

Editorial



The theme of the SEDOS Bulletin is the same as that of the Autumn Seminar, “Revisiting the Charism/s in Today’s Context”. This theme was very relevant and thought provoking as every congregation is in search of effective ways to respond to the various new challenging situations they face today. We also present the 400th anniversary of the foundation of the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith known as, “de Propaganda Fide.” Since it deals directly with the “promotion of missionary activities and assists missionaries to win over the hearts and minds of the local populace”, it is a fitting moment to look back at the efforts Propaganda Fide made and to walk with it on its journey of proclaiming the mission, then and now.

We were fortunate to have His Excellency Mons. Camillus Johnpillai, Head of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, to speak on the “Journey of Propaganda Fide (400 years): Mission then and now”, in his Keynote Address. The Congregation came into existence because it saw the urgent needs and challenges arising at that time in the context of mission. In his address he said, “Reform was also urgently needed to bring about a more united and concerted missionary action. Even at initial time, the Congregation made use of occasions such as the General Chapters of the Religious Institutes to present to the superiors matters concerning the missions and to ask for their opinions and suggestions. Thus, it is a good time to go back to the roots and revisit the respective Charism/s to rediscover the original enthusiasm and zeal for mission.

We know from the multiple changes taking place in and around the world that the mission has become much more difficult and challenging. We have all been reflecting on

these challenges as well as on the opportunities at our Congregational Chapters. The theme of the Seminar invites us to reflect together and share the steps we plan to take, so that our journey can become easier and our destination focused.

In the main article, Alain Mayama, Superior General of the Congregation of the Holy Spirit, guides us in the search for new ways of being a missionary to the world in these changing contexts. According to him, the events of the contemporary world help us to understand our difficulties and charisms better. He writes, “Basically, we must perceive what, in the context of the time of our respective Founders, could have aroused or formulated the idea of a religious and missionary charism and how the events of their time marked their approach to religious life and mission.” He also cautions us, “the charism, although a powerful breath, can become fragile if we do not take care of it.” He stressed that what comes first is the Gospel, the Word of God. That is why the Founders/Foundresses did not seek to move away from this Word but made it audible, adapted it to the world of their time. “This was their mission and this needs to be our mission: to make room for the Word of God so that it is lived in situations marked by human contingencies and limits.”

Defining the role of the Charism in today’s context, Alain stresses the need and importance of revisiting it. He says, “if the salient events in the world at a particular time inspired the project to found a religious family, defining its orientation and mission, today too, world events show what is at stake for our mission.” According to him, each charism is a book open to the Gospel and to the world. It is inseparable from spirituality. Thus, to become an effective missionary, we need to return continuously to the sources, to the original inspiration of our respective Institutes, adapting it to the changing conditions of life.

Stanley Lubungo, Superior General of the Society of Missionaries of Africa in his

article, “Rediscovering the fresh richness of our charism in the 2022 General Chapter”, explains that “Every General Chapter is an opportunity for the Society to discern strategies for living out the mission in order to achieve its vision of evangelisation.” Going along with the spirit of the Founder his Congregation chose the theme “Mission as Prophetic Witness.” He continues, “The last General Chapter came as an occasion for us to remember that as disciples of Jesus and missionaries, our vocation is naturally prophetic.” Therefore, the Chapter stressed the need to go on mission *ad extra* and *ad gentes* witnessing to the Kingdom of God to the African world.

The Congregation of the Passion of Jesus Christ, at their current Chapter stressed the need for Renewing their Mission, which involves Gratitude, Prophecy and Hope. Cristiano Massimo Parisi in his article, “Mission Strategies in light of the Chapters in progress”, says, “Though the Founder's charism is a vital reality, which must be lived and preserved and deepened, at the same time it must be constantly developed by the members of the respective Institutes, always in harmony with the Body of Christ.”

Anna Maria Geuna, FMA, in her presentation said that their 24th General Chapter, held in Rome, was one of the best prepared Chapters in the last forty years of their Congregation. She said, “For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation and Mission, in a certain sense, called the Chapter Fathers present and others to listen meekly to the Holy Spirit, so that during the General Chapter every member of their Education Communities worldwide might be prophetic witnesses to an alternative way of life, together, and to their relations in a synodal style.” Their Mother General, Chiara Cazzuola, in her concluding words at the 24th General Chapter stressed that: “*The objective that has called, and calls, for our commitment is to reawaken the Institute's original vitality and vocational fertility.*”

I am sure this Bulletin will enlighten us and invigorate our spirits to search for new ways of being and becoming a true missionary; witnessing and proclaiming the Kingdom of God.

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