

Editorial



Dear Members and Readers,

As missionaries, working for the Global mission, do we sometimes pause to reflect on the immense challenges that lie before us? The world is constantly

changing: we need to pause and think of the purpose and the end goal of our mission.

A missionary is a disciple of Christ and he/she truly needs to be like him, full of love and compassion. This means not only to take up one's Cross but also to invite others to become his disciples. That is why mission work is described as one of the most difficult tasks on the planet today, as it faces day-by-day new challenges.

Besides love and compassion, sacrifice is another essential element in his/her life. Sacrifice involves giving up one's family, culture, language, identity and near and dear ones. We can imagine the sentiments of the one who is being sent out leaving his/her land, family and friends to go to an unknown place, to a new culture, people, language and to a new environment. In the case of unfamiliar places, the challenges are even greater. Imagine a cross-cultural context, one may feel completely lost, lonely and depressed. In case of change in environment and the food, acute health problems may arise. Similarly, in case of an unknown language one can easily feel helpless. In such cases, one has to strive harder or give up one's mission.

When a missionary is sent to a foreign land where Christianity is seen as a foreign religion, sharing the Gospel becomes a real challenge. Sometimes the Truth the missionary brings contradicts the world view of the people and that can result in anger and rage. Besides, the difficult terrain, deserts, mountains, thick forests, rivers, severe climate etc. can pose big challenges. Furthermore, the changing times continue to pose new challenges. Gone are the

days when the West sent missionaries to places where the Gospel had not reached. Now the world has become a global village. With regard to knowledge, all the nations, are on a par. The resources are available everywhere and all people are found everywhere. The cross-cultural experience is a common factor, due to which a lot of unrest and conflict has arisen. The missionaries need to be trained as they are called to give a cross culture witness to spread the Message of Peace and Harmony.

We have also pondered over the new challenges faced by the missionaries in the context of changing landscape. The changes are so rapid that it is difficult to cope with them. In the era of communication and information technology there is a challenge to communicate the unchanging Truth of the Gospel. The Church although Universal, beyond any caste, creed and culture, is criticized today for being Western in nature. Today, no culture can be absolutized and it is believed that the Gospel can take root in each culture. Imposing one culture over another, has negative implications.

The Church is facing an exodus of people. Those leaving the Church are disinterested in an institutionalised Church. There is an urgency to do something; there is a need to create indigenous and contextualised churches, and this needs contributors, collaborators and builders, not dependents. The Mission needs missionaries who are dedicated, committed and filled with the Spirit. However, although there seems to be a heap of challenges, with the enduring and everlasting hope in Christ and faith in God's divine providence, one can meet all the challenges. It is the work of God, who is all powerful, and it is he who can change the face of the earth.

The current Bulletin, based on the theme, "Mission as Challenge", narrates various challenges missionaries usually face, arising from history and from new contexts.

James H. Kroeger, MM, in his article, "Pope Francis and Missionary Pneumatology" speaks about the "Vatican II era" emphasising four Church Documents that emerge as milestones

for appreciating a contemporary view of missionary evangelization. He quotes *Evangelii Gaudium* (The Joy of the Gospel) which says, “We no longer say that we are ‘disciples’ and ‘missionaries,’ but rather that we are always ‘missionary disciples’” (n.119).

In the article, “La mission comme défi pour les Religieux aujourd’hui” **René Stockman, FC**, explains that mission is a challenge for religious today. He speaks about the challenge of proclamation, spreading the faith and witnessing through one’s life, a life that is prophetic and based on prayer.

The article, “The Mission of the Church in India: New Challenges and Opportunities”, by **John Paul Herman, SVD**, highlights some of the challenges faced by missionaries in India due to the increasing influence of fundamentalism in the political system.

In his article, ‘Misión en un horizonte divino “Missio Dei” setenta años más tarde’, **Christian Tauchner, SVD**, poses the question. “How could Christian mission still be justified when Western Christianity had so thoroughly discredited itself through colonialism, imperialism, and then especially also through the First and Second World Wars?

Had the signs of the times been misinterpreted?” He also describes mission as *missio Dei*. “Mission starts in the Mind of God.” Therefore, the focus of mission-theological consideration must be taken up on issues of the interpretation of history with a focus on the doctrine of the last things, i.e., eschatology.

The article by **Frans Wijzen, SMA**, “We did not come to demolish the Church but to build it up”, narrates the challenges faced by the foreign Missionaries and by the local church in The Netherlands.

In the article, “Nuovi scenari dell’Evangelizzazione per la Vita Consacrata in un contesto sinodale-interculturale”, **Fr. Amedeo Cencini**, speaks about the new scenarios opening for evangelization and for Consecrated life in a context, which is the synodal-intercultural context.

I am sure these articles will enlighten and guide you in your missionary journey.

Dr. John Paul Herman, SVD
Director of SEDOS



***Congratulations to Sr. Mary Barron, OLA
The New President of UISG***

**SEDOS Team congratulates Sr. Mary Barron, OLA for being
elected as the New President of UISG. It is really a proud moment
for all of us in SEDOS.**