



C.Ss.R. SPIRITUALITY

ONE BODY (Eph 4,4)

UN SOLO CORPO (Ef 4,4)

UN SEUL CORPS (Eph 4,4)

UN SOLO CUERPO (Eph 4,4)

JEDNA WSPÓLNOTA (Ef 4,4)

UM SO CORPO (Ef 4,4)

EIN LEIB (Eph 4,4)

EIN REIB (Eph 4,4)

One Body: The renewal of our Consecrated Life

March 13, 2017

After the Year of Consecrated life

Not so long ago, the Year of Consecrated Life concluded. We might do well to ask ourselves what has remained with us and in our communities, in concrete terms, after that particular year.

We remember the theme of the Year of Consecrated Life: wake up the world! "Wake up the world, illuminate it with your prophetic and countercultural witness!" – said Pope Francis in the opening message of this particular year. In the same message, he indicated three programmatic attitudes as the way to implement that call to wake up the world. He pointed out that we can achieve the goal of waking up the world by being joyful, by being brave and by being men and women of communion. In his apostolic letter, addressed to all consecrated people, he established a perspective in which we were supposed to walk: look to the past with gratitude, live the present with passion and embrace the future with hope.

It would be very useful if we could spend some time in our communities to undertake a sincere reflection upon what we achieved during the year of consecrated life in our/my "concrete" community. This retrospective analysis would allow us to realize and grasp what was achieved and what was omitted, what gave us a new light and life and what became just an obstacle on the path of our consecrated life?

Chapter's Message

The last General Chapter, in its message to the Congregation, continues the themes initiated during the Year of Consecrated Life, and invites us to a very serious and sincere reflection in the following words:

Let every confrere carry out a serious examination of his consecrated life, and recognize those areas where conversion and renewal are needed. Doing so requires an intimate communion with Christ the Redeemer, who touches and heals our personal and community wounds and strengthens our spiritual life, making us available for mission. Indeed our vision of Redemptorist apostolic community would not be complete without the joyful promotion of our vocation. We call on all confreres to rediscover the beauty of our Redemptorist vocation and to become the primary agents of vocation promotion in their Units, and to create a culture of vocation so that many people will be inspired to join our Redemptorist family.

If we took seriously this invitation to carry out a serious examination of our consecrated life, each one of us would identify the interior mission "territories" where conversion and renewal are needed.

The Chapter emphasizes that, as the basis of such a process of examination, we need to establish an intimate communion with Christ the Redeemer. Only in union with Him can this "open heart surgery" be successful, and become a healing process. We need to start from examining the state of our relationship with Christ. He is the source of my vocation and it is He who sends me for mission in today's world. Do I really read my life in this perspective?

Secondly, the Chapter urges us to rediscover the beauty of our own vocation. We live a common vocation that is the "sum" of many vocations. In other words, our stories are linked: the story of my vocation from the beginning up to the present moment is joined to the stories of the lives of every single Redemptorist, and these contribute to the current shape of our Congregation. The beauty of it lies in rediscovering how I have made myself available for Christ's mission in today's world, with all the consequences of that choice. I have made my choice, and I do not regret it. I have a deep conviction that, despite its ups and downs, despite many difficulties, I have lived a life dedicated to Christ, and I can still feel that He walks right beside me.

Thirdly, the certainty that it is worthwhile being a Redemptorist today, leads me to a certain kind of confidence that I should promote this way of life to others. Because of what I have lived, I want to share, I want to make others participants in this story that began before me, and goes on in my life.

Some questions for reflection and discussion:

- Do you think that the life of your community can attract others to join us?
- Would you recommend this kind of life to young people you meet in your ministry?
- Do you think that you are doing enough in this matter in your life as a Redemptorist?

Our Constitutions

There are many references in our Constitutions and Statutes that speak of our consecrated, professed and dedicated life to the Holy Redeemer. Let us invoke just one reference here– Constitution 56 – which says: moved and strengthened by the Holy Spirit, the members spare no effort to arrive at a total gift of themselves. They aim to become, through Christ, a response to the Lord “who first loved them” (1 John 4:10). They express this response in the profession of the vows of chastity, poverty and obedience.

This particular constitution calls us to offer a total gift of ourselves. Giving of ourselves in this way is a decision, which can only be made as fruit of the action of the Holy Spirit who moves and strengthens us in our vocation. It is a free response from our side to the love of Christ, who first loved us.

Every renewal and every conversion starts from the experience of God’s love. Our response can be total and undivided only if we have been and are profoundly touched by God. Only then can we find new enthusiasm and new ability to renew ourselves. Our vowed chastity, poverty and obedience are the expression of our clear choice and decision. This is why Constitution 56 is described as a response of love. Every renewal should lead us to mission, to a concrete apostolic activity that finds its source in the mission of Christ.

Some questions for reflection and discussion:

- How do these “idealistic” words sound in my ears?
- Do they meet in my heart an immediate response or perhaps, because they are too “idealistic”, do they find resistance there?
- How can we respond to this invitation as individuals and as community?
- Are there, in our community life, “mission territories” that need to be renewed?

From our own well

Soon we are going to celebrate the feast of Saint Clement Hofbauer. This confrere is always presented to us as an example of dedication and apostolic zeal. His famous saying is: the Gospel has to be preached in a new way. His times were not much different than ours, and he stands as a guide because he was able to find ways of reaching out to the poor and abandoned.

The figure of Saint Clement Hofbauer inspires us and sometimes challenges us. We ask ourselves: How was it possible to work like this? He had to endure so many difficulties in his apostolic life, and yet he is called a mystic in action. How come this man, sometimes described as a "total failure," can still inspire and attract us? Here there are some points of his apostolic physiognomy that perhaps can encourage us in our ministry in today's world and also in the renewal of our consecrated life:

- Clement had a very vivid awareness of his own responsibility and of a special mission for his times, for the particular age being experienced by the world, the Church, and the Congregation.
- He had a prophetic sense that evangelisation is a normative criterion for the apostolic community.
- Clement knew the power of Incarnation in the periphery of the world, the nations, and the Church, allowing the Gospel to be preached to the most abandoned in a more relevant and meaningful way.
- He had a strong sense of the urgency of communion of an apostolic Redemptorist community both in the apostolate and ordinary life.
- He bears witness to the possibility of harmony between the active and the contemplative dimensions of life.
- He offers the hopeful witness of a forward-looking attitude and perspective.
- Clement leads us to live, as he lived, an authentic creativity and radical fidelity to the world in which we live and in which we have been called to work, to the Church, to the Spirit, to Christ, to the Congregation, to the foundational charism incarnated

by Alphonsus, and to the personal call through which these fidelities invite us to serve the poor.

Some questions for reflection and discussion:

- What should it mean to us, that we live in a Congregation, which has as a member an apostle of such a stature as Clement Hofbauer?
- What does Clement say to us about love for the Congregation? ... about faithfulness to the tradition? ... about innovation?
- In what way can Clement inspire us in the renewal of our consecrated life?

ONE BODY is a monthly text of prayer proposed by the Centre for Redemptorist Spirituality. For more information:

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