

## **THE FORMATION OF THE LEADER, AN ESSENTIAL CONDITION FOR THE CM EVANGELIZING TASK – PART 2**

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### **I. WHAT SORT OF LEADERS DO WE NEED TO PUT INTO PRACTICE THAT EVANGELIZING TASK?**

- 1.** The CM leaders must be continuously formed as CM leaders by:
  - 1.1. Getting to know the CM literature, using as a starting point the basic book on which the Holy See was based to canonically recognize the OMCC and its Statute, that is, Fundamental Ideas of the Cursillo Movement (FICM).
  - 1.2. Getting to know the Statute of the OMCC, since the Statutes of the International Groups and National Secretariats must follow the same lines.
  - 1.3. Getting to know the CM Regulations in their Country, their Region, their Diocese to harmoniously contribute with their work in the CM structures.
- 2.** In order to do so, they must transform the principles clearly described in FICM (328 and 329) into life, accepting freely and as a specific vocation, to assume the evangelizing mission of the Church from the specificity of the CM, which is a preferred apostolic option. They should do so because:
  - 2.1. Leaders are those who are aware or become aware, and are willing and able to encourage, promote and live the three stages of CM method.
  - 2.2. Leaders are those who are open to others, and who live and commit to others in the Groups and Ultreyas. These are the areas to find members of the School.
  - 2.3. Leaders are those who are leaders in the ordinary circumstances of their existence. These can also be leaders in the operational structures of the CM, because one cannot be a leader in the CM if he or she is not a leader in his/her own environment.
- 3.** The leaders will be recognized because they possess certain aptitudes and maintain certain attitudes:
  - 3.1. Human qualities that shape a mature, consistent, honest, capable and caring personality.
  - 3.2. Supernatural virtues that enable a life that is strong in faith, joyful in hope, diligent in charity.
  - 3.3. Their own style resulting from the living of the charism and the mentality of the CM, in which is stressed the enthusiasm for bringing the Good News to others, the dedication and commitment to be leaven in the environments, having a communitarian spirit, living as a group, forming a team and sharing views and projects, criteria and action.

## II. WHAT SORT OF FORMATION IS NECESSARY FOR THAT TASK?

1. The evangelizing task is very demanding. Therefore, the agents of evangelization must be continually formed as persons and as Christians. They need to...
  - 1.1. Know the documents of the ecclesiastical magisterium that can teach them to be a Christian of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, exactly as Jesus himself would do... Today it is so easy to get to know (without cost) via Internet, very rich documents like those of the Second Vatican Council (among other important documents, *Lumen Gentium* speaks about what a layperson is and *Apostolicam Actuositatem* shows the layperson how to act), the *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, the *Evangelii Gaudium* and the *Gaudete et Exsultate* by Pope Francis. Not to mention Pope Francis' speeches, messages, etc., all of them full of precious lessons.
  - 1.2. Know the Evangelizing Plans of their diocese, their region, their country so that they will understand how the CM will be linked to these Plans according to its own charism. Of course the CM – as a Movement – will not assume the responsibility of visiting Nursing Homes, or Hospitals (although CM leaders can do so if this is their personal charism). But the CM will detect in those places who are the leaders that, knowing Jesus, will change those environments.
  - 1.3. Know what the Bishops of their country (the Bishops Conference) and those of their Continent say so that the CM can give their contribution to those plans. In its final message, the Document of Aparecida calls everyone to carry out “the *Great Continental Mission*. It will be a new Pentecost that impels us to go, in a special way, in search of the fallen away Catholics, and of those who know little or nothing about Jesus Christ, so that we may joyfully form the community of love of God our Father. A mission that must reach everyone, be permanent and profound.”
2. This is necessary because it is important to consider that in a century characterized by technological advances we need to be in continuous formation. Among the essentials in the formation of the leader we should include the development of a leader that is able to rotate in 360 degrees, without neglecting spirituality and fidelity to the history of the CM, and without ignoring the demands of modern life...
3. On this respect, in his Encyclical Letter *Redemptoris Missio* (On the permanent validity of the Church's missionary mandate), St. John Paul II speaks of the various areas of the “*ad gentes*” mission, and mentions the “modern Areopagus” (No. 37, c):
  - ◆ The world of communication, the commitment to peace, the development and liberation of peoples, the rights of individuals especially those of minorities, the advancement of women and children...
  - ◆ He says that “*After preaching in a number of places, Paul arrived in Athens, where he went to the Areopagus and proclaimed the Gospel in language appropriate and understandable in those surroundings (see Act 17, 22-31).*”

♦ *At that time the Areopagus represented the cultural centre of the learned people of Athens, and today it can be taken as a symbol of the new sectors in which the Gospel must be proclaimed.*

4. Formation is a basic requirement, a response to the “call to grow, mature, and bear fruit” (FICM 327). And it can be detailed as:
  - 4.1. Human formation, so they can grow as persons, supported by sound values, criteria and human capacities.
  - 4.2. Spiritual formation that allows their relationship with the Triune God and their dedication to brothers and sisters grow through charity.
  - 4.3. Doctrinal formation to move ahead in suitable maturity in faith and be able to “answer the reason for the hope we have”.
  - 4.4. Social formation to suitably understand the social and cultural dimensions of our reality and to address them from the approach of the Social Doctrine of the Church.

### **III. WHAT SORT OF MEANS ARE NECESSARY FOR THAT FORMATION?**

#### **1. What do we have to do?**

- 1.1. Learn, unlearn and relearn – all the time: as persons, as Christian leaders, as CM leaders.
- 1.2. Learning – As we automatically learn many things (breathing, eating, moving), we adopt ideas, attitudes, skills that become our way of thinking... This “automation” leads us to do always the same, to stay lethargic, to resist the new...
- 1.3. Unlearning is to stop doing the same thing in the same way, to discover that there are other ways to reach the same place, to leave behind our own limitations, to try what we have not experienced. It is to get rid of concepts or ideas that were instilled in our lives... It is to recognize that if what we have done has not given the expected result, it is time to replace outdated knowledge by differences and changes.
- 1.4. Relearning is to get updated by changing the paradigms. Re-experiment using new patterns in order to re-signify and re-encode experiences. Dismiss and even responsibly eliminate what is no longer useful, and learn something in a way that is different from what we have done for years.

#### **2. How should we do it?**

- 2.1. Following and living the tripod we adopted in our Cursillo and that – though old – continues to be very effective: daily prayer, serious study, permanent action.
- 2.2. Using technology appropriately. Computer, Internet, audio, video, slides... are useful tools when used as a mean and not as an end to help communicate, clarify, memorize concepts and ideas.

### **3. Where should we do it?**

- 3.1. The Document of the Third Conference of the Latin American Bishops (Puebla, 1979), says that “As the participation of the laity grows in the life of the Church and in her mission in the world, the need of their solid formation is also more urgent– human in general, doctrinal, social, apostolic. Lay people have the right to receive it primarily in their own movements and associations, but also in appropriate institutes and in contact with their Pastors.” (794).
- 3.2. The CM has the structures that make it possible to do just that...

## **IV. WHAT ARE THE STRUCTURES THAT WILL MAKE IT POSSIBLE?**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1. FICM (chapter 11) explains that the service structures in the CM are two: School and Secretariat.
- 1.2. The School has a nature, a purpose, some dimensions, some members and an organization.
- 1.3. The Diocesan Secretariats are the basic structure of the CM coordination – because the CM becomes visible in a Diocese... But the development of the CM created the need for National Secretariats and the expansion of the CM resulted in the creation of an international organization, that is, International Groups and the OMCC.
- 1.4. Let's talk about the School of Leaders as a structure offered by the CM to enable the formation of its leaders (FICM paragraphs 319 to 330).

### **2. NATURE AND PURPOSE OF THE SCHOOL OF LEADERS**

- 2.1. The CM was born in a School of Leaders that was defined, then, as *a group of friends who shared the same apostolic mentality and concern* and remains as an essential element for the continuity, development and achievement of the purpose of the CM. Its members form a community of Christians with the necessary aptitudes and attitudes to intensify the living of what is fundamental to being Christian in their own lives and in their environments, being at the same time leaders of the CM and Church in the world.
- 2.2. The School exists to make possible the ultimate purpose of the CM: the transformation of the environments by the actions of individuals and groups who share together what is fundamental to being Christian.
- 2.3. This means intensifying the living of what is fundamental to being Christian on three fronts: in its members (the leaders of the CM); in the Groups and Ultreyas, and in the environments, through individuals and groups.
- 2.4. In order that its members become authentic leaders, the School:
  - a. Encourages them to develop a continuing process of conversion.

- b. Provides the ideas, criteria, and attitudes necessary for them to act as CM leaders.
- c. Commit them to encourage and inspire groups that leaven the environments.
- d. Promotes the life of the groups of the CM (Groups and Ultreyas), so that they live more and more what is fundamental to being Christian, and that supposes:
  - Exploring and channelling concerns.
  - Encouraging, promoting and supporting groups or communities, respecting their own dynamics.
  - Identifying and promoting in these groups the future leaders of the CM who join the School and take responsibility for the life of the CM.
  - Promoting the evangelization of the environments, by the action of the leaders themselves.

### **3. DIMENSIONS OF THE SCHOOL OF LEADERS**

#### 3.1. School of Holiness

The School is a group of Christians on their way to holiness, the first requirement for evangelization. For this reason, the School proposes a model of life based in following and imitating Christ:

- a. In prayer, in listening to the Word and in sacramental experience.
- b. In life according to the Beatitudes.
- c. In love as a basic principle of action.
- d. In the service to others, especially the ones most in need.

#### 3.2. School of Communion

The first norm of life of the School is communion of all with Christ and of all with each other. This requires promoting a “spirituality of communion”, that provides:

- a. Appreciating others as “those who are part of me.”
- b. Sharing, caring, being aware and helping others.
- c. Offering and living a deep and sincere friendship.
- d. An atmosphere of openness and trust, authenticity and freedom...
- e. Sharing criteria, objectives and efforts.
- f. Making possible cooperation, coordination and co-responsibility.

#### 3.3. School of Formation

*(We have already talked about that)*

### **4. ORGANIZATION OF THE SCHOOL**

- 4.1. It is very important that the School be well organized so that, according to its nature, it achieves its purpose, developing their

dimensions. But the School does not follow a specific form in its organization and operation.

- 4.2. The way the School is constituted, and the way its activities are carried out is determined by the needs, possibilities and realities of the Movement in each location.
- 4.3. Not all Schools of Leaders are the same; each one will be based on the specific diocesan reality and will have its own forms and nuances, always keeping the same basis in respect to the mentality, purpose and method of the CM.

## **5. ONLINE SCHOOL?**

- 5.1. Not all dioceses are able to keep Weekly School sessions, though this would always be the ideal... This means creativity is necessary to avoid failing in the leaders' formation. It is possible, for example, to replace four weekly meetings of two hours by a monthly meeting of one day; to organize encounters every two weeks and send the School members material via e-mail, etc.; to create a School of Leaders that is – not technically, but colloquially – virtual, by allowing consultations to the Website of that Diocesan Secretariat...

## **V. WHAT SORT OF COMMITMENTS SHOULD WE ASSUME...?**

1. Are we convinced that...
  - 1.1. ... the evangelizing task waiting for us is demanding?
  - 1.2. ... we need well-formed leaders to put it into practice?
  - 1.3. ... we have to develop the necessary means to achieve this formation?
  - 1.4. ... the CM service structures can be a channel for these means?
  - 1.5. Therefore we have to take on practical commitments – as leaders responsible for our Diocesan and National Secretariats – so that all that becomes a reality...
2. That is why we must reflect on the following questions that will help us to channel these commitments:
  - 2.1. What can we do to develop in our leaders a modern and correct vision about what the leader should be today?
  - 2.2. What can we do to make our leaders understand that formation is the work of a lifetime?
  - 2.3. What can we do for the CM to be kept as a current and effective instrument of Evangelization that the world of today longs for and expects?

## **VI. Conclusion:**

The leader of the CM, as an agent of evangelization in today's world, should follow Jesus closely... This way he or she will be a missionary disciple, a modern saint...

When speaking of the Criteria of Ecclesiality for Lay Groups, *Christifideles Laici* (no. 30) affirms “*the primacy given to the call of every Christian to holiness that is manifested in the fruits of grace which the spirit produces in the faithful*”.

In his Apostolic Exhortation *Gaudete et Exsultate*, Pope Francis begins by saying that the Lord “wants us to be saints and not to settle for a bland and mediocre existence”, and proposes to us what God proposed to Abraham: “Walk before me, and be blameless” (Gn 17: 1) (GE 1).

And to call today's humankind attention to that, he mentions the message of the Bishops of West Africa: “We are being called in the spirit of the New Evangelization to be evangelized and to evangelize through the empowering of all the baptized, to take up our roles as salt of the earth and light of the world wherever we are.”

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Secretary to the OMCC during the term of Brazil (2002-2005).

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