



SEDOS

Bulletin 2011

Vol. 43, No. 11/12
November-December

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EDITORIAL



"People who walked in darkness
have seen a great light".

To SEDOS' Friends
We wish a Merry Christmas and
a Happy New Year !



All our Congregations are facing more or less the same challenge: that of identifying fitting members for training for formation, because good quality formation depends on good quality Formators. Created in God's image and likeness, every human being is a mystery to himself/herself. Human existence is an unfolding process of self-discovery that is why the Ministry of Formation is an awesome mystery. It is God's work entrusted to human hands.

God is the first Formator; it is he who calls and transforms. Formators, are called to active contemplation and so to be able to catch a glimpse of the invisible work of transformation being worked in the young women and men entrusted to them. Formators accompany the candidates so as to enable them to make a re-reading of their life story, assume and integrate their past, and discern God's action in their lives, and so respond in freedom and responsibility to God's plan and embrace it as mission.

We are very grateful to the Congregations that sent us articles or allowed us to download articles from their Web-Site. This very fact has empowered us to offer to SEDOS Readers some necessary and important materials to prepare the missionaries for today: lived experiences at the stage of Initial Formation, and up-to-date articles. Such as the ones on "Psycho-Spiritual Integration in the Formation Process" by Fr. Justi TARIMO, CSSp; "Religious Formation and Psychosexual Integration" by Sister Chinyeaka C. Ezeani, MSHR; "Madurez Psicológica y Madurez Espiritual", *"Una lectura de Doroteo de Gaza"* by Sor Pascale-Dominique Nau, OP. A Call to Character Formation by Dr John Sankarathil, OSFS. The main issue which preoccupies us today is the one dealing with the skills needed to attain the Psycho-spiritual and Psychosexual integration of our candidates in an ever-changing world, always moving onward.

This issue also brings the voices of the Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of Africa in the period of temporary vows. They are sharing their journey of integrating the different elements of the programme and how the Spirit of the Lord is transforming their lives.

And finally, the Sisters with temporary vows of the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary were enthused when they were asked to be protagonists in learning to produce materials for vocation promotion. They got involved in producing a video show and share with you their excitement and joy. Unfortunately, the time did not allow them to finish it, but they got the skills.

Sister NZENZILI MBOMA, FMM
Executive Director

Justi Tarimo,

PSYCHO SPIRITUAL INTEGRATION IN THE FORMATION PROCESS



Justi is well qualified to speak on the subject. He was ordained in 1999; thereafter he went on mission to Mauritius and Seychelles for five years. This was followed by specialised studies in Clinical Psychology and Formation at the Gregorian University, Rome, from which he graduated with a Licentiate in 2007. In 2008 he was sent to work in formation at the Spiritan Missionary Seminary, and in 2009 he was appointed Rector of the same Institute. In the article, which he presented at the Nairobi Meeting, he writes about the role that psychology plays in the vocation journey and how personalised

formation and accompaniment can bring about true psycho-spiritual formation.

Introduction

Any Christian vocation is both an initiative and a gift from God who is transcendent and immanent. God is transcendent in the sense that He is independent of us; he is beyond us. In the philosophy of religion, a transcendent God is one who is distinct and separate from the universe he created. Even though God is independent of us, distinct and separate, he is very close to us. He is immanent to the human person.

A human being is concrete, finite, and spiritual. The spiritual element in him: the power of reasoning, the soul, makes him transcendent. This is what brings us close to God.

The call we receive is only meaningful if the human person can live it fully. Rulla M. Luigi says, "the call should appear as a project of life which is suited to the human person, not destroying him or diminishing the person but building him up". (1) Yet the Christian vocation cannot be reduced merely to human fulfilment, for it is something divine but lived in the human condition.

It is in this context of living the divine call in a human condition that calls for the convergence of psychology and Spirituality. The human person is created in the image and likeness of God (Gn: 1:26). This is an indication that the human person shares something both psychological and spiritual with God. The human person is a complex and mysterious being.

The mystery that man is, keeps on unfolding progressively. The unfolding process calls for man's awareness so that man can appreciate the mystery he is. In appreciating the mystery that he is, he is taken beyond himself to meet the Other through others. There is self-transcendence – going beyond self. The meeting with the Other is the beginning of self-surrender; hence, self-giving on the vocation journey. Such a journey calls for psychological resources so that it can make sense to man and be lived as authentically as possible. On the journey man becomes aware of his limitations and "this temporal limitation of human life, as well as the searching, the sorrow and the solitude which characterize it, remind man that he does not contain within himself the reason for his being. He is, therefore, a mystery to himself, knowing and desiring himself in terms of the world and of the reality which he finds outside himself. He knows himself in knowing the reality of this world, and desires himself in desiring things: the realities which surround him".(2)

Before a vocation journey begins, the individual would already have established a certain image of himself, others and the Other through the encounter with his surroundings. The first instance of such surroundings is the family milieu. It is from the family milieu and society at large that the desire to know the Other on a personal level develops. However, it is not always true that the individual's background provides a correct understanding of self and of the other.

There are a number of factors which can hinder a correct and authentic understanding. Consequently, when there is a misconception of oneself this will adversely influence the conception of others and of the Other.

The role of psychology then is to discover when, how, and why such misconceptions happen with the possibility of an authentic remedy which takes into consideration the reality of man as mystery. The role of psychology is to enable one to act in the best possible way, according to reason. Unfortunately, it can happen that one may act in one's own self-interest under the pretext of acting for the other.

In this short paper, an attempt is made to: understand the reality of man in an inclusive way, indicate some attempts to reduce the reality of mystery and the consequences of such a temptation. Finally, there will be some methodological suggestions of how to re-address the issue in an authentic way without reducing the reality of human mystery, hence psycho-spiritual integration.

The Parameters of Human Mystery

The question of formation to priestly life poses a number of challenges that are partly due to the present revelation of the sexual scandals that the Church has been, and still is, experiencing in many parts of the world. The cases mentioned in Northern America and in Western Europe are just the tip of the iceberg. This problem demands our serious attention and commitment.

Another big challenge is being posed by the secularized world. In such a secularized world, the question is how to form young people to live their commitment in the world where the social structures are less supportive of the type of life chosen. In the *Tablet* of 6th March 2010, Hans Küng strongly objected to the statement made by the President of the German Episcopal Conference, Archbishop Robert Zollitsch, that the sexual abuse of children has nothing to do with the law of celibacy for the clergy. Küng argues that "Celibacy is not the only cause of such misconduct ... however, it is the most important and structurally the most decisive expression of an uptight attitude of the Church's leadership towards sexuality in general". The question then is: How does celibacy contribute to the problem? Would the abolition of celibacy, for example, reduce the problem? There is no straightforward answer to the question. It is complex.

In my clinical experience, when I was at university, I accompanied at least two priests who had the problem of being sexually attracted to minors. One of them had acted it out in a few instances. Both priests were from milieus different from those which have come before the public eye so far, i.e. North America and Europe. This is to say that the problem exists elsewhere, although it has not yet become public. Sooner or later it will come! In both cases there were difficulties in their development process within the family *milieu*.

The problem of instability in the mission appointments has been experienced for some time now. The re-appointment of those who are still in their mission appointment in recent years was a cause for alarm to the General Council. Some of the reflections felt that the problem at issue concerned the choosing of the welcoming community, affirming that a proper preparation and discernment of the welcoming community has to be done. Is the problem only with the welcoming community, or with the young confrère?

Franco Imoda, in his *Human Development: Psychology and Mystery*, (3) outlines three aspects of human growth and existence which he terms “parameters”. His idea is that when the three parameters are well integrated and lived in a balanced way, then a mature human person develops. His understanding of maturity is holistic in the sense that the individual continues to discover him/herself continually. He tries to bridge the extremes and the problem of reducing human life to only one aspect of existence. The three parameters, according to Imoda, are Otherness, Temporality, and Stages. Briefly, I will try to show how in each aspect the best/optimum approach will bring about maturity and the continuous discovery of the human mystery as created in the image and likeness of God.

Otherness

Imoda sees the process of human development as a *scenario* through which the mystery of human life unfolds progressively. The HOW of the process is crucial so as to determine whether there will be maturity or immaturity, whether the mystery of human existence is respected or not. The way the process unfolds prepares the ground for whether a strong character for religious/priestly formation develops or a weak one. The idea of otherness in human existence reflects the reality that from birth to death, human contact with others is crucial and indispensable. Maturity can only be achieved if there is a balance between the ‘other’ and the self. Any attempt at reductionism will result in immaturity. The family environment is the context in which such an encounter begins. A stable family which is capable of providing a sense of security, acceptance and belonging, while respecting the individuality of the child in the first five to ten years of life is a guarantee for the mystery of human existence. An individual coming from such a family background may have the necessary inner strength to live the challenges of religious life and persevere at the moment of crisis. He will have the proper inner boundaries required for mature and fulfilling human relationships.

In our Formation Houses, we meet young people from different family backgrounds. The intuitive pedagogy used in their upbringing in relationship to the reality of otherness determines the type of candidate we may have. This in turn will determine the type of formation and areas which may call for special attention in the accompaniment of the young candidate. It is in such a context that personalized formation is required. In human development, there are always two poles, namely, the self and the ‘other’. Any attempt which directly or indirectly, consciously or unconsciously, overemphasizes one pole will lead to “removing an essential anthropological characteristic of the human person”.

The central question, as I mentioned above, is HOW the ‘otherness’ is faced. If the ‘otherness’ is faced in such a way that it exaggerates or overemphasizes the importance of the self, then there will be immaturity. One of the possible forms of emphasizing self is permissiveness. The general culture of the present world gives the impression that everything is possible, insofar as it pleases the individual. With such a permissive culture, no clear sense of boundary is communicated to the individual, and the sense of objective values is not clearly presented. This approach tends to forget the demands of the ‘other’, which is in the form of demands of the external world, by focusing only on the subject. A candidate brought up in this kind of world view who joins a religious community will have difficulty in living his religious commitment. Community life will be difficult because most likely, his world view may tend to make him feel that everything should function according to his point of view. The objectivity of the religious values will be reduced to subjectivity. Any attempt to remind him of the objectivity needed to live the religious values, may lead to accusations that the superior/community is unfair to him.

Another extreme in the family upbringing which may also result in immaturity is the emphasis on the ‘otherness’, while ignoring the self. This immaturity which derives from objectivism “has an authoritarian or extrinsic stamp, and which never succeeds in appreciating the value of personal appropriation and interiorization of the true and the good” (p. 75). These are types of religious who have difficulty in being in touch with their feelings and emotions and those of others so as to bring

about apostolic effectiveness. Such religious will even have difficulty in spending leisure time in the community. The failure to be in touch with one's own emotions and feelings may have serious repercussions or even deviations. It may lead to the incapacity to feel guilt and the sense of remorse sincerely.

So the Formator has to be aware of such possible forms of immaturity in some candidates so that his intervention can seek to create a balance, which is lacking, between the two poles. It is due to the peculiarity of immaturity in each individual that the Formator needs to adopt an approach of personalized formation. This awareness and knowledge will enable the Formator to know when and how to intervene in the best way.

Temporality

The second aspect Imoda mentioned on the concept of human development and the discovery of the human Mystery is the concept of time. By temporality, he means that in human development and the encounter with otherness, there is the question of time and progress. The encounter with otherness does not take place in one single period. In human existence, there is past, present and future. This concept of time has deeper implications in the understanding of human development and spiritual growth.

In any human existence, there is always the past, present and future. The fact of being born in a particular time, place, in a particular culture, and social-politico-economical context, puts the individual in a framework of time. This implies a sense of limitation and concerns the broader context of human finitude. On the other hand the human spirit is free and able to determine a future other than certain givens. The human spirit is capable of transcending what is presented by the past and of creating a different future. In Greek mythology, there are two figures who can help us understand the concept of temporality. The symbolic images of these two figures demonstrate how the past can be lived positively as the source of inspiration for a better future or negatively as the source of helplessness in any future. The first character is called "Prometheus who climbs Olympus in order to acquire the sacred fire of life and to acquire life, whereas Sisyphus, the prisoner, is condemned to pushing a boulder up to the summit of the mountain from which it inexorably falls down again". The idea of temporality is about how different experiences affect the individual and how they are lived later on. The past cannot be changed but it can be given a better or worse meaning. Prometheus represents that dimension of the human spirit which seeks and ventures into the future, which is better and promising in spite of a difficult past and present. This dimension of the human spirit has inner freedom and can control its future destiny. Sisyphus, on the other hand, represents the other dimension of the human spirit which looks back to the past in a fatalistic way, seeing life as a burden to be carried, with no hope of a better future. Life, in this dimension of the human spirit, is boring and repetitive. However, although the two dimensions exist in the same human person, childhood experiences with otherness will determine which dimension will predominate in the life of the individual. A number of problems such as alcoholism that are experienced in religious life are the consequence of the predominance of the Sisyphus dimension.

In the development process, the reality of past experiences is inevitable. The three aspects of temporality: the past, the present, and the future need to be well integrated and treated with the dimension of Prometheus. Any attempt to emphasize one aspect to the exclusion of the other will not bring about maturity. Immaturity, resulting from the failure of a balanced integration in this area, may be visible in different forms. One, is the attitude of some candidates who are incapable of waiting or being patient. They tend to demand that every desire and wish be fulfilled *hic et nunc*.

Another form of immaturity may be expressed by the inability to accept novelty in life. Such individuals remain closed in their past experiences and in their way of being and doing. Any new proposition will cause anxiety and fear; hence, lead the individual to claim to be a custodian of tradition. It may also be manifested through an exaggerated desire for newness, while in fact there is fear of facing up to the past realistically.

In order to guide a young man to reach true maturity in this area, the Formator has to direct him to experience three basic attitudes: first, the acceptance of one's past, the given of his life. This acceptance is not to be understood as surrendering oneself in a fatalistic way, but to accept it with the inner freedom of Prometheus.

The second attitude is responsibility. Accepting responsibility for one's existence by taking one's future into one's own hands with faith. Unless there is such positive responsibility, acceptance may lead the person to feel self-defeat. Responsibility calls for a positive future.

The third attitude is call. To live one's life as an experience of a call will enhance the previous two attitudes of acceptance and responsibility. To live the given of life as a call, implies commitment. It is a positive self-surrender and an on-going openness to discover what such a call entails in a progressive way. When the three attitudes are lived in unity, there will be a greater possibility of facing failure and difficulty in the ministry with a positive outlook, realizing the forgiving grace of God in a progressive way while discovering one's own mystery of life.

Structure, Process and Stages

In the first parameter, we saw that there is no such thing as an absolute subject or absolute object. The whole process of growth is a dialogue between the two aspects which pass through various stages, while forming structures. The structures that are formed are physiological, moral, cognitive, and spiritual. These structures are mediations of the encounter between the subject and otherness. In the process of dialogue between the two poles of the subject and otherness, the above mentioned structures are formed progressively. The structures support the process of maturity in the individual whose growth is not linear but spiral. The structures and their corresponding stages are the intermediaries through which the human mystery can be understood. However, there is no single structure or stage which can embrace the whole human person. This parameter is significant in the formation process and vocation growth because it helps to know exactly at what stage the young man is in his growth process. It shows that maturity in one structure does not imply the maturity of the whole person. For example, we have several instances of a young man who is very bright, eloquent, and clear in his thinking, yet this does not necessarily mean that he is mature morally or spiritually. The understanding of the inner structures will give the Formator a clue where and how to intervene. To look at this kind of life in this way is quite challenging because the question will be raised, as to who can be mature in all aspects of his/her life? What the Formator has to look for is not perfection, but harmony and balance between the poles of the first parameter and the structures and stages of the third parameter. He should be able to identify any possible reductionism so that he can chip in to alert the young man, or call for professional assistance, if such be necessary. In epigenetic psychotherapy, for example, intervention depends on the point the individual has reached according to the inner structures of the problem. In one of my clinical experiences, I encountered a young nun who had been raped by gangsters who broke into the convent. Through the healing process, it came to light that she had experienced sexual abuse at the age of five by a member of her family. Here all parameters were involved in order to bring about true healing. First, the process of encounter and dialogue with otherness was at fault. She tended to shy away from any human relationship because the basic trust had been betrayed. Consequently, the spiritual growth of her vocation was built on a wrong understanding, because one of the reasons that led her to enter religious life was to run away from married life. For her, marriage would have perpetuated experiencing the same pain she had experienced from sexual abuse. In her structure, at the stage of her development during the abuse, she had registered that any sexual relationship would mean a painful experience. Her temporality was denied because she was unable to accept that painful past. She did not own her past but the past owned her. So any intervention had to consider all the three parameters and how they were affected so as to bring about holistic healing.

In the following section, I will briefly show how the encounter with the other may produce defensive or even neurotic ways of being. Then, by using the personality style approach or Enneagram, the Formator may intervene in order to bring about true psycho-spiritual integration.

Personality Styles and their Psycho-Spiritual Integration

From the experience of growth in contact with the environment, each individual develops a particular style/way of coping with the daily stresses of life. The style which is developed has the function of protecting the sense of personal esteem. A particular style is generally influenced by an "emotional bond that develops between the child and parent/caregiver which normally influences the child's capacity to form mature intimate relationship in adulthood". Unfortunately, such an emotional bond is not always well established depending on the type of parent/caregiver that the child might have had. Subsequently, a person may have a style which is highly neurotic and will not allow for any flexibility in relating to the outside world. The general style of coping in the psychodynamic approach is known as personality style. On the extreme side of personality style there is personality disorder. My point of focus here is not personality disorder but rather personality style. Most of you, I suppose are familiar with the nine personality styles in the Enneagram. In each of the numbers in the Enneagram, there is a healthy and an unhealthy side. There are neither perfect numbers nor perfect styles as far as the psychodynamic approach is concerned. What brings about a healthy relationship and growth is self-awareness of one's style or number and how they may fluctuate from one pole to the other depending on the amount of pressure or response to be adopted by oneself in the new situation.

The way an individual relates to others forms the basis for relating with God, and hence the process of true spiritual growth and effectiveness in the apostolic ministry. If there is a fault in the capacity for relationship as seen in the previous section, then true spiritual growth will be difficult because of the incapacity to relate satisfactorily with others. This will in turn reflect the same difficulty in one's relationship with God. Furthermore, apostolic ministry is a relational ministry.

For the psychodynamic psychologist, there are about ten personality styles which reflect the way different individuals relate to others. Such styles have their equivalence in the Enneagram approach. So, those who are more familiar with Enneagram can easily see how the nine numbers with their two poles operate in the following process of integrating one's personality style in one's spiritual life.

I find the following proposition from Nico Dal Molin very useful and very common in my clinical experience. I chose only five styles that I found very common and more problematic in the process of spiritual growth. These are: narcissist, paranoia, passive, histrionic and obsessive-compulsive personality styles. The objective here is to suggest how a Formator can accompany the candidate, first, to become aware of his style and, how he can technically and slowly guide him to integrate what he is psychologically with his spiritual growth.

1. The God of a Narcissist

The major characteristic of a narcissistic personality style is the incapacity to feel true sadness, to be emotionally involved and to love with true affection in any human relationship. He/she is incapable of saying: "I love you" in the true and inclusive sense of the term. Deep in him/her there is anger, jealousy, and competition. There is a strong sense of emptiness in him/her, hence what a narcissist is truly looking for is admiration, praise and approval, not love in any relationship. In other words, he/she uses others for praise/admiration. If the person "loved" no longer provides what is wished for, then he/she is "discarded" as if he/she was nothing, just like a rotten apple.

Now the image of God for such an individual is an Omnipotent being who can be used to fulfil his desire for protection from any danger, including the experience of human fragility. God who proposes the Cross is not acceptable. To wait for the will of God is impossible.

So to accompany such an individual to grow spiritually is to progressively destroy the unrealistic expectations of omnipotence in his life. The Formator has to create an environment which will make the candidate experience true human pain so that he can realistically face the reality of human fragility. In experiencing the reality of human fragility, it may lead him to learn to trust and wait for God's fatherly protection, but whose will, can be a heavy cross to carry. Such a journey may require strong confrontation, depending on the level of the narcissism of the candidate. It will be more difficult and may take longer if the narcissism is deeply rooted and if the age of the candidate is well advanced. The younger the candidate is, the easier it will be to re-orient him.

2. The God of a Paranoia Personality style

The psychogenesis of paranoia personality style derives from a family environment which was severely authoritarian, tough and even cruel. The child might have had a parent who was hostile and controlling, rejecting, devaluating or even with false accusations. As a result, this creates in the child a negative self-image, lack of trust, anxiety and fear. With such an infantile experience, the paranoia has great difficulty in believing in the presence of loving, merciful and faithful God who does not betray as the parent(s) used to. The image of God of such people is built around the image of parents who were unfaithful and whose actions could not be predicted. In addition, God is seen as unpredictable and may be as sadistic as the parents were.

However, from various clinical experiments and the spiritual direction of such people, it appears that the inner world of the paranoia is rich in intuition and sensibility, a secret world in which values, goodness and beauty are appreciated. They are capable of deep reflection on the word of God. So, to help such individuals to grow both spiritually and psychologically, the Formator needs to create an environment of trust so that through such trust he can enter the secret world of the candidate. Once allowed to enter this world, the Formator has to develop in the candidate a sense of acceptance and the capacity to appreciate the values of his inner world. This can create a basis upon which the candidate can reveal to others his rich inner world, hence leading to the possibility of sharing his deep reflections with others. Through such a process, the Formator can enable the candidate to develop slowly the image of God who is merciful, faithful and loving. The new attitude of the candidate, to be achieved, is the sense of self-abandonment in God. This will also enhance the pastoral relationship of the candidate. He may become more welcoming rather than dismissing.

3. The God of Passive Personality Style

The passive personality style is quite common among young people in recent years. Some psychologists argue that it is influenced by the media which tries to present a world of pleasure and happiness without showing how to work hard in order to achieve true happiness. These are young men and women who "wait" for things to happen in their life. They do not know they need the will to determine their future. When confronted with the question about their "*projet de vie*", they appear surprised or they may say that they want to be happy. When further questioned as to how they will bring about such happiness, they cannot answer. They tend to have group answer: what everyone else wants.

Normally, such candidates have a positive image of God who is a loving, merciful Father. They also have a good concept of love of neighbour. However, such good concepts and images are only theoretically in the mind. They lack the self-involvement to live up to such ideals. The role of the Formator is to introduce the candidate to an image of God that is demanding, who calls for personal involvement and sacrifice. The value of the Cross has to be introduced into the life of the candidate by concrete means, to provoke in him the image of God who is tough and demanding. If there is no response/reaction to the "provocations", it may be wise for the Formator to seriously rethink the suitability of the candidate for the life he/she aspires to.

4. The God of Histrionic Personality Style

The histrionic personality style, involves individuals who appear to be very sociable, charming and welcoming. They can get used to strangers more quickly than usual. They appear to be friendly with everyone. However, in the depths of such individuals, there is strong artificiality and emptiness. They lack a strong sense of commitment in long lasting relationships. Though they appear to have a lot of “friends”, they may find it difficult to say who their true friend is. They tend to impress others and to be the centre of attention.

Such individuals have no difficulty in conceiving of God as a loving Father. Their major problem lies in the artificiality of their relationship and lack of commitment. This implies that even their prayer life is artificial and lacks consistency. Their faith is emotive and short lasting.

In order to help them to grow humanly and spiritually the Formator, through different interventions, needs to present a God who is demanding and exigent. A God who demands lasting commitment. Such a God wants some form of sacrifice and self-giving. The superficiality has to be confronted concretely. Such interventions may help the candidate to deepen his prayer life and to prepare to engage in apostolates that are not always emotionally rewarding.

5. The God of an Obsessive Compulsive Personality style

These are individuals who in growing up were not allowed to express their emotions easily. Their parents were very demanding and tough beyond the realistic capacity of the child. A slight mistake was punished severely and the value of work was overemphasized while overlooking the emotional growth of the child. Parents were probably very rigid in their principles and moral standards. The child from such a family *milieu* will develop a very strong sense of guilt. From the psychosexual point of view, cleanness was over-emphasized dirtiness never tolerated. It was severely punished. From such a family background, the individuals with this personality style have an image of God who is very tough, ready to recall each and every mistake. God cannot forgive but punishes every sin. They have difficulty in abandoning themselves to God because he is seen as unforgiving. Success is essential in their life and failure is never tolerated.

The positive image of their dynamic upon which the Formator can lay the ground for guidance is their strong sense of commitment. They have very strong sense of duty and responsibility. So the Formator has to present to the candidate a forgiving God who appreciates their commitment. They are to be guided to accept their failures as part of their life. To be guided to be in touch with their emotions so that such emotions can be involved in their prayer life. On the other hand, the individuals with this style tend to hold something up as an idol. This could be a hidden desire for power, or a useless life experience. This is kept secret. The Formator should gradually discover that there is such an idol so that he can slowly propose a sense of self-abandonment to God's grace.

CONCLUSION

We have seen how the three parameters are the means through which the human mystery can be discovered and appreciated in the daily living of one's vocation. The process of self-discovery is never complete but an on-going process which allows each individual to consolidate his/her relationship with the Other and others. The vocation journey is a journey to the mystery of one's being. So the Formator, in accompanying young people in their initial formation stages, is rediscovering the mystery of his own being. An awareness of one's own inner dynamics will allow the Formator to feel comfortable and secure in accompanying others in formation. It is the duty and responsibility of the Formator to discover the inner strengths and weaknesses of the candidate in order to bring to his awareness the possible consequences if an effort is not made to address them.

The psycho-spiritual integration process aims to bring the spiritual and psychological aspects of the life of the candidate together so that his life and apostolate as a religious missionary may be unified. The inner unity of emotional, spiritual and physical energy is to be used to serve God who calls the whole person in an altruistic way.

Human frailty is sometimes the consequence of some faults during development, but are concrete realities in the human experience. There is never such a thing as perfect growth. However, such fragility is to be accepted with faith and courage knowing that the past cannot be changed but the present can be re-oriented to prepare a future that is realistic and inspired by the Gospel values. The final goal of the psycho-spiritual integration is to allow the candidate to accept such a reality. Any dichotomy in the formation process will result in preparing religious/missionaries to use the Gospel values in a defensive way to meet emotional personal gain or to live a kind of spirituality which is out of touch with human reality. The possible consequence of living the Gospel values in such a way will be an unfulfilled personal life full of bitterness and anger. The present scandals the Church is facing may well have sprung from a non-integrated life, whereby past wounds and faults in growth were never accepted. Any attempt at psychologism or spiritualism is to reduce the reality of human mystery. Any formation programme which does not take such integration seriously could run the risk of the so-called classic formation, with the assumption that information about the values is enough for the candidate to live a virtuous life.

It is a call and challenge for all those who are involved in the formation ministry to journey with the young people in discovering the mystery that they are. It is only in discovering what they are, that they will be able to respond with greater inner freedom the call to love like Christ who was poor, chaste and obedient. In discovering what they are, they also discover their wounds and parts of their past life that are not very pleasant to look at. Some may tend to evade it or even deny it. The process of psycho-spiritual integration is aimed at progressively enabling the young man to face such a past with faith and courage as part of his life. Finally, he can offer it to God who is the source of the healing grace. Such self-surrender to the grace of God is never a once for all process, but calls for an on-going dialectic, that is, on-going tension between what one is and what one desires to be. It is to live an on-going experience of the transcendental precepts of: "Be attentive, Be intelligent, Be reasonable, and Be responsible".(8)

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Fr. Justi Tarimo, CSSp.)



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ENDNOTES

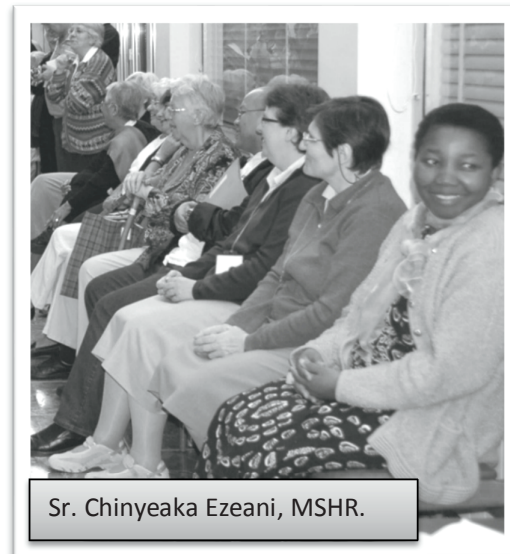
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- (2) Imoda, Franco, *Human Development: Psychology and Mystery* (Leuven: Peeters, 1998)37.(from here on it will be referred to as **HD**)
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Sr Chinyeaka C. Ezeani, MSHR

Religious Formation and Psychosexual Integrationⁱ

Introduction

Human development and integration are peculiar human experiences because no one has ever reached the point of being able to say, "I have arrived!". The same can be said of human psychosexual development and integration; it is an on-going human endeavour. Human sexuality is fluid and dynamic. It is not conditioned by the seasons, nor totally subject to instinct. More than an instinct, it "cuts through a person's body and penetrates every dimension of his or her life: the psychic and the spiritual".ⁱⁱ Therefore, adequate psychological functioning calls for a readiness to grow in harmonious and positive co-existence with one's sexuality and the rest of one's life. The goal of religious formation is to assist individuals to develop their full human potential, a task involving a holistic integration which includes the psychosexual dimension. In my working encounter with various persons training to become religious and priests in the Church, (both male and female), I became increasingly aware of how so much more needs to be done in the area of formation for affective/emotional development and psychosexual integration. For growth into the fullness of life for which Christ came into the world (cf. Jn 10:10), we are invited to enter into and fully embrace the journey of healthy integration, which includes the psychosexual – described as "another phrase for our pathway to love".ⁱⁱⁱ Hence, this article aims first to encourage the reader to learn to be at home with and appreciate his or her gender. However, it will only touch on certain dimensions of human sexuality and its integration, such as how to embrace the call to the religious and celibate vocation and how to live that life more fully and joyfully so that sexuality is accepted as a precious gift rather than a burden. Specifically, the article clarifies the distinction between sex and sexuality and how people can be influenced in their attitude to sexuality. It also indicates some sexual issues that can be found among candidates in formation, and possible reasons why people engage in certain sexual behaviour. Finally, the article explores some ways and means toward healthy sexual integration and how to assist others on their journey toward that goal so that they may live a meaningful, loving, and happy celibate religious life.



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Making Sense of Sex and Sexuality

While "sex" and "sexuality" are often used interchangeably, they are not exactly the same thing. "Sex" can refer to gender, intercourse, genital/physical pleasure, "making love", copulation, or coitus. In this article, the word "sex" will refer to sexual intercourse unless otherwise stated. The sexual drive is strong but not like the drive for food or drink. One will not die without sexual intercourse as one would if deprived of food or water. "Sexuality" on the contrary, denotes our way of being in the world as man or woman; it refers to the physical, spiritual, emotional, psychological, social, and cultural aspects of relating to one

another as an embodied male or female. Broader than “sex”, it is better understood as something we *are*, rather than as something we *do*. This gift from God embraces all the dimensions of human life. It is that aspect of personhood that makes us capable of entering into loving and life-giving relationships with others. “*Sexuality* affects all aspects of the human person in the unity of his body and soul. It especially concerns affectivity, the capacity to love and to procreate, and in a more general way the aptitude for forming bonds of communion with others”.^{iv} Right from birth when we leave the security of our mother’s womb, we feel incomplete and lonely. As a result, we tend to long for some kind of union. Long before the genital sexual awakening at puberty, we reach out to others in friendship, or at least long for it.

Effects of some earlier religious and social Influences

Historically, it seems that many human societies and institutions did not view human sexuality in a positive way. Sometimes, it is viewed with some degree of fear and ambivalence. Unfortunately, it is also found in the Christian Tradition. A cursory study of the Christian Tradition reveals at least two approaches in dealing with the relationship between human sexuality and spirituality. One approach is an ascetic (self-denying) tradition. This particular tradition “which appears to have emerged very early on in the history of Christianity, emphasised the dangers of sexual temptation and sought to avoid sexual sin, usually through celibacy”.^v It dates back to the Desert Fathers and emphasised the sinfulness of sex; hence regarding marriage as more or less of a compromise, necessary for procreation and the limitation of sin. There was equally, a more affirmative tradition emphasising the allegorical scriptural images of relationship with God as sexual, speaking explicitly about the possibilities for this relationship, and marriage, in a sexual language.^{vi} Prior to Vatican II, sexuality was seldom discussed in religious settings, neither were adequate lessons in human sexuality and affectivity given in seminaries and novitiates. Moral Instruction classes often made a connection between sex and sin rather than a bond between sex, love, service, and spiritual integration. It is striking how, during workshops with young people, on human sexuality, their questions often centre on what is sinful and what is not. Some of them, especially those with a tendency to scrupulosity, feel tormented for having normal healthy adolescent sexual fantasies. This poses the risk of ending up in despising self. Another danger which an obsessive focus on sexual sin can pose is that cruelty, dishonesty, malice or a lack of charity might receive less attention than necessary, while sexual matters are inordinately emphasised.

Some families and societies are not exempt from the above. In such societies, it is uncommon to find individuals whose mothers or fathers periodically engage in a loving conversation about menstruation, nocturnal emissions, the wonder of sexual excitement and arousal, or the realities of sex and marital love. The classic admonition to girls is: “Beware of boys” or, in certain parts of my country, Nigeria, “Don’t ever let any man ‘cross you!’” (“Crossing” is a euphemistic way of describing sexual intercourse). Young men receive warnings about making girls pregnant. Generally speaking, talking about sex is not always easy for people no matter from which country or culture they come. Treating sex as a taboo subject, however, impedes wholesome integration and creates difficulties in learning how to live this gift with joy and gratitude. These difficulties in turn fuel fantasy and temptation that may lead to illicit sexual behaviour. On the other hand, what is recognized and accepted gains a heightened capacity to influence lives positively. All these have implications for religious formation, as individuals can be influenced by whatever learning has shaped them earlier on in life.

Sexuality and Candidates for Religious Formation

Entering religious life does not divorce candidates from their sexuality. In addition to other aspects of their lives, it is important to explore their sexual history with them, their

understanding of, and attitude toward, sexuality, and their hopes or fears in embracing the celibate consecrated life. Congregations and dioceses can no longer be complacent about these issues, especially in view of the crises that have arisen in the Church as a result of paedophilia and the sexual exploitation of vulnerable persons that have left the victims wounded for life and the Church's moral credibility scarred. If there was ignorance in the past about the seriousness and damaging effects of sexual abuse, today's knowledge leaves Formators and religious leaders with no excuse for failing to help candidates grow in healthy sexual integration and to seek to help those who may be living with a serious inclination toward sexual deviation. It is wiser to pay honest attention to such issues and so avert problems that might arise later. Reverently addressing these issues early in the vocation discernment and formation process is crucial. Formators too should be aware of their own sexuality and be willing to explore it honestly. This will enable them to prepare others better to face the realities of life, embrace celibacy and live it out in a healthier, more integrated commitment. Their openness will encourage openness in those whom they accompany, and can therefore help the Formators to discover subconscious motivations in a candidate's choice of religious life.

Some Sexual Issues Relating to Formation Candidates

Past Sexual Experience: One cannot assume that young people who enter religious life today are sexually inexperienced or ignorant. For those who enter at an older age, it becomes even more important to explore with them the sexual dimension of life. Formators or vocation directors who think that they are being respectful by avoiding any discussion of sex and sexuality in the assessment and formation of candidates for the religious life are in fact not being helpful or discerning. For an aspirant who has been sexually active, at least three years of abstinence is recommended before he or she may enter formation. This could be an additional help in discerning his or her suitability and disposition to the commitment to live the celibate vocation. It will be equally good to explore with the person how disposed he or she is to embracing a celibate lifestyle permanently.

In some societies and cultures, because *homosexuality* is still a taboo topic, it is often shrouded in denial or silence. To pretend that homosexuality is a "foreign" problem, not "native" to one's own culture or situation, does not make the issue disappear. The way forward is to face homosexuality realistically and with openness. Some argue that those whose sexual orientation is homosexual should be discouraged from entering religious life because of possible temptation in a same-sex environment. Others argue that heterosexuals have to struggle to live a celibate life, and the homosexually oriented person is equally capable of engaging in the same process and struggle. There are also people who maintain that sexual orientation is not always the determinative factor in a person's ability to live the vow of chastity. Nevertheless, according to the document of the Congregation for Catholic Education, *Instruction Concerning the Criteria for the Discernment of Vocations with Regard to Persons with Homosexual Tendencies in View of Their Admission to the Seminary and to Holy Orders*, (dated, 4 November 2005)^{vii}: "the Church, while profoundly respecting the persons in question, cannot admit to the seminary or to holy orders those who practise homosexuality, present deep-seated homosexual tendencies or support the 'gay culture'" (n. 2). The same document states that for men whose homosexuality is a transitory problem associated with not yet superseded adolescence, they may be ordained deacons. It is required though that they must have clearly overcome that tendency at least three years before ordination to the diaconate. It seems, however, that in cases of 'deep-seated homosexual tendencies' (n. 2) and the accompanying dynamics, the difficulties which can arise in communities sometimes include possessiveness, exhibitionism, touchiness, and aggression. Creating a clique or "culture" of sexual orientation can equally bring about division in community. A basic attitude is called for nonetheless: regardless of sexual orientation, every person is a child of God and deserves love and understanding. It is

important however to state that if pursuing a religious vocation, or the priesthood, does not enhance a person's life and growth in Christ and in his or her humanity, then serious and honest discernment is required and decisions have to be made.

Masturbation or autoeroticism tends to be treated with silence too in religious circles. Unfortunately, some people carry a burden of guilt and self-loathing as a result of their experience of masturbation. Such persons might think, "I am the only one around who cannot control his sexual urges". Some masturbatory acts have very little to do with sexual gratification. Compulsive masturbation (several times in a day) could indicate a form of pathology — for example, an obsessive-compulsive disorder driven by anxiety. In that case, masturbation may be an anxiety-reduction mechanism rather than an attempt to satisfy sexual desire. The obsessive thought and compulsive behaviour reduce anxiety and distress for an individual, but can create a repetitive and uncontrollable cycle, immersing the person in self-preoccupation to the point of being limited in or incapable of self-sacrificing love and service. Occasional masturbation can sometimes be a developmental issue (interest in satisfying and gratifying self and not another). In adults, masturbation can point to unfinished aspects of sexual integration. In accompanying people in formation, therefore, "it is important to focus not so much on the action but on what the action is signifying and revealing . . .".^{viii} It is simplistic to jump to a hasty conclusion that every masturbatory act shows a weak will and a search for erotic gratification. For many, masturbation may indicate other life issues that may have little or nothing to do with sexual gratification. For example, it could be a compensation for an experience of rejection ("I am self-sufficient"), a self-centred outlet ("I will not give in to anyone"), or a sign of a search for positive identity rendered precarious by some failure ("I am capable of . . .").^{ix} For younger people, masturbation could be a way of bodily exploration or an expression of sexual curiosity, while for others it could be used for anxiety management, sexual gratification, or the release of tension. For all these reasons, it is worth giving attention to the real issue behind each act rather than simply generalizing or making assumptions so that the particular individuals can be adequately guided in a way that is life-giving and will facilitate their growth in human and Christian maturity.

Because religious formation programmes require introspection, memories of *sexual abuse* (another "silent" and inadequately addressed psychosexual issue) may surface for candidates, especially during initial formation. Those who have been sexually abused usually find it difficult to talk about the experience, fearing they may be blamed or seen as unsuitable for religious life. If they are unable to talk about the experience, they will carry their burden alone, which could have hugely detrimental consequences — an overwhelming sense of shame, difficulty in forming healthy adult relationships, trust issues, erratic behaviour, and explosive aggression which baffle others. Child sexual abuse especially can have such effects. The other side of this phenomenon is that a candidate may become a perpetrator of sex abuse. If a candidate has a sexual attraction to little children and minors, the issue is serious and calls for careful assessment and discernment because of the vulnerability of children and the human and moral obligation to love, nurture, and care for them. If a candidate constitutes a high risk to children, it may be advisable to encourage withdrawal from the religious life because of the possibility of working with children in the future. However, the individual should be assisted to get professional help because, whether religious or not, he or she is a potential danger to children in any setting.

A new form of addiction to sex, *cybersex*, has emerged with the expansion of technology. It manifests itself in excessive amounts of time spent accessing, viewing, sometimes transmitting pornography. Long hours spent viewing pornography — whether in print media or on the Internet takes its toll. This can amount to compulsion and loss of control.^x An active addict is most likely to experience difficulty in concentrating on the process of religious or seminary formation. Prayer life and other human functions are likely to be adversely affected or hampered. A person's life can become cluttered with images that do not enhance integral

growth. Although this form of addiction seems to be more common among men, who are usually more affected by visual stimuli, women are not immune to cybersex addiction.

Asexuality is the condition of not experiencing sexual attraction and sometimes of not experiencing arousal. The celibate religious life is about loving and channelling one's energies, including the affective energies, in loving service, and in channelling sexuality in creative, loving, and relational ways. The question therefore arises whether an asexual person is capable of celibate self-giving. Asexual persons seem to be less capable of feeling and empathizing deeply with others, which makes celibate self-giving difficult. However, extensive information is necessary to ascertain truly whether an asexual condition is a result of an induced psychological condition or a medical issue.

Reasons for Engaging in Sexual Intercourse

Because sex tends to permeate many aspects of life, it can serve many needs and can be motivated by issues that have little or nothing to do with sex. For example, repressed sexual instincts may appear as excessive anger, or a person with low self-esteem may pursue a sexual relationship to gain a sense of security and acceptance. M.A. Friederich^{xi} suggests some reasons why people engage in sexual intercourse. Some examples showing their relevance to the consecrated celibate vocation and the religious life/formation are given below:

The use of sex as a release from anxiety, stress, or tension is probably one of the most widespread nonsexual uses of sex. Orgasm leads to a general physical relaxation, and engaging in intercourse at a time of emotional turmoil is similar to "drowning one's sorrows in alcohol" or "tripping out" on drugs. Those following this path have little if any concern for anyone but themselves and can treat others as mere objects for sexual gratification. Unless the underlying causes of the problem are dealt with, the behaviour will continue compulsively in an attempt to gain a temporary sense of well-being. In religious or priestly life, such behaviour can become a manipulative use of people, which jeopardizes a celibate's integrity and authenticity as a religious minister. Some men and women need to prove that they are able to become biological parents, though they may not even want a child. A woman may use pregnancy to manipulate the man in her life who is hesitant about marriage. Although unlikely, it is not at all impossible that a female religious, feeling her biological clock ticking away, might give in to an unconscious longing to bear a child of her own. For the celibate religious man, the temptation could be to fulfil a desire to show that he, too, has the capacity to procreate and so become a father. Adolescents learn about their bodies by having them touched by another. The young may use sexual intercourse as an attempt to prove gender identity. Religious who have not successfully negotiated the psychosocial task of Erikson's stage of "identity versus identity confusion" may act like adolescents still struggling to form a clear personal identity. Their interpersonal relationships may be superficial, immature, and stereotyped. Adult religious who have not outgrown this stage of development — or are "underdeveloped" — may spend years moving from one relationship to another and engaging in sexual activity to find out who they really are.

Personal identity seems to be tied to self-worth. Those with very little feeling of self-esteem may feel that getting somebody to sleep with them proves their desirability, and thus may go to bed with anyone who comes along. If they have not internalized the fact that they are lovable and loved by God and some significant persons in their lives, they may feel inadequate and worthless, may compare themselves with married siblings or friends, and may fall prey to pressures, including sexual pressure, to prove their worth.

It is not unusual to experience same sex affective feelings especially during early adolescence. A strong affiliation can also exist among young people of the same sex. As a result of fear and confusion around this, some adolescents (and even adults) engage in heterosexual intercourse as a means of denying or suppressing such feelings. Lay friends or

colleagues may taunt young religious or one training to become a religious about being “homo” because of their virginity. The person could then feel pressured to use sexual intercourse to prove they are heterosexual.

Celibates who have no family of their own may feel more vulnerable during times of grief, especially at the loss of a parent, when the need for affection and assurance is heightened. Those who are alone in a foreign country or are away from a familiar environment for the first time are especially vulnerable to a sense of loss and loneliness. Some, out of touch with how deeply these feelings affect them, may engage in sexual intercourse to assuage the feelings of loneliness or grief. Sex then becomes a defense against their pain. Sex can also be used to demonstrate power. This can be seen in the man who boasts of “conquests” or the woman who feels the need to prove herself attractive by seducing as many men as possible. Promiscuity in the middle-aged individual is frequently an attempt to deal with feelings of inadequacy or of waning physical attractiveness. In such cases, sex can be a powerful force to ward off the distressing reality that they are getting older. The situation is compounded for celibate religious who have not worked through and accepted the reality of not having anyone to whom they are special in an exclusive relationship.

Sex can be an expression of anger and destructiveness and can be used as a weapon to punish or control others. A man may pursue extramarital affairs to punish his wife, or young religious may engage in sex to rebel against superiors to show them that they cannot rule their lives. Rape can also be an expression of anger and destructiveness. While sexual intercourse may be a means of sharing love in a mature and secure committed adult relationship, infantile love is not based on such a relationship. A young woman may find herself attracted to a much older man whom she sees as a kind, concerned father. A young religious who may have had a difficult relationship with a parent of the opposite sex (an emotionally absent father or a nagging mother) may fall into a relationship with an older person of the same gender as the parent with whom there had been unresolved issues. That relationship becomes an attempt to obtain the love denied to the young person by a parent.

Of course, sexual behaviour is not used solely for physiological purposes. This has implications for the formation of celibate religious. Formators need to be properly qualified in a way that will serve to make their ministry effective.

Interrelatedness of Psychosexual and Psycho-spiritual Integration

Formation is needed to help candidates respond positively and fully to the action of God in their daily lives. Their response means working toward a healthy integration of all they are, including their sexuality. Formators should seek to create an atmosphere in which candidates can engage freely and fearlessly in the formation process. Apart from one-to-one interaction with the candidates in this regard, classes, workshops, and other activities treating human sexuality can provide sound formation in affective development. The area of feelings also needs a great deal of consideration. It should not be forgotten that sexual integration includes spiritual integration. A spirituality that neglects the body as if it were of no importance in a life of love with God and others fosters a dualistic attitude that undermines spiritual growth. A healthy sexuality will embrace sexuality within the context of a healthy spirituality. When a person embraces a healthy sense of sexuality, it can prove to be a powerful vehicle for fostering joy and openness in living and in relating to others. Conversely, an unhealthy sexuality can create self-centredness and unhappiness. It is important to be open to integrating these two dimensions of spirituality and sexuality, bearing in mind however, that it is a process, and a gradual one.

Means toward Sexual Integration

A principal goal of sexual integration is to enable individuals to embrace human life fully and to live it wholeheartedly and joyfully. In this section, let me propose some elements that can

foster healthy sexual integration. Central to the celibate vocation is an undivided heart. The fire of love that inspired a person to give up everything and follow the Lord needs to be rekindled and kept alive so that one's celibate vocation may continue to be meaningful. It helps to recall the earlier years when one first felt the zeal and desire to commit one's entire life to Christ. Is one still in love with Jesus Christ after years of living the vocation? That love is the only effective motive that can keep the celibate religious vocation and commitment alive. Being in love with Jesus has to permeate one's whole lifestyle so that nothing matters more than manifesting the love of Christ in one's daily life and experience. Unless the individual sees the need for prayer and reflection and develops a deep desire for a loving relationship with God, it will be difficult to live a happy and meaningful celibate life. A life without meaning and deep spiritual roots can impede healthy growth. Adequate information and sound knowledge about human sexuality are essential for anyone seeking to live authentic celibate/sexual integration. However, the use of pornography is hardly the best way to educate oneself. That will only trivialize and undermine the important gift of sexuality. It is not a sign of holiness or purity of heart to be ignorant of a basic understanding of human sexuality in the biological and the other dimensions of human relationships. Enlightenment through good literature can be quite helpful. A part of self-knowledge and self-acceptance as a sexual being is the awareness that God made us as sexual beings but did not make us to be attracted exclusively to one person. A certain amount of sexual appeal appears to be in the air much of the time when a man and a woman are together, even when that appeal is not acknowledged. Because of the emphasis in religious upbringing on the need to control one's instincts, individuals can expend an enormous amount of psychic energy in trying to repress sexual fantasies in order to "keep thoughts pure". Such efforts can have two negative results. The first is anxiety. Repression builds pressure. Trying to cram the powerful force of our sex drive into the unconscious is like trying to cap a volcano. The second negative result is a constant feeling of guilt about sexual attractions, because attempts at repression are never fully successful. The best approach to sexual feelings, then, is to accept and befriend them for what they are. Feelings are neither right nor wrong in themselves; they have no moral value. So, one can allow oneself to feel. What, then, does Jesus mean when he says that when a man looks at a woman lustfully, he has already committed adultery with her in his heart (Mt 5:27-28)? If we sin whenever we have a sexual thought or desire, we will all be considered as hopelessly "soaked" in sin. Nevertheless, Jesus obviously has a strong point to make. By "lust", he means looking at a woman merely as a sexual object, a pornographic image, and then, forgetting her quickly because she is just something to give one an immediate gratification. The same equally applies to a woman considering a man merely in terms of sexual gratification. In addition, lust can also imply actively and deliberately plotting to seduce someone.

Training to be in touch with and identify inner movements, or feelings, is one important step toward personal integration as a mature human being. Being aware of one's feelings can be indicative of affective maturity. During the years I interviewed candidates for the priesthood and religious life, I came to realise that a large number of candidates could not respond accurately to a simple question about their feelings. I recall interviewing a young woman for religious life who talked about having been a maid in the home of a rich couple. The lady of the house once made her eat the food she had thrown into the bin the previous day as a punishment and to deter her from being wasteful. Asked how she felt about this experience, she said, "I feel that it is wrong to treat a child like that, even if the child is someone else's and not your own". Another attempt at putting the same question to her in a slightly different way was unsuccessful. Her insistent response was, "Sister, I really feel; it is only a very wicked and heartless woman that can do that kind of thing to a child". Our conversation ended without her ever getting to the point of being able to express her feelings about that painful experience by which she had obviously been very deeply affected.

Spiritual direction is a great help in living one's celibate commitment in one's relationship to God. However, because there has been abuse and because some spiritual directors are

without adequate training, it is important to find competent directors. It is appropriate for the Formator to check with the person receiving direction about any ethical issues in the relationship with the director. For example, a spiritual director embracing or touching a directee in an intimate manner is a violation of ministerial boundaries. People need to be aware of what constitutes violation and to name it if it occurs. It is likewise important to ask about the quality of spiritual direction so that it bears fruit instead of being an obstacle to growth. Spiritual direction could become spiritual destruction when it does not foster growth. To know oneself is a worthy goal on the journey of psychosexual growth and integration, and the capacity to allow oneself to be known is a good sign of human maturity. K.P. McClone,^{xii} reflecting the views of developmental theorists, maintains that “any adult intimacy involves the capacity to share more of one’s authentic self with another. This presupposes not only a certain self-knowledge but also *skills of self-disclosure* and taking the risk to share with trusted others” (emphasis added). Verbalizing our sexual stirrings by keeping a journal or conversing with God and appropriate others can assist us to become familiar and more at ease with our sexuality. Because good intentions and willpower are not enough to check the human tendency toward self-indulgence, especially in the area of sex, individuals who aspire to religious life and the priesthood have to cultivate some degree of self-control. Discipline helps one to integrate bodily and spiritual needs. The goal of human life and of religious life is not the pursuit of sensual pleasure. Some people tend to view as out-dated any sort of bodily discomfort or mortification. However, self-mortification can be a viable means to self-transcendence, self-discipline, and integration. Excessive amounts of time spent in chatting and small talk, or an addiction to the movies, mobile phones, iPods or the Internet, make it hard to hear the “still small voice”. An atmosphere of considerable quiet and opportunity for interior solitude are important for the deepening of the spiritual life and celibate commitment. Along these lines we need to develop the capacity for solitude, which includes skills for managing loneliness.

Respect for the Body and the Whole Self

Our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit (I Cor 6:19). The temple of the Holy Spirit is sacred and hence, needs to be treated as such. Proper care, appreciation and nutrition for the body are therefore essential for psychosexual development. Celibacy is not drudgery. Regular exercise, good eating habits, and other physiological care can foster health. Engaging in hobbies or other enjoyable activities is part of caring for the self. The religious celibate is challenged to nurture the gift of self through prayer, retreats, discipline, a good balance between work and leisure/rest, healthy friendships and other creative activities. Self-neglect, overeating, over-drinking, neglect of prayer, work-aholism, emotional withdrawal, or impulsive behaviour can be indicative of immaturity and a lack of integration. We do not move to the transcendent by skipping over the human, but by knowing and living the human to the full. Individuals have to find out for themselves the acceptable ways of channelling the energies including the sexual. Developing the ability to play and learning to laugh at ourselves can keep us from taking life or ourselves too seriously. To keep growing, everyone needs to attend to vital issues in his or her past life that have not yet been given the attention they need. We have a responsibility to find a safe place to deal with hurts instead of inflicting on others the pain and anger that we carried over from those hurts.

Caring Presence and Generativity

Living out the gift of sexuality means transcending one’s own needs and reaching out in love to the other. There is no doubt that self-fulfilment is important in human life. However, one usually attains profound self-fulfilment as he or she sincerely and deeply engages in the process of self-transcendence. Celibate religious life, lived authentically, can promote the realization of this goal. The call to celibate chastity has more to do with self-transcendence, which can bring some degree of self-fulfilment, albeit not intently sought after from the outset; a vocation to love, it renders the heart freer to love God and others, unencumbered

by mundane cares and worries (1 Cor 7:32-34). Those called to celibate life are freed from the duties of conjugal love and, consequently, should become better able to offer gratuitous love to other sisters and brothers. Learning compassion and empathy for others encourages such love. One matures by moving from centering on oneself to caring for others, bearing their burdens with them, and sharing in their joys.

Good Friendships

Human beings do not usually thrive in isolation. They need to relate and interact with others in order to mature psycho-sexually and psycho-spiritually. A healthy sense of self and “at homeness” with oneself make it easier to relate well with others. Friendship and intimacy in the life of the religious celibate facilitate community living and availability for mission and ministry in the wider faith community. In other words, religious celibates’ friendships should assist them and others to grow in the love of all of God’s people and creation.

Conclusion

Psychosexual integration and the maturation process do not take place automatically or “all at once”. The process is gradual – one step at a time. Human sexuality is not easy to understand. Neither is religious celibacy. That is probably why serious discussions on celibate and sexual integration are not as prevalent as they should be. Simply being aware that one is living a countercultural value will not provide a magic wand for handling the challenges of its day to day living. However, a wholehearted commitment to on-going formation can have a significantly positive impact. Consecrated celibates cannot dismiss the basic human sexual drive as insignificant or beneath them; they need to face, accept, and embrace the reality honestly while channelling its energies. Sexuality of itself can hardly bring us to wholeness, integration and fullness of love. A conscious spiritual life and a growing relationship with God and neighbour go hand-in-hand with sexual integration. Our sexuality, like our celibate vocation, is a means of growing in love and closeness to others and to God through a relationship that calls us to transcend and make a gift of ourselves. It is essential that we internalise and savour the grace freely given to all regardless of each person’s circumstances. That gift is God’s unconditional love and mercy, and the bountifulness of Jesus Christ, whose constant positive response to the Father, even in his moments of trial and struggle, gives us the freedom that enables us to trust, thrive, and live truly in the Spirit.

“A wholehearted commitment to on-going formation can have a significantly positive impact. A conscious spiritual life and a growing relationship with God and neighbour go hand-in-hand with sexual integration”.
(Sr. Chinyeaka Ezeani, MSHR.)



Notes

ⁱ This article is a revised and edited version of an article by the same author which had appeared in *Review for Religious*, 70.3, October 2011, under the title: "Religious Formation and the Integral Psychosexual Development of Candidates".

ⁱⁱ C.U. Okeke, *Love: With or Without Sex — The things you would want to know about love and sex but might not know how to ask* (Nimo, Nigeria: Rex Charles & Patrick Ltd, 2005), p. 21

ⁱⁱⁱ F. Ferder and J. Heagle, *Your Sexual Self: Pathway to Authentic Intimacy* (Notre Dame, Indiana: Ave Maria Press, 1992), p. 10.

^{iv} *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, (Dublin: Veritas Publications – Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1994), #2332.

^v C.C.H., Cook, "Sexuality and spirituality", in: *Sexual Issues - Understanding and advising in a Christian context*, J. M., Greer & B. Geary (eds), (Suffolk: Kevin Mayhew Ltd, 2010), pp. 392-393.

^{vi} *Ibid.*, p. 393.

^{vii} http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_20051104_istruzione_en.html (Approved by Benedict XVI on 31 August 2005).

^{viii} T.W. Krenik, *Formation for Priestly Celibacy: A Resource Book* (New York: National Catholic Education Association, 1999), p. 29.

^{ix} A. Cencini and A. Manenti, *Psychology and Formation — Structures and Dynamics*, trans. A. Plathara and A. Mattapallil (Bombay: Pauline Sisters, 1985), pp. 331-332.

^x Researchers who have done extensive work in the area of internet sex have developed a term which they call 'Cyberhex', as a way of understanding the powerful and compelling pull of internet sex. They used the word, 'hex' which suggests a spell or trance. In this, is captured the psychological state that addicts experience while interacting sexually on the Internet. Those researchers (David Delmonico, Elizabeth Griffin and Joe Moriarty) suggest that though the Internet has become integral to our lives, it is also imposing, isolating, interactive, inexpensive, and intoxicating. B. Geary & E. Hone, "Sex and the Internet", in: *Sexual Issues - Understanding and advising in a Christian context*, J. M., Greer & B. Geary (eds), (Suffolk: Kevin Mayhew Ltd, 2010), p. 281.

^{xi} M.A. Friederich, "Motivations for Coitus", *Clinical Obstetrics and Gynecology* (13 September 1970): 691-700.

^{xii} K.P. McClone, "Intimacy and Healthy Affective Maturity — Guidelines for Formation", *Human Development* 30 (Winter 2009): 9.

GRANDIR DANS SA FOI ET DÉCOUVRIR LA SIGNIFICATION DE SA MISSION

Étant enfant, j'avais le désir d'être toute proche de Dieu par la vie religieuse. J'ai porté ce désir dans mon cœur et j'ai continué à chercher jusqu'à un samedi de 2003, lorsqu'une SMNDA, Jacqueline Picard, est venue nous rencontrer dans notre école pour préparer la liturgie du dimanche suivant. J'étais alors en seconde à l'école secondaire. On nous la présenta et elle nous dit qu'elle nous retrouverait pour la messe du dimanche, après laquelle elle nous parlerait. Le jour suivant, comme elle l'avait dit, elle était là avec notre aumônier. À la fin de la messe, elle nous présenta la Congrégation. **Je suis tombée amoureuse de la Congrégation.** Je ne le lui ai pas dit mais j'ai pris un prospectus. Ce prospectus donnait des informations sur les SMNDA et l'adresse où les contacter. Après quelque temps, j'ai décidé de leur écrire et de leur exprimer mon désir.



Tel a été le début de ma correspondance avec la congrégation. J'étais prête à commencer ma formation à la fin de la troisième mais la responsable des vocations d'alors m'a conseillé d'**avoir une profession avant de commencer.** Bien sûr ce fut une déception ! Je me suis dit qu'il me fallait travailler dur pour décrocher une formation d'enseignante dans ma province. Le 19 février 2001, j'ai été libérée de mon poste d'enseignante par ma province pour rejoindre la communauté SMNDA de Gumo et commencer mon expérience en communauté et ensuite le postulat. Pendant un an et demi, tout en suivant le programme de formation, j'ai enseigné dans une école tout près de là. J'ai poursuivi ma formation à Arusha et Nairobi avec, respectivement, le « bloc d'études » et le noviciat. J'ai fait ma profession le 29 mars 2005 à Arusha. Je continue à enseigner.

Pendant les années de vœux temporaires, j'ai suivi un programme ouvert jusqu'à il y a environ trois ans, quand j'ai commencé à suivre **celui des vœux**

temporaires. Celui-ci m'a enrichie sur de nombreux plans. Il m'a aidée à approfondir mon désir d'être proche de Dieu et à unifier ma vocation SMNDA. En priant et en étudiant ce programme de

formation, j'ai été nourrie par tant d'aspects où se joue ma vocation SMNDA. Ce programme reprend chaque année les mêmes thèmes mais présente des aspects qui développent les précédents. Grâce à ce programme, j'en suis venue à estimer et aimer mes sœurs avec qui je vis ou ai vécu, devenant consciemment attentive à nos ressemblances et différences dans notre vie ensemble et notre partage de notre mission commune et de notre foi. Cela m'a aidée à creuser le fait que, **vivre et partager en communauté est ma première mission,** le premier endroit où partager ma foi. C'est le premier lieu où témoigner de l'amour de Dieu que je reçois à profusion, dans les moments de joie comme aux temps des défis.

Spirituellement cela m'a aidée à comprendre et approfondir ma vie de prière, personnellement et plus largement. Je veux parler ici d'un approfondissement de ma foi en

Celui qui m'influence journallement, dans mes pensées, dans mes paroles et dans mes actes, pour que je lui réponde en aimant les autres et en me laissant moi-même aimer par les autres. Au cours de ces années de vœux temporaires, j'en suis venue à approfondir et à vivre concrètement et consciemment le souhait et la prière de notre fondateur, le « Tout à tous... » et « Soyez apôtres, ne soyez que cela... » J'ai été heureuse d'avoir eu ce programme dans ma première mission où j'avais à apprendre la culture et à être disponible à un peuple que je n'avais jamais rencontré ni même rêvé de rencontrer. Avec la grâce de Dieu, j'ai essayé de faire de mon mieux pour **répondre de tout mon être aux besoins des gens auxquels j'étais envoyée** afin qu'ils puissent partager la vie que

Jésus nous donne, être libérés et entrer dans l'espérance. Je les ai aimés et eux aussi m'ont aimée. J'en ai presque oublié que j'étais du Ghana.

Dans ma mission actuelle située dans mon pays d'origine, où j'enseigne et étudie tout à la fois, je fais tous les jours de mon mieux en essayant de les aider de manières diverses en **posant les bases de la lecture et de l'écriture, ainsi que des valeurs morales** sur lesquelles ils doivent construire leur avenir proche ou éloigné. Je fais cela en espérant qu'ils puissent eux aussi expérimenter l'espérance, la joie et la lumière. Ces enfants sont de quotient intellectuel, d'âge et de sexe différents. Ils sont de milieu social différent, de religion différente. Pourtant rien de cela ne fait obstacle à ma disponibilité à leur égard mais me donne plutôt de l'espoir pour eux. Je crois qu'un jour, quand ils seront capables de devenir des personnes indépendantes, ayant de bons principes, ils rendront grâce à Dieu.

Dans cette même école où nous SMNDA enseignons, lorsque le corps enseignant aborde les **sujets d'engagement et de transparence**, une question nous est posée : « Pourquoi voulez-vous être différentes ? » Notre vocation de SMNDA dans cette école ne nous permet pas d'être injustes ou d'enfreindre les droits des enfants simplement parce que la société trouve cela normal. J'affronte la même question en d'autres termes avec les collègues entre lesquels s'insère mon programme, quand on en vient à corrompre les maîtres avec de l'argent pour qu'ils laissent tricher aux examens. Je leur dis que ma foi ne me permet pas de tricher. Avec une autre religieuse du même cours, nous leur paraissions très étranges parce que, pour eux, c'est une pratique normale. Bien que nous n'ayons pas réussi à influencer la pratique de la fraude, je crois que le message a été clair.

En tant que femme apôtre, j'ai appris et apprend encore à ne pas reculer devant une difficulté ou situation injuste, grâce à l'expérience quotidienne de ma foi soutenue par ce programme. Il y a dans chaque livret **des questions pratiques pour des réflexions qui m'ont guidée à faire des choix concrets**. Cela a construit ma foi en Dieu, ma compréhension de la mission du Christ et me motive chaque fois à rechercher les voies pour être disponible. C'est pourquoi cela m'aide à rester engagée dans la mission qui m'est confiée à chaque instant.

Susana Bosuh
GUMO Communauté (Ghana)

L'ART AU SERVICE DE LA MISSION

Mon aventure avec l'Afrique a commencé en Pologne, au cours de mes études dans les arts plastiques. Grâce à la sculpture que j'aime beaucoup, j'ai commencé à **m'intéresser aux différentes cultures et religions africaines**. J'ai vu que mon intérêt pour l'Afrique ne cessait pas, au contraire ! Mon cœur brûlait de plus en plus à la recherche de quelque chose qui donnerait un sens à ma vie. C'était aussi l'époque où je me posais des questions concernant mon avenir et ma foi.

J'ai commencé à m'engager dans **un groupe missionnaire de jeunes** dans un autre diocèse que le mien, parce que je ne l'avais pas trouvé chez moi. Ma première activité avec le groupe a été un camp. Je peux dire que grâce à cette rencontre et à cette expérience, ma relation au Christ a commencé à être davantage personnelle et en même temps je me suis sentie plus proche de l'Église.

La pensée de devenir missionnaire laïque me poursuivait, mais par la suite j'ai découvert que cet engagement ne serait que pour un temps. Finalement, avec pas mal d'hésitation, **j'ai commencé à penser à la vie religieuse**. Je me suis procuré un livre qui présentait toutes les congrégations religieuses, et voilà que mon regard s'est posé sur une petite carte d'Afrique et une phrase qui parlait de **l'importance de l'engagement des sœurs dans le dialogue islamo-chrétien**. C'était suffisant ! Cela m'avait montré une ouverture, un respect pour les autres que je n'avais jamais imaginé possible. Très vite, j'ai rencontré les sœurs et je suis partie avec elles pour le camp missionnaire en montagne.



C'est là que j'ai pris ma décision et que j'ai demandé aux SMNDA de commencer mon discernement. J'ai fait ma première expérience communautaire à Lublin, pendant deux ans et demi, et après cela je suis partie en Ouganda pour mon postulat.

J'avais toujours pensé que, ayant choisi l'Afrique et les SMNDA, je n'aurais plus la possibilité de continuer dans l'art et faire ce que j'aime, et cela me coûtait. Mais ma première expérience sur le continent africain m'a montré le contraire. À Kisubi (Ouganda), nous avons une communauté située juste à côté d'**une école des beaux-arts dans laquelle j'enseignais la sculpture**. J'ai donc eu la chance de pouvoir exercer mes talents plastiques, et ma créativité a été stimulée par les situations et les besoins de mon apostolat.

Le noviciat a été retardé d'une année pour intégrer l'aspect de l'interculturalité dans notre formation. J'ai compris cette décision, mais cela m'a coûté. Attendre une année m'a semblé long. Envoyée à Nairobi j'ai trouvé du travail à l'hôpital, dans un programme appelé « arts en médecine ». Grâce à ce travail j'ai découvert que **l'art sert à la communication**, et qu'il permet de s'exprimer et donc de servir les autres. L'expérience m'a aidée à découvrir un nouvel horizon.

Il y a déjà deux ans que j'ai fait mes premiers vœux et un an que je suis ici en Algérie. **Les fiches qui nous sont proposées pour la formation continue**, je les ai trouvées très intéressantes et utiles pour intégrer plus facilement notre charisme dans ma réalité quotidienne. Très souvent je constate que certains aspects qui sont développés dans ces fiches, nous les pratiquons dans nos communautés. Ces fiches me permettent de redécouvrir et d'approfondir le sens de ces pratiques, par exemple **l'envoi en mission** qui est au cœur de notre vie de SMNDA.

Souvent, quand une sœur quitte la communauté pour aller dans une autre, nous préparons une liturgie spéciale pour célébrer ce moment. Nous rappelons alors que nous sommes missionnaires et que **notre mission est une**, où que nous soyons.

Personnellement, cela m'encourage aussi à approfondir ma manière d'être, ici à Oran, avec toutes les personnes que je rencontre et avec lesquelles je travaille. Ce que je trouve aussi très important, c'est de **partager avec elles notre charisme**. Nous avons eu une bonne expérience l'année dernière, pendant l'été : nous avons organisé un centre aéré pour les enfants d'Oran, au centre diocésain. Pendant trois semaines 90 enfants ont participé aux différentes activités que nous leur propositions. Ils étaient encadrés par 20 animateurs de différentes nationalités : étudiants algériens, burkinabé, nigérian, togolais, tanzanien, congolais. Nous avons essayé de créer une atmosphère de paix et de respect mutuel pour dépasser nos préjugés de cultures, de religions, etc. Et en même temps nous voulions donner aux enfants le meilleur de notre travail et de notre présence. Finalement cette prise en charge a été très appréciée par les parents, et a renforcé leur confiance en nous, ce qui nous a donné beaucoup de joie et de satisfaction. Grâce à cette rencontre et à cette collaboration plusieurs amitiés se sont tissées.

Au début de cette année, pour préparer la journée de la vie consacrée dans le diocèse, notre communauté d'Oran a été sollicitée pour **partager ses expériences en interculturelité**. Quel défi ! Nous avons préparé ensemble l'animation de cette journée, chacune de nous a donné sa part et nous avons vu, par la suite, que la journée de récollection a été appréciée par les autres communautés. Ce sujet d'interculturalité a été pris avec beaucoup de sérieux par notre congrégation ; il a été étudié et il nous a été proposé dans **le programme Salomé**, et de plus il a été inséré à tous les niveaux de notre formation. Grâce à cela, notre communauté a été capable de partager avec les autres religieux cet aspect de notre vie : l'interculturalité. Par cette expérience, j'ai vu comment **nous formons un seul corps** : notre congrégation ; et comment notre communauté peut apporter la vie aux autres, grâce à cette force qui nous appartient, à nous toutes.

Merci à nos responsables qui **répondent avec courage aux besoins de notre mission** et qui nous donnent les moyens de nous former.

Malgorzata Poplawska
Oran (Algérie)

CRÉER DANS NOTRE MONDE UN MERVEILLEUX TISSAGE D'AMOUR

La vie est un voyage que nous entreprenons ensemble,
marchant main dans la main, avec nos sœurs et nos frères.
Nos vies si différentes sont tissées ensemble
créant un merveilleux tissage d'amour dans notre monde.

Ces paroles sont le refrain d'un chant parlant de notre vie comme **d'un voyage à diverses étapes**, n'ayant pour but que d'apporter l'AMOUR dans notre monde qui en a tant besoin.

Avant de vous en dire plus sur mon voyage pour devenir une femme apôtre, **laissez-moi vous dire qui je suis**. Je m'appelle Birgitta Gremm. Avant de rejoindre notre congrégation, j'ai vécu presque toute ma vie, 48 ans, dans un petit village d'Allemagne. J'ai travaillé comme jardinière d'enfants pendant 22 ans et j'étais fort engagée dans toutes sortes de sessions et rencontres au niveau paroissial. Je travaillais avec les jeunes ainsi qu'avec ceux d'une paroisse voisine.



Un jour, je suis allée à Trèves avec un groupe de jeunes de la paroisse voisine pour un temps de préparation au sacrement de confirmation. L'auberge de jeunes qui nous accueillait alors se trouvait juste à côté de la maison des Pères Blancs. Un terrible mal de tête me fit leur demander un remède car j'avais oublié d'en prendre avec moi. Ils n'en avaient pas mais je pris l'initiative d'interroger le Père sur leur travail en Afrique. Comme je me trouvais à l'étape de mon voyage où je cherchais dans quelle congrégation Dieu me désirait, je lui ai demandé s'il y avait aussi des Sœurs Blanches. Il m'a alors donné l'adresse de nos sœurs à Cologne. J'ai écrit à Agnès Wahl qui était à ce moment-là responsable de l'AMV et c'est ainsi que **mon voyage comme « femme apôtre » dans notre congrégation a débuté**. Le 1^{er} octobre 2003, je suis entrée en communauté

à Cologne et le 4 avril, j'ai commencé mon voyage en Tanzanie, à Arusha, comme **associée** de notre congrégation. **Je suis très heureuse que notre congrégation soit si ouverte et m'ait acceptée malgré mon âge et le fait d'avoir ma propre famille.**

Ce premier temps de présence dans notre congrégation, aussi bien à la communauté de Cologne qu' à celle d'Arusha, - aux deux endroits **j'ai expérimenté « l'Esprit de famille » et notre « style de vie simple » auquel j'aspirais** – m'a fait vite me sentir chez moi. Pendant le postulat et le noviciat, en vue d'un partage avec notre accompagnatrice, nous recevions **des fiches avec textes et questions** qui m'ont aidée à méditer et à descendre plus profondément en moi-même afin de connaître si cette route entreprise dans notre congrégation était bien ce que Dieu désirait réellement pour moi, y trouvant mon bonheur et ma paix intérieure. Les cinq années suivantes jusqu'à ma « première profession » le 21 mars 2009, j'ai grandi de plus en plus, entrant dans la vie de notre congrégation et dans son charisme.

Après la première profession, nous avons continué à recevoir de l'aide à travers notre accompagnatrice et les fiches que personnellement, j'apprécie de plus en plus. Ces fiches nous les recevons chaque mois. **La structure de ces fiches est bien pensée** : une introduction au thème avec

des paroles de Marie Salomé, de Charles Lavigerie, de nos Constitutions, de saints et autres personnes spirituelles ; au début, quelques lectures qui introduisent le thème de chaque mois ; des questions en vue de la réflexion et du partage avec l'accompagnatrice ; quelques suggestions de lectures bibliques.

Les thèmes de ces fiches se rapportent à notre charisme, à la compréhension de notre Mission, à notre vie communautaire, à notre vie de prière, à notre travail apostolique, à nos trois vœux : obéissance, pauvreté et chasteté et à notre formation continue.

En méditant et en réfléchissant chaque jour d'une manière plus approfondie, je sens grandir en moi **mon sens d'appartenance à notre congrégation**. Je deviens de plus en plus consciente **que nous sommes « une » dans notre mission** et que nous sommes toutes des **femmes apôtres** appelées par notre Seigneur Jésus-Christ et envoyées par lui pour être **« toutes à Tous »**. Les lectures bibliques sont toujours en lien avec le thème et m'aident beaucoup dans ma méditation du matin que je ressens si importante pour vivre mon quotidien. Contempler Jésus et Sa Vie, comment par exemple, Il a essayé de vivre Sa Mission, Son « être d'envoyé », Son obéissance, Sa pauvreté et Sa chasteté, Sa vie au milieu de « tous » les gens de Son temps, Sa relation avec Son Père et Sa vie de prière, font que je me sens proche de Lui et déjà vraiment en route pour **devenir de plus en plus « femme apôtre » lui appartenant**.

Dans mon cheminement pour devenir « femme apôtre » **je me sens très unie à toutes mes sœurs**, surtout avec celles qui utilisent ces fiches. Nous cheminons ensemble sur les pas de notre Seigneur Jésus-Christ, et nous partageons notre joie, notre paix, nos combats, nos défis et nos difficultés.

Les fiches sont composées par **mes sœurs plus expérimentées aussi bien dans la vie de notre congrégation que dans la vie en Afrique**. Je peux ressentir cela quand j'approfondis les fiches, et c'est pour moi une réelle nourriture pour croître dans ma vie personnelle, spirituelle et apostolique. Par les questions données dans ces fiches, je peux former ma conscience, regarder aux expériences de ma vie de chaque jour, par ex. comment je vis en communauté, avec le peuple qui m'entoure à qui je suis envoyée. Personnellement, j'ai expérimenté ces fiches comme si j'avais un **compagnon pour mon voyage**, plein de vie, me donnant par mes sœurs des indications et de l'aide. Je peux expérimenter que l'Esprit Saint était au travail en elles, avec toute son énergie.

Je voudrais **dire un grand « merci »** à toutes mes sœurs qui ont donné de leur temps pour créer ces fiches. Elles ont donné une grande contribution pour transmettre la flamme du charisme de notre congrégation et de notre Mission « Une » et je pense que je ne peux qu'en tirer profit.

Ensemble travaillons à construire
le Royaume de Dieu ici, aujourd'hui :
justice, égalité, partage,
compassion, paix seront notre chemin.

C'est sur cette dernière strophe du chant que j'ai déjà cité que je désire terminer mon partage sur les fiches de notre programme de formation de sœurs de vœux temporaires. Mon souhait pour vous toutes et tous qui lirez ce numéro de *Partage Trentaprile* est **que vous expérimentiez l'Amour et la Paix de notre Seigneur Jésus-Christ dans vos vies, où que vous soyez**. Unie à tous dans l'Amour et la Prière.

Birgitta Gremm
Arusha, Tanzanie

UN OUTIL DE FORMATION POUR LES ANNÉES DE VŒUX TEMPORAIRES

LA JOIE DE PARTAGER

Et nous qui préparons ces fiches pour nos sœurs d'engagement temporaire, qu'est-ce que cette mission nous apporte, quel impact a-t-elle sur notre vie ? La première chose qui nous vient, en réponse à cette question, c'est la joie : joie de partager avec nos plus jeunes sœurs la richesse, la beauté de notre vocation SMNDA. En nous replongeant, fiche après fiche, dans nos Constitutions, dans les Pensées du Cardinal et de Mère Marie-Salomé, dans les Actes Capitulaires et autres écrits de Congrégation, nous voyons, chaque fois à nouveau, quelle richesse, quel trésor nous est ainsi confié. Oui, elle est belle, notre vocation, et pouvoir partager notre émerveillement et nos convictions avec les « jeunes générations » est une grande joie.

Pour chacune des six années d'engagement temporaire, nous avons d'abord une fiche de mise en route de l'année. Ensuite, nous reprenons les thèmes essentiels de notre vie de religieuses-missionnaires : charisme et spiritualité SMNDA, notre mission à la suite du Christ, la prière de l'apôtre, la communauté apostolique, la consécration pour la mission, puis chacun des vœux vécus selon nos Constitutions SMNDA, et enfin la formation continue. Et la série se termine par une fiche d'évaluation de l'année.

Ainsi, chaque année, nous parcourons tous les aspects essentiels de notre vie, vus chaque fois sous un angle différent. Ce sont des thèmes tellement riches qu'il n'est pas possible de les épuiser en un an... ni même en six ! Mais nous espérons que les fiches sont comme un tremplin pour les jeunes professes, une invitation à continuer à approfondir toute cette richesse, pour continuer à en vivre. La formation n'est-elle pas « l'œuvre de toute une vie » (Constitutions n° 61) ?

Partager ce qui nous fait vivre est aussi un fameux défi, car cela nous renvoie à nous-mêmes, à la façon dont nous donnons chair, dans notre propre vie, aux différents aspects de notre vocation. Pour essayer d'en exprimer ce qui nous paraît l'essentiel, nous nous posons chaque fois la question : tel aspect de notre engagement, qu'est-ce qu'il veut dire pour nous ? Comment nous sentons-nous appelées à le vivre aujourd'hui ? Ainsi, nous sommes chaque fois remises face à notre responsabilité envers la congrégation et envers sa mission, puisque, en faisant profession dans la congrégation, nous nous sommes engagées « à collaborer en tout à l'œuvre de Dieu pour l'annonce de son Règne en Afrique ».

Notre travail nous procure encore un autre enrichissement : la recherche et la sélection de citations et de textes qui viendront nourrir et étoffer la réflexion. Chaque fiche comporte en moyenne cinq pages de lectures complémentaires : extraits de livres ou d'articles d'auteurs variés. Notre vocation ne se vit pas en vase clos, et il est bon de nous laisser éclairer, bousculer parfois, par une pensée venue d'ailleurs.

Puis viennent les suggestions ou questions adressées aux jeunes professes : recherche à faire, réflexion sur leur expérience missionnaire, assimilation et appropriation du contenu de la fiche. Comme critère pour choisir telle ou telle question, nous nous demandons : Comment répondrions-nous nous-mêmes à cette question ?

Autre trésor, autre joie : les suggestions pour la prière. Nous cherchons, en lien avec le thème de la fiche, des textes d'Écriture (surtout, mais pas exclusivement, des passages de l'Évangile) qui permettront à la jeune professe de fonder sa vie sur le Roc de la Parole et de faire le lien entre sa prière et sa vie.

Ajoutons encore deux aspects importants : le dialogue et l'échange d'idées entre nous, quand nous nous retrouvons pour une session de « travail – fiches » (car nous n'habitons pas ensemble). Entre deux sessions, nous avons aussi recours au courrier électronique et au téléphone. Et enfin, le dialogue avec nos sœurs du Conseil Général, qui suivent de très près ce travail qu'elles nous ont confié. Après l'envoi de chaque fiche, nous recevons leurs réactions et suggestions, auxquelles à notre tour nous répondons. Cette collaboration franche et ouverte nous soutient tout au long des mois et des années.

En résumé, disons que ce travail que nous faisons – de grand cœur et avec enthousiasme – pour nos plus jeunes sœurs, nous sommes les premières à en bénéficier !

L'équipe de rédaction des fiches
Tiré du PARTAGE TRENTAPRILE – SHARING Mars 2011

Grâce à ce programme, j'en suis venue à estimer et aimer mes sœurs avec qui je vis ou ai vécu, devenant consciemment attentive à nos ressemblances et différences dans notre vie ensemble et notre partage de notre mission commune et de notre foi.

Cela m'a aidée à creuser le fait que, **vivre et partager en communauté est ma première mission**, le premier endroit où partager ma foi. C'est le premier lieu où témoigner de l'amour de Dieu que je reçois à profusion, dans les moments de joie comme aux temps des défis

Susana BOSUH, SMNDA

Ce sujet d'interculturalité a été pris avec beaucoup de sérieux par notre congrégation ; il a été étudié et il nous a été proposé dans **le programme Salomé**, et de plus il a été inséré à tous les niveaux de notre formation. Grâce à cela, notre communauté a été capable de partager avec les autres religieux cet aspect de notre vie : l'interculturalité.

Malgorzata Poplawska, SMNDA

Les fiches sont composées par **mes sœurs plus expérimentées aussi bien dans la vie de notre congrégation que dans la vie en Afrique**. Je peux ressentir cela quand j'approfondis les fiches, et c'est pour moi une réelle nourriture pour croître dans ma vie personnelle, spirituelle et apostolique. Personnellement, j'ai expérimenté ces fiches comme si j'avais un **compagnon pour mon voyage**,

Brigitta Gremm, SMND

Outil de formation - Période des vœux temporaires

	1 ^{ère} année	2 ^e année	3 ^e année	4 ^e année	5 ^e année	6 ^e année
1. Mise en route de l'année						
2. Charisme et spiritualité	Spiritualité apostolique ignatienne	Tout à tous	« Soyez apôtres... »	Ouverture aux différents besoins	Engagement dans l'Eglise et dans le monde	Fidélité au charisme – Sens d'appartenance
3. Notre Mission à la suite du Christ	Femme-apôtre, envoyée pour participer à la Mission du Christ	Le salut est pour toutes/tous (ouverture et dial.)	Justice et paix	Solidarité avec les femmes	Autres religions et mouvements	Être témoins responsables
4. La prière de l'apôtre	Responsabilité personnelle	Parole de Dieu	Eucharistie et Réconciliation	Discernement	Avec Marie, N-D d'Afrique	Prière qui s'unifie
5. La communauté apostolique	Envoyée en communauté interculturelle	Gérer la différence	Équilibre apostolat – Cité (dispersion – rassemblement)	Participation et engagement	Communauté qui discerne	Conversion et pardon
6. Passion pour le Christ, passion pour l'humanité – Consécration pour la Mission	Suite du Christ (sa passion pour le Père et sa mission)	C23 : enracinement dans la consécration baptismale (Vat II)	C 24 : notre faiblesse, et force que donne la foi	C 25 : Dieu consacre, l'Eglise reçoit l'engagement	L'Alliance (C 83-85)	C 26 : réflexion sur la formule de l'engagement
7. Obéissance selon nos Constitutions SMNDA	Dimension apostolique de l'obéissance	Importance de l'obédience – Place des médiations	Le discernement dans la pratique de l'obéissance	Obéissance et interdépendance	L'obéissance, chemin pascal vécu avec le Christ	L'obéissance, chemin de liberté intérieure
8. Pauvreté selon nos Constitutions SMNDA	Dimension apostolique de la pauvreté	Créature – se recevoir – pauvreté de l'être	Solidaire avec les pauvres – Se laisser toucher	Liberté vis-à-vis des biens	Mes dons et les dons des autres	Co-créatrice – Écologie – Sobriété, solidarité
9. Chasteté selon nos Constitutions SMNDA	Dimension apostolique de la chasteté	Comment gérer mon affectivité	Célibat comme ouverture aux autres	Célibat vécu dans la joie	Fécondité	Fidélité dans l'amour – prendre les moyens
10. Formation continue	Responsabilité personnelle – moyens à prendre	Savoir profiter d'une lecture	Le cercle pastoral	Ouverture aux événements d'Eglise (Synode..)	Ouverture aux événements du pays et du monde	La formation, œuvre de toute une vie
11. Évaluation de l'année						

Sor Pascale-Dominique Nau, OP

MADUREZ PSICOLÓGICA Y MADUREZ ESPIRITUAL

Una lectura de Doroteo de Gaza
San Sebastián 2008

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I. Introducción y reflexión preliminar

A. introducción

Doroteo de Gaza, monje y abad del siglo VI, que vivió en Palestina, es uno de los herederos más celebres y más citados de los Padres del desierto¹. Encontramos en su obra intitulada las *Conferencias* una síntesis de las enseñanzas de los primeros siglos del monaquismo cristiano. Ahora bien, está generalmente aceptado que los Padres del desierto eran los primeros “psicólogos” cristianos porque por su enseñanza –transmitida en sentencias o historias²– a la vez trataban enfermedades espirituales y indicaban el camino hacia la plena salud del espíritu y del alma, la realización del ser humano y su felicidad.

En este trabajo vamos intentar poner en contacto dos mundos aparentemente muy distintos: el de Doroteo del siglo VI y nuestro mundo científico. Quiero mostrar que el camino que Doroteo plantea en sus *Conferencias* para educar a sus monjes y ayudarles a llegar a la plena realización humana en la madurez espiritual puede servir como modelo también hoy a quienes quieren llegar a la madurez psicológica.

Vamos a proceder con las etapas siguientes:

primero, en una *reflexión preliminar*, vamos a definir la madurez psicológica. Nos referimos en esta sección a trabajos de los psicólogos Gordon Allport³, Erik H. Erikson⁴ y Tony Anatrella⁵ así que a Sor Marie-Ancilla, o.p.⁶;

segundo, vamos a considerar la doctrina de Doroteo en las *Conferencias*;

tercero, en la conclusión notaremos unos puntos de contacto entre la progresión hacia la madurez espiritual (o santidad) y la madurez psicológica.

B. REFLEXIÓN PRELIMINAR

Hablamos mucho de la madurez psicológica de los jóvenes como prerequisite para entrar en la vida consagrada. En efecto, la psicología es una dimensión de nuestra humanidad que es preciso tener en cuenta en la vida espiritual, pues psicología y vida espiritual están estrechamente vinculadas: más exactamente es en el terreno psicológico que se enraíza la vida espiritual y, por lo tanto, la vida consagrada.

En esta reflexión preliminar, quisiera plantear tres preguntas:

1. ¿Qué es la madurez psicológica? ¿Es estado alcanzado o progresión?

G. Allport dice: “No es fácil describir la riqueza distintiva de la personalidad completamente madura. Hay tantos modos de desarrollo como individuos en crecimiento, y en cada caso el producto final es único. Pero si se buscasen criterios generales para distinguir una personalidad completamente desarrollada de otra inmadura, existen tres características diferenciadoras que parecen indispensables y universales [...] la *extensión del yo*, la *introvisión* y una *filosofía unificadora de la vida*”⁷. Sor Marie-Ancilla explica con palabras menos técnicas: “¿Cómo definir la madurez? Ser capaz de apertura, de

responsabilidad [*Allport: extensión del yo*] de asumir los acontecimientos como factores de crecimiento. La madurez emocional es la capacidad de centrarse en otro y no en sí. La sensibilidad, la inteligencia y el trabajo ya no se movilizan para probarse su valor, sino para pretender hacer placer a otros, volverlos felices, hacer todo lo que es posible para favorecer su desarrollo y su éxito.⁸

Ayudar a otros a avanzar hacia esta madurez humana significa evidentemente que el mismo acompañante o formador ya ha llegado a una madurez suficiente para medir si tiene los recursos necesarios para ayudar; para decirlo con las palabras de Allport: necesita “ese peculiar desprendimiento que muestra que la persona madura cuando examina sus propias pretensiones en relación con sus habilidades, sus objetivos presentes en relación con los objetivos posibles para ella”⁹.

El punto de partida es la *filosofía unificadora de la vida* que se escoge normalmente una sola vez, y la *extensión del yo*, la *introvisión* son procesos que dependen tanto de la situación de la persona que de su edad y de su salud física y psicológica. Y la persona que más se acerca a su madurez sería la que con más facilidad realiza estos procesos.

2. ¿Se puede no acoger la generosidad de los jóvenes que sienten la llamada a la vida consagrada y en quienes uno cree percibir una madurez insuficiente?

los textos más recientes sobre la formación en la vida religiosa, la palabra “madurez humana” reviene como una cantinela¹⁰. Por ejemplo, el documento *Optatam Totius* (nº 11) del Vaticano II dice respecto a los objetivos de la formación de los candidatos al sacerdocio:

Por medio de una educación sabiamente ordenada hay que *cultivar también en los alumnos la necesaria madurez humana*, la cual se comprueba, sobre todo, en cierta estabilidad de ánimo, en la facultad de tomar decisiones ponderadas y en el recto modo de juzgar sobre los acontecimientos y los hombres.

Todos los esfuerzos de Mons. Tony Anatrella van en este sentido. Este autor observa que un obstáculo dominante al desarrollo armonioso de la madurez humana en los jóvenes es la carencia de modelos adultos maduros. Como nuestra sociedad occidental ha perdido en gran parte su *filosofía unificadora de la vida* –dado durante siglos por el cristianismo– puede afirmar en su libro *La sociedad depresivo*:

La sociedad deprime porque ya no está animada por un ideal que la trascienda. Un ambiente de muerte y la idea de un universo carente de perspectiva cunden en nuestras sociedades (...). A la manera del deprimido, nuestras sociedades se han idealizado como si pensarán ser ellas mismas su propio ideal. Y queriendo liberarse de Dios, lo han cambiado por ideologías alienantes y desesperanzadoras para el hombre, basadas en el mito triunfador de la ciencia y de la tecnología. Mientras nuestras sociedades no renuncien a este yo idealizado que no tiene fundamento real, ellas se sumergen en la depresión¹¹.

Hay que decirselo: si queremos ayudar a los jóvenes a desarrollar su personalidad hacia una madurez responsable, ante todo tenemos que hacer este trabajo sobre nosotros mismos, planteándonos firmemente nuestra *filosofía que unifica nuestra vida* y actuando con coherencia.

Tenemos que tener en cuenta también que un ser humano sólo llega a madurez por un largo crecimiento. Y hablar de crecimiento, es hablar de límites donde el equilibrio debe sin cesar estar mantenida por una integración de elementos cada vez más complejos¹². Así como un niño no aprende a andar sin caer, la afectividad, la inteligencia, la voluntad, la sensibilidad, no se desarrollan sin conocer algunos traumatismos y situaciones de crisis¹³. – Es necesario aceptar y amar a las personas con sus heridas, sus fallos y su historia si

queremos ayudarles en su desarrollo personal. Digo no solamente aceptar a los jóvenes que se presentan sino también *amarles* porque las heridas pueden impedir una auto-estima sano y aun provocar reacciones de rebelión, de ira contra sí mismo y contra otros, de regresión a nivel emocional, de culpabilidad, comparación, búsqueda de un ideal de sí imposible a realizar... El amor no solamente cubre multitud de pecados y fallos (cf. 1 P 4, 8); también cura y pone en pie a quien no se ama suficientemente; la acogida positiva y sin juicio puede contribuir a una percepción y una valoración de sí positivas.

3. ¿Qué hemos de hacer?

La respuesta tiene en una palabra: **educar**, indicando el camino hacia la madurez y la realización plena de sí. En esta noble tarea la doctrina de Doroteo de Gaza nos puede ayudar mucho. Sin embargo, antes de exponer de qué manera nos puede ser útil, hay que decir unas palabras sobre cómo conciliar la psicología moderna con la tradición cristiana de los Padres del desierto, los “psicólogos” de los primeros siglos del monaquismo.

La cuestión de la relación entre lo psicológico y lo espiritual no es nueva. La finura psicológica ya estaba presente en los autores espirituales. Las sentencias de los Padres del desierto son ejemplos sorprendentes. Pero a la diferencia de nuestro tiempo, en sus escritos, la psicología no es un tema autónomo. Se puede comparar con lo que es la gramática por un niño: cuando comienza a hablar, no puede exponer las reglas de gramática, pero si las utiliza. Del mismo modo, los Padres del desierto aplican la psicología de manera adecuada, pero no hablan de ella. Aunque el padre espiritual y el psicólogo se refieren con frecuencia a datos comparables, no les observan desde el mismo punto de vista.

El psicólogo examina la vida humana tal como se vive: comportamientos, maneras de pensar y actuar, y pregunta: ¿Todas estas actitudes son auténticamente humanas? o ¿hay algo de desviado que impide el desarrollo de la vida humana de la persona?

El padre espiritual, al contrario, va de esta evidencia: cuando el Espíritu Santo es la causa de la vida espiritual, suscita el comportamiento que conviene, hace buscar la verdad en los actos, los pensamientos, las palabras: al contrario, siente cuando Espíritu aún no ha invadido todo el ser del acompañado.

Con Doroteo, nos situamos evidentemente en el marco espiritual y en el de la psicología (o interpretación de la mente) pre-científica¹⁴. Para exponer la correspondencia entre la madurez humana y la madurez espiritual según Doroteo, vamos a considerar sus *Conferencias* a la luz de los criterios de madurez psicológica de G. Allport en el orden siguiente: la *filosofía unificadora de la vida* – la *extensión del yo* – la *introvisión*.

II. Las Conferencias de Doroteo de Gaza

a. la *filosofía unificadora de la vida*: el fundamento: las fuentes de doroteo

Las *Conferencias* que los discípulos del maestro espiritual nos han transmitido fueron escritas por el mismo Doroteo, según los especialistas¹⁵. Del *corpus* que tenemos, 18 conferencias tratan directamente de nuestro tema¹⁶; los demás nos permiten identificar con más precisión el ambiente y las fuentes de Doroteo. Además, algunas conferencias no se han conservado; por lo tanto, no encontramos en esta obra una síntesis completa de la doctrina de Doroteo sobre la vida del monje, la cual se caracteriza por la vigilancia sobre sí mismo, el trabajo manual, la oración, y la meditación de la Sagrada Escritura.

Las *Conferencias* se centran en el desarrollo de la primera de estas características, es decir **la vigilancia sobre sí mismo**, y eso en un contexto comunitario tradicional donde la

caridad para con el prójimo y la obediencia en el servicio de la comunidad es más importante que el silencio contemplativo.

Doroteo, hijo de una familia cristiana acaudalada, vino al monasterio después de sus estudios de retórica clásica¹⁷. A estos primeros estudios profanos se añadieron los estudios de la Sagrada Escritura, de la doctrina de los Padres de la Iglesia –especialmente Basilio, Gregorio Nacianceno y Juan Crisóstomo¹⁸– y la enseñanza de los “ancianos” que son los Padres del desierto de los primeros siglos del monaquismo¹⁹. De todo ello, Doroteo recibió el fundamento teológico y antropológico sobre el cual elaboró su doctrina espiritual, recomponiendo las enseñanzas de los Padres del desierto y confrontándolas con su experiencia personal, en un *corpus* bastante unificado y coherente (a pesar de lucanas dejado con la pérdida de algunas conferencias).

La primera Conferencia presenta este fundamento en forma de una síntesis de la historia bíblica de creación-salvación, en la cual cada cristiano se reconoce implicado. Este fundamento es la **filosofía unificadora de la vida** de los monjes. He aquí el esquema:

A) CREACIÓN Y CAÍDA Dios hizo al hombre a su imagen (Gn 1, 27), es decir <i>inmortal, libre y ornado de todas las virtudes</i>. Le colocó en el Paraíso y le impuso el precepto de no comer del árbol que se hallaba en medio del jardín. El hombre transgredió el precepto y fue expulsado del paraíso. Caído de su <i>estado natural</i>, el hombre se encontraba en un <i>estado contrario a la naturaleza</i>, “es decir en el amor de la gloria, el apego a los placeres de esta vida y en las otras <i>pasiones que le dominaban</i>, [...] desde entonces el mal aumentó progresivamente y se extendió en el mundo. B) REDENCIÓN <i>Antes de Cristo</i>: “Dios en su bondad tuvo misericordia de su criatura”, le dio la ley para socorrer, convertir y corregir el mal y mandó a sus profetas para instruirle. <i>Con Cristo</i>: “Nuestro Señor vino, haciéndose hombre por nosotros, Para curar lo semejante con lo semejante, el alma con el alma, la carne con la carne [...] <i>restaurando el estado de la naturaleza, y restituyendo las facultades a su integridad primera</i>. [...] Destruyó toda esclavitud por el bautismo, perdonando y borrando toda culpa” (n. 1 et 7).
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Este esquema presenta varias *afirmaciones teológicas*: el Dios bueno es creador, cuida del hombre antes y después de la transgresión del precepto, y por la Encarnación de su Hijo restaura el estado natural y las facultades que el hombre perdió con esta transgresión. En toda esta historia de creación-salvación, la iniciativa está del lado de Dios. Ahora, *de punto de vista de la antropología*, nos interesa la respuesta del hombre que se encuentra en un estado de debilidad, de enfermedad (alteración de salud) contrario a la naturaleza, y esclavo de las pasiones. En efecto, todavía queda al hombre potencialmente su libertad, su voluntad – fuente de su rebelión contra Dios pero también posibilidad de recibir la curación – y su inteligencia, pues ha sido creado a imagen de Dios.

El primer paso del hombre en su curación es el bautismo que “perdona y borra la culpa”. Pero no es suficiente; después del bautismo, el hombre debe practicar los mandamientos que Dios, en su bondad, le dio. Doroteo escribe: “Podemos, si queremos, purificarnos de nuevo con la práctica de los mandamientos; y no sólo purificarnos de nuestros pecados, sino también de nuestras pasiones”.

Doroteo pone la noción de pasiones en relación con el versículo de 1 Jn 2, 16: “Todo lo que hay en el mundo – la concupiscencia de la carne, la concupiscencia de los ojos y la

jactancia de las riquezas – no viene del Padre, sino del mundo”. Su definición de la noción de “pasión” viene de Aristóteles²⁰, que dice en su *Metafísica*, (V, 21):

Pasión se dice de las cualidades que puede alternativamente revestir un ser; como lo blanco y lo negro, lo dulce y lo amargo, la pesantez y la ligereza, y todas las demás de este género. En otro sentido, es el acto mismo de estas cualidades, el tránsito de una a otra. Pasión, en este último caso, se dice más bien de las cualidades malas, y sobre todo se aplica a las tendencias deplorables y perjudiciales.

La doctrina que Doroteo va ahora elaborar en las demás conferencias tratará directamente con las pasiones que dominan y perjudican el equilibrio psíquico y físico del hombre, debilitando su estado de salud natural. El hombre ha de arrancar las raíces de sus pasiones. De hecho, los pecados que le dejan herido y enfermo son simplemente las manifestaciones de sus pasiones. Notamos aquí la distinción que Doroteo hace entre el “pecado” y la “pasión”:

Las **pasiones** son la cólera, la vanagloria, el amor del placer, el odio, los malos deseos, y todas las *disposiciones* de este género. Los **pecados** son los *actos* mismos de las pasiones: cuando se ponen en acción, se realizan corporalmente las obras inspiradas por las pasiones.

Concluye: “Ciertamente es posible tener pasiones y no actuar con ellas”. Así pues, las pasiones son *disposiciones* o *actitudes*. Y no hay un hombre que no las tiene. Lo que hace la diferencia entre los hombres es, de un lado, que todas las pasiones no se presentan de manera igual en todos y, del otro, que todos los hombres no actúan de la misma manera: mientras unos se dejan llevar por sus pasiones, otros espiritualmente más maduros – y eso no depende de dones o talentos particulares sino de la entrega en la *filosofía de la vida* – por la vigilancia sobre sí mismos se defienden contra ellas, las vencen y las arrancan.

Antes de pasar al apartado siguiente, en que vamos a considerar unos ejemplos en las *Conferencias* de hombres que han llegado a la madurez, quiero señalar el diagrama del conjunto de la doctrina de Doroteo (Anexo I), que servirá de referencia para la presentación que sigue.

B. LA EXTENSIÓN DEL YO:

LOS “PADRES” QUE HAN LLEGADO A LA MADUREZ ESPIRITUAL

Los “santos” son estos hombres y estas mujeres que por la vigilancia sobre sí mismos se defienden contra las pasiones y las vencen, y al mismo tiempo sirven a los demás en su desarrollo personal – o para decirlo con las palabras de Sor Marie-Ancilla: son estas personas capaces “de apertura, de responsabilidad, de asumir los acontecimientos como factores de crecimiento” con “la capacidad de centrarse en otro y no en sí y la sensibilidad, la inteligencia y el trabajo entregados para hacer todo lo que es posible para favorecer el desarrollo y el éxito de otros”.

En las *Conferencias*, el premier ejemplo que encontramos es Basilio de Cesarea (330-379, Capadocia): después de su formación en Atenas como orador, fue monje, luego obispo, escritor y fundador de una familia monástica que todavía existe hoy en la Iglesia ortodoxa. Doroteo le presenta como maestro, citándole varias veces para apoyar su propia enseñanza. Basta con una cita:

San Basilio dice: “No es asunto fácil hacerse dueño de [una mala inclinación inveterada], porque una costumbre consolidada con una prolongada práctica, viene a ser de ordinario fuerte como la naturaleza”. Es preciso luchar, lo repito, contra las malas costumbres y contra las pasiones, pero también contra sus causas, que son sus raíces. Porque si no se arrancan las raíces, necesariamente las espinas volverán a brotar (*Conf.* 12, 131).

Los “Padres” que guían a otros son los “amigos” de Dios y, por sus palabras y su ejemplo, enseñan la *filosofía* (es así que se llamaba el movimiento del monaquismo, *philos* significa amigo, y la *Sofía* era identificado con Cristo, la sabiduría de Dios en persona). Doroteo, en la primera Conferencia, les presenta así como ejemplos a sus discípulos:

Por medio de la contrición del corazón se aceptan los mandamientos, se aleja uno del mal, adquiere las virtudes y llega al fin al reposo. Esto, todos los santos lo sabían. Por eso, buscaban unirse a Dios con una vida enteramente humilde. Hubo amigos de Dios que, después del santo bautismo, no sólo renunciaron a los actos de las pasiones, sino que quisieron vencer las mismas pasiones y llegar a ser impasibles: tal fue san Antonio, Pacomio y los otros Padres teóforos (portadores de Dios) (n. 10).

Como Basilio, Antonio (250-356, Egipto) et Pacomio (solado romana, que fundó su primer monasterio en Egipto 320; † 346), maestros de la vida espiritual o, para decirlo con la palabra más utilizada en la tradición, eran “Padres” que después de una larga experiencia en la vida monástica ejercían la paternidad espiritual para con sus discípulos. Descentrados de ellos mismos, su propia experiencia les condujo a ayudar a otros en su relación con Dios, en la comunidad, y a lo largo de su camino hacia la libertad interior.

En los primeros párrafos, vemos que la donación de sí mismo es fundamental en la vida monástica:

Los Padres comprendieron que, en el mundo, no podrían llegar fácilmente a la virtud. Por ello, concibieron una existencia aparte, una manera de vivir especial, quiero decir la vida monástica (n. 11). [...] No contentos con guardar los mandamientos, ofrecieron a Dios presentes; estos presentes son la virginidad y la pobreza (n. 12). [...] Decíamos que los Padres ofrecieron a Dios como presentes, además de las otras virtudes, la virginidad y la pobreza, y, como habíamos dicho antes, crucificaron el mundo en sí mismos y lucharon luego por crucificarse ellos al mundo, según la palabra del Apóstol: “El mundo está crucificado para mí y yo para el mundo” (n. 13).

Ya hemos dicho que la Biblia es la *regla de conducta* de los monjes. Sin embargo, su *modelo* principal es Cristo, el nuevo Adán, Maestro y Salvador por su muerte y resurrección. Doroteo escribe:

Cristo nos enseña por los santos mandamientos cómo purificarnos incluso de nuestras pasiones, para que no nos hagan caer de nuevo en los mismos pecados. Nos muestra, en fin, la causa que hace llegar al desprecio y a la trasgresión de los preceptos de Dios; nos proporciona así el remedio para que podamos obedecer y salvarnos.

¿Cuál es ese remedio y cuál es la causa del desprecio? Escuchad lo que dice nuestro Señor mismo: “*Aprended de mí que soy manso y humilde de corazón y hallaréis el reposo para vuestras almas*”. He ahí que, brevemente, en pocas palabras, nos muestra la raíz y la causa de todos los males, y su remedio, fuente de todos los bienes (n. 7).

La imitación de Cristo no consiste tanto en imitar sus acciones exteriores sino a apropiarse sus actitudes, su disposición humilde y manso, requisita para la curación y “remedio, fuente de todos los bienes”. Concretamente, para el hombre ser humilde significa simplemente reconocer, como Pablo, “El bien que quiero, no lo hago, y el mal que no quiero, lo cometo” (Rm 7, 15). – Notamos aquí que las pasiones tienen, de hecho, un efecto alienante.

Sintetizamos: Los Padres se retiraron en el desierto y en monasterios para, “por medio de la contrición de corazón” y la observación de los mandamientos, alejarse del mal, adquirir las virtudes y llegar al fin al reposo. Ahora, gozando de este reposo, no se cerraron en ellos mismos sino se pusieron al servicio de otros – principalmente a los hombres en sus comunidades pero también a los laicos que acudieron a los monasterios – para ayudarles a recorrer el camino interior hacia la libertad. “Se ofrecieron a Dios como presentes” y, en muchos casos, atendieron a la vida material de sus comunidades – es el caso del mismo Doroteo; después de su formación inicial, sus superiores le encargaban el cuidado de los enfermos del monasterio. Sus enseñanzas nacen de su experiencia, de su contemplación e imitación de Cristo en la vida diaria concreta, y de su oración. Finalmente, para sus discípulos, los que vivieron con ellos en las comunidades monásticas de los primeros siglos como para los que leen sus *vidas* y observan (en el sentido de meditar y poner en práctica) sus enseñanzas, los Padres son una familia y una comunidad espiritual en la comunión de los santos.

Para terminar este apartado, notamos también que, además del enseñamiento, los Padres tenían la responsabilidad de rezar por sus discípulos. Más aún, para Doroteo (y los demás autores de esta tradición), la oración por el discípulo es una parte muy importante del papel del padre espiritual.

Terminemos con un ejemplo.

Estaba abatido y en una angustia tal que estaba a punto de morir. Este tormento era un engaño del demonio y una prueba semejante procede de su envidia; es muy penosa, pero de corta duración; pesada, tenebrosa, sin consolación ni reposo, con la angustia y la opresión por todas partes.

Pero la gracia de Dios llega pronto al alma, si no, nadie podría soportarlo. Estando, pues, presa de esta prueba y de esta angustia, me encontraba un día en el atrio del monasterio, descorazonado, suplicando a Dios que viniese en mi auxilio. De repente, echando una mirada al interior de la iglesia, vi penetrar en el santuario a alguien que tenía el aspecto de un obispo, y que llevaba una vestimenta de armiño. Nunca me acercaba a un extraño sin necesidad o sin una orden. Con todo, algo me atrajo, y avancé tras sus pisadas. Mucho tiempo permaneció de pie, las manos tendidas hacia el cielo. Yo estaba detrás de él y oraba con mucho temor, porque su vista me llenaba de espanto. Cuando cesó de orar, se volvió y vino hacia mí. A medida que él se acercaba, yo sentía alejarse mi tristeza y mi miedo. Detenido ante mí, extendió su mano hasta tocar mi pecho y lo golpeó con sus dedos diciendo: “No cesé de aguardar al Señor. Él se inclinó hacia mí, escuchó mi oración, me retiró de la fosa de perdición y del fango del lodazal: estableció mis pies sobre roca y confirmó mis pasos. Puso en mi boca un cántico nuevo, una alabanza a nuestro Dios” (Sal 39,2-4). Tres veces repitió estos versos golpeándome el pecho. Luego se fue. Inmediatamente mi corazón se llenó de luz, de alegría, de consolación, de dulzura: no era el mismo hombre. Salí corriendo en su búsqueda, pero no lo hallé; había desaparecido.

Desde aquella hora, por la misericordia divina, no me acuerdo de haber sido atormentado de tristeza o de temor. El Señor me protegió hasta ahora, gracias a las oraciones de los santos ancianos (n. 67).

C. LA INTROVISIÓN: CONOCIMIENTO D SÍ MISMO Y COMBATE ESPIRITUAL

Quien recibe el bautismo – y más aún quien entra en la vida religiosa – ya ha decidido emprender un trabajo sobre sí mismo: la purificación del corazón y la vida ética que acompañan su entrega en y para el Reino de Dios. Este sabe, como Doroteo, que el hombre ha sido creado a imagen de Dios (1,27), dotado de la inteligencia y la libertad que le colocan por encima de los demás creaturas del mundo. Sin embargo, también se da cuenta de que en el corazón del hombre se hallan fuerzas oscuras que le pueden expulsar fuera de este Reino y alejarle Dios, como Adán y Eva fueron echado del Paraíso y de la presencia cercana de Dios después de la transgresión del único precepto.

En las *Conferencias* estas fuerzas, las dichas “Pasiones principales” – que Doroteo enumera según la primera carta de san Juan²¹ – son: el amor al placer, el amor al dinero, y el amor a la vanagloria; éstas son las raíces de las demás pasiones cuyas retoños visibles y reconocibles se manifiestan en los malos pensamientos, la voluntad propia y la pretensión de justicia. Ya hemos visto que el resultado más difundido en el mundo como en el corazón humano es la ausencia de paz y toda la turbación que estas realidades espirituales y psicológicas llevan consigo.

La disposición fundamental del alma para curarse estas enfermedades comience en la vida personal por la vigilancia sobre sí mismo. La vigilancia, que presupone la humildad de reconocer la existencia del mal en su propia casa, requiere, de un lado, tiempo y silencio – condiciones externas – y, del otro, la *introvisión*.

Doroteo indica además dos ayudas humanas en este proceso: la **consciencia** y el **acompañante**.

De la consciencia dice:

Cuando Dios creó al hombre depositó en él un germen divino, una facultad más viva y luminosa como una centella, para esclarecer el espíritu y hacerle discernir el bien y el mal. Es lo que se llama “consciencia” o “ley natural” (n. 40). [...] Conformándose a la ley de la consciencia, los Patriarcas y todos los santos de antes de la ley escrita agradaron a Dios. Pero, habiéndola sepultado progresivamente los hombres y habiéndola pisoteado con sus pecados, nos fue precisa la ley escrita, nos fueron necesarios los profetas, nos fue menester la venida de nuestro Señor Jesucristo por sacarla a relucir y despertarla, para reanimar con la práctica de sus santos mandamientos la centella enterrada. Desde entonces, está en nuestro poder o bien enterrarla de nuevo, o bien dejar que brille y nos ilumine, si le obedecemos. Si nuestra consciencia nos manda hacer tal cosa y nosotros la despreciamos, si nos habla de nuevo y no hacemos lo que ella nos dice, persistiendo en pisotearla, terminaremos por enterrarla, y el peso, que la cubre, le impide en adelante hablarnos claramente (n. 45).

Del otro lado, el *acompañante* juega el papel de una “consciencia exterior”, un espejo que refleja al hombre su conducta y le ayuda, orientando y animándole por el camino del bien. También puede elucidar lo que parece dictar la consciencia en situaciones más difíciles. En todo caso, Doroteo recuerda que “el monje no debe nunca dejar que su consciencia le atormente, por nada”.

El combate espiritual para el bien debe ser acompañado por la **oración**: se trata de la oración de los ancianos, como lo hemos visto, y de los hermanos, pero sobre todo de la oración personal. En la *Conferencia* 13, intitulada “Hay que soportar las tentaciones sin turbarse y dando gracias” leemos:

En efecto, cuando alguien combate para no pecar y lucha incluso contra los pensamientos apasionados que le sobrevienen al espíritu, es humillado y quebrantado en la lucha, pero el sufrimiento de los combates le purifica poco a poco y le retorna al

estado natural. Como hemos dicho, es ignorancia y orgullo turbarse cuando se está asediado por una pasión. Uno debe más bien reconocer humildemente sus límites y esperar en la oración que Dios tenga misericordia (n. 144).

Hay que quitar las pasiones. Éstas se concretan en formas de apego que se revelan en pensamientos que turban la paz, primero la paz interior y después la paz exterior. Doroteo presenta una lista de ocho pasiones: *glotonería - amor al dinero - lujuria - tristeza - acedia - ira - orgullo - vanagloria*²². Existen también otras listas. Ahora bien, tales clasificaciones así como las presentaciones de las pasiones nos interesan porque muestran que las pasiones son una parte constitutiva de todo ser humano. Por lo tanto, si uno las descubre en sí mismo se reconoce como ser humano “normal”, y el descubrirlas le permite no dejarse llevar por ellas. Pero para saber cómo purificarse “de las pasiones, de las malas disposiciones de nuestro hombre interior” (n. 6), hay que darse cuenta de su influencia sobre la voluntad y la imaginación. La progresión de la *ira* es paradigmático:

Soportando una simple palabra de vuestro hermano, podíais extinguir el pequeño carbón, antes de que apareciese la turbación. Pero incluso la turbación podéis todavía calmarla fácilmente, cuando acaba de producirse, con el silencio, con la oración, con una mera *metania* (o inclinación) que brota del corazón.

Si, al contrario, continuáis a producir humo, es decir a conmover y a excitar vuestro corazón pensando: “¿Por qué me dijo aquello? ¡Yo también puedo hablarle a él!”, la afluencia y la fricción de los pensamientos, podría decirse, trabajando y calentando el corazón, provocan la llama de la irritación. Ésta, según san Basilio, es solamente la ebullición de la sangre en torno al corazón. Eso es la irritación. Si queréis, podéis aún extinguirla, antes de que se transforme en ira. Pero si continuáis a turbaros y a perturbar a los demás, hacéis como el que echa trozos de madera a la hoguera y activa el fuego: se hacen brasas. Es la ira (n. 90).

En este caso, la complicidad con la pasión conduce progresivamente a una turbación interior grave y a una sumisión total – espíritu y cuerpo – a la pasión; al contrario, quien rechaza la pasión en cuanto aparece conserva su paz interior y la caridad para con las personas de su entorno. (Cf. Anexo II) Evidentemente arrancar la pasión requiere un esfuerzo y – sobre todo al principio cuando uno está aprendiendo como luchar – un acompañante. Es el caso también de los demás pasiones que apegan el alma a objetos ajenos. Doroteo afirma:

Si queremos ser completamente libres, comencemos a negar nuestra voluntad propia, y de esta manera, poco a poco, llegaremos con la ayuda de Dios a despojarnos verdaderamente. Nada hay tan provechoso para el hombre como el negar su voluntad propia. Por este camino progresamos más allá de toda virtud. El que anda por esta vía de la negación de la voluntad propia se asemeja al viajante que encuentra un atajo por el cual se ahorra gran parte del camino. Ello se debe a que negando nuestra voluntad alcanzamos el desapego de las cosas, y por este desapego, con el auxilio de Dios, llegaremos a la impasibilidad (n. 20).

Pero la lucha contra las pasiones es solamente un aspecto del combate espiritual. También hay que adquirir las virtudes, primero las virtudes cristianas fundamentales (teologales) de fe, esperanza y caridad y, consiguientemente, las de obediencia, paciencia, temperancia, compasión, despojo de la voluntad propia y generosidad con perseverancia y ánimo. Doroteo nota que

Cada pasión tiene una virtud que le es contraria:

contra el orgullo, la humildad;
 contra el amor al dinero, la limosna;
 contra la lujuria, la templanza;
 contra el desánimo, la paciencia;
 contra la ira, la mansedumbre;
 contra el odio, la caridad (n. 133).

Volviendo a nuestro ejemplo a propósito de la ira, vemos como la humildad se opone a la turbación, la irritación y la ira.

En todo se trata de actuar con inteligencia y conciencia, sabiendo que poco a poco la lucha llegará a ser más fácil, a medida en que se adquiere una agudeza y la competencia para actuar con suavidad. Por este camino, hay que soportar las tentaciones sin turbarse y dando gracias (*Conferencia XIII*). El hombre se ejerce en el combate y consigue la libertad, arrancando las pasiones en la tentación –y aún después un fracaso en el pecado–, si sabe aprovechar de la circunstancia para no dejarse llevar la próxima vez. Paso a paso llegue a vivir sin preocuparse ni turbarse demasiado; digo “demasiado” porque

Lo mismo que “El agricultor ni siquiera puede estar sin inquietud cuando la mies en el campo no sufrió ningún daño y fue preservada hasta la cosecha, ya que puede suceder, después de haber bregado y cosechado su campo, que un malvado viene por odio a quemar la cosecha y destruirla completamente, reduciendo a nada toda su labor y no puede, pues, estar tranquilo antes de ver el grano bien limpio y guardado en el granero. Así el hombre no debe estar sin inquietud aunque haya podido escapar a todos los peligros (n. 137).

Por lo tanto, uno tiene que perseverar en la vigilancia sobre sí mismo, dispuesto a humillarse, a pedir la ayuda de Dios y de sus hermanos, esforzándose a convivir con todos en la caridad. De un hombre llegado a este punto, podemos decir que es espiritualmente y humanamente maduro, porque sabe afrontar los acontecimientos de su vida con calma y reflexión, y mantener su equilibrio. Ya puede gozar de la recompensa y de los frutos sensibles de la victoria sobre las pasiones que son el reposo y la paz en Dios – es este estado que llamamos “hesicasm²³”: quietud, silencio, paz interior, en unión mística con Dios y en armonía con la creación. Y así puede un hombre ser movido por el Espíritu de Dios y agente de reconciliación y de paz.

III. Conclusión

Vamos a concluir aunque todavía queda mucha por decir, por ejemplo sobre temas como el temor de Dios (cf. el índice), la relación entre las pasiones y las virtudes, la mala costumbre y la psicopatía, la contrición y la conversión, la obediencia y la autoridad, el carácter y el ambiente, la transmisión narrativa de la doctrina espiritual...

Resumimos lo que hemos visto. La doctrina de Doroteo de Gaza corresponde perfectamente a los criterios de madurez de G. Allport: el punto de partida y de referencia es la *filosofía unificadora de la vida* – el cristianismo fundado en la Revelación bíblica e encarnado en el monasterio; la *introvisión* – el conocimiento de sí mismo y el combate espiritual con todos sus componentes; y la *extensión del yo* – acción movida por la compasión, con generosidad y cuidado de los hermanos jóvenes por los “ancianos”.

Así también hemos contestado a las dos últimas preguntas de nuestra reflexión preliminar inspirados por Mons. Anatrella: ¿Se puede no acoger la generosidad de los jóvenes que sienten la llamada a la vida consagrada y en quienes uno cree percibir una madurez insuficiente? Sí, les podemos acoger pero solamente si estamos preparados a ayudarles verbo et exemplo en su camino hacia la madurez – y, como para todos, aceptar que unos, llegados a una madurez suficiente, repartan y anden por otros caminos que la de la vida monástica.

¿Qué hemos de hacer? Educar, por supuesto, según nuestra tradición de espiritualidad cristiana – como la de Doroteo y los demás Padres del desierto – más de milenaria, lo que no significa en absoluto rechazar los medios psicológicos de hoy que pueden ayudar a encaminarse hacia la madurez humana y espiritual. Termino con una cita de Sor Marie-Ancilla: “Hoy en día, el acompañante espiritual y el psicólogo pueden trabajar juntos. De hecho, el acompañante se encuentra a veces frente a situaciones, resistencias – distintas de las resistencias a la gracia –, o sea elementos puramente psicológicos que, por la inercia o oposición que causan, impiden la acción del Espíritu. En este caso, la mirada exterior especializada en los comportamientos humanos detectará lo que no es humanamente normal: por ejemplo imágenes de Dios o esquemas establecidos durante la pequeña infancia, cuya influencia provoca miedo y huida. El psicólogo podrá ayudar a determinar dónde se sitúa el problema. El acompañante espiritual, por su parte, ayudará a ver cómo dejar el Espíritu transformar estos obstáculos, cuál es el camino espiritual que podrá permitir la obra de la gracia”.

Anexo I

DOROTEO DE GAZA CONFERENCIAS

DIVERSAS ENSEÑANZAS DE NUESTRO SANTO PADRE DOROTEO A SUS DISCÍPULOS

- I CONFERENCIA: ACERCA DEL RENUNCIAMIENTO
- II CONFERENCIA: LA HUMILDAD
- III CONFERENCIA: LA CONCIENCIA
- IV CONFERENCIA: EL TEMOR DE DIOS
- V CONFERENCIA: NO SE DEBE SEGUIR EL PROPIO JUICIO
- VI CONFERENCIA: NO DEBEMOS JUZGAR AL PROJIMO
- VII CONFERENCIA: LA ACUSACION DE SI MISMO
- VIII CONFERENCIA: DEL RENCOR
- IX CONFERENCIA: SOBRE LA MENTIRA
- X CONFERENCIA: ACERCA DEL FIN PRECISO Y DE LA VIGILANCIA CON LA QUE DEBEMOS MARCHAR EN EL CAMINO DE DIOS
- XI CONFERENCIA: DE LA PRONTITUD EN REPRIMIR LAS PASIONES ANTES DE QUE EL ALMA SE HABITUE AL MAL
- XII CONFERENCIA: DEL TEMOR AL CASTIGO QUE VENDRA Y DE LA NECESIDAD DE QUE AQUE QUE DESEA SER SALVADO NO DESCUIDE JAMAS LA PREOCUPACION DE SU PROPIA SALVACION
- XIII CONFERENCIA: SE DEBEN SOPORTAR LAS TENTACIONES SIN TURBACION Y CON ACCION DE GRACIAS
- XIV CONFERENCIA: SOBRE EL EDIFICIO Y LA ARMONIA DE LAS VIRTUDES DEL ALMA
- XV CONFERENCIA: LOS SANTOS AYUNOS

- XVI CONFERENCIA: EXPLICACION DE ALGUNAS PALABRAS DE SAN GREGORIO
CANTADAS EN LA SANTA PASCUA
- XVII CONFERENCIA: EXPLICACION DE ALGUNAS PALABRAS DE SAN GREGORIO,
CANTADAS PARA LOS SANTOS MARTIRES

DOCTRINA ESPIRITUAL DE DOROTEO DE GAZA

Palestina, S. VI

EL SER HUMANO ES CREADO A IMAGEN DE DIOS

Gen 1,27

SEMEJANZA: por las virtudes
PÉRDIDA DE LA SEMEJANZA: por los vicios
BAUTISMO: somos purificados del pecado por la muerte de Cristo,
pero las raíces de los vicios permanecen en nosotros

Pasiones principales:

1 Juan 2,16

sus raíces

amor al placer

amor al dinero

amor a la vanagloria



las demás pasiones
(escondidas)

sus retoños visibles

- pensamientos malos

- voluntad propia

- pretensión de cumplir la justicia =

pretender cumplir con la justicia mientras
que uno no hace más que
actuar según su propia voluntad

Actitud fundamental del alma

Vigilancia = sobriedad (opuesta a la indiferencia)

(el alma vigilante, que queda perfectamente

presente a sí mismo, vela para no dejarse

sorprender por el enemigo)

Auxilios

CONCIENCIA (ley natural)

que ilumina el espíritu y ayuda

a discernir la diferencia

entre el bien y el mal

Guía

o

consejero

QUITAR LAS PASIONES

Con sus raíces

todas las formas de afecto
(manifestadas por los pensamientos
que turban la paz)

combate

por el esfuerzo

y la ayuda del guía

Despojo

con la ayuda

de Dios

COMBATE
ESPIRITUAL

ACOMPAÑADA
POR LA ORACIÓN

LAS PASIONES
GLOTONERÍA
AMOR DEL DINERO
LUJURIA
TRISTEZ
ACEDIA
IRA
ORGULLO
VANAGLORIA

ADQUISICION DE
LAS VIRTUDES

actuar con conocimiento
y inteligencia

plenamente consciente de lo que haces

con una conciencia limpia, con firmeza

Virtudes fundamentales – FE (FIDES) • ESPERANZA (SPES) • CARIDAD (CARITAS)

Humildad
Discernimiento

OBEDIENCIA - PACIENCIA - TEMPERANCIA - COMPASIÓN -
DESARRAIGO DE LA VOLUNTAD PROPIA - GENEROSIDAD
PERSEVERANCIA Y ÁNIMO

CARIDAD = perfección de las virtudes

HUMILDAD

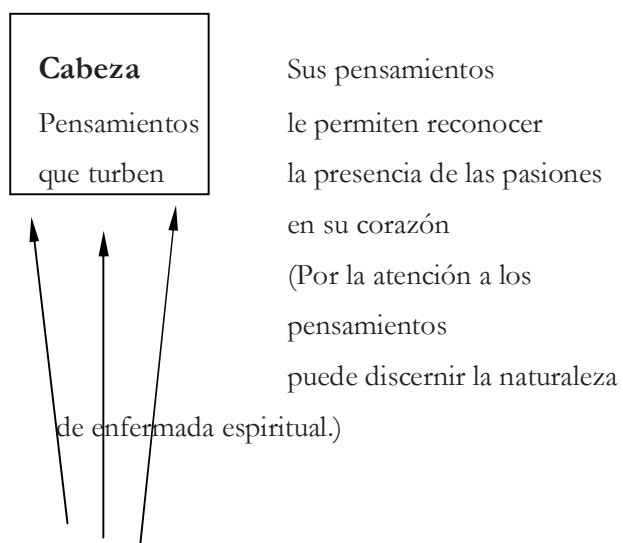
DESCANSO y PAZ
EN DIOS

Ausencia de preocupaciones y de turbación

Anexo III

CAMINO ESPIRITUAL

I. El hombre está enfermo



Semillas de las pasiones en el corazón:

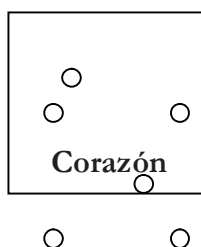
consecuencias

del pecado original

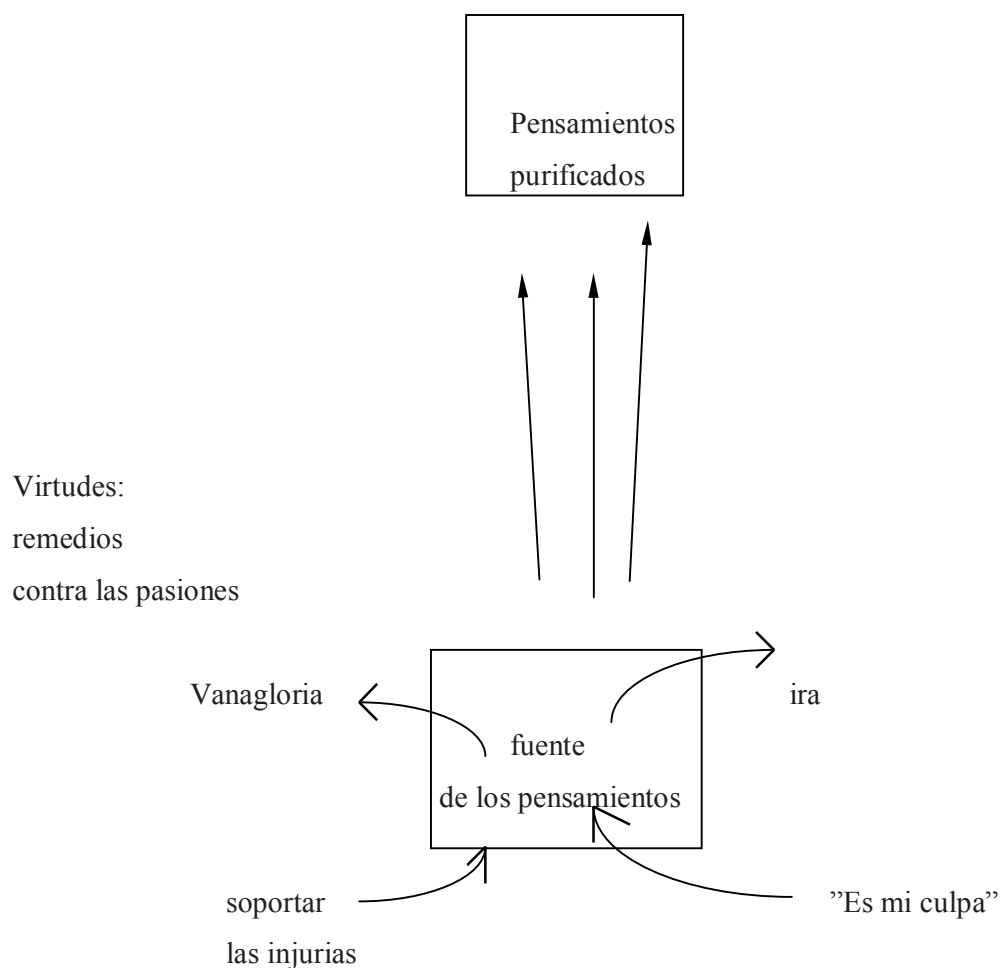
(Energías oscuras

que se oponen

a la acción de la gracia.)



II. La verdad os librar 



Para la edici n imprimida de este estudio, v ase:

<http://www.lulu.com/content/libro-tapa-blanda/madurez-psicol%C3%B3gica-y-madurez-espiritual-una-lectura-de-doroteo-de-gaza/8077269>

¹ Existen dos traducciones en l nea de su obra *Las Conferencias* en espa ol: BEC et www.cartuja.org/escritos/monasticos/doroteo.pdf (incluye sentencias y cartas de san Doroteo), pero todav a no tenemos una edici n cr tica espa ola. Cito la traducci n de las *Obras completas* de la Cartuja Sta. M  Benifa a.

² He aqu  dos ejemplos: Preguntaron a un anciano:   Cu l es el trabajo del monje? . Y  l contest :   El discernimiento . — Se le pregunt  a un anciano:    Qu  debe hacer un monje? . Y respondi :   Practicar el bien y abstenerse de todo mal .

³ Psicólogo humanista, profesor de Harvard (1930-1967), y autor de *Psicología de la personalidad* (Buenos Aires, Paidós, 1970) y *Pattern and Growth in Personality*, Nueva York - Londres, Holt, Reinhart and Winston, 1967).

⁴ Psicólogo estadounidense de origen alemán, profesor de Harvard hasta 1970, destacado por sus contribuciones en psicología evolutiva. Elaboró una Teoría del desarrollo de la personalidad a la que denominó "Teoría psicosocial". En ella describe ocho etapas del ciclo vital o estadios psicosociales (crisis o conflictos en el desarrollo de la vida, a las cuales han de enfrentarse las personas). Para una presentación de su teoría, cf. <http://www.psicologia-online.com/ebooks/personalidad/erikson.htm>.

⁵ Tony Anatrella, S.J., sacerdote, psicoanalista y especialista en psiquiatría social. Además de su práctica clínica, participa en diversos trabajos de investigación sobre Psicología juvenil y problemas sociales: la familia, el matrimonio, el divorcio. Enseña Psicología clínica. Reconocido y apreciado como especialista en problemas de la adolescencia. Consultor del Consejo Pontificio para la Familia.

⁶ Sor Marie-Ancilla es monja dominica en el monasterio de Lourdes (Francia) y autora de varios libros sobre la doctrina patristica y la vida religiosa.

⁷ G. W. Allport, *Psicología de la personalidad*, p. 231 s.

⁸ Conferencia al CDVR Tarbes-Lourdes, 18 juin 2001, "Accompagnement psychologique au cours d'un accompagnement spirituel: Comment, éventuellement, en faire découvrir la nécessité à un jeune?"

⁹ G. Allport, op. cit., p. 231.

¹⁰ Vaticano II, *Perfectae caritatis* 1965 (2 párrafos); CIVCSVA, *Eléments de l'enseignement de l'Eglise sur la vie religieuse* 1983 (2); Id., *Directives sur la formation dans les Instituts religieux* 1990 (9); Id., *La Vie fraternelle en communauté* : « Congregavit nos in unum Christi amor » 1994 (3); Id., *Collaboration inter-instituts pour la Formation* 1998 (3).

¹¹ Citado en Horacio Bojorge, S.J., *La civilización de la acedia: El mal espiritual de la civilización actual. Un diagnóstico espiritual inspirado en la doctrina tradicional sistematizada y expuesta por Santo Tomás de Aquino*, Congreso Tomista Internazionale l'Umanesimo Cristiano nel III Millennio: Prospettiva di Tommaso d'Aquino Roma, 21-25 settembre 2003, p. 13.

¹² Cf., por ejemplo, los estado de fe de James Fowler en *Stages of Faith: The Psychology of Human Development* (1995) y *Becoming Adult, Becoming Christian : Adult Development and Christian Faith* (1999).

¹³ "Crisis", que deriva del verbo *kri,nw*: separar, distinguir, seleccionar decidir, es una palabra griega que significa el proceso de decisión. Así podemos decir que Jesús, en el huerto (Mt 26, 36-46; Mc 14, 26 s.; Lc 22, 39), vive una "crisis" de que sale humanamente más maduro por haber mantenido por libre decisión su orientación fundamental: obediencia a la voluntad del Padre en el servicio del Reino de Dios.

¹⁴ J. M. Baldwin, *History of Psychology: A Sketch and an Interpretation*, Volume I, Part II: Early Unscientific Interpretations of Mind.

¹⁵ Cf. el artículo "Doroteo de Gaza" en *Dictionnaire de spiritualité*, III, 1600 s.

¹⁶ Cf. el índice en el anexo de este trabajo: Anexa I

¹⁷ Cf. J. L. Hevelone-Harper, *Disciples of the Desert: Monks, Laity, and Spiritual Authority in Sixth-Century Gaza* (John Hopkins University Press, 2005), p. 62.

¹⁸ Para conocer a estos Padres y su doctrina, cf. las audiencias del papa Benedicto XVI, en la página web del Vaticano.

¹⁹ La presencia de la doctrina de los Padres del desierto se reconoce fácilmente en los escritos de autores espirituales posteriores, por ejemplo San Bernardo, San Juan de la Cruz, San Ignacio de Loyola (esp. en las Reglas de la 1ª y de 2ª semana) y hasta la mitad del siglo XX en España, p.ej. en los escritos de la Madre María Teresa Dupouy, fundadora de la Misioneras del Sagrado Corazón (San Sebastián); luego, aparentemente, ha sido ocultado por el interés en la ciencia de psicología.

²⁰ Baldwin llama a Aristóteles "a pioneer in psychology" en referencia a su *De anima*.

²¹ 1 Juan 2,16: "Todo lo que hay en el mundo - la concupiscencia de la carne, la concupiscencia de los ojos y la jactancia de las riquezas".

²² Por ejemplo en las cartas de Pablo, Gál 5, 20, y en las *Conferencias* de Juan Casiano (S. VI, en Occidente).

²³ Transcrito también aunque más raramente "esicasmo" (del griego: ἡσυχασμός/*hesykasmos*, derivado de ἡσυχία/*hesykia* : "quietud, silencio, paz interior") es la doctrina y práctica ascética difundidas por los Padres del desierto a partir del S. III.; la parte central de esta doctrina se basa en una re-unión con Dios y para esto se da un conjunto de prácticas fisiológicas y psicológicas.

TEMPORARY VOWED RELIGIOUS IN ACTION



On December 27, 2010 the temporary vowed religious (TPR) from USA and Canada met for the second time with a specific objective in mind and that is to create a video for vocation promotion bearing in mind that, as FMMs we all have a responsibility to pass on to other women our charism; and with the guidance of the Holy Spirit the FMM will continue on to help in building God's kingdom here on earth.

Each sister has a story to tell about her experience and it seems that all five sisters expressed how precious it was to be together and how much fun it was to work together and to learn together. It was truly a gift given by both provinces. The TPRs extend their gratitude to Sr. Lois Ann Pereira, FMM, and Sr. Simone Bastian, FMM, Sr. Isabelle, FMM, Sr. Pauline, FMM, Sr. Liliane, FMM and Mrs. Pam Heffernan for making the gathering possible through their input, support and encouragement.

Let us now read on what the TPRs have to share:

Peace to All,

Due to bad weather, we missed one day for the session and started late. We had the opportunity to meet a professional woman named Pam Heffernan from Cumberland, Rhode Island.

What I found helpful from her presentation was the brainstorming on: what is the objective of the message and who is our audience before thinking about making the video. She referred to it as "the triangle" - What, Who and How? We came up with the conclusion that we are Missionaries who are called to train, serve and empower the people to whom we are sent to work with. And we do that by being contemplative women, and living the Gospel. This model helped us to focus on the objective of our video. We worked as a team, Karen, Ludmilla, Arlene, Annie and I which, was an enriching experience for me. Further, during our meeting, we had Sr. Liliane Alam, FMM who shared with us interesting inputs through captivating PowerPoint on St. Clare of Assisi and Communication. Sr. Liliane's presentation was very reflective and insightful.

Pax et Bonum

Cathy Tshitenge, FMM

The goal of making a video for vocation promotion may seem far-fetched and yet along the way we discovered that it is possible if we put all our efforts together. Pam Heffernan, a lay person who gave the training on strategic planning, helped us focus on the content of the

video. As someone looking from outside into the FMM sphere, Pam shared that we should use words that are understandable to the public.

Our very own Sr. Liliane Alam, FMM emphasized that we have to speak from the heart just as St. Clare did. St. Clare's deep prayer life exuded out of her. Her wisdom was spread throughout the land through St. Francis and his brothers. Thereby throngs of people came to seek her advice. Sr. Liliane's PowerPoint presentation gave subtle tips on how we can stress the keywords by using some animation techniques and matching the images with words. We were also given t-shirts with the slogan "PRAYER, the world's greatest wireless connection."

Working on the video was truly challenging and fun at the same time. We all wrote our mini-scripts and recorded ourselves several times. The process itself was a learning experience for it opened our eyes to the complexity of making a video. The best realization for me was that as young religious sisters it is possible that we can work together in harmony and peace no matter what task is given. This quality can certainly be carried over wherever we are missioned in the world.

Annie Nebres FMM

For my part I want to share with my sisters in both provinces what touched me the most during my precious time in the United States. The day after Christmas we got on the last bus to Boston (because of a storm that had hit the area) and we were welcomed warmly by the FMM sisters in Brighton. I was immediately struck by the internationality of this community and the joy of the sisters. I felt right at home and it brought me back to my original experience of visiting the FMMs in 2005.

The following day we went by train (where I wished I had brought my swimsuit for it was boiling hot) to Rhode Island. The first session given by a lady named Pam, helped us to see that it is witnesses' stories that speak to the young of today. Messages need to be brief, right to the point, and in a language that the young can understand (she gave us some pointers for our website).

On Wednesday, Sr. Liliane, fmm (who had quite the adventure herself to get to Rhode Island in the storm) gave a well prepared PowerPoint presentation on communication and another one on St. Clare. She stated that it is important to create opportunities so that St. Clare can speak to the young of today. However what struck me the most during her sharing was: it is how we use the communication methods of today that matters. I can often brush them off saying that they do not lead to true communication, but through this reflection I was able to look at these methods in a different light. Thursday and a bit of Friday, we worked hard to try to put what we had learned into a video format. We put our ideas together and started filming one another. On the 1st of January I was so pleased to have the cooperation of all the TPRs to bring to reality one of my dreams since pre-novitiate.

In the afternoon we went back to Brighton and visited St. Anthony's Shrine, where Sr. Pat works. We attended a mass that was full of life ... what a treat! The music was phenomenal and the church was full of families, children, and young adults! Wow! It was a true celebration to start the New Year! After the mass, we were invited by a Franciscan friar to visit the fraternity. I was absolutely floored by the beauty of their chapel. They welcomed us with open arms, another unexpected treat.

The thing I will treasure the most however, is the time spent with my 'young' sisters. We had a great deal of time to share our experiences, our joys, and our pains. Because of this, I was able to come home with a new spirit and outlook. Thank you so much to everyone who

works to make these gatherings possible. It is a real joy and gift for me; I look forward to it every 6 months!

Arlene, fmm

Dear Sisters, I like to share with you my experience of the session in Rhode Island, USA.

Getting there is a story of itself, as we four TPR's (temporary professed religious) were coming into a snow storm travelling a Voyageur bus. It was quite an experience: the snow blowing, the strong wind and many other main transportation was closed down and so Sr. Lois Ann, FMM, the provincial of USA was not able to pick us up at the Boston Terminal to bring us to Rhode Island. So, Sr. Pat Barrett, FMM from our pre-novitiate house in USA, came to pick us up and brought us to Brighton. We stayed one night then next day we hopped on the train to go to Rhode Island as the sisters were eagerly awaiting for us. Sr. Pauline Gilmore, FMM the Director of TPR's of USA picked us up to bring us to Bethany (the Retreat House) in Rhode Island. At last we reached our destination and the next day we started our session with a lay person named Mrs. Pam Heffernan who spoke about how to put a video together for a project. It was quite informative, as she asked us to question ourselves what the FMM is about and to put in a young person's language for the ages 18-35 years. We had to look in many areas e.g. our mission, our strengths and weakness, threats of our Institute.

So with this helpful information we took the whole day of putting our vocation promotion video; we each had to write a script and put into a video together. It was a wonderful experience as we spend the time together, figuring out what and where to start etc... the video. As TPR's we worked as a team in harmony and in peace with one another. Then the following day we had another session on St. Clare and communication by Sr. Liliane Alam, FMM. She taught me how it is important to get into today's technology because our young people of today are very much advanced with it, so that we can bring the Good News to them through technology and/or those who are searching in their vocation.

St. Clare in her time was quiet in her ways, living in a cloister and yet people knew her, she was a famous person. The word went out in the world about Clare and so this is how important one needs to be involved of bringing the word of God to the people and the young in today's world and/or to those who are searching. Later in the week, travelling back I came back with joy, knowledge and insight for the institute and for young people of today of how to communicate to them, that living a religious life is rewarding.

Ludmilla Grabetz fmm

We finally arrived in Rhode Island after having been on an airplane, bus, car and train. Our goal during this session was to create a vocation promotion video. The first session which was presented to us by Pam, helped us to identify more clearly our objectives and goals for the video. This helped us to narrow down our content and focus on what was important to 'our audience' (young women who are seeking to answer a call to religious life). Sr. Liliane, fmm helped us to connect with the spiritual aspect of communication, the importance of words and the need to use vocabulary which will speak to the young adults of today. Also to use methods of communication which are relevant to today's fast moving world. It was interesting to see the connection between Saint Clare and communication. Even though Saint Clare lived in a monastery without any modern day technology she was able to communicate with God, her sisters and the outside world. How can I learn from this Saint who was able to touch many lives and communicate the love of God through her life?

After having received input from both Sr. Liliane, fmm and Pam we began the process of creating the video. We each shared our personal stories and our specific calling to FMM life. We put forth all the materials (photos, video clips) we had gathered for the video. Sr. Annie our 'Video Specialist' began putting it all together, but due to time limitations we were unable to produce the final product before the end of our session.

Karen Corera, fmm



Front range: from the left to the right. Ludmilla Grabetz, FMM, Sr. Isabelle, Sr. Karen Corera, FMM and Sr. Annie Nebres, FMM

In the back range: Sr. Arlene, FMM, Sr. Lois Ann, FMM, Superior Provincial of the USA Province.

Sr. Pauline Guilmor, FMM, Director of the TPR, Sr. Liliane Alam, FMM and Cathy Tshitenge, FMM

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