

Editorial



Dear Members and Friends,

Here we bring you the May-June issue of Bulletin based on the talks of the guests Speakers and the sharing of the members. It

was a really good Residential Seminar. We hoped many would attend the Seminar in Nemi as the COVID situation has now normalised somewhat. The number has yet to grow. Maybe we need to stress this point that being in presence is a real experience. Although there is an online option there is no alternative to being present for a real experience. As a feedback many participants appreciated the theme of the seminar, “Changing Landscape of Religious-Missionary Life” as apt and relevant in today’s context. The surroundings around the Lake of Nemi helped reflection on the landscape. The various prolific plants, the products of the surrounding area, were a fitting offertory at the altar as the symbolic gift of all the members. The same plants were carried by all the participants as a concrete message to “Care and Multiply.”

In the opening article we have added the beautiful prayer Anna Damas, SSsP, wrote on three great women in the Bible: Naomi, Oprah and Ruth who went through the experience of a changing landscape. The prayer rightly directed the thoughts and reflections of the participants to what one is going to travel through.

Another strong orientation to the changing landscape was given by Mary Barron, OLA, in her opening talk. Quoting the words of Pope Francis, ***“we are not living in an era of change but in a change of era”***, she points out that the changes taking place in society, technology, and politics are not simply a continuation of existing trends or a natural evolution of human progress but witness to a fundamental shift in the way

people live and interact. According to her, “Pope Francis’ statement reflects a deep concern about the direction of society and the need for bold action to address the challenges facing humanity.”

In his opening Address Msgr. José Rodríguez Carballo, OFM, presents the history of the religious and missionary life: how in the past it has been changing and how it has been continuously changing. There have always been challenges. The present era too poses many challenges to the religious-missionary life.

The main Talk Paulus Budi Kleden, SVD, gave on the theme, “Changing Landscape of Religious Missionary Life”, was from the Governance/Leadership perspective, where he presented the present scenario of the Divine Word Society (SVD Congregation). He described how the Congregation is facing this phenomenon of a changing landscape in its religious-missionary life and the way it is coping with the new challenges and the new possibilities. The article calls for reflection and introspection as every Congregation stands in the same troubled waters.

The following four articles are the experiences member congregations shared in a panel discussion. In the first presentation, “Changing Landscape of Religious Life and Mission”, Armin Luistro, FSC, states that due to the changing landscape there is an enormous decline in vocations but this is not a cause for fear as the quality of religious life and mission has improved. It is a time to transform into leaven. He calls upon all the members to come out of their exclusive club of Brothers, with a “capital B”, to become little sisters and brothers for “those far from salvation”.

In the second presentation of the panel, Theodosia Baki, TSSF, speaks of the Joys and Challenges the members of the congregations face in a Changing Landscape. These

challenges, she says, call the congregational leaders to inculcate the attitude of listening, of being present and of building positive energy within and around all.

In the third presentation of the panel, Didier Lawson, SMA, speaks about Governance-Animation-Finance. These three elements, he says, are expressions that constitute the refrain of the same song: cohesion, unity for good cooperation in our current missionary life despite our different charisms and visions.

In the last presentation of the panel on the “Changing Landscape of Religious Missionary life” Mary John, SSpS, focussed on religious women in Asia and India in particular, where the number of religious women has grown enormously. In this regard she invites the Church to be more attentive, inclusive and discerning in the way mission is carried out. She stresses the need for dialogue, understanding, authority, leadership, and an improvement in gender relations. She states, the “Changing Landscape asks for changes in mentality, organisation and style of functioning”.

Dr. John Paul Herman, SVD,

Director of SEDOS

