Saint John XXIII was elected pope (October 28, 1958). In less than 100 days after his election, he announced the Second Vatican Council on January 25, 1959, the feast of the conversion of Saint Paul. Certainly, the Council, considered by many as the most significant Church event since the Council of Trent in the 1500s, opened an age of marvelous transformation in the Church—all guided by the action of the Holy Spirit. In addition, this

“Vatican II Era” has been characterized by several holy popes: Saints John XXIII, Paul VI, and John Paul II.

How did these saints regard Vatican II? John XXIII said that he was offering “to the world the gift of a new Ecumenical Council” and prayed to the Holy Spirit: “Renew your wonders in our time, as though for a New Pentecost.” Paul VI said: “One may say that the Council leaves itself as a legacy to the Church that held it.” He asserted: “The first need of the Church is to always live Pentecost.” John Paul II noted: “The Second Vatican Ecumenical Council has been a gift of the Spirit to his Church.” He affirmed: “The Conciliar documents ... have not lost their value nor their brilliance.... In the Council we have received a sure compass to guide us.”

Our hearts overflow with gratitude for God's abundant blessings, showered upon the contemporary Church through two very special gifts: Vatican II itself and the three “pope-saints” of the Council. Indeed, the Spirit has renewed the Church in our times; we have experienced a “New Pentecost”!



(Gift from ORBIS Books)

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Antes y más allá de los roles sociales, ¿qué puede aportar la identidad femenina a la vida y articulación de la iglesia?

Bueno, creo que la identidad femenina aporta una mirada nueva. Aunque sólo fuera esto ya sería diferente. Las mujeres tenemos otra concepción del mundo porque estamos situadas en otros lugares que no importan. Son lugares que tienen que ver con el servicio. Lugares que tienen que ver con el cuidado de la vida, su sostenimiento y su protección. Aspectos que normalmente no aparecen en los medios de comunicación o las redes sociales.

Vista desde la perspectiva de la democracia ya universalmente reconocida, ¿qué pensar de la actual estructuración vertical y patriarcal de la iglesia?

La actual estructura de la iglesia es una estructura preconiliar. El concilio quiso que fuéramos más sinodales, más democráticos.

Por eso es necesario replantearse cómo son nuestras comunidades locales porque la práctica comunitaria es vital para el cambio estructural. Las mujeres estamos acostumbradas a trabajar juntas, pues el tipo de trabajos y labores que se nos otorgan nos obliga ello. La actual estructura de la iglesia debe cambiar, debe cambiar si realmente queremos una iglesia preparada para el siglo XXI. No puede prescindir de las mujeres pues son la mitad de la sociedad. ¡Y el 80% de la propia iglesia! Pensar en las mujeres significaría repensar una estructura diferente, con otras prioridades y relaciones. Las teólogas españolas nos esforzamos en ofrecer nuevas visiones sobre las relaciones entre cristianos y cristianas y crear nuevas propuestas de cómo crear una práctica eclesial diferente. Es importante para nosotras el lenguaje, pues en él se puede producir una visibilidad o una invisibilidad de las mujeres. Pero además del lenguaje teológico y eclesial, es importante la forma de mirarnos, es decir, cuando yo, varón, célibe, o casado, da igual, miro a una mujer ¿qué es lo que veo? ¿Una madre, una cuidadora, un peligro? O una compañera en el camino de Jesucristo... ahí está la cuestión.

Uno de los problemas más graves que afronta actualmente la iglesia es la pederastia, que podría estar relacionada con el celibato eclesiástico, hoy muy cuestionado? Como teóloga ¿qué valoración harías a esta antigua normativa y praxis de la Iglesia Católica?

Como teóloga creo que el celibato eclesiástico es una norma que sirvió para el tiempo en que se impuso en la Edad Media. Fue necesaria para organizar y favorecer la formación del clero en ese momento. Una decisión muy útil. Hoy en día las cosas han cambiado mucho. Nuestra cultura es diferente y entendemos la vida con otros parámetros. Es necesario preguntarse si realmente todos los vocacionados deben asumir

la promesa del celibato. Considero que la vocación sacerdotal no es incompatible con la vocación matrimonial. Son aspectos diferentes de la persona y servicios diferentes. Actualmente, la promesa del celibato está vinculada a un modelo de sacerdocio determinado, concebido como sacerdocio en soledad, apartado del resto de la comunidad. Quizá revisando esta comprensión del sacerdocio podríamos encontrar otras propuestas donde el celibato pudiera tener otro sentido para el sacerdocio. No creo, sin embargo que esta problemática esté relacionada con la pederastia en la Iglesia. El pederasta no actúa porque se le obligue a ser célibe, sino porque no tiene respeto a la vida del otro.

Una actividad importante en la iglesia es la liturgia. Vista desde las mujeres, ¿qué transformaciones importantes consideras que habría que acometer en ella, en la forma y en el fondo, para que resulte inclusiva?

La liturgia es una de las cuestiones en iglesia que menos se ha reformado. Creo que no depende de que la mirada de las mujeres puede cambiarla, sino que depende de cómo seamos mujeres y hombres, capaces de adecuarla y transformarla a la cultura del siglo xxi. La liturgia está a años luz de ser comprendida como símbolo por los creyentes, incluso por los que tienen un poco de idea de lo que celebramos. En la liturgia hay elementos fundamentales: que deben ser revisados. El primero, la participación y la forma de desarrollar el ritmo litúrgico. Por otro lado, el lenguaje. Un lenguaje que no se entienda y no sea comprensible para los fieles, no favorece una celebración consciente y significativa. Por último, las imágenes. Cuando el arte, la música y el ritmo de la celebración no son cercanos a la persona es imposible que la liturgia sea realmente vivida, en profundidad. Las mujeres cristianas llevamos: tiempo pidiendo una transformación de la liturgia: una liturgia más participativa, más comprensible. Y que llegue más a la sensibilidad espiritual de cada uno.

Considero que la vocación sacerdotal no es incompatible con la vocación matrimonial. Son aspectos diferentes de la persona y

servicios diferentes.

En la sociedad dividida y diversa en que vivimos, con masas crecientes de pobres sin hogar y sin alimento, caravanas de inmigrantes y refugiados, ¿es suficiente la caridad y los cuidados o la iglesia necesita hacer algo más y distinto?

Creo que el trabajo de la iglesia en el ámbito de la pastoral social es un trabajo imprescindible para las sociedades de hoy. Con él estamos mostrando que la iglesia tiene un gran potencial de transformación social. Por eso, hay que cuidar las tareas que tienen que ver con el apostolado y con la misión, cuidar a las personas que se dedican a ello y formarlas convenientemente. Favorecer, además, espacios donde la conciencia cristiana de acompañamiento del que sufre se pueda compartir con otras personas no creyentes y generar una sensibilidad social de justicia y de solidaridad. En este trabajo, las mujeres tienen mucho que decir pues son las que han asumido preferentemente el trabajo de los cuidados de otras personas. Si escucháramos su voz probablemente el trabajo solidario y de justicia sería mucho más rico y más creativo. Llegaríamos a lugares que actualmente no son lugares de misión. Hay mujeres cristianas que trabajan en labores pastorales de frontera, como la prostitución o la atención a migrantes... Estas tareas son propias del carácter inclusivo de Jesús. Debemos cuidarlas y potenciarlas, ya que nuestro mundo está lleno de fronteras. Y el cristiano debe ser un creyente de frontera.



Caravans of Immigrants
(<https://diosc.org>)

Hablando de los cuidados, asumidos fundamentalmente por las mujeres se impone la pregunta por el diaconado, Incluso por el sacerdocio de las mujeres, ¿se ha avanzado algo en esta línea de la Iglesia Católica?

Creo que se va avanzando, pero muy lentamente. El hecho de que en este pontificado se esté exhortando a las diócesis para que haya mujeres en los órganos de gobierno y decisión de las mismas es un dato novedoso. Sin embargo, creo que no es suficiente. Creo que hay que seguir avanzando en el diálogo y en la generación de propuestas que se lleven a la práctica de verdad. No sirve sólo con hacer comisiones. La comunidad cristiana está esperando una respuesta al tema de la participación de las mujeres, que en general se ve como evidente. La participación de las mujeres no puede ser siempre en el servicio, pues tienen dones diferentes y muchas de ellas tienen mucha capacidad de liderazgo. Probablemente, si las mujeres estuvieran plenamente integradas en la organización de la iglesia no sólo a nivel sacramental sino también a nivel ejecutivo, esta organización sería diferente. Los últimos estudios históricos de los primeros siglos nos reafirman en que no hay justificaciones para impedir el diaconado femenino. Todas y todos estamos esperando a que Francisco se pronuncie sobre esto. Sería una puerta abierta al diálogo hacia otro tipo de comunidad eclesial.



(<https://dioscg.org>)

En cuanto al sacerdocio, quizá es más complicado. Es necesaria una revisión previa del Sacramento y de cómo se asume la

vocación sacerdotal en la actualidad. En muchas ocasiones encontramos mujeres que se sienten vocacionadas para el sacerdocio. Sin embargo, no querrían vivir un sacerdocio como el que actualmente existe, en soledad y sin contar con la comunidad, tomando decisiones de forma unilateral y desenraizadas del resto de los creyentes. Por tanto, presencia de las mujeres y revisiones eclesiales van de la mano.

Vivo el pontificado de Francisco y sus propuestas con alegría, pero necesitaríamos más audacia, algo más de provocación.

Teniendo en cuenta los gestos evangélicos del papa Francisco y también su postura sobre la mujer, el colectivo LGTBI Y el celibato eclesiástico, ¿qué imagen te está dejando este pontificado?

Vivo el pontificado de Francisco y sus propuestas con alegría. Creo que su tiempo es un tiempo de oportunidad, donde podemos hablar y ser escuchados. Quisiera que los cambios fueran más rápidos, pero entiendo que en una estructura tan compleja, con tantas personas y con una larga tradición a sus espaldas, es difícil hacer cambios drásticos. Quizá necesitaríamos algo más de audacia, algo más de provocación, algo más de espacio para decisiones que no dependan directamente de Francisco sino de los obispos, de los agentes intermedios, para configurar las iglesias locales. En estos ambientes es fundamental que mujeres y hombres creyentes nos situemos en posición de diálogo; que hablemos, que no nos calleemos, y no sólo denunciemos, sino que también propongamos nuevas ideas para ser y hacer comunidad. Las crisis son siempre el inicio de algo nuevo. Ahora mismo vivimos una crisis profunda en la iglesia: vivámosla, o al menos yo la vivo, como un tiempo de oportunidad. No todo depende de Francisco, depende también de la capacidad que tengamos de influir y transformar lo pequeño para que lo grande se sienta obligado a seguir la estela. Necesitamos aprender hacer política eclesiástica. Con esto quiero decir que Francisco necesita interlocutores que le propongan y le sitúen en

la brecha. Por ejemplo, las superiores de las congregaciones religiosas de Estados Unidos están presionando constantemente para que Francisco se posicione en determinados temas que afectan a la comunidad cristiana. No se trata de enfrentamiento, se trata de provocar el diálogo y la acción.

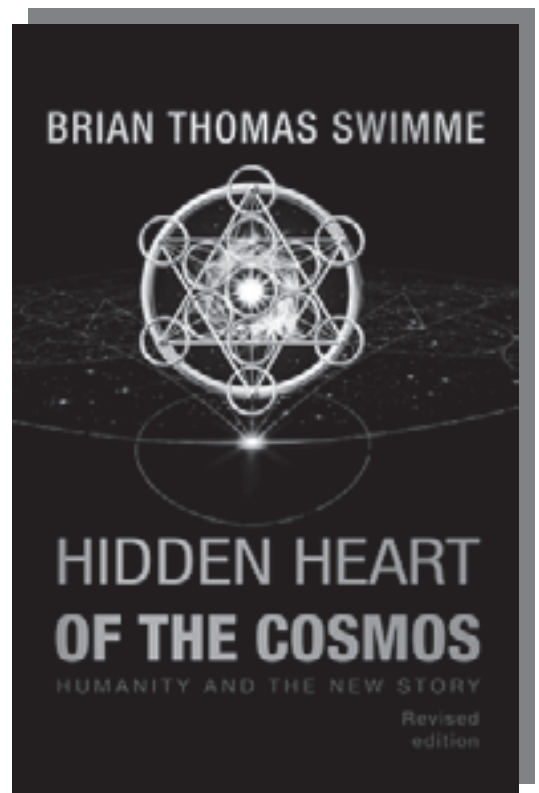
Si estuviera en tu mano, ¿qué transformaciones harías en la iglesia actual española para acercarla al colectivo que Jesús soñaba como continuador del Reino?

Creo que lo primero que haría sería simplificar estructura eclesial de las diócesis. Hay una gran cantidad de estructuras, consejos o comisiones que actualmente no necesitamos. También reorganizaría el espacio de las diócesis, reduciendo cantidad de parroquias para concentrar a los en yentes con un enfoque diferente: más desde pertenencia y menos desde lo territorial. Favorecería el trabajo en red de las parroquias mucho más de lo que se hace actualmente en las Vicarías. También liberaría personas no de forma voluntaria sino con trabajos estables que pudieran animar a la comunidad cristiana. Creo que este trabajo ha de llevarse a cabo no sólo por los sacerdotes sino también por laicos que queden incorporados a esa estructura. Evidentemente, con incorporación de las mujeres. Crearía un consejo de diócesis donde hombres y mujeres participaran de la misma manera. Y no sólo participaran, sino que tomaran; decisiones teniendo el mismo peso en la decisión. También diseñaría planes estratégicos de formación para sacerdotes, laicos y religiosos en conjunto, para que el clero y las instituciones religiosas, pudieran conocer a través de la empatía y de experiencia propia cómo es la vida de las comunidades. Se me ocurren muchas cosas más: por ejemplo, hacer las asambleas diocesanas cada cierto tiempo lideradas por los laicos y laicas o tener planes específicos para formación de adultos y de jóvenes, sin que estos planes dependieran solo del clero sino que hubiera un compromiso y una colaboración por parte de religiosos y laicos también, hombres y mujeres. Equilibraría la presencia de clero, religiosos/as y laicos/as en

los órganos diocesanos, contaría con los proyectos y propuestas de muchas órdenes religiosas femeninas a las que nadie hace caso y que son tremendamente audaces. En definitiva, iría a lo se cilio, pues nos sobran muchas capas en esta Iglesia de muchos siglos.

(Ref.: Exodo, N° 147 Febrero 2019, pp. 13 – 17)

(An English translation of this article can be found on the SEDOS Website)



(Gift from ORBIS BOOKS)

“Allarga Lo Spazio Della Tua Tenda” (Is 54,2)

Buone Pratiche di Dialogo fra Consacrati in Albania

Una speranza in fiore. La sponda orientale del mare Adriatico non è abbastanza conosciuta dagli italiani, se non per motivi di turismo, caccia e gioco d'azzardo. Stupende cattedrali romaniche si trovano anche da quella parte, come, ad esempio, a Cattaro o a Zara. Oggi i consacrati possono vantare una presenza di tutto rispetto nella terra delle Aquile. In Albania, dopo la caduta del regime comunista, si è verificata una lenta ripresa di



(<http://www.pixabay.com>)

ogni attività. Anche la speranza è rifiorita nelle comunità religiose, tornate finalmente a godere la piena libertà. Quel che, tuttavia, resta da curare sono le ferite dell'anima, laddove il comunismo ha voluto e saputo sradicare dai cuori ogni traccia di religiosità. Le famiglie cattoliche si sono salvate per la fede trasmessa attraverso la recita del rosario. Le macerie di chiese e santuari distrutti venivano toccate, strofinate di notte, di nascosto, dai genitori che vi accompagnavano i loro bambini.

E si è verificato quello che anche altrove si è visto. Da ceneri mai completamente spente, come sotto i tizzoni rimasti accesi, ha ripreso vita il fuoco della pratica religiosa. Il concilio Vaticano II non sembra del tutto recepitò, ma

la fede profonda ha prodotto anche una schiera di martiri, in tutto trentotto, beatificati il 5 novembre 2016, nella cattedrale di Scutari. Tutti i fedeli del posto la chiamano “kisha e madhë”, la chiesa grande, già trasformata dal regime in palazzetto dello sport.

Insieme per camminare. Per certi versi oggi in Albania si è più avanti dell'Italia. Difatti, i consacrati e le consacrate sono riuniti a formare una sola grande Associazione, chiamata KSHEL. È vero che nella nostra Penisola siamo di fronte a due diverse realtà, CISM e USMI, che rappresentano gli orizzonti di vita consacrata più ampi nel mondo, per il numero di persone che ne fanno parte. Ma l'unità di intenti, d'operazioni e appuntamenti fa sentire a tutti i consacrati in Albania la bellezza di un cammino da realizzare insieme.

A maggio di ogni anno si vive un momento assembleare, presso l'Università Cattolica “Nostra Signora del Buon Consiglio”, nel cuore di Tirana, la capitale. Quel necessario progetto di formazione accademica di tipo cristiano, inizialmente affidato dalla Compagnia di Gesù a P. Rodolfo Bozzi, barese ora deceduto, è stato poi realizzato dai Concezionisti del Beato P. Monti da Saranno. Un campus universitario che si è dotato di varie facoltà nel settore medico-sanitario, prevedendo là anche la costruzione di un grande ospedale cittadino.

Dialogo e annuncio. A fine ottobre 2017 sono stati scelti il nuovo Presidente e vice-Presidente del KSHEL, rispettivamente P. Artan Seli, salvatoriano albanese, formatosi in Polonia, e suor Edvige Carocari, salesiana

italiana, che vive a Scutari. Questo si è reso necessario per l'elezione di tre nuovi vescovi, risalente al 15 giugno. Uno di loro, già Presidente, P. Giovanni Peragine, barnabita pugliese, parroco a Milot, nell'arcidiocesi di Tirana-Durazzo, è stato scelto come nuovo Amministratore apostolico dell'Albania meridionale, consacrato vescovo il 7 settembre a Lushnjë. In pratica è stato trapiantato in un terreno da arare e dissodare, un campo adattissimo al primo annuncio, in cui è scarsa la risposta alla celebrazione classica e significativo il *dialogo* con i fedeli di tradizione musulmana e ortodossa, insieme all'*annuncio* della novità e della gioia cristiane.

La situazione nel Sud, in particolare a Lushnjë. Trovandosi grandi centri a Sud, presi in coppia, si considerano zone pastorali quelle di Saranda-Delvinë, Korça-Bilisht, Berat-Kuçovë, ecc. Complessivamente vivono là 9 sacerdoti, di cui 3 *fidei donum*, e alcune Congregazioni femminili. Dal villaggio di Bubullimë 6-7 anni fa sono andate via le suore.

È presente la Piccola Famiglia dell'Assunta di Don Giuseppe Dossetti. A Uznova lavorano questi religiosi, un sacerdote e cinque sorelle, che seguono le attività in Berat e Kuçovë. Hanno la possibilità di adottare minori, come fossero affidati *ad personam*. Si tratta di bambini che vivono con loro, disabili, e perciò hanno una certa riuscita nell'evangelizzazione.

Lushnjë ha 58 mila abitanti, forma un distretto con due municipalità e 14 diversi Comuni, per un totale di 144.350 persone. Nel centro principale vi sono circa 26 famiglie cattoliche, altre 24 nel circondario, dunque una cinquantina di nuclei in tutto, ovvero circa 300 cattolici battezzati. Ci sarebbero anche varie donne di tradizione cattolica, sposate con uomini di tradizione musulmana o ortodossa, quasi sempre impediti di prendere parte alla vita della comunità.

A Lushnjë vive P. Ilir, sacerdote ortodosso coadiuvato da un confratello più giovane. Nei villaggi intorno sono sparsi una dozzina di

preti ortodossi. A settembre 2017 è stato pubblicato il primo libro in italiano di S.E. Anastasios, teologo, ex missionario in Africa, Arcivescovo ortodosso di Tirana, Durazzo e di tutta l'Albania. Ci sono anche gli evangelici con Alberto, animatore della comunità. Vi sono rapporti buoni coi *bektashim* e con i capi musulmani più anziani, un po' meno coi nuovi responsabili giovani.

Il primo Nunzio apostolico in Albania dopo la fine del regime, Mons. Ivan Dias, pensò di seminare nel Sud una serie di comunità: religiose, sacerdoti, fedeli. Per il fenomeno dell'urbanizzazione molti battezzati si sono allontanati da Lushnjë, andando a vivere a Tirana e Durazzo, o si sono trasferiti per l'emigrazione in Italia, Germania e Grecia. I fedeli di Lushnjë chiamavano Caritas l'insieme delle persone e delle opere della Chiesa cattolica. Oggi gli aiuti materiali sono molto diminuiti e si distribuiscono soltanto in casi di reale necessità.

Nel 1994 arrivarono là i Padri Gaetanini (Pia Società San Gaetano), giovane Congregazione nata nel 1961 per impulso del Ven.le Don Ottorino Zanon (1915-1972), vicentino, composta di preti e diaconi per il ministero pastorale in diocesi particolarmente bisognose. Tra le suore che collaborano col Parroco, Don Giuseppe Sgarbossa, vi sono quelle di Plugu, che hanno aperto un centro di accoglienza per minori, poiché in tutto il territorio di Lushnjë e Fier non vi era nessuna struttura del genere.

Altre suore (della Divina Volontà) furono le prime a giungere a Lushnjë nel 1994, trascinandosi dietro gli Alpini di Bassano del Grappa. Essi furono appunto coinvolti e invitati da una suora, che vide la situazione in cui versava l'ospedale civile negli anni Novanta e li sensibilizzò. Da molto tempo gli Alpini sono andati via e le suore sono diventate anziane.

Religiosi vescovi. Per molti anni Mons. Peragine ha animato con servizio generoso la realtà dei consacrati uomini e donne di Albania, composita nella provenienza geografica, spesso giovane in età. Del resto

siamo in una terra ove si registra la più bassa età media degli abitanti in riferimento al resto d'Europa. L'Albania appare adatta per creare, progettare, sognare. Un chiaro e stimolante orizzonte, sul quale si possono disegnare molti progetti concreti da realizzare. In Italia, per certi versi, purtroppo, i consacrati sono più portati a ricordare o a riempire le falle che si vengono ad aprire.

Altri religiosi si trovano impegnati a guidare le Chiese locali, come Mons. Angelo Massafra, della Provincia dell'Assunta dei Frati Minori di Lecce, Arcivescovo Metropolitano di Scutari-Pult. O anche Mons. Ottavio Vitale, rogazionista, vescovo di Lezhë, nel nord della nazione. Mons. Cristoforo Palmieri, vincenziano, a settembre 2017 ha lasciato la diocesi di Rreshën a motivo dell'età, tornando a vivere a Lecce città, nella parrocchia di S. Maria dell'Idria.

I frati minori albanesi hanno così tanto lavorato da essere identificati con gli stessi sacerdoti, pastori nelle comunità, specie del nord. Nell'entroterra, per qualche verso, non si è riusciti del tutto a far passare l'idea che i sacerdoti generalmente non vestono un saio, ma invece fanno parte di un presbiterio animato dal Vescovo.

I capofila dei trentotto Beati Martiri è un francescano, Mons. Vinçenc Prenushi, Arcivescovo di Durazzo, perseguitato dai comunisti e rinchiuso in un manicomio, per metterne alla prova la tempra. Nel gruppo dei Beati, eliminati dal 1945 al 1974, sono con lui altri sette frati minori, padri gesuiti, sacerdoti diocesani, un seminarista, alcuni laici e Marije Tuci, postulante delle suore stigmatine. Dunque, un meraviglioso, autentico spaccato di Chiesa con tutte le vocazioni, capaci di testimoniare col sangue la vitalità della Parola e dei sacramenti.

Il panorama attuale. Oggi in Albania sono presenti 556 consacrati, di cui 108 religiosi e 448 religiose, al fianco dei quali si collocano anche i movimenti ecclesiali. A Elbasan si tiene una bella esperienza di dialogo

interreligioso, soprattutto con i musulmani, grazie a Don Emilio Valente, orionino. Suor Elda, P. Dario, RCJ e altri hanno messo in piedi una stimolante realtà di consacrati/e giovani, con incontri pensati per le loro specifiche esigenze, miranti soprattutto alla conoscenza e all'incoraggiamento reciproci. La traccia che fa da sfondo è la parola di Isaia sulla madre feconda: «Zgjerorjë vendin e tendës sate» (Is 54,2: «Allarga lo spazio della tua tenda»).

In tempi passati si reclutavano vocazioni e si usava inviare i giovani – sia uomini sia donne – in Italia o altrove per la formazione iniziale. I Vescovi hanno fatto sentire anche su questo la loro voce. Provvidenzialmente oggi le candidate alla vita consacrata femminile vivono momenti insieme; alcune case di noviziato sono aperte in Albania e le juniores si incontrano periodicamente con un programma di formazione, che prevede giornate singole ed esperienze residenziali prolungate.



Don Ottorino Zanon con i giovani

Assemblea generale 2017. A Tirana, il 6 maggio 2017, da parte di alcuni consacrati del movimento dei Focolari sono state ricordate alcune parole di Chiara Lubich ai suoi, a tutti: «Voi esistete quando siete corpo. Se non siete corpo, non esistete affatto». Come fare corpo tra noi consacrati? Il problema non è di facile soluzione. L'Arcivescovo di Tirana, Mons. George Frenndo op, altro religioso, maltese di origine, ha ricordato un pensiero di P. Timothy Radcliffe, già Maestro dell'Ordine dei Predicatori: «Il peccato più grave contro il celibato è rinunciare all'amore». E. P. Emilio

Gonzalez Magana sj, messicano, forte della sua esperienza nella formazione dei formatori all'Università Gregoriana di Roma, ha rincarato la dose: se non sei obbediente, non sei povero!

A proposito di affezioni disordinate, una vera trappola a volte scatta in noi: esco dalla preghiera in cappella e non saluto nessuno. In altri termini anche la preghiera potrebbe diventare un tipo di legame o di prassi disordinata. E il lavoro, che nessuno mai potrebbe definire una realtà peccaminosa, diviene una sorta di schiavitù. Spesso nella vita consacrata si adotta lo stesso criterio del mondo, ovvero debbo essere un uomo, una donna di successo. Se arriva la croce, devo cercare di evitarla. Pare che alcuni fratelli o sorelle permangano nella vita religiosa, solo perché non hanno altre dimore in cui andare. Così purtroppo succede che trasmettono un senso di frustrazione e di insoddisfazione.

Ogni giorno tre ore in internet. Tornare al primo amore è fondamentale. Diceva Benedetto xvi al tempo in cui era vescovo di Roma: «Voi religiosi portate la grande sfida della rifondazione del carisma». Ogni religioso si dovrebbe chiedere: dove sono oggi? Sono quel che son stato chiamato ad essere? Se Cristo non si trovasse al centro, potrei essere anche molto bravo, molto professionale, ma non rimarrei fedele. Ecco perché sono chiamato a discernere ogni giorno, senza stancarmi.

Attraverso i giovani che arrivano fra noi si scopre e verifica sempre più che manca la famiglia. Ogni giovane sa e dice: ho diritto a tutto. Al giorno d'oggi il mondo vorrebbe distruggere la famiglia e al suo interno la formazione religiosa di un figlio non viene quasi per nulla avviata né curata. Uno studio già effettuato sull'argomento afferma che un giovane religioso (o una giovane religiosa) quotidianamente spende almeno tre ore in internet.

Si insegna e si impara la teologia o la spiritualità di ciascuna congregazione, ma non si sa dove sia il rispetto verso le persone anziane o come vada la preghiera. *Pastores*

dabo vobis e Vita consacrata sostengono che non si può costruire una solida formazione religiosa, se non c'è una preliminare, solida formazione umana. Naturalmente è fondamentale la formazione dei formatori. Un formatore non s'improvvisa, sicché dovrebbe formarsi non solo col diritto canonico, la teologia dogmatica o quella spirituale, ma soprattutto sapendo "perdere" tempo con i giovani candidati.

Accompagnati spiritualmente. Imparare ad imparare per la vita, in tutta la propria vita: è questo l'orientamento attuale, proposto nella formazione permanente. Il 28 gennaio 2017, durante la Riunione plenaria della CIVCSVA, Papa Francesco ha sottolineato l'importanza dell'accompagnamento spirituale:

«Molti sono i fattori che condizionano la fedeltà in questo che è un *cambio di epoca* e non solo *un'epoca di cambio*, in cui risulta difficile assumere impegni seri e definitivi. [...] È necessario che la vita consacrata investa nel preparare accompagnatori qualificati per questo ministero. E dico la vita consacrata, perché il carisma dell'accompagnamento spirituale, diciamo della direzione spirituale, è un carisma "laicale". Anche i preti lo hanno; ma è "laicale". [...] Non insisteremo mai abbastanza su questa necessità. È difficile mantenersi fedeli camminando da soli, o camminando con la guida di fratelli e sorelle che non siano capaci di ascolto attento e paziente, o che non abbiano un'adeguata esperienza della vita consacrata. Abbiamo bisogno di fratelli e sorelle esperti nelle vie di Dio, per poter fare ciò che fece Gesù con i discepoli di Emmaus: accompagnarli nel cammino della vita e nel momento del disorientamento e riaccendere in essi la fede e la speranza mediante la Parola e l'Eucaristia (cf. *Lc*, 24,13-35)».

Facilmente si cade nell'autoinganno, ossia credere di aver fatto tutto bene. Invece, solo i fallimenti fanno soffrire e ci si dimentica che, se stiamo lavorando bene, arriva la croce. Si ha bisogno di avere una persona affianco che ci dica la verità, magari anche che stiamo sbagliando, e ci aiuti a capire chi è al centro

della nostra vita.

«*Venite e vedrete!*». Oggi più di ieri non si è sicuri di niente, trovandoci in una società liquida. Quando si è persa la centralità di Cristo, la vita consacrata si svilisce e va sprecata a causa di autentiche stupidità. San Rafael Arnaiz Barón (1911-1938), trappista spagnolo, pur sapendo di dover morire a causa di una grave forma di diabete, non smise di ottemperare ad ogni suo grande e piccolo dovere.

La prima sfida contro la povertà è interna, ovvero affrontare e risolvere la povertà della vita fraterna in comunità. Per questo Gesù dice: «*Venite e vedrete!*» (Gv 1,39). Prima di imparare *Regola e Costituzioni* o di conoscere il carisma, la vita consacrata è questo invito di Gesù a conoscere Lui, ad incontrare l'amore del Padre. Non cadiamo nell'inganno di pensare che un Progetto formativo o un Piano di vita fraterna potrà fornirci la soluzione ai vari problemi della vita fraterna in comunità. L'incontro coi due ciechi fuori da Gerico (cf. Mt 20, 29-34) spiega come Gesù percepisce i bisogni degli uomini, affamati e assetati di un rapporto vero con Lui.

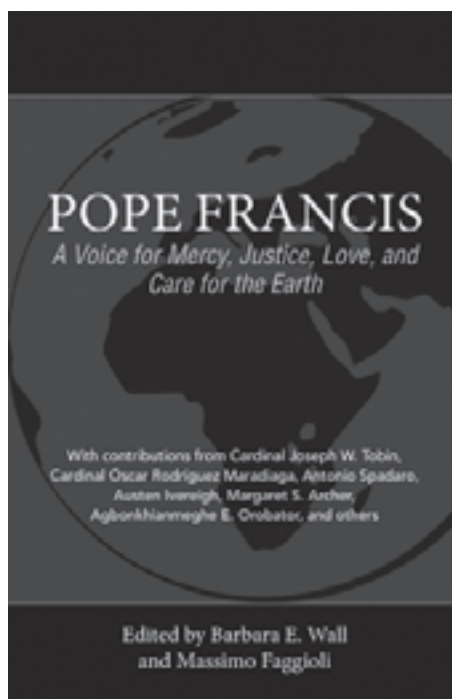
Custodi della speranza. Essere in Albania come consacrati, al di là della famiglia spirituale in cui si è inseriti, è un'esperienza assai stimolante ed energizzante. La missione unisce assai più di altri contesti, anche in campo ecumenico e di dialogo interreligioso. Basti ricordare che il movimento ecumenico nacque a Edimburgo nel 1910, nell'ambito della prima Conferenza missionaria mondiale e delle istanze messe a fuoco dai partecipanti.

Lavorare per l'evangelizzazione e la promozione umana con tanti fratelli e sorelle

di diversi Paesi significa aprirsi alla mondialità. Specialmente intrecciando relazioni fra loro, i consacrati in Albania si prefiggono di restare autentici custodi della speranza di un popolo che ha già incredibilmente sofferto. Popolo di fede semplice ma coraggiosa, popolo di martiri, che oggi desidera rinascere e crescere.

(**Ref.:** *Religiosi in Italia*, N° 423 Novembre – Dicembre 2017, pp.280 – 286)

(An English translation of this article can be found on the SEDOS Website)



(Gift from ORBIS BOOKS)

The Missionary Vocation of the Local Church in the Teaching and Writing of Giuseppe Allamano

It's Relevance for Today

Introduction

In this short study, I would like to present the missionary vocation of the Local Church according to the teaching of Giuseppe Allamano. I would like to present it in four main aspects after a short introduction about Giuseppe Allamano and his time: a) The meaning of "Local Church" for Allamano, b) Missionary vocation and mission according to Allamano, c) The influence of his teaching in the missionary activities of the Consolata Missionary Institute, d) The relevance of his teaching for the mission today, and a short conclusion.

Fr. Giuseppe Allamano was a diocesan priest in the archdiocese of Turin- Italy. He was born in a place called Castelnuovo d'Asti, on 21 January 1851. He was ordained priest on 20 September 1873. From 1880 up to his death he was working as the Rector of the Consolata Shrine in Turin and from 1882 as the Rector of the Ecclesiastical Pastoral Institute¹ (*Convitto Ecclesiastico*) of Turin simultaneously He is the founder of two missionary Congregations: - the Consolata Missionary Institute which he founded in 1901 and the Consolata Missionary Sisters in 1910. He died on 16 February 1926, and he is beatified by John Paul II on 07 October 1990².

He was a dedicated priest for his diocese and always was concerned for others with missionary heart. He was dreaming of being missionary from his young age. He had attempted to join to the missionary college when he was studying theology, but because of his poor health he was not able to make it.³

In the mission history of the church from the last quarter of 18th century up to the first quarter of 19th century, it was the dark age of mission, because of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution which caused missionary activity to decline drastically. In the second quarter of 19th century after the French Revolution, the Religious movements' restarted and missionary activity of the church also revived again. The modern Catholicism started from here, although it is not easy to mark the exact time of change. The church was reborn again with missionary zeal; the Popes became promoters of missionary activities. Allamano lived during this time of missionary revival, in Europe in general, and in Italy in particular.⁴ The missionary activity taken from the state Padroado to the new missionary cooperation of the church, the Popes, the entire faithful and mission became

della Consolata, Torino 1963, 9-12, I. TUBALDO, *Giuseppe Allamano, Il suo tempo – La sua vita – La sua opera*, vol. I Missioni Consolata Torino 1982, xvii- xx, G. TEBALDI, *Consolata Missionaries in the World, 1901 - 2001*, Pauline Publication Africa 2001, 19-30, A. BELLAGAMBA, "Allamano, Joseph", in H. A. GERALD (Ed.), *Biographical Dictionary of Mission*, Macmillan Reference USA New York 1998, 11, B. MONDIN, *Dizionario Storico e Teologico della Missioni*, Urbaniana University Press 2001, 36-38, 258-259.

³ I. TUBALDO, *Giuseppe Allamano*, Vol.1, 119-123.

⁴ During that time in Italy there were signs of missionary revivals to mention some like the publication of missionary journals, financial contributions for the work of Propaganda Fide, and Pastoral letters of bishops to encourage the missionary spirit of the church. Cf. M. LODOVICI, *Il Movimento Missionario in Italia nel Secolo XIX*, tesi di Laurea per la Facoltà di Lettere e Filosofia, Università Cattolica del S. Cuore, Milano 1952, 37-78, 304-306, I. TUBALDO, *Giuseppe Allamano*, Vol. 2, 133.

¹ Ecclesiastical Pastoral Institute in Italian called "*Convitto Ecclesiastico*" was a center for young priests to prepare them spiritually and practically for the ministry, for one or two years. Tubaldo, Bona and others saying that, Allamano became rector of the Convitto at the same time as the Consolata Shrine 1880, but Lorenzo Sales wrote in detail that he became rector of the Convitto in 1882. The College was closed for a while because of doctrinal problem of the previous rector, then Allamano asked the Archbishops to open it again and he allowed him with one condition, to be the rector himself. Cf. L. SALES, *Il Canonico Giuseppe Allamano Fondatore dei Missionari e delle Missionarie della Consolata*, Missioni Consolata, Torino 1936, 91-95.

² G. GALLEANI, *Istituto Missioni Consolata: Fondazione e primi sviluppi, 1880-1939*, manuscript, vol. 1 Torino 1973. xlii - xliii L. SALES, *La Vita Spirituale dalle conversazioni ascetiche del Servo di Dio Giuseppe Allamano, Fondatore dei Missionari e Missionarie*

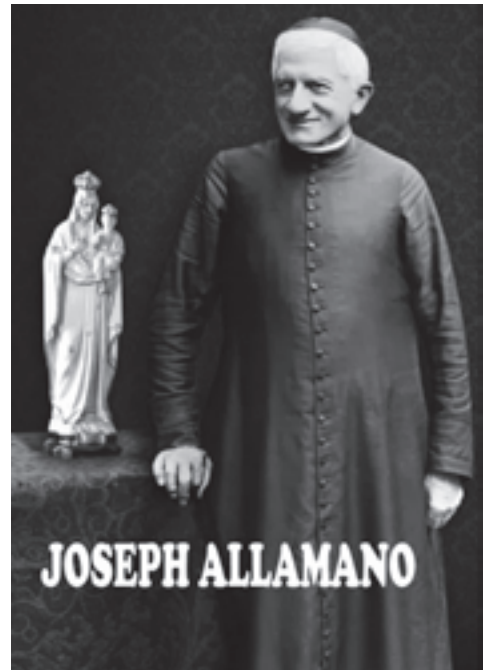
the obligation of every Christian.⁵ During this time the old Religious Orders were reorganized and new ones entered in to the camp but all exclusively for the mission.⁶

“In chronological order the first missionary institute founded in Italia during this time are: - *L’Istituto Missioni Estere di Milano* 1850 by the bishops of Lombardi, then follows *Il Collegio Brignole- Sale- Negroni per le Missioni Estere di Genova* founded in 1852 and opened in 1855., then followed *Le Missioni Africane di Verona* (Figli del S.Cuore di Gesù) in 1867 which was founded by St. Daniel Comboni (1831-1881), separated from the Institute of Don Nicola Mazza, in 1868-1871 *Il Pontificio Seminario SS. Pietro e Paolo per le Missioni Estere* and in 1895 *la Pia Società di S. Francesco Saverio per le Missioni Estere* of Parma, founded by Mons. Giudo Maria Conforti”.⁷

In addition to new missionary congregations there were other institutions which had been contributing for the mission like the *Opera della Propagazione della Fede* and the *Opera della S. Allamano's Infanzia* and other associations, bulletins and publications for the promotion of missionary activities.⁸

In a particular way, in Piemonte also there were different activities and movements started by a number of known people to contribute for the mission:- Diessbach-Lanteri

(Guala), Cafasso Allamano, Cottolengo, Don Bosco, Card. Massaia, Can. Ortalda, Mons. Ghilardi, Murialdo, Faà di Bruno, etc... Allamano’s missionary dream and his contribution was the fruit of the above missionary revival of the church.⁹



<https://giuseppearlamano.consolata.org/index.php/altre-raccolte-di-parole/1566-a-father-in-the-faith-of-innumerable-christians>

1) The “Local Church” in the thoughts of Allamano

In the second quarter of the 19th century, as missionary activities started in different parts of Europe, regional missionary movement was normal: - the foreign mission of Paris in France, the foreign missionary activity of Lombardy Milano, Foreign mission of Genova etc....¹⁰ Some individuals had been starting missionary animation as personal initiatives and some bishops as a diocesan activity to form missionaries and collecting money to send for mission under the

⁵ I. TUBALDO, *Giuseppe Allamano*, Vol. 2, 66-68, M. LODOVICI, *Il Movimento Missionario*, 19-22, S. B. BEVANS, R. P. SCHROEDER, *Constants and Context: A Theology of Mission for Today*, Orbis Books Maryknoll, NY 2011, 221-227.

⁶ In 1814 the Society of Jesus reestablished by Pius VII, the number of Missionaries who had been working in mission land increased continuously. In 1817 Pius VII recalled the Propaganda Fide to lead the missionary activity of the church, which was abolished by Napoleon in 1798 and he worked continuously to strengthen it. His successor the previous Prefect of the Propaganda Fide Pope Gregory XVI (1831-1864) known as a missionary Pope, continued to strength the Missionary work of the church. cf. M. LODOVICI, *Il Movimento Missionario*, 4-6, 18-23, I. TUBALDO, *Giuseppe Allamano*, Vol. 2, 66-67, G. TEBALDI, *Consolata Missionaries in the World*, 25-27, T. BOKENKOTTR, *A Concise History of the Catholic Church*, New York, Image Books, 1990, 320.

⁷ I. TUBALDO, *Giuseppe Allamano*, Vol. 2, 71-72, M. LODOVICI, *Il Movimento Missionario*, in chapter five states in detail about the Missionary institutions of the second half of 19th century which are mentioned in the text.

⁸ I. TUBALDO, *Giuseppe Allamano*, Vol. 2, 73, M. LODOVICI, *Il Movimento Missionario*, 31-32, J. VIDMAR, op, *The Catholic Church through the Ages: A History*, New York- Mahwah: Paulist Press, 2005, 307, S. B. BEVANS, R. P. SCHROEDER, *Constants and Context*: 221-227.

⁹ I. TUBALDO, *Giuseppe Allamano*, Vol.2 78-81, M. LODOVICI, *Il Movimento Missionario in Italia nel Secolo XIX*, 89-114.

¹⁰ M. LODOVICI, *Il Movimento Missionario*, 30-32, I. TUBALDO, *Giuseppe Allamano*, Vol. 2, 66-72, 132 In 1815 the Seminary of Paris foreign mission restored. In 1822 in Lyon France founded the Works of the Propagation of Faith, In 1843 founded the Paris Work of Santa Infanzia, in 1889 founded the Work of St. Peter Apostle for formation by the local clergy. The association of Leopoldia of Vienna established in 1829, The Catholic Apostolate of of Pallotti in Rome established in 1835 etc....

Propaganda Fide.¹¹ Allamano lived the same experience in his regional church of Turin in particular and in the region of Piemonte at large. From the above observation we can see the missionary activity was a regional church initiative with a universal concern for evangelization. This is what I call it “Local Church” in the thoughts of Allamano. For Allamano, the Local Church is the Church of Turin in particular and the Church of Piemonte at large. He was complaining that there wasn’t a missionary institute for our priests and young people who were interested to go for foreign mission. He said, “A diocese like ours with good number of priests and a town which is rich with many charitable activities how could we miss having one regional institute purely missionary for the unbelievers”.¹² Ours priests are going outside of Italy or another part of Italy like Milano or Genova or France looking for a missionary institute that accommodate them to realize their missionary vocation.¹³ Therefore he was working to fill the gap, to found a local missionary institute.

He had proposed a project to the S.C. Propaganda Fide to found a local missionary Institute in 1891, but his missionary project was delayed until he could get the approval of his local bishop and all the bishops of Piemonte even though it was accepted by the Propaganda Fide.¹⁴ After the approval of his project from the local church and from Rome he worked hard to animate the whole church

of Piemonte by recruiting and forming personnel and also raising fund for the mission as an activity of the local church.¹⁵

The first article of the first rule of the Institute underlined that this missionary Institution is approved by Archbishops and Bishops of the ecclesiastical province of Piemonte and Vercelli.¹⁶ The recruitment of missionaries was also specified for the young priests, seminarians and laity from Piemonte who were willing to dedicate themselves for the mission.¹⁷ He remained a diocesan priest until the end, and never joined his institute as missionary to go out of his local church, but was animating the local church for the mission, although he was the General Superior of the Institute. He was a missionary within the local church.¹⁸

2) Missionary vocation and Mission according to Allamano

“I will give them a sign and send some of their survivors to the nations, to the distant islands that have never heard of me or seen my glory. They will proclaim my glory to the nations”. (Is 66:19)¹⁹

Missionary vocation is the vocation of every local church with the participation of everyone: bishops, priests and laity. Missionary vocation is for every Christian who loves God and humanity, to go out to call

¹¹ I. TUBALDO, *Giuseppe Allamano*, Vol. 2 69-73, M. LODOVICI, *Il Movimento Missionario*, 265ff, speaks in detail the missionary initiatives of the second half of 19th century and their missionary activities under the Propaganda Fide, in different parts of the world.

¹² AIMC, in the sector of the Founder which is not cataloged folder no.25, G. GALLEA, *Istituto Missioni Consolata*, vol. 1, 3-4, I. TUBALDO, *Giuseppe Allamano*, Vol. 2, 162, C. BONA, (ed.), *Quasi una vita... Lettere scritte e ricevute dal beato Giuseppe Allamano con testi e documenti coevi*, 10 vol., Edizioni Missioni Consolata, Torino 1992-2002, Vol. 1, 296-299. The letter which was written by Allamano to P. Carlo Manchini, who was the house superior of the Lazarist in Rome, to explain to him about his project and to ask his help to reach to the Propaganda Fide. This letter is so similar to that of the Propaganda Fide except the date.

¹³ G. GALLEA, *Istituto Missioni Consolata*, 3-7, 53-55 I. TUBALDO, *Giuseppe Allamano*, Vol. 2, 162, C. BONA, (ed.), *Quasi una vita... Vol. 1*, 296 - 299, G. TEBALDI, *Consolata Missionaries in the World, 1901-2001*, 28.

¹⁴ Allamano had presented his project to found a diocesan missionary society for foreign mission in 1891 and it was appreciated and accepted but since it was not approved by the local bishops delayed until 1901, the actual foundation of the Institute.

¹⁵ I. TUBALDO, *Giuseppe Allamano*, Vol. 2, 174-176, 480-491. Allamano waited for ten years from his first formal application for the official approval of the foundation of his missionary Institute to the Propaganda Fide (1891-1901), G. TEBALDI, *Consolata Missionaries in the World, 1901- 2001*, 27-28.

¹⁶ AIMC, ISTITUTO, Costituzioni, III-3, 1 Regolamento no.1, AIMC, DIREZIONE GENERALE, IV-1, 271-272, I. TUBALDO, *Giuseppe Allamano*, Vol 2, 485-488, 491, L. SALES, *La Vita Spirituale dalle conversazioni ascetiche del Servo di Dio Giuseppe Allamano, Fondatore dei Missionari e Missionarie della Consolata*, Torino 1963, (hereafter referred as VS), 84-86, 273-274.

¹⁷ AIMC, ISTITUTO, Costituzioni, III-3,1 Regolamento no. 2, G. GALLEA, *Istituto Missioni Consolata*, vol. 1, 16-21, I. TUBALDO, *Giuseppe Allamano*, Vol. 2, 489.

¹⁸ AIMC, CAPITOLI GENERALI, V-1,16, In the first general Chapter in 1922 Canon Giuseppe Allamano elected the general superior; since he was not member of the Institute the chapter fathers asked the approval from S.C. Propaganda Fide about his election. Acts of the chapter 1922 no. 20, C. BONA, *La Fede e Le Opere*, EMC Torino 1989, 94, A. BELLAGAMBA, “Allamano, Joseph”, 11.

¹⁹ It is a quotation at the beginning of the Consolata Missionary Institute Constitution to express our missionary vocation in the Church.

others to the love of God and to make God known and loved by others. It is fraternal concern for humanity; in a special way to the poor, to those who do not know the true God. Christianity is all about Love: “Love one another as I loved you”, it demands charity towards the other without preference.²⁰ He underlined that we are missionaries for the unbelievers. The aim was to save the souls and to establish the church where there was no visible church structure as an instrument of salvation.²¹ In the first article of the rule of the Consolata Missionary Institute it is underlined that the institute is missionary for the evangelization of unbelievers, primarily in equatorial Africa.²² He recognized unbelievers as poor, because for him the highest poverty is to live without knowing God and deficient salvation. Therefore, our concern for the poor is the greatest motivation of mission and our missionary vocation.



Consolata Missionary Sisters in Ethiopia
(from their Facebook account)

Allamano was convinced that each and every local church should be a missionary. A diocese should be concerned for the mission of the church beyond its boarder. Missionary responsibility is not an option but it is an obligation, it is not only a charitable act to send something which is surplus but it is a duty to share the necessary resource for the salvation of others.

²⁰ G. PASQUALETTI, *Missionary for the World in the Local Church*, Torino 1978, 34-36, C. BONA, *La Fede e Le Opere*, 92.

²¹ C. BONA, *La Fede e Le Opere*, 70-75

²² AIMC, ISTITUTO, *Costituzioni*, III-3,1 *Regola-mento* no.1, G. GALLEANI, *Istituto Missioni Consolata*, 76, VS 18.

The missionary awareness of his time was not mature enough as he was thinking; therefore, he suffered a lot to convince the bishops to be generous to allow their priests to the mission abroad. Most of the bishops had been worrying about the shortage of priests in their respective dioceses rather than missionary concern. In fact, there was no shortage of priests and more new priests had been ordaining every year.²³

Allamano took the initiative to coordinate all the superiors of missionary institutes in Italy to appeal to the Pope to ask a guideline or a document to the church as a whole and to the bishops in particular to be generous to allow their priests to go for mission and to give awareness to all Christians about missionary responsibility. He had identified three main problems: the ignorance of church towards her missionary duty, the availability of limited personnel and resource for the mission and the hindrance by the bishops for the animation of missionary vocation in their dioceses.²⁴

Pope Pius X responded to the letter of Allamano on 31 January 1913 and addressed to all the Superiors of missionary institutes in Italy. He expressed his understanding about the church's ignorance of her missionary obligation and encouraged them to work harder and assured them his support and blessings.²⁵

In the response of the Pope to the appeal, there was no immediate answer or action plane that was ready to take up the responsibility. But after six years, in 1919 we find Benedict XV who came up with an

²³G. GALLEANI, *Istituto Missioni Consolata*, 55-58, C. BONA, *La Fede e Le Opere*, 347-348, I. TUBALDO, *Giuseppe Allamano*, Vol. 2, 139-140, 143-144.

²⁴ Allamano wrote a letter to all the superiors of missionary institutes in Italy to share his plan to write an appeal to the Pope and to ask their support on 29/08/1912, and all had responded positively. He wrote the same appeal to the Propaganda Fide on 15 September 1912. Finally he wrote to Pope Pius X December 1912 (the date is not specified) with the agreement of the Propaganda Fide. AIMC, DIREZIONE GENERALE, IV-1, 326 - 333, APF, Archivio della Sacra Congregazione di Propaganda Fide, Roma, Vol. 510, 433-435, C. BONA, *La Fede e Le Opere*, 348, G. GALLEANI, *Istituto Missioni Consolata*, Vol. II, 300 - 305.

²⁵ AIMC, DIREZIONE GENERALE, IV-1, 335, G. GALLEANI, *Istituto Missioni Consolata*, Vol. II, 305-307.

apostolic exhortation *Maximum Illud* specifically about mission. The purpose of the letter clearly pointed out the same intention as Allamano had mentioned with his appeal. “While writing it, “We had two purposes in mind: to encourage you (bishops), your clergy, and your people in these efforts, and secondly, to point out methods you can adopt to further the fulfillment of this momentous undertaking”.²⁶

The Pope clearly mentioned his observation in the past few years about the difficulties of those who were in charge of the missions. It could be understood that this exhortation was the fruit of the intervention of the Missionary Institutes Superiors at least indirectly. “We know very well the burning intensity of their zeal for the apostolate, and We are also well aware of the immense difficulties they have had to overcome and the crises they have had to face, especially in the last few years. This was the price they had to pay to remain at their stations and outposts and to go on extending the Kingdom of God. And so they paid it willingly”.²⁷

The above intervention of Allamano for the missionary vocation and obligation of the church shows his universal concern for mission and its application in the local church. *Think globally act locally.* After the foundation of the Consolata Missionary Institute, those who were going for the mission used to depart from the Archdiocese of Turin with the blessing and mandate from the Archbishop to underline that the missionary Institute as part of the local church of Turin.²⁸

Every priest by his ordination is a missionary; for a priest who shares the priesthood of Christ, a diocese is too narrow to exercise his mission, so a priest should be

open to the whole humanity.²⁹ As Allamano became the rector of both the Consolata Shrine (1880) and the Ecclesiastical Pastoral Institute of Turin (1882), he was animating the diocesan priests and the laity, who were interested to the missionary vocation, to respond their missionary vocation.³⁰

Allamano was concerned much about the place where to go as a destination for his missionaries and always he had in mind Equatorial Africa,³¹ more specifically the Galla (Oromo) people of Abyssinia, the old mission land of Cardinal Massaia. The normal procedure to found a missionary college during his time was to form missionaries and then to send them under the propaganda Fide, wherever there was a necessity and it was not must to go together in one location. According to him, his missionaries were supposed to go together to a specific place that is given by the Propaganda Fide to take care of it continuously until the establishment of the local church in the new land. There was the idea of stability and continuity of missionary apostolate unless the establishment of the local church.³²

The missionary vocation and willingness was not enough for Allamano to go to mission land. It was compulsory to pass through missionary formation in Turin according to their status of life (Ordained priests, seminarians and laity). The formation course included intellectual, spiritual and technical aspects of life. He used to say: “a missionary without science is like a lamp without light”. In addition to basic initial formation he was

²⁹ C. BONA, *La Fede e Le Opere*, 70,81, G. PASQUALETTI, *Missionary for the World in the Local Church*, 34-35.

³⁰ G. GALLEA, *Istituto Missioni Consolata*, vol. 1, 3-7, 55-58, I. TUBALDO, *Giuseppe Allamano*, Vol. 2, 139-140ff. Tubaldo gave us a detailed statistic of the abundance of priests in the region, AIMC, ISTITUTO, III-3,1, Regolamento, no. 4.

³¹ AIMC, ISTITUTO, III-3,1, Regolamento no.1, G. GALLEA, *Istituto Missioni Consolata*, 3-5, 76.

³² AIMC, Costituzioni, III-1,1 Regolamento no. 4, The letter of Allamano to Mancini and the letter to the Propaganda Fide express in detail the location where Allamano was intending to send his missionaries. G. GALLEA, *Istituto Missioni Consolata*, 3-5, 76, I. TUBALDO, *Giuseppe Allamano*, Vol. 2, 144-145, 162-164. C. BONA, *La Fede e Le Opere*, 323-324. Since he did not know Africa personally he had a problem about the exact place and people he was talking. Since he was talking about a vast area of Africa, sometimes he was confusing between the people and the location.

²⁶ BENEDICT XV, *Maximum Illud*, Apostolic Letter on the Propagation of the faith throughout the World, 30 November 1919, 7.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, no. 8.

²⁸ C. BONA, *La Fede e Le Opere*, 311, I. TUBALDO, *Giuseppe Allamano*, Vol. 2, 603, *La Consolata*, Revista diocesano missionaria di Torino, Settembre 1902, 130.

concerned about continuous missionary formation of the missionaries. Since he did not have the life experience of Africa on the ground, he ordered his missionaries to write daily diary and to send to him and he was learning about Africa from them and he was giving them instruction on their day to day life. The collection of his correspondence with the missionaries was a rich material for formation to those who were in the Mother House and of continuous formation for those who were on the field.³³

Allamano was never in a hurry to send missionaries as emergency worker to go and to baptise as much as possible, rather he believed in conversion based on continuous missionary activity based on life witness of the missionaries. His motto was “first saint then missionary”. He was careful to send well prepared missionaries and number with quality. The first rule of the Consolata Missionaries, in its third part well defined the spiritual formation and holiness of life for mission.³⁴ He was saying that “the good must be done well and in silence” to interpret sanctity in ordinary life and activity, as Jesus’ call to perfection, “Be perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect” The current Constitution of the Consolata Missionary Institute also clearly stated the holiness of the missionary as a condition to be credible in the mission.³⁵

According to Allamano missionary activity should include human promotion: “The Africans would be happy with a religion that helps them to improve their life here on earth in addition to the hope of the eternal life after. Teach them how to read first then they could understand the bible very well.”³⁶

Mission with the respect of culture and the people was in the mind of Allamano; he

³³ AIMC, ISTITUTO, Costituzioni III-1, 1 Regola-mento III-IV, G. GALLEANI, *Istituto Missioni Consolata*, Vol. 1, 79-82, I. TUBALDO, *Giuseppe Allamano*, Vol. 2, 169-170, VS, 75-76, 185, ISTITUTO MISSIONI CONSOLATA, *Costituzioni e Direttorio Generale*, no. 101.

³⁴ AIMC, ISTITUTO, III-3,1, Regolamento, no. 3, Part III, I. TUBALDO, *Giuseppe Allamano*, Vol. 2, 529ff, 659, G. TEBALDI, *Consolata Missionaries in the World, 1901- 2001*, 37, VS, 18-19, 113.

³⁵ ISTITUTO MISSIONI CONSOLATA, *Costituzioni e Direttorio Generale*, no. 5, VS 94, 128-129.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, no. 3, 16.

advised his missionaries to respect the culture of the people and to go slowly not to criticize the culture. It was also compulsory to study the language of the people; once Allamano critically commented on the position of one missionary who was against the cultural dance called “Goma” “please for God’s sake go slowly take time to understand them.”³⁷

The Africans should be treated with respect and love whether they are converted or not. Missionary service should be with generosity but not to encourage dependency or to convert them to the faith with manipulation of gifts. “Under their black skin they have good heart and sensitive feeling.” Mission is all about to serve the people and to a particular church in order to help them find a local expression for Christianity.³⁸



Consolata Missionaries in South Africa

3) The Influence of Allamano’s teaching in the missionary activities of the Consolata Mission

His teaching and understanding about mission influenced the missionary activities of the Consolata Mission from the very beginning of its foundation. The Consolata Missionary Institute was founded as a local church missionary society for foreign mission in 1901. The members were supposed to be from Piemonte/ Turin and they had to sign an agreement or the oath of poverty, obedience and chastity to go for mission for five years and to renew again for another five years or to

³⁷ I. TUBALDO, *Giuseppe Allamano*, Vol. 3, 158, C. BONA, (ed.), *Quasi una vita...* Vol. IV, 79-80

³⁸ *La Consolata*, Nov 1900, 163-164, G. PASQUALETTI, *Missionary for the World in the Local Church*, 49-52.

go back to the diocese. For those who were interested to continue after ten years automatically become permanent member. Later on Propaganda Fide proposed to the removal of regional limitation for recruitment of missionaries. With renewed and approved Regolamento (Rule) of 1909, it became National and allowed priests from all over Italy. In 1910 the Institute passed from diocesan institute to the Propaganda Fide and as Religious Congregation became under the Sacred Congregation for the Religious Life. In 1923 the Constitution of the Institute approved definitely by the Holy See. From 1940s the Institute extended its missionary animation in other European countries and America; in Portugal 1944 and in Spain in 1950s. The 1949 General Chapter of the Consolata Missionary Institute opened the Institute for internationality. In the beginning of 1970s, after the first General Chapter after Vatican II, vocation animation started in Africa.³⁹

The missionary Institute of Consolata founded with the approval of the local ordinaries as the missionary wing of local church.⁴⁰ It started and left a good example that missionary activity is the responsibility of the local church. Allamano was convinced that mission is a teamwork of the local church but not as personal activity of an individual. Allamano worked as team for the foundation of the institute; with Giacomo Camissassa⁴¹ as co-founder, and close collaboration with his bishops for the approval and its development

³⁹ C. BONA, *La Fede e Le Opere*, 38ff shows clearly, his collaboration with all for the mission. 345-346, I. TUBALDO, *Giuseppe Allamano*, Vol.1 336-346, Vol III, 460-462, 470-473, ISTITUTO MISSIONI CONSOLATA, *Costituzioni e Direttorio Generale*, no 1-2, 23.

⁴⁰ ISTITUTO MISSIONI CONSOLATA, *Costituzioni e Direttorio Generale*, no. 1.

⁴¹ Giacomo Camissassa was a diocesan priest of Turin and he was a class met of Allamano. He was born 27 September 1854 Caramanga Piemonte, and died on 18 August 1922 in Turin. He was Co-founder of the Consolata Missionary Institute and he was working as vice rector of the Consolata Shrine. He was a great collaborator of Allamano with all his activities. He was a great friend of Allamano as if they had been sharing the same soul and spirit. He had visited the mission of Kenya from 8 February 1911 up to 26 April 1912 behalf of Allamano. Read more: ISTITUTO MISSIONI CONSOLATA, *Costituzioni e Direttorio Generale*, 3.1, I. TUBALDO, *Giuseppe Allamano*, Vol.1 336-346, Vol. III, 513-515 G. TEBALDI, *Consolata Missionaries in the World*, 44, G. GALLEA, *Istituto Missioni Consolata*, Vol. 1, 334-335, 350-356, Vol. II, 290, 299.

and continuous collaboration with the faithful to support the activity with their donation and prayer. That is the reason how the Institute and its activity continued even after his death.⁴²

Allamano as the founder of the society and animator of the missionary activities remained a diocesan priest of Turin. He was the rector of the Consolata Shrine and rector of the Ecclesiastical College of the diocese until his death. His position paved the way clearly for him to communicate that the missionary activity is part of the local Church apostolate.⁴³

“Mission is borne from the salvific love of God grown up through the Holy Spirit, that is the Good News of Christ the savior and liberator”.⁴⁴ In short the activity of the Consolata missionaries is to proclaim the love of God in their words and actions to all nations; that is their ad gentes.⁴⁵

Evangelization and human promotion have been integrated in the missionary activities of the Consolata missionary. The mission stations were always attached with schools: technical and formation education, health care institutions, agriculture etc.... according to the necessity of the place. This methodology was not a trap for conversion but with deep conviction of human promotion as part of evangelization. Their methodology was appreciated by the Holy See and by the office of the Propaganda Fide.⁴⁶ “The characteristics of these missions are that the missionaries do not limit themselves to introducing religion..., but together with the splendor of the faith they promote the development of those peoples by teaching them new methods of agriculture,

⁴² C. BONA, *La Fede e Le Opere*, 38ff ,345-346, I. TUBALDO, *Giuseppe Allamano*, Vol.1 336-346, ISTITUTO MISSIONI CONSOLATA, IX Capitolo Generale, *Atti del Capitolo Generale*, Roma 1993, 31

⁴³ G. GALLEA, *Istituto Missioni Consolata: Fondazione e primi sviluppi*, Vol. II, 201-203.

⁴⁴ ISTITUTO MISSIONI CONSOLATA, IX Capitolo Generale, *Atti del Capitolo Generale*, 27.

⁴⁵ ISTITUTO MISSIONI CONSOLATA, X Capitolo Generale, *Atti del Capitolo Generale*, Sagana (Kenya) 1999, 35.

⁴⁶ AIMC, DIREZIONE GENERALE, IV-1, 276 Decreto di Lode and Decretum Laudis VI-1, 280 G. GALLEA, *Istituto Missioni Consolata*, Vol. 1, 242-244, C. BONA, *La Fede e Le Opere*, 92, A. BELLAGAMBA, “Allamano, Joseph”, 11.

animal husbandry and the exercise of the most common trades”.⁴⁷

The Consolata Missionary Institute’s activities reached all over the world gradually according to the necessity and capacity of the Institute. In twenty years’ time still when the Founder was alive, their activity was spread in Kenya, Ethiopia, Tanzania and Mozambique. They have established the structure of the local church with local clergy in different level. It was also developed in Europe and America for the mission and vocation animation of the church.⁴⁸

4) The relevance of his teaching for the contemporary mission

In order to see the validity of his teaching about mission for today, it is good to examine first the teaching of the church starting from the Second Vatican Council document until today. Second it is good to examine the acts of the General Chapters of the Consolata Missionaries and the content of its actual Constitution and Directory. Finally it is good to read the reflections of contemporary theologians about mission.

When we are reading his teaching about mission after fifty years from the Second Vatican Council, we could say that he lived before his time. Seventy-five years before the Council it was clear for him about the missionary vocation of the church. We could

⁴⁷ AIMC, DIREZIONE GENERALE IV-1, 276, 280 ISTITUTO MISSIONI CONSOLATA, *Costituzioni e Direttorio Generale*, 15, Unfortunately the Consolata Missionaries had been accused by Bishop Andreas Jarosaeu of Galla (Oromo) Ethiopia, for their involvement in human promotion, to the Holy See in 1920. Allamano defended his methodology with a letter of appeal to the Holy See and Pope Pius X appreciated and approved the involvement of human promotion as part of mission. APF, Vol. 678, 371-395, I. TUBALDO, *Giuseppe Allamano*, Vol. 2, 91-92, G. PASQUALETTI, *Missionary for the World in the Local Church*, 45-47, G. GALLEA, *Istituto Missioni Consolata*, Vol. 1, 222-227.

⁴⁸ From Kenya the mission of the Consolata developed in Africa, in 1913 Ethiopia Kaffa given to the Consolata as Apostolic prefecture, and after a lot of difficulty in 1917 they reached to their destination, in 1922 Tanzania Iringa Apostolic prefecture given to the Consolata, in 1924 to Somalia and in 1925 Mozambique. In Europe and North America developed for vocation and missionary animation: 1943 in Portugal, in USA-Canada 1946-1947 and in 1955 Spain. In to Latin America for the motivation of missionary vocation animation; in 1937 the first missionary arrived in Brazil, in 1947 Argentina, in Colombia in 1947, and it goes on still. , B. MONDIN, *Dizionario Storico e Teologico della Missioni*, 37, 258.

say that he has anticipated by many years the teaching of the Council: “the church by its very nature is missionary” and “the church has an obligation to proclaim the faith and salvation which comes from Christ”.⁴⁹ Each and every local church with the leadership of its bishop called to mission where there is great need to go out to the outskirts of its own territory.⁵⁰ “Our Institute intends to be the expression of the Church’s universality and of the missionary obligation of the local Churches.”⁵¹

Comparing his teaching on mission with contemporary missionary approach is large but I just mention a few missionary approaches to show its validity even today.

Mission is the work of God which still needs our generosity and collaboration. Christians have the duty to proclaim the Gospel without excluding anyone especially those who do not know Jesus Christ or who have always rejected him; because this is the first task of the Church. We are all missionary disciples and we are called to take part in this new missionary “going forth”, as Pope Francis said in *Evangelii Gaudium*.⁵² “Without the mission *ad gentes*, the Church's very missionary dimension would be deprived of its essential meaning and of the very activity that exemplifies it.”⁵³ In our time there is no

⁴⁹ VATICAN COUNCIL II, *Ad Gentes Divinitus*, Decree on the church’s missionary activity, 7 December 1965 (hereafter referred as AG), 2, 5, JOHN PAUL II, *Redemptoris Missio*, Encyclical Letter on the Church’s Missionary Mandate, 7 December 1990, (hereafter referred as RM) 48, G. TEBALDI, *Consolata Missionaries in the World, 1901- 2001*, 27, G. COLZANI, *Missiologia Contemporanea. Il cammino evangelico delle Chiese:1945-2007*, San Paolo Millano 2010, 69-72, ISTITUTO MISSIONI CONSOLATA, *Costituzioni e Direttorio Generale*, no. 69

⁵⁰ VATICAN COUNCIL II, *Christus Dominus*, Decree on the pastoral Office of Bishops, 28 October 1965 (hereafter referred as CD), 11, FRANCIS, *Evangelii Gaudium*, Apostolic Letter on the Proclamation of the Gospel in Today’s World, 24 November 2013, (hereafter referred as EG), 30-31, 111, 119-120, CONSOLATA MISSIONARIES, ed., *Consecration and Mission: IMC Post - Conciliar Reflections*, Roma 1997, 28, F. A. OBORJI, *Concepts of Mission, The evolution of Contemporary Missiology*, Orbis Books, Maryknoll, NY 2006, 3-6.

⁵¹ CONSOLATA MISSIONARIES, ed., *Consecration and Mission: IMC Post - Conciliar Reflections*, 32-33, ISTITUTO MISSIONI CONSOLATA, *Costituzioni e Direttorio Generale*, no. 69.

⁵² EG, 14, 20, ISTITUTO MISSIONI CONSOLATA, *Costituzioni e Direttorio Generale*, no. 72, 80, VATICAN COUNCIL II, *Lumen Gentium*, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, 21 November 1964, (hereafter referred to as LG), 17.

⁵³ RM 14.

specific location for *ad gentes*, it is everywhere and there is no center or outskirts it is *inter gentes*. Our *ad gentes* is through dialogue, solidarity and sharing our faith experience in friendship.⁵⁴

Allamano lived in the time where mission was understood as saving the soul (*Salus animarum*) theory; but he was able to go beyond that and proposed also to plant the church with a continuous missionary activity. It was similar to that of the teaching of the Vatican Second; mission as conversion and planting of the church where there is no established church.⁵⁵ In addition to that, his approach for human promotion as part of mission is valid even today.⁵⁶

The missionaries are those who are sent out by the church and the entire baptised members of the church are responsible to share the missionary mandate of the church.⁵⁷ "Since the whole Church is missionary, and the work of evangelization is a basic duty of the People of God, every Christian needs to share the responsibility of mission among the nations." AG 35.⁵⁸

Benedict XVI with his message for the World Mission Sunday in 2006, underlined the importance of charity for mission "*Charity: soul of the mission*", that is to say that mission comes from deep charity. The Pope had underlined the participation of all to make known that God is love. Mission according to him is to make known God as love.⁵⁹ Building of ecclesial community is a common responsibility of all the baptized.⁶⁰

⁵⁴ XII Capitolo Generale, *Atti Capitolari*, Roma 2011, 19, F. A. OBORJI, *Concepts of Mission*, 9-11.

⁵⁵ AG 6, RM 48, ISTITUTO MISSIONI CONSO-LATA, XI Capitolo Generale, *Atti del Capitolo Generale*, San Paolo (Brazile) 2005, no. 20.

⁵⁶ ISTITUTO MISSIONI CONSOLATA, IX Capitolo Generale, *Atti del Capitolo Generale*, 32.

⁵⁷ www.vatican.va / JOHN PAUL II, general audience on 15 April 1995, 10/03/2016

⁵⁸ RM 71, CONSOLATA MISSIONARIES, ed., *Consecration and Mission: IMC Post - Conciliar Reflections*, 72-73, ISTITUTO MISSIONI CONSOLATA, *Costituzioni e Direttorio Generale*, no. 4-5

⁵⁹ www.vatican.va / BENEDICT XVI, 80's World Mission Sunday Message "*Charity: soul of the mission*", 29 April 2006, 10/03/2016

⁶⁰ www.vatican.va / BENEDICT XVI, World Mission Sunday Message, *Building Ecclesial Communion is the Key to Mission*, 6 February 2010, 10/03/2016, BENEDICT XVI, *Verbum Domini*,

A priest by his ordination is missionary, ordained for the service of the universal church. A priest should be formed in a catholic mentality to be concerned the whole mission of the church. In his Encyclical *Fidei Donum*, Pope Pius XII, with prophetic insight, encouraged bishops to offer some of their priests for temporary service in the churches of Africa, and gave his approval to projects already existing for that purpose.⁶¹ Allamano had such understanding and dream before half a century.

Pope Paul VI defines evangelization as "bringing the Good News into all the strata of humanity, and through its influence transforming humanity from within and making it new" EN19. Evangelization is not only a matter of preaching the Good News in a wider coverage geographically, but also changing the mentality of the people from human logic to gospel logic. In other word evangelization is human promotion in every aspect. It is inseparable to announce the love of God and to show fraternal concern and love to the people whom we are evangelizing.⁶²

Today more than ever, missionary activity should be accompanied by life witness or holiness of life. "Modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if he does listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses."⁶³ If the life of the missionary does not reflect his identity or if he is not living the word of God practically it would be an obstacle for the mission and he could not be happy in life.⁶⁴ The world needs spirit filled evangelizers, those who are working and praying with generosity and zeal for mission. "A spirit-filled evangelizer is one

Apostolic Exhortation, on the Word of God in the Life and Mission of the Church, 30 September 2010, no. 94

⁶¹ VATICAN COUNCIL II, *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, 7 December 1965, 10, RM 67-68, AG 39.

⁶² VATICAN COUNCIL II, *Gaudium et Spes*, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, 7 December 1965, (hereafter referred as GS), 46,53, EN 24, RM 58, EG 76-79, CONSOLATA MISSIONARIES, Ed., *Consecration and Mission: IMC Post - Conciliar Reflections*, 52-56, ISTITUTO MISSIONI CONSOLATA, *Costituzioni e Direttorio Generale*, no. 3, 69, ISTITUTO MISSIONI CONSOLATA, XI Capitolo Generale, *Atti del Capitolo Generale*, no. 22, F. A. OBORJI, *Concepts of Mission*, 21-25.

⁶³ 1Pt 3:1, EN 41, RM 42.

⁶⁴ EG 78-80.

who guided by the Holy Spirit, for he is the souls' of the Church called to proclaim the Gospel. To be evangelizers we need to have personal encounter with Christ.⁶⁵

The contemporary mission needs to take into consideration the culture of the people to whom we are evangelizing. Inculturation is a way of doing mission in its two way performance; evangelizing the culture and inculturating the gospel. "Missionaries, who come from other culture, need to immerse themselves in the cultural milieu of those to whom they are sent and to move beyond their own cultural limitations. Hence they must learn the language of the place in which they work, to become familiar with the most important expressions of the local culture, and discover its values through direct experience." RM 53.⁶⁶

Conclusion

Allamano managed to translate his missionary understanding and zeal in to action through the Consolata Missionary Institute as small as a mustard seed. Today his missionary thought and charism is universal, the missionary vocation of every local church. Every baptised person needs to be concerned to make known the love of God or to spread the Good News.⁶⁷ Still we are not fully aware of our obligation as individual Christian, as local church, for the mission; so still his teaching is valid for today.

The teaching of Allamano about mission is valid to all time and place at the same time it is open for adaptation according to the time and the place; the history of the Consolata Missionary Institute shows that fact.⁶⁸ During

the time of the founder the extreme poverty was lack of salvation and evangelization was to go and to convert unbelievers and to improve their lives. In our time poverty has many faces; spiritual, material, moral and social, therefore our concern for the poor needs to address all.⁶⁹

The priority of evangelization and generosity with sacrifice is still valid but we need to translate it according to the situation. That is why today missionary activity has different approaches: evangelization as direct proclamation, inculturation, interreligious dialogue, and ecumenism. Today poverty is more than lack of material things; it is all about lack of human dignity, therefore human promotion is liberation, peace and justice, reconciliation, *reconstruction*, concern for nature *migration* etc.... Our goal is to create a better world and humanity as the seed and the beginning of the kingdom of God.⁷⁰

In this time of global indifference, Allamano has a message, reminding us to be generous, to come out from our comfort zone and worrying only our self-sustenance just to survive. The global indifference is affecting the Church also; we are worrying about our self-sustenance even missionary congregations and dioceses.

Our mandate as missionary is to form matured local church ready to go out for mission, not to stay there forever as missionary. It is all about animating the church for mission and vocation promotion.⁷¹

⁶⁵ EG 261, 264, CONSOLATA MISSIONARIES, Ed., *Consecration and Mission: IMC Post - Conciliar Reflections*, 41, 49, 77-78, 101-103, ISTITUTO MISSIONI CONSOLATA, *Costituzioni e Direttorio Generale*, no. 56, 61, ISTITUTO MISSIONI CONSOLATA, XI Capitolo Generale, *Atti del Capitolo Generale*, no. 2,4.

⁶⁶ LG 13, AG 22, EN 20, 63 RM 52-53, EG 68-70, CONSOLATA MISSIONARIES, Ed., *Consecration and Mission: IMC Post - Conciliar Reflections*, 50-52, ISTITUTO MISSIONI CONSOLATA, IX Capitolo Generale, *Atti del Capitolo Generale*, 33, F. A. OBORJI, *Concepts of Mission*, 14-20, ISTITUTO MISSIONI CONSOLATA, *Costituzioni e Direttorio Generale*, no. 72, 73, 74.

⁶⁷ ISTITUTO MISSIONI CONSOLATA, XI Capitolo Generale, *Atti del Capitolo Generale*, 20, G. COLZANI, *Missiologia Contemporanea*, 104-105, 129-131, 311-314.

⁶⁸ ISTITUTO MISSIONI CONSOLATA, *Costituzioni e Direttorio Generale*, no. 2, VS 84-86, 273-274.

⁶⁹ CONSOLATA MISSIONARIES, ed., *Consecration and Mission: IMC Post - Conciliar Reflections*, 21-25.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, no. 22-32, ISTITUTO MISSIONI CONSOLATA, IX Capitolo Generale, *Atti del Capitolo Generale*, 32, ISTITUTO MISSIONI CONSOLATA, X Capitolo Generale, *Atti del Capitolo Generale*, 46-47, 50-51, S.B. BEVANS, R. P. SCHROEDER, *Constants and Context*, 253-255, 305, 352-353, 369ff, F. A. OBORJI, *Concepts of Mission*, 39-40, ISTITUTO MISSIONI CONSOLATA, *Costituzioni e Direttorio Generale*, no. 76, 78,79 *The italics is mine.*

⁷¹ ISTITUTO MISSIONI CONSOLATA, *Costituzioni e Direttorio Generale*, no. 17, VI Capitolo Generale, *Atti del Capitolo*, IMC Torino 1975, III, 2, VI, ISTITUTO MISSIONI CONSOLATA, X Capitolo Generale, *Atti del Capitolo Generale*, 41, 45.

Dix pistes pour lutter contre le cléricanisme

(Paru le 30/8/2018 à 06h00)

1. Mettre les prêtres à leur juste place

En premier lieu, étymologiquement, le cléricanisme semble viser les prêtres. Le pape le définit comme une «manière déviante de concevoir l'autorité dans l'Église». Elle concerne aussi bien le prêtre, dans la manière dont il se perçoit, que les laïcs, dans leur manière de se comporter avec lui. Considération du prêtre comme un surhomme, confiance aveugle dans son autorité, ignorance de ses fragilités et, plus largement de son humanité... voici quelques-unes des façons dont le cléricanisme peut se traduire, et dont, bien souvent, l'on trouve la trace dans les affaires d'abus commis par des prêtres.

L'attachement aux titres hiérarchiques est un autre exemple de ce que dénonce le pape. Lui-même ne s'y est pas trompé, en restreignant largement, dès janvier 2014, l'attribution des titres honorifiques de « Monseigneur » aux prêtres. Une manière de lutter aussi contre le carriérisme au sein du clergé.

Aujourd'hui, dans la manière dont sont formés les jeunes prêtres, « cette notion de carrière ou d'ambition cléricale est dépassée », assure le père Jean-Luc Garin, supérieur du séminaire interdiocésain de Lille. De même, la collaboration avec les laïcs est envisagée d'une façon beaucoup moins hiérarchique. «Le sacerdoce est fait pour le service, ce n'est pas un en-soi», rappelle le père Garin. La dimension humaine du prêtre est aussi mieux prise en compte, avec par exemple, au séminaire de Lille, un accompagnement des séminaristes par une psychologue.

Le moment de la formation des futurs prêtres, déterminante pour l'exercice du ministère, semble donc être pensé aujourd'hui précisément de manière à éviter les dérives du cléricanisme. La nouvelle *Ratio fundamentalis*, le «programme» édité par le Vatican pour la

formation des prêtres, publiée fin 2016, va d'ailleurs dans ce sens.

2. Mettre les laïcs à leur juste place

Des paroissiens présents depuis vingt ans dans les équipes d'animation pastorale dont ils empêchent le renouvellement, d'autres qui se posent en défenseurs d'un ordre établi sous prétexte qu'ils se sont vu confier une mission par le curé... Les exemples de cléricanisme laïc ne manquent pas.

Certains ont parfois une tendance à «réduire le peuple de Dieu à une petite élite», confirme Mgr Jérôme Beau, président de la Commission épiscopale pour les ministres ordonnés et les laïcs en mission ecclésiale (CEMOLEME). Traduction : pour être un bon chrétien, mieux vaut être dans les petits papiers du curé, et cette conception entraîne frictions et divisions dans les communautés où chacun a du mal à trouver sa place, particulièrement les jeunes.

Selon Mgr Beau, la notion clé pour remettre le laïc à sa place demeure le service. «Un laïc "cléric" exerce un pouvoir, il ne rend pas un service.» Or, avec la baisse du nombre de prêtres, de plus en plus de baptisés se voient confier des services. «Cela nous invite à repenser la communion ecclésiale», insiste l'archevêque nommé de Bourges, qui voit à l'avenir les paroisses comme des «communautés autoportées» où personne, pas même le prêtre, ne sera en position de surplomb.

Dans cette perspective, remettre le laïc à sa juste place revient à parler de mission plutôt que de fonction à laquelle serait rattaché un pouvoir. C'est ainsi que depuis quelques années, les laïcs en mission ecclésiale reçoivent une charge d'une durée limitée de trois ans, renouvelable. En définitive, la mission du laïc, c'est «renoncer à un pouvoir

qui domine, pour servir dans la charité», résume Mgr Jérôme Beau.

3. Rappeler l'égalité de tous devant le baptême

«L'appel à la plénitude de la vie chrétienne (...) s'adresse à tous ceux qui croient au Christ, quel que soit leur état ou leur rang», a affirmé le concile Vatican II (*Lumen gentium* V, 40). En ce sens, rappelle le théologien jésuite Christoph Theobald, enseignant au Centre Sèvres, «le baptême instaure un principe fondamental d'égalité entre tous les baptisés, et cela l'emporte sur tout le reste». Vatican II a affirmé également que tous les baptisés ont le «sens de la foi» et que cela leur donne certains droits, dont le droit de s'associer. «Les fidèles peuvent s'organiser en groupes comme ils le veulent, pour lire les Évangiles ou pour exercer la solidarité, poursuit le père Theobald. Et s'il s'agit d'une association de droit privé, les fidèles n'ont pas à rendre compte aux clercs de ce qu'ils vivent.»

S'il reconnaît des difficultés réelles à vivre l'égalité baptismale, Christoph Theobald constate que celles-ci ne sont pas spécifiques à l'Église : dans tous les secteurs de la société, une hiérarchie s'instaure entre les spécialistes et les autres. «Il est facile de prendre les clercs pour des "spécialistes du religieux" et de leur laisser faire le travail. Cela produit des angoisses, tant du côté des clercs débordés que des fidèles déçus de ne plus avoir de prêtres disponibles.»

Cette égalité entre fidèles et clercs est d'autant plus fondamentale qu'elle s'appuie sur le rapport de «hiérarchie inversée» vécue par Jésus: «Que le plus grand parmi vous prenne la place de celui qui sert», déclare le Christ après l'institution de l'Eucharistie (Lc 22, 26). Parce que Jésus a inversé l'ordre hiérarchique, «les clercs sont dans une position seconde et non pas première», poursuit le père Theobald, qui aime utiliser l'image d'un prêtre sourcier face aux immenses nappes phréatiques de l'Église et de la société. «À eux de se laisser d'abord surprendre par les relations fraternelles et les

initiatives des fidèles, avant de lancer des projets de leur unique initiative.»

4. Assumer publiquement les fautes de l'Église

Tout catholique qui évoque publiquement les fautes de l'Église s'expose à deux types de réactions. Soit il se verra féliciter pour son courage et son souci de transparence, soit il se fera blâmer d'avoir «blessé» l'Église et alimenté les arguments de ses détracteurs. Y compris lorsqu'il s'agit de crimes.

Dans l'avion qui le ramenait d'Irlande, le pape n'a pas hésité à rappeler que le silence s'installait d'abord dans les familles concernées par les abus sexuels commis par des membres du clergé. «Tellement souvent, ce sont les parents aussi qui couvrent les prêtres qui abusent. Ils ne croient pas leurs enfants, et le garçon ou la fille reste comme ça», a affirmé François, lançant un appel à «parler» et à «parler encore».

C'est précisément cette culture du silence, doublée d'une tendance à l'entre-soi que dénonce le pape François quand il évoque la «corruption spirituelle», dont la complicité passive est le ferment. Pour la théologienne dominicaine Véronique Margron, «il faut vraiment que disparaisse cet empire de l'omerta. Un tel silence, qui s'explique à la fois par l'argument, médiocre, de "ne pas faire de mal à l'Église" et par la corruption, la complicité, n'est plus possible.» Pour la moraliste, briser le silence ne suffit pas. «Assumer les fautes de l'Église, ce n'est pas seulement demander pardon. C'est poser des actes forts vis-à-vis des abuseurs au cas par cas, réparer financièrement ce qui est réparable et instaurer des procédures moins opaques. Trop souvent, on ne sait pas ce que deviennent les dossiers des prêtres abuseurs.»

5. Organiser des lieux de débat dans l'Église

Entre laïcs ou avec un prêtre, qui dit liberté de parole dit liberté d'exprimer des désaccords, notion explicitée dans le code de droit canonique. Il y a quelques mois, La Croix s'était interrogée sur la possibilité de

débattre dans l'Église (notre édition du 31 janvier). Et avait constaté l'absence d'une culture de débat entre catholiques, et l'inexistence de lieux dédiés à cet exercice.

Un manque sans doute lié à la structure pyramidale de l'institution, qui pousse à se tourner vers une autorité supérieure, plutôt que de débattre entre égaux. Mais aussi à la sociologie du catholicisme français, souvent décrit comme une juxtaposition de «chapelles», de groupes qui se rencontrent peu, et, souvent, ne s'apprécient guère.

Un problème que n'a pas résolu Internet, bien au contraire, qui a pourtant vu se multiplier blogs ou comptes Twitter, sur lesquels des laïcs s'expriment en toute indépendance: ces nouveaux acteurs ont toujours tendance à parler aux «leurs». Pour entrer dans une culture de débat saine, «encore faut-il en prendre les moyens, soulignait alors le père Jean-François Chiron, théologien : se former, et choisir le bon cadre institutionnel, qui peut être la paroisse ou une faculté de théologie, ne pas prétendre ériger une nouvelle norme...»

Des initiatives en ce sens existent déjà, comme le Centre Sèvres, à Paris, qui remet au goût du jour la tradition de la *disputatio* entre étudiants. Mais c'est encore rare.

6. Utiliser sa liberté de parole

«C'est une réalité encore terriblement ancrée: les laïcs s'écrasent devant leurs curés, n'osent pas leur faire part frontalement d'éventuels désaccords», regrette Monique Hébrard, journaliste et auteur de l'ouvrage *Prêtres. Enquête sur le clergé d'aujourd'hui*.¹ Comment expliquer que nombre de fidèles demeurent réfractaires à exercer cette liberté, pourtant inscrite dans le code du droit canonique, de pouvoir exprimer leur opinion au sein de l'Église ? Peur d'entrer en conflit, sentiment de ne pas faire intellectuellement le poids...

« Cette liberté de parole des laïcs est tributaire de l'attitude du prêtre, s'il entretient une relation de mise à distance et non de mise au service du fait de sa consécration »,

soutient le père Christian Delorme, curé de l'ensemble paroissial Saint-Côme-Saint-Damien, à Caluire dans la banlieue de Lyon. Très engagé sur le terrain politique, y compris sur des sujets clivants – contre l'extrême droite, pour le dialogue islamo-chrétien... – dans les rangs catholiques, il encourage le débat avec ses paroissiens. «Ils osent me dire leurs désaccords, toujours avec beaucoup de respect », explique-t-il, soulignant que le fait de « leur laisser la liberté de l'appeler comme ils le souhaitent » a participé à l'affirmation de cette relation franche.

Pour sortir de ce phénomène d'autocensure des laïcs, «il faudrait qu'ils soient davantage formés à la théologie, à la pastorale, à l'humain», recommande Monique Hébrard, ancienne membre du groupe «Paroles », portant dans les années 1990 la voix des laïcs dans les médias. «Sans jouer l'opposition pour être dans l'opposition, cela leur permettrait d'avoir une pensée plus structurée pour oser un dialogue libre avec leurs curés.»

7. Gouverner les diocèses de manière plus collégiale

Le 17 octobre 2015, dans son discours au Synode des évêques, dans lequel il rappelait que la synodalité est une «dimension constitutive de l'Église», le pape François soulignait que son «premier niveau d'exercice (...) se réalise dans les Églises particulières», c'est-à-dire les diocèses où, justement, le gouvernement des évêques apparaît souvent très personnel.

«Sans le vouloir, Vatican II a ouvert la porte à cela», relève le père Patrick Valdrini, professeur de droit canonique à l'Université pontificale du Latran. «En insistant sur la plénitude du sacrement de l'ordre comme source du pouvoir de l'évêque, il a donné un caractère sacré à ce pouvoir. Pourtant, si dans l'Église le pouvoir est personnel, il n'est jamais arbitraire : il existe toujours des collèges censés être autant de contrepoids.»

À ses yeux, c'est justement pour contrebalancer cette dérive que François insiste tant sur la synodalité. Dans son discours d'octobre 2015, le pape rappelle, outre la possibilité des synodes diocésains, les

¹ Éd. Buchet-Chastel, 2008, 280 p., 22,30€

différents conseils qui entourent l'évêque soulignant que «de tels instruments qui, parfois, font preuve de lassitude, doivent être valorisés comme occasion d'écoute et de partage».

Dans la pratique, ces conseils ont connu des dérives. Ainsi le collège des consultants, que l'évêque est obligé de solliciter dans les affaires les plus importantes : ce «conseil des sages», héritier du chapitre cathédral autrefois considéré comme le «sénat de l'évêque», n'apparaît plus forcément comme le contre-pouvoir qu'il est censé être. Trop souvent, l'évêque y nomme ses vicaires généraux ou épiscopaux qui, par leur fonction, sont solidaires de l'évêque et de ses décisions.

Quant au conseil pastoral, ouvert aux laïcs mais seulement consultatif, le code de droit canonique n'oblige pas encore à sa constitution par l'évêque qui n'est même pas obligé de publier ses travaux. Cette précarité du conseil pastoral se retrouve aussi au niveau paroissial où, parfois, les prêtres n'hésitent pas à se passer de ces laïcs perçus comme voulant freiner leurs initiatives.

8. Donner des responsabilités aux laïcs

Dans cette lutte contre le cléralisme, les laïcs ont une place à prendre: aussi bien symboliquement qu'en accédant à de hautes responsabilités. Mgr Jérôme Beau, évêque nommé de Bourges et président de la Commission épiscopale pour les ministres ordonnés et les laïcs en mission ecclésiale (CEMOLEME), confirme qu'il va falloir rapidement se poser la question de « ce qui constitue la vocation du laïc ».

Au sein même du Vatican, le pape François aimerait voir des laïcs à la tête d'organismes ayant du poids dans les orientations de l'Église. Dans une interview accordée au magazine *Intercom*, le cardinal Kevin Farrell, préfet du dicastère pour les laïcs, la famille et la vie, explique que le pape lui aurait fait part de «sa lassitude de voir toutes les congrégations prendre le premier rôle pour absolument tout». Ces congrégations étant toutes dirigées par des prêtres ou des évêques. Et le cardinal Farrell d'ajouter que «les personnes les plus importantes dans l'Église

ne sont pas les prêtres, ni les évêques, mais les laïcs».

Encore faudrait-il que ces vœux se traduisent dans la gouvernance de l'Église. Un laïc, en mission ecclésiale dans le diocèse de Paris depuis plus de huit ans, confie « qu'il n'a pas vu tellement les laïcs prendre des places décisives » dans son diocèse où «les prêtres ne font pas encore défaut». Selon lui, cela est «en partie dû à la fois à un manque de formation notamment pour les acteurs pastoraux, lacune parfois présumée par certains prêtres qui pensent que les laïcs n'ont pas les qualifications requises comparées aux leurs». D'autant qu'un effort manifeste de formation a été mené dans les diocèses français.

Ce travers est logique selon Anne Soupa, présidente de la Conférence catholique des baptisé(e)s francophones (CCBF). «Depuis le XI^e siècle, le prêtre assure, de par sa différence de nature, les trois charges de gouvernement, de sanctification et d'enseignement, explique-t-elle. Il faut que cela change.»

Pour cela, la CCBF a écrit une lettre ouverte aux évêques de France, exhortant à la tenue d'assise de la gouvernance de l'Église pour poser la question «d'une cogouvernance de l'ensemble des baptisés» des institutions ecclésiales.

9. Associer plus de femmes à la formation des prêtres

«La familiarisation avec la réalité féminine, si présente dans les paroisses et dans d'autres milieux ecclésiaux, s'avère essentielle pour la formation humaine et spirituelle des séminaristes et devra toujours être considérée positivement», peut-on lire dans la nouvelle *Ratio fundamentalis institutionis sacerdotalis* (2016) de la Congrégation pour le clergé. Ces propos font suite aux recommandations du rapport final (2015) du Synode sur la famille, qui invitaient à «valoriser davantage» la participation féminine à la formation des futurs prêtres. C'est pourtant loin d'être le cas.

Certes, on compte quelques femmes enseignantes dans la plupart des séminaires en France. Mais celles-ci sont généralement

«reléguées dans des disciplines sans enjeu directement théologique, telles les langues anciennes ou l'histoire», regrette la bibliste Anne-Marie Pelletier qui a enseigné au séminaire du diocèse de Paris. Au séminaire Saint-Sulpice d'Issy-les-Moulineaux, on ne compte que sept femmes – dont deux pour l'ecclésiologie et la théologie – pour 40 hommes, mais à partir de cette rentrée, une mère de famille, assistante du supérieur du séminaire, devient membre du conseil avec lettre de mission de la Compagnie Saint-Sulpice.

«Il n'y a aucune raison pour qu'une quelconque discipline soit interdite aux femmes. Toutes les branches de la théologie devraient pouvoir être abordées à travers le double regard masculin et féminin, et de futurs prêtres ne sauraient être bien formés par le canal exclusif d'une parole sacerdotale», insiste la théologienne dominicaine Véronique Margron, ancienne doyenne de la faculté de théologie d'Angers. Elle plaide aussi pour que des femmes soient membres des conseils des séminaires, en rappelant que pendant ses années d'enseignement de théologie morale dans un séminaire diocésain, elle n'a «jamais» été invitée au conseil : «Vu ma discipline, on aurait pu penser que j'avais des conversations profondes avec des séminaristes et que cela aurait pu justifier ma présence.» «Plus il y aura de pluralité, mieux on sera armé pour faire face à l'autoritarisme», poursuit Véronique Margron qui rappelle toutefois que le cléricisme et l'autoritarisme ne sont les apanages ni des hommes ni des clercs: «Il peut y avoir un cléricisme de femmes.»

10. Placer des femmes à des fonctions d'autorité

«Les femmes dans l'Église doivent être estimées à leur valeur et pas cléricisées», affirmait le pape François dès décembre 2013, rejetant l'idée de cardinales. D'une certaine manière, clériciser les femmes reviendrait en effet à perpétuer le modèle cléric. «Leur place dans l'Église, les femmes doivent l'avoir en tant que femmes», insiste l'historienne féministe Lucetta Scaraffia,

responsable du supplément «Femmes Église Monde» de *L'Osservatore romano* qui dit ne pas croire aux femmes prêtres. Pas plus qu'aux diaconesses, sujet que le pape François a confié à une commission dont les travaux semblent perdus dans les sables de l'inertie vaticane...

En avril dernier, François a néanmoins nommé trois femmes consultrices de la puissante Congrégation pour la doctrine de la foi. Une première. Et, en désignant, au début de l'été, un laïc à la tête du dicastère pour la communication, il a aussi ouvert la porte à des femmes préfètes de dicastère.

Les religieuses sont ici en première ligne. Ainsi, au Synode, leurs représentantes n'ont pas le droit de vote, contrairement à ceux des religieux. Or les responsables de grandes congrégations religieuses seraient largement capables d'accéder à des fonctions de gouvernement. La présidente de l'Union internationale des supérieures générales (représentant les 650 000 religieuses du monde) serait très à même de conseiller le pape. Y compris au «C9».

Dans les diocèses, des femmes encore plus nombreuses pourraient être nommées comme chancelière ou professeure de séminaire. Rien n'empêche non plus qu'elles soient accompagnatrices spirituelles, voire prédicatrices de retraite. «Je rêve que le pape demande à une femme de prêcher la retraite de la Curie», confie Lucetta Scaraffia qui, comme beaucoup, interroge l'interdiction qui leur est faite de commenter l'Évangile à la messe.

Enfin, il faut rappeler que *Sacrosanctum concilium* et la Présentation générale du Missel romain identifient 17 fonctions liturgiques différentes : autant de pistes à explorer pour des ministères spécifiquement féminins.

(An English translation of this article can be found on the SEDOS Website)

SEDOS AUTUMN SEMINAR 2020

In cooperation with *Faith and Praxis*

The Past - Present - Future of our Congregational STRUCTURES IN THE SERVICE OF MISSION

Friday 16 and Saturday 17 October 2020

WEBINAR: Registration before Thursday 15th of October
(online group discussion will be organized by language group)

MORNING DAY 1

Moderator: Fr. Peter Baekelmans, CICM (EN)

10.00-10.15: Prayer and Introduction

10.15-11.15: PANEL

Institutes with different experiences of organizing the Congregation.

(Focus: What is the evolution of our structures in the last 20 year)

Congr. 1: Medical Mission Sisters, MMS

Sr. Agnes Lanfermann, Former Superior General (EN)

Congr. 2: Immaculate Heart of Mary, CICM

Fr. Adorable Castillo, Vice-General Superior (EN)

Congr. 3: Marist Brothers, FMS

Br. Juan Carlos Fuertes, Provincial (SP)

11.15-11.30: Coffee Break

11.30-12.15: Group sharing based on the learnings and questions

12.15-12.45: Feedback from the groups (What can be helpful for my own Congregation?)

MIDDAY DAY 1

Moderator: Sr. Piluca Benavente Serrano, MSOLA (EN)

14.00-14.45: LECTURE

Sr. Mary Wright, IBVM (EN)

How free can we be to change structures?

(Focus: The Canonical implications when changing structures)

14.45-15.00: Coffee Break

15.00-15.30: Group sharing based on the questions from the speaker

15.30-16.15: Feedback from the different groups.

MORNING DAY 2

Moderator: Br. Emili Turú, FMS (SP)

10.00-10.15: Prayer and Introduction

10.15-11.15: PANEL *Being creative with the structures*

(Focus: offering examples on how some Congregations and other ecclesial groups are changing their structures in view of mission)

1: Missionaries of Nazareth with “*Nazareth Global*”.

..... (SP)

2: Jesuits in Spain with “*Apostolic Platforms*”.

Francisco José Ruiz Pérez, SJ (SP)

3: Adsis (International Association of Faithful) with “*enlaNzada*”.

Begoña Martínez, Adsis (SP)

11.15-11.45: Coffee Break

11.45-12.15: Group sharing based on the following questions:

Are we as creative as we could be?

If you had the freedom to organize your Congregation from zero?

If you were to create a new Congregation?

12.15-12.45: Feedback from the groups

MIDDAY BREAK

Moderator: Fr. Peter Baekelmans, CICM (EN)

14.00-15.00: LECTURE *Covid19. Analysis, impact on our life and mission.*

(Focus: Digitalization and our structures.)

The Analysis: **Emilia Palladino, Prof. Social Studies at Gregorian University (IT)**

The Impact: **Ricky Laguda, FSC, General Councilor of Lasalle Brothers (EN)**

15.00-15.30: Coffee Break

15.30-16.00: Group sharing on the influence of Covid-19 in the ways of interacting, working, organizing the work of the Council and the mission

16.00-16.45: Reflections and suggestions from the different groups about the whole seminar

16.45-17.00: Conclusion

SEDOS (Roman-Catholic Service of Documentation and Study on Global Mission)

FAITH AND PRAXIS (Faith and Praxis for Global Leadership)

Faith and Praxis Associates International was born from the history and mystery of our life experience, a life dedicated to lay and religious teams, a life colored by a faith-filled commitment to God and to our Congregations and Organizations.

SEDOS Autumn Seminar

In collaboration with *Faith and Praxis*

THE PAST, PRESENT, FUTURE OF OUR CONGREGATIONAL STRUCTURES IN THE SERVICE OF MISSION

*Exploring the adequacy / suitability of our congregational structures
and looking for possible alternatives in the post COVID - 19*



(Foto Alvaro Pinot, on Unsplash)

SEDOS WEBINAR

16 – 17 October, 2020



Registration via Email *before 15 October*

redacsed@sedosmission.org

Online Participation Fee: € 20

SEDOS

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SIMULTANEOUS TRANSLATION IN FOUR LANGUAGES