

ORDER OF SERVANTS OF MARY

**FORMATION AND STUDIES
GENERAL SECRETARIAT**



SERVITES
AND
INCULTURATION

Rome - 2001

PRESENTATION

This document, s, is a response to a decree of the 210th General Chapter of the Servite Order. Here is a brief description of its evolution and purpose.

I. THE HISTORY OF A DOCUMENT

THE DECREE OF THE 210TH SERVITE GENERAL CHAPTER

The 210th General Chapter of the Order of Servants of Mary met in Mexico City in October 1995. It studied the theme of inculturation briefly and issued the following decree:

Inculturation is rooted in the mystery of the Incarnation.

For the sake of the New Evangelization, we friars who take inspiration from Mary, the Mother and Servant of the Lord (Const. 1) must be ready to offer new solutions to those new problems we meet in today's world.

We are aware that today's society is subject to rapid change. We must be prepared to create a dialogue between the perennial values of consecrated life and the particular cultures in which we live.

This need is especially apparent in the Order's New Foundations. Inculturation involves all the aspects of the Order's life in all the regions in which it is present; it is a subject of absolute importance to which we must devote our complete attention.

Those friars who will serve in new foundations or the missions must be adequately prepared for their work.

Throughout the entire Order, in both new and ancient foundations, we friars must be intimately involved with local culture. This is a process which begins in the early stages of our formation and continues our whole life long. We must undertake a systematic study of those elements which define consecrated life and especially Servite life; we must discover and exploit all those things in a given culture which facilitate this process and be aware of those things which block it.

The General Chapter calls upon all our communities and friars to read the documents relevant to the societies in which we live and to carry out local and universal Church directives on inculturation. The Chapter cannot study this subject with thoroughness it deserves; it directs the General Council to determine an appropriate way to do this study. The study should focus on inculturation as it is related to formation, Marian devotion and methods of evangelization.

Servite General Chapter, 1995¹

¹ *Atti del Capitolo generale. Città del Messico, 2-25 ottobre 1995. Inculturazione, in: Acta OSM 61 (1996) p. 200.*

THE GENERAL COUNCIL

Appointment of the GSFS

In a letter dated 12 March 1996,² the General Council appointed the members of the GSFS (General Secretariat for Formation and Studies) for the six-year period, 1995-2001. The letter suggests that friars Camille M. Jacques, Clodovis M. Boff and Giancarlo M. Bruni devote their attention to the subject of inculturation (and permanent formation). In this way the Council complies with its obligation “to determine an appropriate way to do this study”.

Request for Suggestions

The General Council charged councilors Patrick M. Carroll, Felipe M. Mariscal Chávez and Honorio M. Martin Sánchez with the task of polling the Order for suggestions on the subject of inculturation. Two letters were sent out by fra Honorio M. Martin Sánchez on October 31, 1996 and by fra Felipe M. Mariscal Chávez on November 3, 1996 (Prot. 1093/96). The letters were addressed to various members of the Order³ who were thought to be particularly interested in inculturation. There was little response.

ORIENTATION OF THE GSFS

The GSFS held its first meeting at Monte Senario, 20-27 November 1996.⁴ In accordance with the directive of the General Council the GSFS appointed a subcommittee of the three friars mentioned above to study the subject of inculturation.

THE WORK OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE

The friars on the subcommittee agreed to meet 28 May, 5-6 June 1997. On 28 May each friar made a presentation of his own thoughts on inculturation and then took part in a discussion. The subcommittee agreed to prepare a document intended to stimulate and launch a discussion on inculturation. It would comprise three different approaches to the subject: Giancarlo M. Bruni would write about inculturation in the Bible; Clodovis M. Boff would prepare a theoretical and practical reflection on the subject; and Camille M. Jacques would handle the points brought up in the 1995 General Chapter - formation for religious life, Marian devotion, evangelization. There would also be a brief appendix dedicated to inculturation in the modern and post-modern world prepared by Giancarlo M. Bruni. A first draft was prepared and discussed on 5 June 1997. It was decided that the title of the document would be: *Servites and Inculturation*. Each member then had the responsibility of completing his own section of the document.

² *Arch. gen. OSM*, Prot 269/1996.

³ Fra Honorio sent his letter of October 31, 1996 to twelve friars: Peregrine M. Graffius, Mariano M. Mannello, John M. Roncalli, Gino M. Leonardi, Rhett M. Sarabia, Nicholas Martin, Mel M. Loftus, Augustine M. Magongo, Robert M. Anderson, Clement M. Langa, Renzo M. Marcon, Camille M. Jacques. Fra Felipe wrote to twelve other friars: Clodovis M. Boff, Pedro M. Suárez, Federico M. Mena, Rubén E.M. Torres, Federico M. Franco, Felice M. Pumilia, Luigino M. Infanti, Vladimiro M. Memo, Roberto M. Braidá, Juan M. Agurto Muñoz, Mario M. Cardiga, Domenico M. Sartori.

⁴ The following members of the SFGS were present: John Roncalli M. Benjamin, Giancarlo M. Bruni, Camille M. Jacques, Juan Bautista M. Pesci, Ferdinando M. Perri, Rhett M. Sarabia, José M. Sartori, Eugene M. Smith, the formation team for the St. Alexis Formation Community: Paolo M. Erthler, Patrick M. Ryall, Angel M. Vargas. Fra Clodovis M. Boff was absent.

In a letter dated 22 September 1997⁵ the General Council recognized that the document was a “work in progress.” It asked the members of the subcommittee to make a greater effort “to complete the document so that the text might be translated and sent to all the communities of the Order along with a request for observations, suggestions, relevant anecdotes, etc”.

The document, *Servites and Inculturation*, was completed in January 1998. On 14 February 1998, the text was sent to various members of the Order who were thought to be especially concerned with this subject. They were asked to provide reactions, suggestions and possible corrections. Again, there was little response.

It was decided to present the document to the International Meeting of Servite Formation (the GSFS took part) to be held at Rome, 27 December 1998 to 6 January 1999. Those present would be asked for their opinions. On this occasion a decision was made to expand the biblical portion to include a section on the inculturation of the people of Israel (Old Testament), and to reverse sections II and III.

This document was revised and presented to the General Council for its *nihil obstat* on 12 November 1999. At this time some corrections were made to the text.

II. THE NATURE AND VALUE OF THIS DOCUMENT

NATURE AND PURPOSE

This document, *Servites and Inculturation*, is not a treatise on the subject. Rather it is an instrument for personal, community and ecclesial reflection. This reflection should be patient, progressive and fruitful; it should consider inculturation in general and in particular; it should consider inculturation in relation to those three aspects the 210th Servite General Chapter thought important: formation, Marian devotion and evangelization.

AUDIENCE

This document, *Servites and Inculturation*, is addressed to those friars engaged in a dialogue between faith and culture. It will be particularly useful for those who work with lay people in the apostolate of evangelization (parishes, missions, sanctuaries, etc). It will be helpful for those members of the Servite Family who seek “to discover the significance of the Virgin Mary in the contemporary world” (*Const.* 7). It should also be helpful to those involved in religious formation in the new foundations.

STRUCTURE

This document has three sections: 1. *Inculturation in the Bible*, inculturation in Israel’s journey of faith and in that of the primitive Church; 2. *Inculturation in the framework of evangelization, Marian devotion and formation in the Servite religious life*: three areas of investigation; 3. *Inculturation: theory and practice*, certain principles and their application in

⁵ *Arch. gen. OSM*, Prot. 875/1997.

the gradual process of inculturation. A reflection on *Inculturation in the modern and post-modern world* can be found in an appendix.

COMPLETION

Each region and jurisdiction of the Order is asked to complete Appendix II, In concrete ..., and to describe their own particular cultural situation.

fra Camille M. Jacques, O.S.M.
secretary general for formation and studies

Monte Senario, 15 November 1999

INCULTURATION IN THE BIBLE

1.1. THE EXPERIENCE OF ISRAEL

1.1.1. Assimilation of their own culture: awareness of being unique

1.1.2. Israel and the culture of idol worship

1.1.3. Israel and its encounter with another culture: the Septuagint

1.2. THEOLOGICAL-CHRISTOLOGICAL ASPECT

1.2.1. *Galatians* 4, 4-7: the Word is made flesh at a specific time, in a specific culture

1.2.2. *Matthew* 1, 1: The Word became flesh in the history of Israel

1.2.3. *John* 19, 19-20: *Luke* 3, 38: discover the “King of the Jews” in every language, in every time

1.2.4. *Philippians* 2, 6-8: the Son of the Most High became flesh in the lowest and most alien of conditions

1.2.5. Conclusions

1.3. ECCLESIOLOGICAL ASPECT

1.3.1. *Acts* 2, 1-12; *Genesis* 10,1-32: to make oneself heard in a dominating language or in all languages?

1.3.2. *Acts* 15, 1-35: do not impose the burden of Hebrew culture on a pagan who believes in Christ

1.3.3. *Acts* 17, 16-34: start with what is right in local religious values

1.3.4. *I Corintizians*: promote the encounter of Christ’s Gospel with every culture

1.4. APOSTOLIC ASPECT

1.4.1. *I Corinthians* 9, 1-27: take on the culture of all

1.4.2. Synthesis *The Life of Christians*

1.1. THE EXPERIENCE OF ISRAEL

The words “inculturation” and “acculturation” are of recent origin and still the object of study. They seem to indicate three things: assimilation of one’s own culture; understanding a culture other than one’s own; encounter between cultures. An essay by Carmine Di Sante⁶ considers these concepts in relation to “Biblical Israel”; C. Di Sante limits himself to certain main points. These concepts deserve a more ample examination.

1.1.1. Assimilation of their own culture: awareness of being unique

A people that knows it has been chosen by God

“One of the traits that defines Biblical self-awareness is “uniqueness”: the Bible is a unique book; the people who received the revelation of Sinai are a unique people; the land God promises to Abraham when He commands him to travel to an unknown fatherland is a unique

⁶ Cf. DI SANTE, C., *L’inculturazione nella Bibbia. Riflessione teologica*, in: *Rassegna di teologia* 39 (1998) pp. 191-206. See also SCHROER, S., *Trasformazioni della fede. Documenti di apprendimento interculturale nella Bibbia*, in: *Concilium* 30 (1994) pp. 17-31.

land.”⁷ This awareness of being unique (unique book, unique electron, unique land ...), is surely positive; it introduces into the definition and dynamic of world relations the concept of otherness, of diversity; it is to be interpreted in a non-fundamentalist understanding of the Bible, i.e. in terms of “exemplarity” and “inclusion” - and not “superiority” and “exclusion.” Israel realizes that it has been chosen by God, that it has been placed on earth as a “priest of God” among the nations: it is a sign of God’s intentions towards all peoples. This awareness of oneself as unique leads to watchfulness lest one be assimilated or swallowed up by another culture; it leads also to a recognition of the “other”, the “different.” All of this takes place within the framework of a centuries long human history marked by a confrontation between the Self and the Other, theoretically and historically eliminating the difference.

A people in intimate encounter with the thrice holy God

Israel’s realization that it is unique rests on this justification: Israel has a new awareness of the Divine. God is “the radical Other”, “radical liberty”, “radical provocation.” He is the “thrice Holy”, He is other than man. He is beyond both man and nature; something separate and remote, Who in absolute liberty chose to make Himself dose and loving (*fascinans*) and awesome (*tremendum*). Through the Torah, the prophets, and the wise men He provokes a response to His Word; he provokes a free response to His command that men love one another, and that man love nature, mindful of its right to exist. God calls “His” people to live in an alliance of cooperation and *order* in the world. God calls His people to give witness in the land (“holy nation”) on behalf of all (“priestly people”) in the consciousness that sin consists in assimilation on the one hand (“idolatry”) and exclusiveness on the other (when you say “Israel” you are saying “every nation.”)

In Israel the time of *God as the personification of the real* (Life, Nature, Harmony, Cosmos, Eros, Beauty, History, Evolution, Progress, Science, Culture, Tradition, ...) comes to an end and the time of *God as a THOU which is radically other* (He cannot be identified or assimilated with any other existing reality) begins; He is defined as the Word which moves the conscience to respond freely and lovingly to others, above all to those without rights. He is Holy, He is Totally Other; He calls Israel to be a holy nation, to be something totally different from what it has been and what it is: a nation guided by the Word, whose heart is the Scriptures. Israel is thus called by God to be a fragment of light among and for the nations. In this it is unique.

1.1.2. Israel and the culture of idol worship

If we are to understand Israel’s attitude to the people it encounters we must begin with the point of view described above.

A people who does not worship “other gods”

“From the heights of heaven, God laughs” and so do the prophets and the psalmists. They laugh at the emptiness of idols, of false gods; they are products of the human imagination; they do not exist - and hence there can be no interpersonal relationship with them; they do neither good nor evil, and yet they terrorize.

⁷ DI SANTE, C., *L’inculturazione nella Bibbia. Riflessione teologica*, in: *Rassegna di teologia* 39 (1998) pp. 191-192.

Trivializing these gods leads to trivializing the people of these gods: Israel pays dearly for this. The nations have never tolerated Israel's *anti-idol-worshipping culture*; Israel derides the idols, it purges heaven and earth of all those gods who would distract humans from their true destiny. Sweeping away imaginary gods is a liberation for Israel, but for others is intolerable: it makes Israel unique and makes a mockery of all the absolutes created by humans.

A people who walks in the ways of its God

Israel is characterized by its NO to the culture of idol worship. In an organic sense this culture is totalitarian. In biblical times and now as well: land - authority - institution - religion constitute an organic system. Each individual exists and is valued to the extent that he is part of that system. This is a totalitarian system: on the one hand it is a "collectivity" (an imperialism in the past Egyptian, Assyrian, Babylonian, Roman; in the present is Nazism, Fascism, Stalinism, Nationalism, economism); and on the other a self-absorption. The "self" becomes the measure of all things. By declaring these things "false gods" Israel is a thorn in the side; totalitarian systems are irritated by Israel's inflexibility and refusal to be assimilated. By proclaiming that the God of the Bible cares for the poor and calls upon his allies to exercise the same concern; He calls men to be adult and responsible, and not an unthinking part or instrument of some larger whole; Israel calls into question important presuppositions of totalitarian theories on the one hand and self-absorption on the other- In the name of its God and His Law Israel is the variant which relativizes everything.

A watchful people

Israel's relationship with idol-worshipping cultures is one of Constant irritation, for which it pays a high price. This relationship is open to discussion: are all cultures totalitarian? are all religions idolatrous? Perhaps, "historically" the critique we find in the prophets and the psalms is less than generous vis-a-vis other ways; "typologically" however, it is always valid and current, in that it prompts us to inspect the abstract schemes, categories, and models inherent in every religion, ideology, culture or system that lead ultimately to the alienation of man. The criterion with which to examine every "religion" is the fruit that it produces: does it free us from that great evil, a culture of exclusion and hate, or not?

1.1.3. Israel and its encounter with another culture: the Septuagint

A people who must utter its truth in another language

Another moment that characterizes Israel's relationship with other cultures is the translation of its own tradition into another language: the Septuagint translation of the Bible in Alexandria in the third century BC This was an event of inculturation, an event of incarnation. The truth Israel treasured, meditated, prayed and lived was made incarnate in another language. This was an event of openness and hospitality. Israel receives and offers hospitality to another language; this new language receives and offers hospitality to the experience Israel has consigned to writing. This is an event of liberation and of joy. Man's quest can find a response in a tradition that is accessible to him through its writings. It is reason to rejoice. It is also an event of relative betrayal. Every translation is a small betrayal. It requires a complete understanding not just of one's own and another's linguistic codes, but also of one's own faith and culture as well as that into which it is being translated.

Questions for group discussion

1. *The Yahwist account of creation (Gn 2, 4b – 3, 24)*. Read it. “This account came into being after the fall of Jerusalem in 586 BC In exile Israel came into contact with the culture and religion of Babylon whose fundamental text was *Enunia Elish* (When on high ...). This poem tells how Marduk, the god of the city, became the cosmic god to whom all the world was subject. Through it Babylonian culture responded to certain crucial questions.”⁸ Where do we come from? Where are we going? What is the purpose of life, of suffering, of death? Why is there this mysterious attraction between the sexes? What is man’s relationship with God? with nature (work)? with other men ...?⁹ When the marvelous Yahwist writer¹⁰ meets these questions in Babylon, he does not avoid or deny them but rather takes them on as his own, and in the process enriches himself. He takes inspiration from Babylonian thought (and from that of other civilizations). Using his own faith as a point of departure he writes his thoughts in the form of a story ...

In our own local culture, what are the questions people ask? What are the answers usually given? What answers can the Gospel message provide?

2. *The Book of Sirach*. Read it. Ben Sirach was an enlightened, conservative Jew. He wrote sometime around 180 BC It was a time when Hellenism reigned supreme and enjoyed the official backing. He hoped to demonstrate to his co-religionists (Jews) the riches and depths of wisdom in their own Law, a wisdom more ancient than anything to be found in Greek laws. In our own local culture, is there an oral or written folk wisdom that fits in with the Gospel message? If so, try and describe it.

1.2. THEOLOGICAL-CHRISTOLOGICAL ASPECT

“The roots of inculturation are in the mystery of the Incarnation.” It is important to state this clearly. Both the Church¹¹ and the Order¹² are aware of this. This is a reason for unity and not division. This affirmation deserves further explanation; the “mystery of the Incarnation” is the foundation and norm of everything else we are going to discuss.

⁸ DI SANTE, C., *L'inculturazione nella Bibbia. Riflessione teologica*, in: *Rassegna di teologia* 39 (1998) pp. 204-205.

⁹ Cf. CHARPENTIER, E., *Per leggere l'Antico Testamento=Per leggere* (Boria, Roma 1990) p. 42.

¹⁰ The Yahwist tradition is the most ancient of the four sources present in the Pentateuch. It is called “Yahwist” because from the very beginning it uses the word Yahweh (the name revealed to Moses in Exodus 3, 13-15) to denote the Lord. This tradition came into being during the time of Solomon (e. 950 B.C.) in Jerusalem court circles. It was committed to writing in Judah during the ninth century. The king plays a central role in this tradition: it is he who creates the unity of the faith. God is frequently depicted as a man (anthropomorphism); this is true in the creation account and subsequently where He appears as a gardener, a potter, a surgeon, a tailor ... He appears as a very human God; while totally other He is quick to pardon and renew His blessing. Cf. CHARPENTIER, E., *Per leggere l'Antico Testamento=Per leggere* (Boria, Roma 1990) p. 29,40.

¹¹ Cf. II VATICAN COUNCIL, Decree *Ad Gentes* on the Missionary Activity of the Church (December 7, 1965) n. 22.

¹² Cf. *Acts of the General Chapter. Mexico City, October 2-25, 1995*. Inculturation, in *Acta OSM* 61 (1996) p. 200.

1.2.1. *Galatians* 4, 4-7: the Word is made flesh at a specific time, in a specific culture

*but when the appointed time came, God sent his Son, born of a woman
born a subject of the Law to redeem the subjects of the Law
and to enable us to be adopted as sons.*

*The proof that you are sons is that God has sent the Spirit of his Son
into your hearts; the Spirit that cries, 'Abba, Father',
and that this makes you a son, you are not a slave any more;
and if God has made you son, then he has made you heir.*

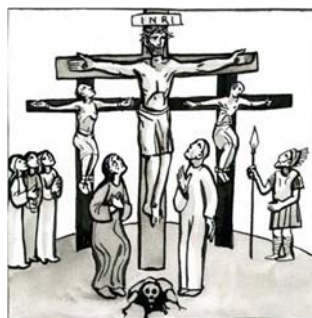
This passage from *Galatians* is our point of departure. It demonstrates that inculturation is inherent in the way God and Salvation are revealed. God's initiative to send His Son to make men sons conforms to the laws of nature ("born of woman" *Gal* 4, 4; cf. *Jn* 1, 14; 1,3); it conforms to the laws of a culture ("born under the law" *Gal* 4, 4; cf. 3, 13) and the laws of time ("when the appointed time came" *Gal* 4, 4). The "one predestined even before the foundation of the world, revealed in these last times for you" (*1 Pt* 1, 20) becomes a son of man so that the sons of men might "share in the divine nature" (*2 Pt* 1, 4). And He becomes a son of man by taking on specific flesh from a specific woman at a specific time in a specific culture (Mosaic). The universal gift of God, the Son, is in His incarnation dated and inculturated: the universality of God's salvation passes through the particularity of a person born of Mary and subject to Moses.

1.2.2. *Matthew* 1, 1: The Word became flesh in the history of Israel

The Genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham ... (Mt 1, 1).

Matthew 1, 1 is telling us the same thing in other words. In its context (*Matthew* 1, 1-4,16) this first verse takes on special meaning. The beloved Son (*Mt* 3, 17) is God-with-us (*Mt* 1, 24) and salvation from sin (*Mt* 1, 21) for the people of Israel; for the gentiles He is light (*Mt* 4, 15-16). He is born into a particular, singular, unique history; David is his irreplaceable ancestor (cf. *J Ch* 17, 11) and Abraham is the father of his race (cf. *Gn* 22, 18; 25, 19). In becoming real, the Salvation- Light of God obeys the laws of history: at that time, in that place, in that culture. The Gospel of John says it explicitly: "Salvation comes from the Jews" (*Jn* 4, 12). In the language of today, Jesus as depicted by Matthew took his place in time and culture very seriously: "I have been sent to the lost sheep of Israel" (*Mt* 15, 25); similarly once He is risen from the dead he will take the prophetic subtext of "Galilee of the Gentiles" equally seriously: "Go forth and teach all nations" (*Mt* 28, 19).

1.2.3. *John* 19, 19-20; *Luke* 3, 38: reveal the "King of the Jews" in every language, in every time



*Pilate wrote out a notice and had it fixed to the cross;
it ran: 'Jesus the Nazarene, King of the Jews'.¹³
This notice was read by many of the Jews,
because the place where Jesus was crucified was not far from the city,
and the writing was in Hebrew, Latin and Greek (Jn 19,19-20).*

Jesus was ... *the son of Enos, son of Seth, son of Adam, son of God (Lk 3, 38).*

A few very enlightening things emerge from what we have said. The useable, unspeakable God, by choosing to make Himself seen and heard through His Son becomes part of a specific culture, territory, language, law, prophecy, cult and history. It is with reason that we say "Inculturation has its roots in the mystery of the Incarnation." The "one born of woman" is the living witness of inculturation as the way God reveals Himself - He is God of that place, of that event. This "particularity" however is not closed in upon itself, rather it is paradigmatic (exemplary). The son of David, the son of Abraham, is also the son of Adam (*Lk 3, 38*); the fragment contains the whole, the very personal mediator of universal salvation (*Acts 4, 12*). The inscription on the cross in Hebrew, Latin and Greek is already telling us this (*Jn 19, 19-20*). It tells us that that naked man hung on high is the pure salvation of God for every language and every nation; it calls each of us to clothe him in the dress of our own culture; He makes the gifts of pardon, the Spirit and eternal life accessible to us. It is emblematic that the incarnation of the universal savior occurred in the particular "law" of Israel; it places the Crucified/Risen One in every place and time, and in the culture of every place and time. Jesus is the Particular-Universal open to all diversity; He gives value to all otherness.

1.2.4. *Philippians 1, 6-8*: the Son of the Most High became flesh in the lowest and most alien of conditions

*His state was divine
yet he did not cling
to his equality with God
but emptied himself
to assume the condition of a slave
and became as men are
and being as all men are
he was humbler yet
even to accepting death,
death on a cross.*

This passage warrants further investigation. The Christological hymn in *Philippians* leads us to this conclusion. It emphasizes the fact that Christ Jesus takes on the "other" and this is part of a singular "exchange." On high He is divine by nature; he strips himself and assumes not just any human condition, but the very lowliest and basest condition - that of a slave. This will raise on high that which is lowly. That which is most remote from God, the sinner (*2 Cor 5, 18-21*) most remote from any social importance (*1 Cor 1, 26-28*). Generating sons and freemen in love. This is the word of preaching (*Rm 6, 17*).

¹³ INRI is the acronym of the Latin version of the inscription: *Iesus Nazarenus Rex Iudaeorum* (*Jesus Nazarene, King of Jews*).

1.2.5. Conclusions

The theological/Christological foundation of inculturation is laid in what may be considered extremely incisive and divisive terms. In the mystery of the Incarnation the Father gives His Son in a specific culture, “under the law” (*Gal* 4, 4). In the mystery of Easter the Father gives the Lord to every language, that is every culture, “the inscription was written in Hebrew, Latin and Greek” (*Jn* 19, 20). This permits mutual reconciliation in Christ and in His Spirit that does not eliminate one’s own ethnic identity (cf. *Ep* 1, 14-18). What happened in the Incarnation is emblematic of what happens every time the Word is born into history. The Father gives His Son, Christ, in the form of “kenosis.”

What is most *universal* can only be uttered in the *particular*. It is that Name which all churches recognize, worship (*Ph* 2, 9-11) and witness (*Acts* 1, 8). It is the source of their unity just as the gifts of the Spirit are the source of their unity in diversity. The Name can only be uttered in a specific culture: that of the poor, the least, the sinful - the counter-culture. New Testament literature is the normative witness of this fact: it provides the principal guidelines for inculturation.

Questions for group discussion

3. The Incarnation demands inculturation. Are we genuinely “incarnate” in those specific cultures in which we live and work?

4. What are the obstacles that block our becoming one with our people and with their values? How can we eliminate those obstacles?

1.3. ECCLESIOLOGICAL ASPECT

1.3.1. *Acts* 2, 1-12; *Genesis* 10, 1-32; to make oneself heard in a dominating language or in all languages?

The two texts *Acts* 1, 1-12 and *Genesis* 10, 1-32 are reminiscent of each other. *Genesis* 10, 1-32 is a list of all the nations known at that time. It is a list of peoples to be understood in a specific way: it demonstrates the original unity of mankind at creation in the multiplicity of peoples, different cultures and different languages. It is “something beautiful and good”, it is a blessing. This is reflected in the interpersonal unity/diversity of man and woman (Adam and Eve) the social distinction between shepherd and farmer (Abel and Cain). In the context of religion it is the distinction between heaven and earth. *Genesis* 10 is the conclusion of a discourse demonstrating the positive nature of diversity reconciled in an international framework.

This positive nature is threatened. In *Genesis* 10, 8 we read “Nimrod was the first potentate on earth” and then in verse 10 “his empire began with Babel.” This beginning was linked to the intention of inaugurating a “new world”, a “new era”, a “new society” that would begin its calendar with itself. This is Nimrod, the builder of great *ziggurat*, those Babylonian towers with steps, this is the one who “agitated men’s minds with his words and led them to rebel against God.”

The threat became a reality with the construction of the Tower of Babel. It was an event of contradiction. The diaspora, dispersal willed by God was to be replaced by a unification willed by Nimrod: there would no longer be a plurality of languages, but rather “a single tongue, identical words.” This was Nimrod’s dream, this was the dream of Babel. No longer would each people have a name, no longer would there be an awareness of the individuality and identity of each nation as something special, but rather “let us build a city and make a name for ourselves” (*Gn* 11, 4). There would be no respect for God’s space, for the direction He gave life - blessing, happiness. God was the opposition that had to be eliminated; this would be done by building a tower whose summit (literally whose head) reached the heavens, the place where God dwelt. God’s place had to be usurped; it had to be eliminated by creating a single language, a single tongue, identical words. God was an obstacle to this plan.



The meaning of all this is clear and important for our own time. In the beginning the plan is attractive and convincing: eliminate diversity and create a unity of nations. But how? Through a single language, a single culture, a single ideology, a single government. But which language, culture etc? The Bible is clear: that of the strongest. In this instance it is the Babylonian empire that will unify the world, it is “the name above all other names,” “the first of nations.” What price must be paid for this? The suppression of a long list of peoples, of otherness, diversity, complementarity; the very denial of the Name of God as something bothersome, a sign of contradiction. The stairway to heaven is an indication that God’s place was to be usurped by the Powerful. The “powerful” and he alone was to be god for mankind; he alone would know and determine what was good and what was bad for nations and individuals. The conclusion is clear: “When the word of man asserts itself as final and definitive we have Babel, we have confusion, we have Babel”; there is hostility and a breakdown of communication. “They hear but they do not understand; they speak but they do not communicate.” From a “blessed diversity of languages” we pass to a “cursed singleness of language”; a lack of communication and understanding masked by the illusion of “identical words, a single tongue.” The illusion that “God is divisive.” We reach the conclusion that “God is divisive”, “God causes chaos” God fragments. But He also heals. We see this in the link between Babel and Jerusalem.

Babylon is a metaphor for misunderstanding and non-communication; it was the scene of a confusion caused by the multiplicity of peoples and their languages. In the name of a single language, that of the strongest, diversity is rejected. Deprived of his identity, the coerced subject ceases to be a partner in dialogue, an open THOU; he becomes mute (*Ps* 137 [136], 1. 4: “how can we sing our hymns in a foreign land?”) There are various responses to homogenization: silence (surrender to the dominant culture); anger (rebellion); or resignation

and growing alienation. Signs of a breakdown of communication and tolerance: nothing to say, nothing to say to each other.

Jerusalem on the other hand is a metaphor for the opposite situation. Babel means “gate of the gods”, entry into a place of non-communication where man and his single culture prevail. As opposed to this is Jerusalem “city of peace.” It is the place of communication, of renewed respect for languages. What is the reason for this? This is “Biblical therapy.” The Spirit comes down from on high; He is divine energy and creates communion and unity in the midst of a diversity of languages and cultures. In *Acts 2* He is the anti-Babel. At Pentecost the nations of the earth hear the message of the Apostles - each in his own language; each celebrates that message in his own language. There is a single *kerygma*, a single message received and celebrated in a variety of dialects, each different but able to communicate with each other. Imperialism is abolished at every level.



With a very beautiful image one could say that Pentecost heals Babel for the simple reason that at Jerusalem man has ceased to occupy the place of God, of God’s throne. God is God, man is man. A Father, who through the Risen One, can finally carry out his task: to send the Spirit of diversity of communicating languages into the desert of conformity. Languages are united by their common content, by the single message destined for all; they are diversified by the way they receive and celebrate that message. The content is clear in the Biblical text.

Questions for group discussion

5. Babel is the city of a “single language”, Jerusalem is the city of “many languages.” Does our Church possess traits reminiscent of Babel? What are they?
6. How can one overcome those “Babylonian traits” in the Church, so that she becomes a reflection of Jerusalem at Pentecost?
7. What characteristics of the modern city recall Babel?
8. How can one plan a society that looks more like Jerusalem at Pentecost?

1.3.2. *Acts 15, 1-35*: do not impose the burden of Hebrew culture on a pagan who believes in Christ

If a pagan asks to become a Christian is it a *sine qua non* condition that he take upon himself the Jewish law: specifically circumcision and all the complex commandments? In other words, is Judeo-Christianity the only possible form of Christianity? According to Luke’s

account, this is the problem that exploded at Antioch and was resolved in the Jerusalem assembly. This is the answer to that question placed in the mouth of Peter, “We believe that we are saved in the same way as they are: through the grace of the Lord Jesus” (Acts 15, 11). For both those Christians who were Jews and those who were pagans, salvation comes through the *grace* of the Lord Jesus accepted in *faith*. This is what we believe is essential and necessary for everyone. Consequently it is neither necessary nor essential to force gentile Christians to be circumcised or to take on the observance of the Law of Moses. This is a burden that should not be placed upon them.

If we study this Biblical text in its entirety and in its historical context we will discover that it is of fundamental importance for the subject we are confronting.

- The text highlights the existence of *conflict between the ways of salvation* and it reveals the *method* for overcoming that conflict. First admit that a conflict exists; determine who is involved; clarify the theories and principles at stake; seek a solution not based on force or coercion but on spiritual discernment: “It appears good to the Holy Spirit and Us;” finally compromise with the demands of one’s opponents in the name of *agape*.

- The text demonstrates the need to conform to a diversity of culture in our outward expressions. What is essential is that Jesus is Lord and Savior of both Jews and Gentiles. The religious and cultural system with which the *Kyrios* is received and worshipped is secondary. That religious and cultural system cannot and should not be imposed. Peter shows the Jewish-Christian element how to assume an attitude of profound respect for those who come to Christianity from paganism. He is both practically and decisively “anti-imperialist.” “Let us not burden them with our customs.” This same “anti-imperialist” logic is used by Paul. He firmly believes that circumcision and observance of the entire Jewish legal system is not necessary to become a Christian or to be justified before God. One is free in one’s conduct. This is why he allows Timothy to be circumcised (Acts 16, 3) to improve his relations with Jews, but forbids Titus from undergoing circumcision as a question of principle (*Gal 2, 3-5; 5, 2*). Paul is an example of one who is committed to keeping non-Jewish Christians free of the burden of the Mosaic Law, while at the same time avoiding the arrogance of imposing this new culture, new method, new behavior on Jewish Christians. No one was forbidden to observe the Law of Moses. What united these two factions was the basic message of *Acts 15, 11*: “We believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus we have been saved in the same way they have” - this salvation is expressed in a plurality of forms: Jewish-Christian and non-Jewish-Christian. Even those obligations suggested by James were not meant to impose a burden but to act as a point of encounter, a bridge between two very different worlds - realistically something they had to come to grips with.

The early church rejected uniformity and was clear on what was essential.

- In his first letter to the Corinthians Paul reminds us that the essential was given to the Church as a single and irreplaceable foundation. It transcends the churches themselves; they can only accept it in the awareness that it is not theirs to dispose of as they please: “No one can posit another foundation - different from the one that is already there: Jesus Christ” (*1 Cor 3, 11*). “Jesus Christ, yesterday, today and forever!” (*Heb 13, 8*).

1.3.3. *Acts 17, 16-34*: start with what is right in local religious values

Paul is in Athens: a simple consideration. The apostle is in a city that had lost almost all its ancient prestige but remained a center of attraction and a symbol of philosophy and Greek culture. He is undoubtedly irritated by the superstitious idolatry of the city, but aware of the words of Jesus “Whoever is not against you is with you” (*Lk* 9, 50). He adopts a positive attitude towards Athenian religious values (cf. *Acts* 17, 22-23). Possibly it is a way of attracting the attention of his audience; he reveals the “cultural poverty” of his own message. The kerygma meets and engages Athenian culture; it respects its mystery, and it uses it to explain itself - its fear of God and its uncertainty about the “unknown God” (*Acts* 17, 32). It presents itself under this name: “What you worship but do not know, I now proclaim to you” (*Acts* 17, 23) - God the Creator, He who raised Jesus from the dead and set him up as the eschatological judge. It is to this God that one must convert (*Acts* 17, 30-31).

This is an example of proper inculturation - gift and acceptance. At the same time it is an example of non-encounter for some. “When they heard talking about the resurrection of the dead, they laughed ... we will listen to you some other time” (*Acts* 17,31). Talk about the immortality of the soul would have been congenial to this culture but Paul was not accommodating. It was a culture that was slow to see the scandal of the resurrection of the flesh, of the transfiguration of matter. Setbacks and delays are inherent in any discussion of inculturation. The Good News is that wine which causes old skins to burst; they cannot accept the new. It is interesting to note Paul’s reaction: “Paul left the meeting” (*Acts* 17, 33). The novelty and folly of the resurrection of the dead - it was better to keep silence rather than betray the message.

1.3.4. *I Corinthians*: promote the encounter of Christ’s Gospel with every culture

Paul writes to the Corinthians. Although it was a city of Greek language and culture, Corinth was cosmopolitan. There were people mere from a variety of countries (Greece, Italy, Syria, Judea). Paul arrived there at the end of the year 50 AD and remained some eighteen months. During that time he proclaimed the Gospel and was the cause of many conversions (cf. *Acts* 18, 1-17). In the middle of 52 AD he departed abruptly.¹⁴ Apollo continued his mission of evangelization successfully (*Acts* 18, 24 – 19, 1). Apollo was an Alexandrian Jew. Soon however the neophytes who lived in this pagan and cosmopolitan city were unable to resist pagan worldly values and began to break into factions. This is the reason Paul wrote to them at Easter in the year 57 (cf. *I Cor* 5, 7f; 16, 5-9; *Acts* 19, 21). He attempted to answer their questions and re-establish concord.

The Gospel is not denied to a plurality of cultures. This is a new aspect to be taken into consideration. Relating the Gospel to different cultures is not a simple task; there is always the risk of accepting elements of a different culture that correspond to things in one’s own culture and rejecting what is foreign to one’s own thought, sensitivity or behavior. We cannot deny that cultural considerations can limit or weaken the strength that emanates from the scandal and folly of the Cross. Neither *a priori* rejection nor uncritical acceptance, but rather adherence to new worlds and their cultures with the clear awareness that the Good News may mean rupture and destructuralization of the past in view of a more authentically evangelical future. The possibility of a biological assimilation of the message and the inevitable conflict this can cause is clearly seen in First Letter to the Corinthians. As an example let’s say that the factional, paternal dependence evidenced in expressions such as “I am of ...” (cf. *I Co* 3,4) corresponds to a dualistic culture, evocative of ecstatic mystery cults. It denotes a peculiar and

¹⁴ The large number of Jews converted to Christianity angered the local Jewish community and provoked Paul’s abrupt departure (cf. *A e* 18, 12-18).

extraordinary understanding of sexuality, sacraments and immortality. All of this is in strong contrast to the simple affirmation of Jesus as the only Lord, and to the concept of the body as a temple of the Spirit destined not for uncleanness but rather for the Lord and resurrection. The absolute primacy of charity is something that is truly extraordinary.

Questions for group discussion

9. What strong counter-values in our present, modern, popular culture are in direct contrast to those proposed by the Gospel?

10. How can we lead people on the conversion journey and free them from the counter-values of our present culture and create an alternate culture based on faith?

1.4. APOSTOLIC ASPECT

1.4.1. I Corinthians 2,1-27: take on the culture of all

... So though I am not a slave of any man I have made myself the slave of everyone so as to win as many as I could. I made myself a Jew to the Jews, to win the Jews; that is, I who am not a subject of the Law made myself a subject to the Law to those who are the subjects of the Law, to win those who are subject to the Law. To those who have no Law, I was free of the Law myself (though not free from God's law, being under the law of Christ) to win those who have no Law. For the weak I made myself weak. I made myself all things to all men in order to save some at any cost... (2 Cor 9, 19-22).

Let us consider briefly Paul's missionary style. In proclaiming the Gospel to all nations in obedience to Christ's mandate (*Mt* 28, 19; *Mk* 16, 15) Paul adapts himself to the people to whom he is sent (cf. *1 Cor* 9, 19-23; 10, 31 – 11, 1; *Gal* 1, 11-14; *Acts* 21, 17-26). For him living in Christ creates no barriers of time or culture. He tells his disciples, "When you were baptized in Christ, you put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave or freedman, there is no longer man or woman, for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (*Gal* 3, 28). What is important is the "degree of responsibility" with which one lives Christ... this transcends all our distinctions (religion, culture, class, hierarchy, sex, ...) Although a free man (cf. *1 Cor* 9, 1) Paul voluntarily makes himself the slave of everyone (cf. *1 Cor* 9, 10) taking on the culture of everyone: "made myself a Jew to the Jews¹⁵ ... with those who had no Law I became as one without the Law¹⁶ ... I did everything for the Gospel, to share it with them" (*1 Cor* 9, 20. 21. 23).

To make oneself weak. To identify with the weak, "made myself weak with the weak" (*1 Cor* 9, 22; cf. *2 Cor* 11, 29). In weakness: "... when I came amongst you I did not present myself ... with sublime words and wisdom ... I came into your midst in weakness ... so that your faith would not be based on human wisdom but on the power of God" (*1 Cor* 2, 1. 3. 5); he proclaims himself the weak one of God: "I know nothing in your midst but Jesus Christ, and

¹⁵ Cf. *Acts* 16, 3; 21, 20-26.

¹⁶ Cf. *Ga* 2, 3.

Him crucified” (*1 Cor 2, 2*), something that is both scandal and folly. Any other comment is superfluous. We find ourselves before a synthesis of Gospel and culture.

Questions for group discussion

11. If we follow Jesus who took on the “condition of a slave” and Paul who “made himself weak with the weak” what are the weak and threatened cultures (subcultures) we see around us?
12. How can we help these subcultures to survive and flourish?
13. Paul, like Jesus before him, becomes weak and poor in order to proclaim the Gospel. What does this mean? What does “being weak” teach us about evangelization?
14. How are we tempted to be overbearing in our preaching of the Word? Give some examples

1.4.2. Synthesis

From all these New Testament texts we can draw a few useful conclusions.

1. The fundamental *content* of the message involving the Trinity cannot be changed by the Churches; it is their pure, permanent and universal given. It is the manifold Lord Jesus of the New Testament, the Good News of God for humanity in the Spirit.
2. The form, however, is another matter. Every proclamation (*kerygma*), prayer (*liturgy*), explanation (*didachè*), reflection (*theology*), expressed in poetry (*art*), or life (*praxis*) is of its nature dated and geographical - in other words, inculturated. It is particular to a specific time and place.
3. The *way* the proclamation is presented or the way the proclaimer presents himself is in weakness and poverty; in this way the power of God in the Spirit and how God is revealed in Jesus become immediately apparent.
4. The results are assured. Unity, always and everywhere, around the same Name makes the relativizing of the evangelical truth found in the creed impossible. The multiplicity of ways that truth can be expressed in many different cultures makes the “religious imperialism” of a single language impossible. The exchange of mutual, complementary and related experiences makes “regionalism” (ecclesiastical self-sufficiency, non- communion, non- communication) impossible. The poverty of the proclamation protects the Church from being dominated. In the interest of doing good the Church can be tempted to use force or make alliances with the powerful to the detriment of the weak, the subculture and to its prophetic integrity. God chooses the things that don’t count to confound those that do (cf. *1 Cor 1, 26-29*).
5. From all of this the importance of a “Biblical context” for inculturation in “formation, Marian devotion and methods of evangelization” is obvious.



Life of Christians

For the Christians are distinguished from other men neither by country, nor language, nor the customs which they observe. For they neither inhabit cities of their own, nor employ a peculiar form of speech, nor lead a life which is marked out by any singularity. The course of conduct which they follow has not been devised by any speculation or deliberation of inquisitive men; nor do they, like some, proclaim themselves the advocates of any merely human doctrines. But, inhabiting Greek as well as barbarian cities, according as the lot of each of them has determined, and following the customs of the natives in respect to clothing, food, and the rest of their ordinary conduct, they display to us their wonderful and confessedly striking method of life. They dwell in their own countries, but simply as sojourners (cf. *Heb* 13, 14). As citizens, they share in all things with others, and yet endure all things as if foreigners. Every foreign land is to them as their native country, and every land of their birth as a land of strangers. They marry, as do all [others]; they beget children; but they do not destroy their offspring. They have a common table, but not a common bed. They are in the flesh, but they do not live after the flesh (cf. *Rom* 8, 12-13). They pass their days on earth, but they are citizens of heaven (cf. *Heb* 13, 14). They obey the prescribed laws, and at the same time surpass the laws by their lives. They love all men, and are persecuted by all. They are unknown and condemned; they are put to death, and restored to life. They are poor, yet make many rich; they are in lack of all things, and yet abound in all (cf. *2 Cor* 6, 9-10); they are dishonored, and yet in their very dishonor are glorified. They are evil spoken of, and yet are justified; they are reviled, and bless; they are insulted, and repay the insult with honor (cf. *1 Cor* 4, 12); they do good, yet are punished as evil-doers. When punished, they rejoice as if quickened into life; they are assailed by the Jews as foreigners, and are persecuted by the Greeks; yet those who hate them are unable to assign any reason for their hatred.

To sum up all in one word-what the soul is in the body, that are Christians in the world. The soul is dispersed through all the members of the body, and Christians are scattered through all the cities of the world. The soul dwells in the body, yet is not of the body; and Christians dwell in the world, yet are not of the world (cf. *Jn* 17, 11-16). The invisible soul is guarded by the visible body, and Christians are known indeed to be in the world, but their godliness remains invisible. The flesh hates the soul, and wars against it, though itself suffering no injury, because it is prevented from enjoying pleasures; the world also hates the Christians (cf. *Jn* 15, 19), though in nowise injured, because they abjure pleasures. The soul loves the flesh that hates it, and [loves also] the members; Christians likewise love those that hate them (cf. *Lk* 6, 27). The soul is imprisoned in the body, yet preserves that very body; and Christians are confined in the world as in a prison, and yet they are the preservers of the world. The immortal soul dwells in a mortal tabernacle; and Christians dwell as sojourners in corruptible [bodies], looking for an incorruptible dwelling in the heavens. The soul, when but ill-provided with food and drink, becomes better; in like manner, the Christians, though subjected day by

day to punishment, increase the more in number. God has assigned them this illustrious position, which it were unlawful for them to forsake.

The Epistle of Mathetes to Diognetus (nn. 5-6)¹⁷

¹⁷ This English translation comes from an online collection of Christian texts: Christian Classics Ethereal Library - www.ccel.org

II

INCULTURATION IN THE CONTEXT OF EVANGELIZATION, MARIAN DEVOTION AND FORMATION IN THE SERVITE RELIGIOUS LIFE

2.1. INCULTURATION

- 2.1.1. The term “inculturation”
- 2.1.2. A twofold movement

2.2. EVANGELIZATION

- 2.2.1. The command to evangelize
 - 2.2.1.1. The obligation to preach the Gospel
 - 2.2.1.2. Why the Gospel seed bears fruit
 - 2.2.1.3. In today’s world: three situations
- 2.2.2. Certain questions
 - 2.2.2.1. Language and means of expression
 - 2.2.2.2. Faith
 - 2.2.2.3. Liturgy: celebrating the faith
 - 2.2.2.4. Family and the ecclesial base community

2.3. MARIAN DEVOTION

- 2.3.1. Virgin
- 2.3.2. Woman
- 2.3.3. Wife
- 2.3.4. Mother

2.4. FORMATION IN THE SERVITE RELIGIOUS LIFE

- 2.4.1. Being aware of context
 - 2.4.1.1. In a new foundation, in a young Church
 - a) Cultivate a theology of religious life with the local culture
 - b) Communicate Servite identity and charism
 - c) Treat members realistically and respectfully
 - d) Be zealous in formation and discernment
 - 2.4.1.2. In a modern, post-modern society
 - a) the ability to share
 - b) service to the most vulnerable around us
 - c) liturgical prayer d) practice hospitality
 - 2.4.1.3. In places hostile to Christianity
 - a) Faithfulness
 - b) Communication
- 2.4.2. Some questions
 - 2.4.2.1. Education and formation
 - 2.4.2.2. Common life
 - 2.4.2.3. The vow of chastity
 - 2.4.2.4. The vow of poverty
 - 2.4.2.5. The vow of obedience

2.1. INCULTURATION

2.1.1. The term “inculturation”

A “modern” term

“Inculturation” is not to be confused with the term “enculturation”.¹⁸ It came to the fore after the Second Vatican Council in discussions on missiology¹⁹ and the insertion of the local church in social life and culture.²⁰ This was widely discussed and the subject of considerable theological reflection during the years 1974-1981 especially among Jesuits. This was a result of the discussions on the role of culture in the Church during the 32nd General Congregation of the Society of Jesus.²¹ Interest reached its climax in an inter-disciplinary seminar on inculturation held in Jerusalem in 1981 and the publication of “Working Papers” on this subject.

The term “inculturation” means “the incarnation of the Gospel in autochthonous cultures and simultaneously the introduction of these cultures into the life of the Church.”²²

“Inculturation implies an intimate integration into Christianity and the rooting of Christianity in different cultures.”²³

¹⁸ “Enculturation” is a technical term in cultural anthropology that describes that learning experience through which an individual is initiated into and grows in his own culture. Cf. ROEST CROLLIUS, S.J., A. *Inculturation: Newness and Ongoing Process* in: WALIGGO, J.M. - ROEST CROLLIUS, S.J., A. - NKÉRAMIHIGO, S.J., T., - MUTISO-MBINDA, J., *Inculturation Its Meaning and Urgency* (St. Paul Publications, Africa 1986) p. 35; HERSKOVITS, M.J., *Man and His Works* (New York 1952) p. 39.

¹⁹ Originally “inculturation” was a technical term in missiology that denoted the process of the Church’s insertion into a specific culture. Cf. ROEST CROLLIUS, S.J., A., *Inculturation: Newness and Ongoing Process* in: WALIGGO, J.M. - ROEST CROLLIUS, S.J., A. - NKÉRAMIHIGO, S.J., T., - MUTISO-MBINDA, J., *Inculturation Its Meaning and Urgency* (St. Paul Publications, Africa 1986) p. 32-35.

²⁰ Cf. VATICAN COUNCIL II, Decree *Ad gentes* on missionary activity in the Church (December 7, 1965), no. 19: [the local church]... already rooted in the social life of the people and to some extent conformed to its culture.” See the declaration of the Bishops of Asia in their meeting at Taipei in 1974: “The local Church is a Church incarnate in a people, a Church indigenous and inculturated. And this means concretely a Church in continuous, humble and loving dialogue with the living traditions, the cultures, the religions - in brief, with all the life-realities of the people in whose midst it has sunk its roots deeply and whose history and life it gladly makes its own.” [FABC ASSEMBLY, Final Statement, n. 12. “His Gospel to Our Peoples ...”. Vol. II (Manila 1976) p. 332].

²¹ This Congregation took place from December 1, 1974 to April 7, 1975. There are two mentions of inculturation in the acts of the Congregation: nos. 36 and 53-56 in Decree IV (on “our mission today”) and in the brief Decree V, specifically dedicated to the theme: “on fostering the inculturation of the Christian Faith and Life.” The term “inculturation” shows up one other time in the decree on formation (Decree VI, n. 29). Cf. ROEST CROLLIUS, S.J., A., *Inculturation: Newness and Ongoing Process* in: WALIGGO, J.M. - ROEST CROLLIUS, S.J., A. - NKÉRAMIHIGO, S.J., T., - MUTISO-MBINDA, J., *Inculturation Its Meaning and Urgency* (St. Paul Publications, Africa 1986) p. 31-45. The study made its first appearance in *Gregorianum* 59 (1978) pp. 721-738.

²² JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Slavorum Apostoli* (June 2, 1985), n. 21 : AAS 77 (1985), 802-803. Ary Roest Crollius, S.J., describes the process of inculturation in these words: “The inculturation of the Church is the integration of the Christian experience of a local Church into the culture of its people, in such a way that the experience not only expresses itself in elements of this culture, but becomes a force that animates, orients and innovates this culture so as to create a new unity and communion, not only within the culture in question but also as an enrichment of the Church universal” [ROEST CROLLIUS, S.J., A., *Inculturation: Newness and Ongoing Process* in: WALIGGO, J.M. - ROEST CROLLIUS, S.J., A. - NKÉRAMIHIGO, S.J., T., - MUTISO-MBINDA, J., *Inculturation Its Meaning and Urgency* (St. Paul Publications, Africa 1986) p. 43].

²³ JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Redemptoris Missio* (December 7, 1990), n. 52: AAS 83 (1991), 300.

2.1.2. A twofold movement

The term “inculturation” signifies a twofold movement:

- On the one hand, the penetration of the Gospel into a given socio-cultural milieu “it causes them to blossom, as it were, from within, it fortifies, completes and restores in Christ the spiritual qualities and gifts of each people.”²⁴

- On the other hand, the Church assimilates those values that are compatible with the Gospel, “to examine and understand more deeply the message of Christ and to express it more perfectly in the liturgy and in various aspects of the life of the faithful.”²⁵

“The evangelization of a culture and the inculturation of the Gospel are interwoven in the Church’s mission; the Church is engaged in building a civilization of truth and love.”²⁶

2.2. EVANGELIZATION

2.2.1. The Command to Evangelize

2.2.1.1. The obligation to preach the Gospel

After His death and resurrection, Jesus gave His disciples the mission to proclaim this message to all nations: “Go out into the whole world and preach the Gospel to every creature” (*Mk 16,15*). This command to evangelize the whole of mankind constitutes the essential mission of the Church. With St. Paul, the Apostle of the Gentiles, the Church can say, “To preach the Gospel is a duty for me: woe to me if I did not do it!” (*I Co 9,16*). Above all the Church must evangelize herself ... and then, with word and witness, evangelize all those who do not know Christ.

2.2.1.2. Why the Gospel seed bears fruit

Let us consider the parable of the sower.

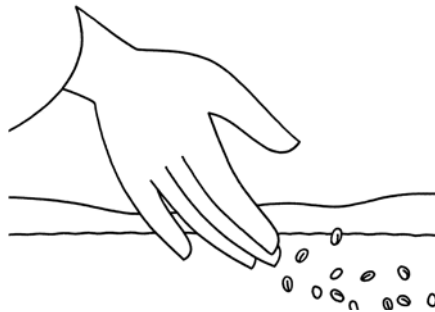
A sower went out to sow. As he sowed, some seed fell on the edge of the path, and the birds came and ate them up. Others fell on patches of rock where they found little soil and sprang up straight away, because there was no depth of earth; but as soon as the sun came up they were scorched and, not having any roots, they withered away. Others fell among thorns and the thorns grew up and choked them. Others fell on rich soil and

²⁴ VATICAN COUNCIL II, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes* on the Church in the Modern World (December 7, 1965), n. 58.

²⁵ VATICAN COUNCIL II, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes* on the Church in the Modern World (December 7, 1965), n. 58

²⁶ JOHN PAUL II, Letter *Rursus episcoporum synodus* (Working paper for the Synod on the vocation and mission of the laity) (date ???), n. 47: EV 10/1690

produced their crop, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. Listen, anyone who has ears! (Mt 13, 3-9)



We can enlarge upon the explanation Jesus gives (cf. *Mt* 13, 18-23). The seed which fell on the side of the road and was eaten by birds refers to hearing the word but not understanding it: it is stolen quickly by the evil one (cf. *Mt* 13, 19). It is the Gospel proclaimed in a foreign language: it is not understood primarily because it has not been translated into the local language.

The seed fallen on patches of rock springs up straight away (but without roots) and is burned by the sun: this is the word heard and received with joy immediately - but it has no roots; the moment trouble or persecution appears the word is abandoned (cf. *Mt* 13, 21-22). This is the Gospel proclaimed in the local language but without explanation. The message is attractive and generates enthusiasm - it is something novel - but when it comes time to put it into practice it fails; it cannot be carried out in life because it has no depth.

The seed fallen among thorns and choked is the word heard in the midst of worldly concerns and choked by the lure of riches: it bears no fruit (cf. *Mt* 13, 22).

It is the Gospel proclaimed in the local language and compared with local culture but there is no genuine dialogue with this culture: gradually the culture overcomes it and the Gospel bears no fruit.

The seed fallen on good ground that bears fruit is the word heard and understood: it bears abundant fruit (cf. *Mt* 13, 23). This is the Gospel proclaimed in the local language, explained and integrated into local culture sympathetically (assimilating the riches of that culture) and prophetically (purifying that culture from its oppressive elements). The Gospel is inculturated and the culture is evangelized in depth. The Gospel is perceived as something that corresponds to the deepest aspirations of the local people - it will bear abundant fruit!

Questions for group study

15. Is the Gospel really the inspiration of our Christian life? If this is not the case, how can we inspire, direct and transform our life?

16. *Lectio divina* on *Mt* 13, 3-23.²⁷

²⁷ N.d.l.r. See, for example, the *lectio divina* proposed on this text (*Mt* 13, 1-23) by Sr M. Elizabeth Torres Martinez (NAP) on 5 August 2014 at the 7th UNIFAS International Congress (Collevalenza, 4-11 August 2014).

If the Gospel is accepted it will transform ...

“Even though the Gospel is not the property of any single culture it must inspire all cultures. It will transform them from within by enriching them with those Christian values that derive from the faith. In reality, the evangelization of a culture represents the most profound and global method of evangelizing a society; through it Christ’s message penetrates people’s consciences and inspires a people’s ethos, vital activities and all its institutions and structures.”²⁸

Mutual fertilization: the Gospel has regenerative power

“From interpretation, one passes then to other stages of inculturation, which lead to the formation of a local Christian culture, extending to all aspects of life (prayer, work, social life, customs, legislation, arts and sciences, philosophical and theological reflection). The word of God is, in effect, a seed, which extracts from the earth in which it is planted the elements which are useful for its growth and fruitfulness.²⁹ As a consequence, Christians must try to discern “what riches God, in his generosity, has bestowed on the nations; at the same time they should try to shed the light of the Gospel on these treasures, to set them free and bring them under the dominion of God the Savior.”³⁰

“Clearly this is not a one-way process; it involves “mutual enrichment.” On the one hand, the treasures contained in diverse cultures allow the word of God to produce new fruits and on the other hand, the light of the Word allows for a certain selectivity with respect to what cultures have to offer: Harmful elements can be left aside and the development of valuable ones encouraged. Total fidelity to the person of Christ, to the dynamic of his paschal mystery and to his love for the church make it possible to avoid two false solutions: a superficial “adaptation” of the message, on the one hand, and a syncretistic confusion, on the other.³¹

“Inculturation of the Bible has been carried out from the first centuries, both in the Christian East and in the Christian West, and it has proved very fruitful. However, one can never consider it a finished task. It must be taken up again and again, in relationship to the way in which cultures continue to evolve. In countries of more recent evangelization, the problem arises in somewhat different terms. Missionaries, in fact, cannot help but bring the word of God in the form in which it has been inculturated in their own country of origin. New local churches have to make every effort to convert this foreign form of biblical inculturation into another form more closely corresponding to the culture of their own land.”³²

2.2.1.3. In today’s world: three situations

²⁸ JOHN PAUL II, *Inaugural Address to the IV General Conference of the Latin-American Episcopale* (Santo Domingo, October 12, 1992) n. 20.

²⁹ Cf. VATICAN COUNCIL II, Decree *Ad Gentes* on the missionary activity of the Church (December 7, 1965), n. 22.

³⁰ VATICAN COUNCIL II, Decree *Ad Gentes* on the missionary activity of the Church (December 7, 1965), n. 11.

³¹ Cf. VATICAN COUNCIL II, Decree *Ad Gentes* on the missionary activity of the Church (December 7, 1965), n. 22.

³² PONTIFICAL BIBLICAL COMMISSION, Document *Interpretation of the Bible in the Church* (September 21, 1993) chapter IV. B.

Inculturation takes place on a local level (in a specific place and culture, at a specific time) and for this reason one must be aware of very different situations.

- In traditionally non-Christian places. One must accept anything in the local tradition which can be reconciled with the Gospel so that one can bring the riches of Christ to that place and in turn enrich oneself with the manifold wisdom of the nations of the earth.
- In places with an ancient tradition. For a long time local culture has been permeated by the Gospel and the faith. One must be aware of the problems that arise from the existence of several cultures.
- In places (Christian or otherwise) where local culture is more and more characterized by an indifference to or disinterest in religion. Emphasis must be placed on education and ways of reaching hearts and souls must be found.

Evangelizers moved by the Spirit

“[... the Church’s proclamation... should be:

- Confident, in the power of the Spirit, and in obedience to the mandate received from the Lord(...)
- Humble, in the awareness that the fullness of revelation in Jesus Christ has been received as a free gift, and that the messengers of the Gospel do not always fully live up to its demands.
- Respectful, of the presence and action of the Spirit of God in the hearts of those who listen to the message, in the recognition that the Spirit is the “principal agent of evangelization.”³³
- Dialogical, for in proclamation the hearer of the Word is not expected to be a passive receiver. There is progress from the “seeds of the Word” already present in the hearer to the full mystery of salvation in Jesus Christ. The Church must recognize a process of purification and enlightenment in which the Spirit of God opens the mind and heart of the hearer to the obedience of faith.
- Inculturated, incarnated in the culture and the spiritual tradition of those addressed, so that the message is not only intelligible to them, but is conceived as responding to their deepest aspirations, as truly the Good News they have been longing for.”³⁴

2.2.2. Some Questions

2.2.2.1. Language and means of expression

It is of prime necessity that the Biblical message be communicated in the local language so that Christ’s disciples in every nation can hear the Gospel proclamation in their mother tongue (cf. Acts 2,8-11) and be directly taught, inspired and guided by it. Besides the language it is important to understand the ways of feeling, thinking, living and expressing oneself in the local culture if one is to translate the Biblical message appropriately.

³³ PAUL VI, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii nuntiandi* (December 8, 1975), n. 75: EV 5/1700.

³⁴ PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR INTER-RELIGIOUS DIALOGUE AND THE CONGREGATION FOR THE EVANGELIZATION OF PEOPLES, Instruction *Dialogue and Proclamation: Reflections and Orientations* (May 19, 1991) n. 70: AAS 84 (1992) 414-446; errata corrige: AAS 84 (1992) 1263; EV 13,367. Cf. PAUL VI, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii nuntiandi* (December 8, 1975), n. 20. 62: EV 5,1612. 1672ff.

Questions for group discussion

17. Has the Bible been translated into the local language? If so, review the translation and try to see how the concepts and symbols used in it are understood. If it has not been translated, translate and interpret it.

Evangelize people in their own language “The missionary tradition of the Church has always been concerned with evangelizing people in their own language. Frequently it was the first missionaries to a particular country that committed to writing languages which had previously been only oral. This is appropriate because it is only through the mother tongue (vehicle of mentality and culture) that one can reach the soul of a people, instill the Christian spirit and make it possible for that people to share more profoundly in the prayer of the Church.”³⁵

The first, fundamental task: translate and interpret the Bible

“The first stage of inculturation consists in translating the inspired Scripture into another language. This step was taken already in the Old Testament period, when the Hebrew text of the Bible was translated orally into Aramaic (*Neh.* 8:8,12) and later in written form into Greek. A translation, of course, is always more than a simple transcription of the original text. The passage from one language to another necessarily involves a change of cultural context: Concepts are not identical and symbols have a different meaning, for they come up against other traditions of thought and other ways of life. Written in Greek, the New Testament is characterized in its entirety by a dynamic of inculturation. In its transposition of the Palestinian message of Jesus into Judeo-Hellenistic culture it displays its intention to transcend the limits of a single cultural world.

While basic step, translation does not of itself ensure a thorough inculturation. Translation must be followed by interpretation, which relates the biblical message more explicitly to the feeling, thinking, living and self-expression of the local culture.”³⁶

Conviction: the Word of God transcends cultures

“The theological foundation of inculturation is the conviction of faith that the word of God transcends the cultures in which it has found expression and has the capability of being spread in other cultures, in such a way as to be able to reach all human beings in the cultural context in which they live. This conviction springs from the Bible itself, which, right from the book of Genesis, adopts a universalist stance (*Gn.* 1:27-28), maintains it subsequently in the blessing promised to all peoples through Abraham and his offspring (*Gn.* 12:3; 18:18) and confirms it definitively in extending to “all nations” the proclamation of the Christian Gospel (*Mt.* 28:18-20; *Rom.* 4:16-17; *Eph.* 3:6).”³⁷

³⁵ CONGREGATION FOR DIVINE WORSHIP AND THE DISCIPLINE OF THE SACRAMENTS, *The Roman Liturgy and Inculturation, IV Instruction for the Correct Application of the Conciliar Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* (nn. 37-40) (January 25, 1994) n. 28.

³⁶ PONTIFICAL BIBLICAL COMMISSION, Document *Interpretation of the Bible in the Church* (September 21, 1993) chapter IV. B.

³⁷ PONTIFICAL BIBLICAL COMMISSION, Document *Interpretation of the Bible in the Church* (September 21, 1993) chapter IV. B.

2.2.2.2. Faith

There is a sense of the sacred in every person, a sense of the Other ... this is apparent in the crucial moments of one's life: birth, becoming an adult, marriage, transmitting life, sickness, death. It is apparent in those events in life resulting from specific choices (commitments, ...) and in the values which guide one's life.

If it is to put down roots in the life of an individual, faith in Christ must be linked to his religious instincts or beliefs: often the same symbols can be used but with new and deeper meanings ... If the Christian message is transmitted in a language people understand it will not look threatening or dangerous. While Christian faith humbly exposes itself to whatever critique may be made from the local culture, it is at the same time nourishing and enlightening local philosophy and theology (popular wisdom, beliefs ...).

Dialogue and sharing are important parts of Christian education so that each person can react and move towards a renewed faith in Christ.

Questions for group discussion

18. In modern or popular belief and religiosity what do people think of God (Supreme Being, All-powerful Judge, ...)? How do they see Him? What sort of relationship do they have with Him (indifference, fear, ...)?

19. What do people believe in? What do they think of life, birth, sickness, death? What values inform their lives, plans and commitments?

The Servant of Mary must be able to dialogue with everyone

“Every friar should strive to achieve a real capacity for dialogue, using his own spiritual strength and human resources as well as those of others, so that he may know how to listen, understand and act. He should acquire the ability to speak the language of his contemporaries, assimilating the riches which are offered him by diverse currents of cultural and religious thought and by practical experience of the milieu in which he carries on his apostolate. Thus he will be able to, in a spirit of charity, to open himself and others to all human needs.” (Const. 107).

Educating the Faithful: catechesis

“Like all forms of evangelization, catechesis too is called to bring the gospel into the heart of the different cultures.³⁸ The process of inculturation takes time, as it is a deep, gradual and all-embracing process. Through it, as Pope John Paul II explains, “the Church makes the gospel incarnate in different cultures and at the same time introduces peoples, together with their cultures, into her own community; she transmits to them her own values, at the same time taking the good elements that already exist in them and renewing them from within”.³⁹

³⁸ Cf. JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Redemptoris Missio* (December 7, 1990), n. 52: AAS 83 (1991) 300; EV 12,652.

³⁹ JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Redemptoris Missio* (December 7, 1990), n. 52: AAS 83 (1991) 300; EV 12,652.

Catechists, like all missionary personnel, will play an active part in this process. They should be specifically prepared for it, with courses on the elements of cultural anthropology and on their own culture, and should be aware of the guidelines that the Church has laid down on this matter⁴⁰ and which may be summarized as follows:

- The gospel message, though it can never be identified with any one culture, is necessarily incarnated in cultures. From its very beginnings it was incarnated in certain specific cultures, and one must take account of this if one is not to deprive the new Churches of values which are now the patrimony of the universal Church.
- The gospel is a force for renewal, and can rectify elements in cultures which do not conform to it.
- The local ecclesial communities, which are the primary subjects of inculturation, live out their daily experience of faith and charity in a particular culture, and the Bishop should indicate the best ways to bring out the positive values in that culture. The experts give incentive and support.
- Inculturation is genuine when it is guided by two principles: it must be founded on the word of God, revealed in the Scriptures, and must follow the Church's tradition and the guidance of the Magisterium; and it must never go against the Church unity that was willed by the Lord.
- Popular piety, understood as an expression of Catholic devotion colored by local values, traditions and attitudes, when purified of defects caused by ignorance and superstition, expresses the wisdom of God's people and is a privileged form of inculturation of the gospel.⁴¹

Following the above directives, catechists should contribute to inculturation by fitting into the overall pastoral plan drawn up by the competent authorities and avoiding adventures into particular experiments that might upset the faithful. They should be convinced that the gospel is strong enough to penetrate any culture and enrich and strengthen it from within."⁴²

Formation of candidates for the priesthood

"A further problem that is strongly felt these days is the demand for the evangelization of cultures and the inculturation of the message of faith. An eminently pastoral problem, this should enter more broadly and carefully into the formation of the candidates to the priesthood: In the present circumstances in which, in a number of regions of the world, the Christian religion is considered as something foreign to cultures (be they ancient or modern), it is very important that in the whole intellectual and human formation the dimension of inculturation be seen as necessary and essential." (*Propositio* 32) But this means we need a genuine theology, inspired by the Catholic principles on inculturation. These principles are linked with the mystery of the incarnation of the word of God and with Christian anthropology, and thus illumine the authentic meaning of inculturation. In the face of all the different and at times contrasting cultures present in the various parts of the world, inculturation seeks to obey Christ's command to preach the Gospel to all nations even unto the ends of the earth. Such obedience does not signify either syncretism or a simple adaptation of the announcement of the Gospel, but rather the fact that the Gospel penetrates the very life of cultures, becomes incarnate in them, overcoming those cultural elements that are incompatible with the faith and Christian living, and raising their values to the mystery of salvation which comes from

⁴⁰ Cf. VATICAN COUNCIL II, Decree *Ad Gentes on the missionary activity of the Church* (December 7, 1965), n. 9. 16. 22: EV I/1108f. 1135ff. 1168ff; ...

⁴¹ Cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (1992) n. 2688.

⁴² CONGREGATION FOR THE EVANGELIZATION OF PEOPLES, Document *Guide for Catechists* (December 3, 1993) n. 12.

Christ.⁴³ The problem of inculturation can have a particularly great interest when the candidates to the priesthood are themselves coming from indigenous cultures. In that case, they will need to find suitable ways of formation, both to overcome the danger of being less demanding and to strengthen their weaker education in human, Christian and priestly virtues, and also to make proper use of the good and genuine elements of their own cultures and traditions. (cf. *Propositio* 32).⁴⁴

In the European Church: dialogue with the Gospel

“The renewal of Europe must begin with a dialogue with the Gospel. This dialogue was given impetus by the Second Vatican Council; it should not involve diluting our own positions and but rather it should evolve in mutual respect between Christ’s disciples and their brothers and sisters with other convictions.⁴⁵ In this way there can be a genuine encounter between the Word of Life and European cultures.”⁴⁶ Evangelization is not just addressed to individual a but to cultures as well. The evangelization of a culture implies the “inculturation” of the Gospel. In the new cultural situation prevailing in Europe this commitment characterizes not just the modern situation but the so-called post-modern as well. It implies a challenge to which we must respond to the best of our ability. To accomplish this we need the contribution of men and women of culture and of theologians who are in harmony with the church.”⁴⁷

2.2.2.3. Liturgy: celebrating the faith

Every culture has its own language, symbols, traditions, ways of living and of celebrating... It is not possible to do without these things. Every faith comes clad in the dress of a particular culture. When people of a certain culture accept and celebrate the Christian faith it is important that they be allowed to use their own language, symbols, traditions and ways of celebrating ... as long as they are in harmony with the Gospel and that they are enriched with new Christian significance. This must be done with respect for the nature of the liturgy and the requirements of universality.

See “IV Instruction on the Inculturation of the Roman Liturgy.”⁴⁸

Questions for group discussion

20. Faith/Belief. What rites do people practice today? Are they well regarded? Can they fit in with the Christian faith?

21. Baptism/Confirmation. Are there rites of initiation in your local culture? What significance would water, light (tire), a garment (white) have in your local culture?

22. Eucharist. What significance do the table, the offering, the Sacred Word ... have in your

⁴³ Cf. JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Redemptoris Missio* (December 7, 1990), n. 67; EV 12/678f.

⁴⁴ JOHN PAUL II, Post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Pastores Dabo Vobis* (March 25, 1992) n. 55.

⁴⁵ Cf. JOHN PAUL II, Apostolic Exhortation, *Christifideles laici* (December 30, 1988) n. 3: EV 11/1616ff.

⁴⁶ JOHN PAUL II, Apostolic Exhortation, *Christifideles laici* (December 30, 1988) n. 5: EV 11/1624ff.

⁴⁷ SYNOD OF EUROPEAN BISHOPS (COETUS SPECIALIS PRO EUROPA), Document *Tertio Millennio iam* (December 13, 1991), n. 3.

⁴⁸ CONGREGATION FOR DIVINE WORSHIP AND THE DISCIPLINE OF THE SACRAMENTS, *The Roman Liturgy and Inculturation. IV Instruction for the Correct Application of the Conciliar Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* (nn. 37-40) (January 25, 1994: II Regno, Document 9 (1994) pp. 262-270.

local culture?

23. Reconciliation. Is there a consciousness of the existence of personal and community sin in your local culture? Are there rites of purification, expiation or reconciliation in your local culture?

24. Matrimony. How is marriage perceived and celebrated in the home, in the family - in your local culture? Is there anything to be included in the marriage liturgy?

25. Anointing of the Sick. How are sickness and suffering perceived in your local culture? What attention is paid to the sick?

26. Orders. How is the exclusive gift of God - a life in Holy Orders - perceived and celebrated in your culture? Is it something of value or not?

27. Religious Profession. How is the exclusive gift of God – a life in a religious order – perceived and celebrated in your culture? Is it something of value or not?

28. Liturgy of the Hours. How is personal and community prayer lived in your culture? Is there a sense of community/family in the church praying?

More creative liturgy

“Certain responses suggest a revision of the classical forms of the Saturday evening Sunday morning liturgies - their current form is frequently remote from everyday life. The Word of God must be re-discovered as an important element in building a community. Attention to “reception” must be equal to that paid to “conservation.” There must be room for joyous creativity, trust in Christian inspiration and the ability “to be creative” as well as a greater sense of community celebration. Here too inculturation is important (with due respect for the nature of the liturgy and the requirements of universality).

Many responses insisted on the need for a Biblical dimension to preaching, the need to speak the language of the people, the need for adequate preparation for preaching and celebrating the liturgy. If possible the liturgy should be prepared by a group with lay participation. Preaching should not be theoretical, intellectual and moralizing; it presupposes that the preacher’s life is a witness to his preaching. The community’s preaching, worship and prayer need not be confined to the traditional places for worship.”⁴⁹

2.2.2.4. Family and the Ecclesial Base Community

No man is an island. Each of us needs a family, a community (social) in which to grow and learn how to live as a human person. This holds true for Christian life as well. The disciple of Christ - with baptism - is re-born into a new “family” which transcends the bonds of blood (cf. Lk 8,19-21; 9,57-62; 11,27-28; 18,28- 30); this new family is the Church, and above all the local Church. If all the members of a family are Christian and are animated by the sole

⁴⁹ SECRETARIAT FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY - SECRETARIAT FOR NON-CHRISTIANS - SECRETARIAT FOR NON-BELIEVERS - PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR CULTURE, Preliminary Report *The Phenomenon of Sects and New Religious Movements* (May 7, 1986) n. 3.5: EV 10/412-413,

faith in Christ one can speak of a “home Church.”

The local ecclesial community in a particular culture is the primary subject for inculturation. It is there that one lives the daily experience of faith and charity, the Gospel journey with others: warmth, acceptance, understanding, reconciliation, fellowship ... In the long and patient task of inculturation it is important to seek the assistance not just of experts and evangelizers but of the whole People of God. “It is well known that the people reflect that genuine sense of the faith of which one must never lose sight.”⁵⁰ It is in the bosom of the local church that one can discern and bring to maturity every stage of inculturation: reviewing social life (social ethics, values, work, education ...), customs (attitudes, habits, marriages ...), popular wisdom (proverbs, sayings, folk healing, secrets, superstitions...)...

N.B. The incarnation of the Gospel into a particular culture (inculturation) is a slow process. To be successful it must be done in depth: the Gospel must touch real life in all its dimensions.

Questions for group discussion

29. How can one facilitate community discernment in the local church in the various stages of a slow and gradual inculturation?

To evangelize is an ecclesial act

“Evangelizing is never an individual or isolated act for anyone, it is profoundly ecclesial.”⁵¹

Faithfulness to the Gospel and to the Church

“Do not lose the sense of communion with the parochial, diocesan, regional or universal church.”⁵²

2.3. MARIAN DEVOTION

“Faithful to our vocation of service we seek to understand the significance of the Virgin Mary for the modern world.” (*Const.* 7)

See: *General Chapter 1995*, nn. 44-59.⁵³

Mary, the model of the Church, is also a model for the evangelization of culture. She was overshadowed by the Holy Spirit at Nazareth so that the Word might become flesh in her. She was present with the apostles (cf. *Acts* 1, 14) when the Spirit of the Risen Jesus penetrated and

⁵⁰ JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Redemptoris Missio* (December 7, 1990), n. 54.

⁵¹ PAUL VI, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (December 8, 1975), n.60: EV 5/1669.

⁵² PONTIFICAL COUNCIL FOR INTER-RELIGIOUS DIALOGUE AND THE CONGREGATION FOR THE EVANGELIZATION OF THE PEOPLES, Instruction *Dialogue and Proclamation: Reflections and Orientations* (May 19, 1991) n. 70: AAS 84 (1992) 414-446; errata-corrige: AAS 84 (1992) 1263.

⁵³ Cf. *Capitolo Generale elettivo 1999. I Documentazione preparatoria (Ia parte)*, I Servi per la nuova Evangelizzazione alle soglie del Duemila: linee di ispirazione, in : *Acta OSM* 60 (1995) pp. 514-517.

transformed people of different cultures.

It is important that we use the two words, *sympathy* and *prophecy*, when we speak about Mary in local Christian faith. *Sympathy*, if we are to discover and revere the figure of Mary that is closest to the every-day life of the people; *prophecy*, if we are to give a complete picture of Mary.

Questions for group discussion

Sympathy

30. What Gospel image of Mary is closest to the every-day life of people in society?

In the light of this image choose one of the Order's devotions - or create a new one - that can serve as a prayer support. Mary is our companion, a pilgrim, on the road of faith. For example:

- In moments of great suffering - Mary next to the Cross; pray the Rosary of Our Lady of Sorrows, the *Via Matris* ...
- In a situation where young people are searching for God, for a meaning to life, for their own vocation - Mary at the Annunciation; pray the *Angelus*, the *Akathistos* Hymn...

Prophecy

31. Present a more comprehensive Gospel image of Mary, Mother and Disciple of Her Son; use other of the Order's devotions appropriate to the season:

- The Annunciation (*Lk* 1, 26-38): the *Angelus*, Litanies of Servite Novices
- The Visitation (*Lk* 1, 39-56)
- *The Magnificat*, song of liberation (*Lk* 1, 46-55)
- Giving Birth (*Mt* 1, 18-25; 2, 1-12; *Lk* 2, 1-20)
- Presentation in the Temple and the prophecy of Simeon (*Lk* 2, 21-40)
- The Flight into Egypt (*Mt* 2, 13-23)
- The anxious search for Jesus lost in the Temple (*Lk* 1, 41-52)
- The Wedding Feast of Cana, Mary's command "Do what He tells you" (*Jn* 2, 5)
- Following Jesus: she is a disciple among disciples (*Jn* 2, 11-12; 19, 25-27)
- The discovery of Jesus' new family - His disciples (*Mk* 3, 31-35)
- The Cross - she becomes the mother of faithful disciples (*Jn* 19, 25-27)
- Pentecost (*Acts* 1, 12-14; 2, 1-13)
- The Assumption (*Rv* 12, 5)

Let us consider four aspects of Mary in the framework of inculturation: virgin, woman, wife, mother.

2.3.1. Virgin

In some cultures virginity has great value. It is a sign of dedication, consecration, preparation... In recent societies (where women are exploited as if they were objects) virginity is not held in high regard.

The girl/woman virgin in every culture can look to Mary and find in her a stimulus to live out their faith and their own life. Mary responded to the angel Gabriel: “How will this be possible since I do not know man?” (*Lk* 1, 24). In the context of Hebrew culture, Mary’s virginity is a “manifestation of the fact that the Incarnation is entirely God’s initiative.”⁵⁴ A human being cannot pretend to be God and save himself (cf. *Gn* 3,1-19); Only God - for Whom nothing is impossible (LA: 1,37), can take the initiative and save mankind. The virginity of Mary “is a sign of her faith ... of her total abandonment to the Will of God.”⁵⁵ “Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done unto me according to thy word.” (LK I, 38). In this way, the virgin Mary is a model of life for the disciples of Christ, and especially for those who choose to dedicate themselves radically to God: Servants of Mary (cf. *Const.* 144), sisters, brothers, priests ...

Questions for group discussion

32. How are girls or unmarried women viewed in our families and local society?

33. *Lectio divina:* *Gn* 18,10-14; 21,1-2 (Sara, old and sterile, becomes the mother of Jacob); *I Sam* 1, 1-28 (Anna, sterile, becomes the mother of Samuel); *Ruth* 1-4 (Ruth, a widow, is the mother of Obed, the grandfather of David); *Judges* 13, 1-25 (the sterile wife of Manoach becomes the mother of Samson); *Lk* 1, 5-25. 39-45. 56-66 (Elizabeth, old and sterile, becomes the mother of John the Baptist). Against every human expectation, God choose the weak the powerless (cf. *I Cor* 1, 27) to demonstrate his faithfulness to the promise of salvation. Other biblical passages: *Mt* 1, 18-25; 25, 1-13; *Lk* 1, 26-38.

2.3.2. Woman

Throughout history woman has been known for certain qualities: tenderness, courtesy, patience, charm and perseverance. In many cultures she plays a definite and respected role. However she has often been dominated and burdened with unflattering descriptions: “the

⁵⁴ *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (1992) n. 503.

⁵⁵ *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (1992), n. 506. It is important to understand biblical virginity in relation to two other states: adultery and widowhood. For example, in the Bible, the Daughter of Zion “the spouse of God” is called a virgin when she is rigorously faithful to the one God of the Covenant and does not compromise her self with idols (cf. *Je* 18,13; 31,4,21; *Is* 62,5;...). She is called an adultress when she is unfaithful and abandons God for other gods (cf. *Ho* 2,4; *Is* 57, 3; ...). She is called a widow when God deserts her land, when He abandons His temple (cf. *Lam* 1,1; ...). We can synthesize this Biblical symbolism with the following outline:

<i>symbol</i>	VIRGINITY	ADULTERY	WIDOWHOOD
<i>status</i>	with God	against God	without God
<i>attitude</i>	faithful - fidelity	idolatry	abandon
<i>consequence</i>	fruitfulness	unfruitfulness	sterile
<i>result</i>	life	death	nothing

Cf. CHARLIER, Jean-Pierre, *Marie, Vierge et Mère* = Horizons de la foi 4 (Maison Saint Dominique, Bruxelles 1985)p.27.

weaker sex,” “impure”⁵⁶ “without a soul,”⁵⁷ “inappropriate”⁵⁸ “unfit for study,”⁵⁹ “without civil⁶⁰ or political⁶¹ identity” ... Her struggle for liberation and emancipation has been and continues to be long and difficult. One of the hazards of this struggle for equality in various cultures (feminism) is the risk of losing her femininity, of becoming hard and masculine.

In every culture women can look to Mary as an encouragement to live out their faith and their own lives. Mary was the woman chosen by God, “full of grace” (*Lk* 1, 28), “blessed amongst women” (*Lk* 1, 42), called to be the mother of the Savior Jesus, the new Adam. She is the new woman (cf. *Gn* 2, 22-23; *Jn* 2, 4; 19, 26) who is faithful to God; she is the model and mother of Christ’s disciples (cf. *Jn* 2, 12; 19, 26-27).

The Evangelizer

During the very first Evangelization women were the first to see the Risen Lord (cf. *Mt* 28, 9-10; *Jn* 20, 11-18), Mary Magdalene and the pious women - probably the mother of Jesus among them⁶² - were the first to proclaim the resurrection of Christ to His apostles (cf. *Lk* 24, 9-10).⁶³ Woman certainly has a role to play in the new evangelization.

Questions for group discussion

34. What is the image of woman in our family and local society?

35. *Lectio Divina:* *Pr* 31, 10-31 (the ideal woman); *Mt* 26, 6-13; 28, 1-10; *Lk* 7, 36-50; 8, 1-3, 40-56; 10, 38-42; 13, 10-17; 18, 1-8; 21, 1-4; 24, 1-11; *Jn* 4, 1-42. What is the attitude of the Lord (Jesus) towards such a woman?

Servites and the Woman

“We are convinced that by living the values Mary as woman represents we will enrich our humanity and develop within ourselves and within our culture that constitutive element found in every human being and in every authentic society - “femininity.”⁶⁴ Unfortunately this femininity has been suppressed for more than a thousand years by the thousand culture. If we do this, we will get closer to the women of today and to the problems that face them, especially to poor women and their just aspirations.”⁶⁵

⁵⁶ For example her menstruations and loss of blood were for centuries considered elements of impurity in Hebrew tradition (cf. *Lv* 12, 1-8; 15, 19-30).

⁵⁷ European mediaeval theologians discussed the question: did women have souls.

⁵⁸ Frequently boys are encouraged to continue their studies - girls need only know how to manage a household.

⁵⁹ Until the end of the XIXth century in both Europe and America whether or not women were capable of university studies was still being debated.

⁶⁰ In Hebrew tradition women did not possess a civil identity. They were not counted in a census. For example in Matthew’s account of the multiplication of loaves and fishes, the evangelist tells us that “... men were fed, without counting women and children” (*Mt* 14, 21; 15,38).

⁶¹ In Hebrew and many other traditions women were considered inferior to men and were to be silent in public (cf. 1 Co 14, 34-35). In many countries women were only allowed to cast a vote in political elections in the XXth century.

⁶² JOHN PAUL II, Audience ???(1997)???

⁶³ Cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (1992) n. 641.

⁶⁴ JOHN PAUL II, Apostolic Letter *Mulieris Dignitatem* (August 15, 1988), n. 29.

⁶⁵ *CG* 1995, n. 39: Acta OSM 61 (1996) p 134. See also: *CG* 1995, n. 56-57: Acta OSM 61 (1996) p. 140.

Man-Woman Equality

“Man is a single person, he is equally man and woman: both were created in the image and likeness of a personal God.”⁶⁶

2.3.3. Wife

Throughout history there have been so many happy marriages, wives who were esteemed and respected in so many different cultural milieux. Unfortunately there have at the same time been many unhappy marriages - especially in recent, changed social conditions. In our current society a wife is on the one hand valued, but on the other she often suffers physical and psychological abuse, abandonment...

A wife, in every culture, should look at Mary and find in her an encouragement to live out her own faith and her own life. Mary, “the Spouse of Joseph” (*Mt* 1, 18), remained faithful to her husband (cf. *Mt* 1,18-25). She shared with him life’s trials. Together in obedience to civil authority they went to Bethlehem for the census (cf. *Lk* 1,1-5). Together in obedience to the Law of God (cf. *Lv* 12,2-8; *Lk* 2,39) they brought their first-born for circumcision and presented him to the Lord (cf. *Ex* 13,2) and offered a sacrifice for purification. Protected by her husband, Mary fled into Egypt (cf. *Mt* 2,14-21) to save her son. Together they celebrated Passover every year making a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Together they sought their son Jesus in anguish (cf. *Lk* 1, 42-49), they were astonished by Him (cf. *Lk* 2, 33. 48); at times they didn’t understand Him (cf. *Lk* 2, 50), they taught Him at home (cf. *Lk* 1, 51), and they saw Him grow “in wisdom, age and grace.” (*Lk* 2, 52).

Questions for group discussion

36. What role does a wife play in your family and local society?

37. *Lectio Divina:* *Tb* 8, 4-9 (Tobit and Sara); *Sir* 26, 1-4 (the ideal wife); *Mt* 1, 18-25; *Lk* 1, 26-38; *Lk* 2, 41-52.

2.3.4. Mother

From the very beginning motherhood is a gift of God the Creator to women; fatherhood is His gift to men.

A Mother, in every culture, can look at Mary and find in her the courage to live out her own faith and her own life. She was a mother who gave birth while homeless (cf. *Lk* 2, 7); she was poor (cf. *Lk* 1, 24; *Lk* 12, 8) and an exile (cf. *Mt* 2, 13-23); a mother who reflected (cf. *Lk* 2, 19-51); she was a devout pilgrim (cf. *Lk* 2, 41); she was praised not so much for the fact of her divine motherhood (cf. *Lk* 1, 43) as for her compliance with the Word of God (cf. *Lk* 11, 27-28); she was a faithful disciple of Christ (cf. *Jn* 2, 11-12; 19, 25-27); she suffered the trial

⁶⁶ JOHN PAUL II, Apostolic Letter *Mulieris Dignitatem* (August 15, 1988), n. 6.

of His death (cf. *Jn* 19, 25-30; *Lk* 2, 34-35).

Mediatrix

In many cultures the mother is the protectress of her children. This is true of Mary as Mother of the Church and Help of Christians. She speaks for thirsting Israel (and mankind) at the wedding feast (alliance) of God (cf. *Jn* 2, 3) and commands the servants (of God) to obey Jesus: “Do what he tells you.” (*Jn* 2, 5).

Questions for group discussion

38. What role does a mother play in your family and in local society?

39. *Lectio divina:* *Mt* 15, 21-28; *Mk* 3, 31-35; 7, 24-30; *Lk* 2, 41-52; 4, 38-39; 7, 11-17; 8, 19-21; 11, 27-28; 23, 26-32; *Jn* 2, 1-12; 19, 25-27; *Acts* 1, 12-14. What good does such a mother do? What is the Lord’s attitude to such a mother?

Servites and the Mother of Christ

“The Seven first Fathers and Servites of those first generations considered the Virgin Mary, the Holy Mother of Christ as their “glorious Lady” to whose mercy they turned with confidence and to whose loving service they were “especially dedicated.” (...) “Lady and Mother” two words that are Constant in Servite spirituality. The first word indicates the transcendence of the Virgin, assumed into Heaven, seated next to the King of Glory (cf. *Ps* 24 [25], 8-10; *1 Cor* 2, 8; *Ps* 45 [46], 11-16); the second word points out her merciful closeness to men, her children, exiles – to use a term common at the time of the Seven Holy Fathers – who so need grace. For the Servants of Mary it was not difficult to turn to her and to carry out loving service to their lady with the filial devotion owed a mother.

Servants of Mary are accustomed to contemplating the Mother at the foot of her crucified Son’s cross; it is easy for them to understand the meaning of Jesus’ dying words to His beloved disciple “Behold your mother!” (*Jn* 19, 27). Contemporary exegesis, the Magisterium and tradition define those words as an expression of the Redeemer’s personal gift to each of His disciples; it is up to the disciple to accept this gift with gratitude and to introduce the Mother of Christ into the whole of his inner life, i.e. into his human and Christian ego. “And he took her unto himself.”⁶⁷

2.4. FORMATION IN THE SERVITE RELIGIOUS LIFE

“Throughout the Order, in both new and older foundations, we friars must immerse ourselves in local culture. This process begins with initial formation and continues one’s whole life long. We must undertake a systematic study of those elements which constitute a consecrated and specifically a Servite life, highlighting and taking advantage of those aspects which facilitate this process and discerning those which will be an obstacle.” [*General Chapter*

⁶⁷ 210th GENERAL CHAPTER OF THE ORDER OF SERVANTS OF MARY, *Letter Servi del Magnificat*. Il cantico della Vergine e la vita consacrata (Curia Generalizia O.S.M., Rome 1995), n. 31.

1995, n. 99]

2.4.1. Being aware of context

2.4.1.1. In a new foundation, in a young Church

“New foundations present the Order with the need for inculturation in its most pressing fashion, but this is a need in all foundations wherever they may be. Inculturation is a central element to which we must give all our attention.”⁶⁸

a) *Cultivate a theology of religious life within the local culture*

Although the Order can be found on all five continents, it is becoming ever more aware of the fact that it is marked by those local cultures in which it exists. Basic approaches to and general explanations of the theology of religious life are useful everywhere but are not enough and sometimes are inappropriate in a particular social context. They must be adapted. An indication of the vitality of the Order is its ability to develop a theology of religious life within a specific culture.

b) *Communicate Servite identity and charism*

The post-conciliar revision of our Constitutions went back to the Order’s origins, to re-discover its own identity and express it in new and modern language. One measure of the Order’s vitality and adaptability is how it communicates its identity, charism and mission in the countries where it is working and how successful it is in making certain aspects of our life visible.

e) *Treat members realistically and respectfully*

The Order must adopt a realistic attitude towards the cultures, languages, age, hopes, priorities and preferences of its members. It must show respect for members’ opinion and understanding - for their heritage, traditions and customs.

d) *Discernment and concerned formation*

It is important to cultivate vocations to the consecrated life: to use wisdom in discerning them; to provide capable guides; to exercise vigilance over their education.

2.4.1.2. In a modern, post-modern society

“Realizing that society is subject to rapid change we must be ready to engage in continuous dialogue between the eternal values of the consecrated life and particular aspects of the culture in which we live.” [*General Chapter 1995, n. 98*].

In the modern world we must cultivate

a) *the ability to share*, to create community,...

b) *service to the most vulnerable among whom we live* ... possibly give up less urgent work - schools, hospitals,... - things handled by the state ...

e) *liturgical prayer*: provide an encounter with God ...

⁶⁸ *Acts of the General Chapter. Mexico City, October 2-25, 1995. Inculturation, in: Acta OSM 61 (1996) p.200.*

d) *practice hospitality*: offer space for silence and recollection ...

2.4.1.3. In an environment hostile to Christianity

As individuals and as communities, Servites may experience what Jesus foretold to His disciples: “They will put their hands upon you and will persecute you; they will expel you from synagogues and put you in prison; they will drag you before kings and governors for the sake of my name.” (Lk 21,12). These words have certainly given rise to some hesitation when it comes to living in cultures that do not welcome the disciples of Christ.

There are no general formulas that fit all circumstances on how to live our life in a hostile environment. Situations are so diverse and complex that each one demands specific and unique adjustments. There are two general principles that can serve as a basis for the approach we adopt in a specific situation.

a) *Faithfulness*. Living and serving in hostile environments often makes religious even more faithful and proud in their commitment; in the words of Jesus “This will give you the chance to bear witness.” (Lk 21, 13). This faithfulness must be mature; it must realize that persecution and martyrdom are real possibilities. In times of adversity faithfulness demonstrates and proclaims an integrity of life that will impress our political or religious persecutors.

b) *Communication*. Living and serving in a hostile environment forces religious to search out every possible way of communicating with the cultural forces that oppose their presence and their work. This communication may have nothing to do with a clear and explicit presentation of the Gospel. The point of this communication may be to reveal the fundamental humanity religious share with those who do not welcome their efforts. It may well be that these serious and sincere efforts in faithfulness and communication are not met with openness and tolerance; they may end in persecution and martyrdom. This has happened in the past and is still happening today. Obviously the authorities of the Order must be prudent and must weigh carefully the advantages of having friars live in especially hostile environments. They must weigh every situation and do all that is possible to safeguard the lives of the friars.

2.4.2. Some Questions

2.4.2.1. Education and Formation

Individuals have already received formation and education in their families and in the social milieu from which they come. Their own life experiences and the teachers they have known have led them to develop certain attitudes and behavior that have their own motivations. One must know what these underlying motivations are, if one is to understand and educate effectively.

Questions for group discussion

40. What kind of education has an individual received in his family, in his social milieu? Understand his personal history ...

2.4.2.2. Common Life

Family life and social milieu determine the primary education of every person. It is the first place that one learns to live with others and to adopt certain attitudes and behavior with various other people.

Questions for group discussion

41. How has an individual lived and grown in his family and in his social milieu? What sort of relationships does he have with the members of his family or his peers?

2.4.2.3. The vow of chastity: to love God as one's only Love; to seek to love others without exception

The vow of chastity consists in voluntary and perpetual sexual continence for the sake of the Kingdom of God. If celibacy, virginity or marital fidelity (monogamy) are valued in a particular society, those values must be used to explain the vow of chastity.

For Servites, to make a vow of chastity means "to grow in the gift of oneself to Christ and to all mankind." (*Const.* 146).

In many cultures sexual education is often minimal and insufficient. Some part of religious formation must be dedicated to helping a young person understand his own sexuality and what is going on in his life. He must learn to express his feelings - not suppress them - he must learn how to behave with members of the opposite sex and not to avoid them. His older brothers should provide him with good examples and instill confidence in him. This is how he will learn to make his vow of consecrated chastity a personal and a free choice.

Question for group discussion

42. How does the individual see and live out his sexuality and emotional life in the family and in his social milieu?

43. Are matrimony, virginity and celibacy values? If so, how are they lived out?

44. Does the fact of offering one's life to God have any significance in your world?

“Chastity represents an eminently personal commitment; it also involves a cultural effort because “the perfection of a human person and the development of his society” are “interdependent”⁶⁹ Chastity presupposes a respect for the rights of the person, in particular that right to receive training and education that respect the moral and spiritual dimensions of human life.”⁷⁰

2.4.2.4. The vow of poverty: to love God as one’s only possession; the will to share

Nowadays the vow of poverty is controversial. In underdeveloped countries entering religious life affords one the use of many possessions that may otherwise be unavailable. In industrialized societies, entering religious life no longer implies embracing a more frugal life - one finds the same comfortable life sometime even more comfortable...

In the Servite and Christian tradition, the vow of poverty means, “to live free from self-centered attachment to material things” (*Const.* 147)⁷¹ like Christ. And like the first Christians (cf. *Acts* 2, 42f; 4, 32f; 5, 12), Servites claim nothing as their own but hold all things in common.⁷²

Questions for group discussion

45. What attitude to wealth and possessions exists in the family or social milieu of the individual?

2.4.2.5. The vow of obedience: loving God is the only “Way”; to want to do His Will

To understand the vow of obedience in any given culture it is important to know how authority is perceived and exercised in that society.

For Servites, the vow of obedience means imitating Christ in doing the will of the Father as it appears in the discernment, judgment and decisions of authority (cf. *Const.* 148; 40).

⁶⁹ VATICAN COUNCIL II, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes* on the Church in the Modern World (December?, 1965), n. 25.

⁷⁰ *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (1992), n. 2344.

⁷¹ Servants of Mary follow the tradition of the mendicant orders; in their profession formula they do not use the word “poverty” but rather the expression “with nothing of their own.”

⁷² Cf. *Rule of St. Augustine*, n. 4.

Questions for group discussion

46. How are decisions made in one's family and society? How does the individual live out his relationship to authority? Is dialogue possible?

III INCULTURATION PRINCIPLES AND APPLICATIONS

3.1. SOME ELEMENTARY PREMISES

- 3.1.1. Culture: an historical and collective process
- 3.1.2. Two levels of culture: symbols and values
- 3.1.3. Two areas of culture: modern and popular

3.2. THEOLOGICAL PRINCIPLES AND METHODOLOGICAL APPLICATION

3.2.1. The “identity” of the Faith

3.2.1.1. Principle

3.2.1.2. Application

- 01. Keep identity, unity of the Faith firm
- 02. Basic respect for Faith’s diverse cultural expressions and how they all fit together

3.2.2. The “incarnation” of the Witness of the Faith

3.2.2.1. Principle

3.2.2.2. Application

- 03. Cultural *kenosis* - or dying to oneself
- 04. Love other people’s culture
- 05. Become one of the people
- 06. Gather seeds of the Word (*semina Verbi*) in modern or popular culture

3.2.3. The “Critique of the Cross”

3.2.3.1. Principle

3.2.3.2. Application

- 07. The need for “cultural prophecy” - to know how to challenge culture
- 08. Pastoral understanding - practicing patience

3.2.4. The “Paschal Fullness”

3.2.4.1. Principle

3.2.4.2. Application

- 09. To cultivate the seeds of the Word (*semina Verbi*)
- 10. To universalize possible forms of inculturation

3.2.5. “Reciprocity”

3.2.5.1. Principle

3.2.5.2. Application

- 11. The courage for confrontation: to dare face a confrontation between faith and culture
- 12. To recognize the sovereignty of faith That they might be holy ...

3.1. SOME ELEMENTARY PREMISES

3.1.1. Culture: an historical and collective process

Culture is not purely the affair of individuals or of closed groups - unless those groups have significant social repercussions.

This means that the subjects of culture are collectives: classes, peoples, etc. They are at the same time individuals and groups but only insofar as they are linked to collective processes.

For this reason culture is not an entity, not a static system, but rather an *historical* process. Its rhythm is composed of long periods of time (centuries). For this reason cultural work is slow and gradual: *translation* (a missionary Church takes root in a new cultural environment); *assimilation* (the Church becomes a part of the local culture); *transformation* (through dialogue the local Church transforms this culture into an authentic Christian culture). “Cultural revolutions” are long, drawn-out processes. Usually a culture is not destroyed but rather transformed.

One Rule Only: never the one without the other: never Christ without the culture, never the culture without Christ.

3.1.2. Two levels of culture: symbols and values

Symbols constitute the first level on which a culture operates. Culture is a system of things (behavior, language, habits, customs, technology,...) it is a complex of symbols (art, dance, music ...).

On this level inculturation takes place in the liturgy, catechesis and theology.

On a deeper level we have culture composed of values (ideas, meanings, beliefs, ..). Paul VI spoke of the “roots” of a culture.⁷³

It is on this level that we find all the ethics and existential demands of the Gospel that frequently require a profound conversion on the part of the culture: faith in Christ, mercy, love of one’s enemy, preference for the poor, justice, etc.

It is precisely on this deeper level of culture that one finds the need for liberation as an expression of social justice. Inculturation and liberation are not in opposition, they are complementary; they are two mutually involved dimensions.

Essentially, the slow process of inculturation establishes a continuous dialogue between Christ and the culture. Jesus asks the culture “And you, who do you say that I am?” (*Mt* 16, 15). The culture asks Jesus “Lord, what do You want me to do?” (*Acts* 22, 10).

3.1.3. Two areas of culture: modern and popular

⁷³ Cf. PAUL VI, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (December 8, 1975), nn. 19-20.

When we speak of culture it is helpful to distinguish two areas (spheres) of cultural expression: the global-modern (including scientific culture and mass culture) and the local-popular (traditional, tribal).

The relationship between these two spheres is complicated, even dialectical: at times they are in opposition and at other times they are complementary.

When we speak of culture we are thinking of both modern culture (a “transculture” that pervades all cultures) and popular, local, traditional culture.

3.2. THEOLOGICAL PRINCIPLES AND METHODOLOGICAL APPLICATIONS

3.2.1. The “identity” of the Faith

3.2.1.1. Principle

We could just as well speak of the “diversity” of the faith. Christian faith does not exist in a pure state, it is always clothed in a given culture. It is always “inculturated.”

At the same time Christian faith is not to be confused with any given culture. The faith **transcends** all cultures. It is “transcultural” in two meanings of the word: it pervades all cultures, but at the same time is beyond them.

For this reason it is important that we be clear on the distinction between the faith and cultural expressions of this faith,⁷⁴ between the Church of Christ and any particular church.

The identity of the faith is established by Christ - he is the “Face of the Mystery, He is the only “Name” (*Acts* 4, 12), He is the irreplaceable “foundation” (*1 Cor* 3, 11). This identity constitutes the basic *unity* of the different historical manifestations of Christianity.

In other words: there is a unity (of faith) and a plurality (of cultural expressions); there is a universality of content and a particularity of forms (theological, liturgical and canonical).

There are two principal errors one can commit at this level:

- a) cultural *imposition* (of a particular type of Church or Christianity);
- b) *loss of the identity* of faith (cultural relativism, syncretism).

3.2.1.2. Application

01. *Keep identity/unity of the Faith firm*

Inculturation does not suppress “parrhesia”, the conviction and courage of one’s own faith, rather it presupposes its existence. For this reason in confronting other cultures it is important

⁷⁴ Cf. VATICAN COUNCIL II, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes* on the Church in the Modern World (December 7, 1965), n. 62.

to maintain clear and strong the identity of the faith, the foundation of its essential unity [to maintain communion with the universal Church] and to remain faithful to Christ's Gospel. But one's faith convictions must always be accompanied by a humility that knows how to listen and to grow, and by meekness - as the saying goes "*fortiter in re, suaviter in modo.*"

02. *Basic respect for Faith's diverse cultural expressions and how they all fit together*

One can determine the effectiveness of a local community in sincere dialogue and exchange with other cultural expressions of faith by the degree of cultural diversity in the community itself.

3.2.2. The "Incarnation" of the Witness of the Faith

3.2.2.1. Principle

Just as Christ became flesh "under the law of Moses" that is in a specific culture, so the faith takes on flesh (through individuals or Christian communities) in specific cultures.

Faith is open to all "the riches of the nations" (*Rv* 21, 24). It treasures the seeds of the Word (*semina Verbi*)⁷⁵ to be found in all peoples. And it does this in virtue of its "Catholicity", its unity of faith in a diversity of cultural forms.⁷⁶

This principle corresponds to the first moment of the Christological Mystery: the Incarnation.

3.2.2.2. Application

03. *Cultural kenosis - or dying to oneself*

Since the faith in a pure state does not exist, if we hope to proclaim the faith to others we must know how to play down our own particular cultural form of the faith - and to the extent that is possible, get rid of it altogether.⁷⁷ This is especially true of preachers or missionaries "*ad gentes*" (foreign missions). In the process of inculturation, they are called upon in their own person to live the truth and reality of the Paschal Mystery in depth. "Unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single grain; but if it dies, it yields a rich harvest." (*Jn* 12, 24; cf. *Mt* 10, 8-10; 19, 16-22; *Gn* 12, 1). If one dies to oneself then a new life (another culture) is born and takes root in one ... This spirit of stripping oneself of one's own culture can only be born of a permanent conversion, that is born of Constant prayer.

04. *Love other people's culture*

⁷⁵ Cf. *Act* 17, 18; *Rm* 10,14; *I Tm* 2,7; *2 Tm* 1,11.

⁷⁶ Cf. VATICAN COUNCIL II, Dogmatic Constitutions *Lumen Gentium* on the Church (November 21, 1964) n. 13.

⁷⁷ Cf. JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Centesimus annus* (of the Encyclical "Rerum Novarum") (May 1, 1991) n. 50: "It is appropriate to recall that evangelization too plays a role in the culture of the various nations, sustaining culture in its progress toward the truth, and assisting in the work of its purification and enrichment. However, when a culture becomes inward-looking, and tries to perpetuate obsolete ways of living by rejecting any exchange or debate with regard to the truth about man, then it becomes sterile and is heading for decadence."

If one truly loves another, one loves his culture as well. Love, sympathy and positive appreciation are necessary attitudes if one hopes to achieve adequate inculturation. Only love can help to overcome the difficulties one encounters in approaching a foreign culture. Only love and respect for the other person allows us to overcome the sense of strangeness, and at times even shock which the cultural expressions of other people may provoke.

05. *Become one of the people*

“I made myself a Jew to the Jews ... made myself a subject to the Law to those who are the subjects of the Law” (*1 Cor 9, 20*) St. Paul says. Inculturation is a question of personality even before language. We must inculturate our very selves. More than something to study, culture is something one lives. Therefore to know a culture, to discern its values and anti-values one must live it, one must immerse oneself in the society that is the vehicle of this culture.

06. *Collect the seeds of the Word (semina Verbi) to be found in modern and popular cultures*

Discover the footsteps of the Spirit present in every people. Treasure those “rays of revelation” God has sent to a particular people.⁷⁸ These are “points of entry” for preaching the Gospel.

3.2.3. The “Critique of the Cross”

3.2.3.1. Principle

The faith may find itself in opposition to specific cultural manifestations. The faith can appear a scandal or a folly. Rupture or conversion may be necessary. This is the teaching we find in the First Epistle to the Corinthians. We can hear the contradictions Christian Faith occasioned in Hellenistic culture.

We must be careful not to “nullify the scandal of the Cross” (*Gal 5, 11*). This submits cultures to criticism, purification and to change. A genuine love of a culture does not remove our critical sense - it requires it.

This principle corresponds to the second moment of the Christological Mystery: the passion and death - the Cross.

All the same, the history of the missions teaches us that applying this principle is a very delicate operation. Not infrequently specific cultural forms or pastoral methods are imposed as ‘the scandal of the cross’ in spite of a given culture’s justified resistance. The “scandal” of the faith is inevitably marked by an absence of violence or any sort of imposition. The scandal of the faith produces martyrs, not executioners.

3.2.3.2. Application

⁷⁸ Cf. VATICAN COUNCIL II, Declaration *Nostra Aetate* on the Church’s Relations with Non-Christian Religions (October 28, 1965), n. 1-2.

07. *The need for “cultural prophecy” - to know how to challenge culture*

Just as there is “social prophecy” so too there is “cultural prophecy.” Although one must start with a fundamental attitude of sympathy and meekness, nonetheless one must be ready to affirm or denounce specific modern or popular cultural phenomena. This means one must, at times, speak out when it would be more opportune to remain silent (2 *Tm* 4,2).

08. *Pastoral understanding - practicing patience*

A pastor sometimes finds himself faced with cultural situations contrary to the demands of the faith (polygamy, vendetta as a question of honor, superstition, etc.) that may be deeply rooted in a people. In these cases one must exercise tolerance and pastoral patience. One cannot expect immediate changes -rather one must set people on the path to discovering Gospel values. In these cases one must apply the principle of Divine Condescendence - which should by no means degenerate into cooperating with evil. On this level it is a good thing to distinguish between the central demands of the Faith (on which one must be firm, but not rigid) and their application in specific cases (and here one can be more flexible). We see this in the way Jesus Himself behaved.

3.2.4. Paschal Fullness

3.2.4.1. Principle⁷⁹

Grace builds on nature and brings it to perfection (*sanat et perficit*); Christian faith does not just assimilate and purify everything positive it finds in a given culture, but it elevates it and brings it to the fullness of God. Faith, therefore, makes cultures flourish and bear fruit to their maximum potential.

Yet we must admit that this fullness is *relative*; every inculturation is only tending towards absolute fullness, that is, eschatological fullness.

Alongside the process of fullness, there is also the process of universalizing the cultural expressions of the faith. Every culture is like a dialect of a single language, the language of mankind. In its own way every culture reflects what is universally human. For this reason the riches of one culture can be exchanged with another - enriching all. One expression of universal values, even if the originated in Western Culture are human rights.

All of this corresponds to the third moment of the Christological Mystery: the *resurrection*. At this point we could also add *Pentecost* - the principle of spreading the faith through a diversity of languages.

⁷⁹ Cf. INTERNATIONAL THEOLOGICAL COMMISSION, Document *II cristianesimo e le religioni* (September 30, 1996) 117 n. : II Regno-doc. 3 (1997) pp. 75-89.

3.2.4.2. Application

09. To *cultivate the seeds of the Word* (semina Verbi)

Elements of truth, justice and beauty to be found in every culture are not just to be accepted and saved, but cultivated, developed and enriched by the fullness of Revelation.

10. To *universalize possible forms of inculturation*

Through inter-cultural exchanges the culturally particular is made more widely known and becomes the common good. This too is one of the Church's tasks.

3.2.5. Reciprocity

3.2.5.1. Principle

Faith-culture is not a one-way Street, the relationship goes in both directions.⁸⁰ These two terms (faith, culture) call to one another as Paul VI so aptly put it.⁸¹ The fathers of the Second Vatican Council spoke of a "vital exchange" between the Church and various cultures.⁸²

Culture, be it modern or popular, has a contribution to make to our faith. What sort of contribution is this?

We can use the same words with which we spoke of the relationship between faith and culture only reversing the direction. Culture can:

- enrich our faith with its own developments; it can give expression or symbolic body to our faith (incarnation);
- it can purify the historical accretions to our faith; it can show what is relative and at times mistaken (cross);
- it can complete our understanding of the faith; it can awaken dimensions of revelation that were unknown or forgotten (resurrection);

All of this means that the identity of the faith is not to be thought of as a static structure, a closed system of truths, but rather as a *dynamic* process. This identity is open, inclusive and self-perpetuating like every living reality (a seed or a tree in the Gospel parables). Christian identity is an identity of solidarity, hospitality and love - in short "catholic."

The theoretical and practical implications of Christian faith can be seen in history; the theology of the development of dogma teaches us this. (But here our terms refer more to the "mystery of faith" than to "dogmas of faith").

We know that the identity of the faith has its roots in the unfathomable mystery of God. Even when we say that Christian identity has its foundation in Christ- God we are giving only an indication and not all that is contained in the mystery of Christ. In his letter to the Ephesians

⁸⁰ Cf. JOHN PAUL II, *Lettera Autografa di Fondazione del Pontificio Consiglio della Cultura* (May 20, 1982): AAS 74 (1982) 683-688. Among other things the Pope says: "A faith which does not become a culture is a faith that has not been fully accepted, not completely thought out, not faithfully lived."

⁸¹ Cf. PAUL VI, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (December 8, 1975), n. 29.

⁸² Cf. VATICAN COUNCIL II, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes* on the Church in the Modern World (December 7, 1965), n. 44.

St. Paul tells us “the riches of the mystery of Christ” are “beyond all knowledge.” (*Ep* 3, 19). Thomas Aquinas, with his usual insight, is saying much the same thing when he declares that the radical, ultimate and decisive (“formal”) object of faith is not the Bible, the Church, the love of neighbor or even the man Jesus, but the Absolute Truth which is God Himself; all those other things are related to faith only insofar as they are related to the “First Truth.” (II-II, q. 1, a.1).

This is what justifies the principle (it is not merely a strategy) of dialogue between faith and other cultures and religions. We need only think of the vast reserves of religious understanding, ethical richness and human wisdom hidden in other religions - both the great religions and popular religiosity; this is also true of other philosophies and political or scientific world-views (*Weltanschauung*).

As is the case with the relationship between faith and reason, so too in the dialogue between faith and culture - faith is always the determining factor. The reason for this is that faith is by its nature transcendent and divine. Cultures are human creations; faith is a gift of the Spirit. Cultures are human words, faith is the Word of God. In the faith-culture exchange, primacy belongs to faith.

3.2.5.2. Application

11. *The courage of confrontation; to dare face a confrontation between faith and culture.*

Faith should not be afraid of comparison with cultures. It should rather open itself up humbly to whatever criticism may come from a particular culture. Since every faith is clothed in a particular culture it reveals itself more clearly when it comes face to face with other cultures and religions; it is only internally and through this sort of confrontation that one can detect the distinction between what is the eternal “substance” of faith and what are its transient “cultural expressions.”

12. *Recognize the sovereignty of faith*

It is not always easy to recognize the boundaries between the “substance” of the faith and its cultural accidents. As a rule of thumb one could say that any eventual contradictions between faith and culture should not be resolved at the expense of the faith but only to its advantage. This is true even if the contradiction remains unresolved.

Questions for group discussion

47. In the context of our community work what methodological applications seem most important? Exchange and discuss your opinions freely

That they might be holy ...

Inculturation is a road to holiness. When faith penetrates lives and communities through inculturation (which brings Christ to the center of one's existence) it reveals a road to holiness. When a Christian community is able to integrate the positive aspects of its own culture, inculturation allows the community to open itself up to the riches of Christian holiness and thus purifies its own culture and makes it more beautiful.

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APPENDIX

I INCULTURATION IN THE MODERN AND POST-MODERN WORLD

The Gospel is a word of grace and salvation addressed to peoples of the West, East, North and South. The following brief comments refer to a Western Cultural Milieu as seen through European eyes. They are neither exhaustive nor conclusive; they are simple fragments in a schematic and scholastic form: questions, answers, reflections and discussions. They are intended to provoke further reflection and discussion.

MODERNITY

“Modernity” is the cultural term the West uses to define itself. It is a complicated term that is, as we shall see, not patient of a single interpretation.

Genesis of Modernity

What gave birth to the “modern?” The crisis of Western Christianity and the political and philosophical conflict it provoked.

1. The religious fragmentation of 1500-1600 caused social disintegration, intolerance and wars of religion; it gave rise to the concept of the non-religious, lay state whose unifying center would be a constitution. This state would be free of religious influence - an influence that had caused division, violence and intolerance in the past.

2. The interminable conflict between reason and revelation was resolved in favor of reason. It was a long way from reason’s previous subordinate role: “*Philosophia ancilla theologiae.*” Reason constitutes man and enables him to fulfill his proper function as an autonomous subject in understanding the world and his role in it.

3. Modernity was freed from ecclesiastical supervision in politics, philosophy, law and science; it is a necessary bulwark in the face of a degenerate, divided, intolerant and dogmatic Christianity. It is only recently that the Church has recognized and confessed its fault and set out on a different path: ecumenism as an answer to its divisions; the lay character of the state as opposed to its previous confessionalism - religious or otherwise; the re-evaluation of Galileo and all that that implies.

The Shape of Modernity

The shapes, forms or expressions of modernity are two.

One is concerned with *the faith* itself and consists in the *secularization* of Christianity. The message and the values of Christianity as they are set out in the Bible are accepted, but cut off from their origin - the ineffable, divine THOU; cut off from their completed intelligibility - Jesus, the Master and the Lord; cut off from that strength that renders them lovable and doable - the Holy Spirit; and cut off from their ultimate goal - the Kingdom.

From this perspective modernity is a process of secularization of Christianity in anthropological, historical and ethical terms. It can be defined in synthesis as follows:

a) By removing as the principle of *transcendence*, the divine THOU and the Kingdom, the *Alpha* from which all proceeds and the *Omega* towards which all move. They are not denied - this is a case more of agnosticism than atheism - they are simply considered beyond the boundaries of consideration.

b) The new principle of transcendence is man and his history: the conscious - responsible - free - authentic - destined for happiness - finite - the INDIVIDUAL-. In short, the *ethical man* who bases his being and expectations on the clear “experience” of himself as such. It is a “given” based upon itself. It is a founding insight that needs no further explanation. That’s just the way it is. The modern is a conscious subject, clearly aware of his own limited nature and his ability to realize himself and his potential by assuming responsibility for man- animal-nature creatively and with free self-determination. He is concerned with his right to live and to happiness. It is in this that his happiness consists. In this way modernity is the *ethical translation* of Christianity in purely secular terms, with no reference to God or Church. Man is responsible for whatever decision he makes on how to exercise compassion and be there for others. This is his truth; it is revealed to him by the voice of his intelligent and sensitive conscience. This ethical truth that man perceives within himself is transcendent, it is his operative and critical reason. In parentheses, what else is a believer if not someone who perceives in this inner voice the echo of a Word coming from the Infinite. An experience that opens one up to an act of adoration.

e) It is important to emphasize how the concepts of individual-society and freedom-truth are basic to this vision of modernity. The subject is aware of himself; his freedom of thought, word and action terminate where the freedom of another begins; his freedom will not harm others. Charters of rights, social contracts and the distinction between public and private are all accepted. Reason is placed with will in the common forum.

POST-MODERNITY

Alongside this image of modernity which has not disappeared, a second, independent image - one might almost say its offspring - can be detected: post- modernity.

a) Post-modernity is a denial of organic visions of the world based on race (Nazism and Fascism) or based on utopianism (Marxism degenerating into socialism and science - illusory victories over poverty and death). This denial is born of disillusion and reaction against systems devoted to abstraction, to great ideas, great dreams, a great race. It is a rejection of idolatry, it favors “weak thought”, “small is beautiful” a taste for what is fragmentary and commonplace. It arises from the ruins and tragedy created by totalitarian systems and ideologies.

b) Post-modernity is a radical self-affirmation of the INDIVIDUAL, of the subject. It is distinct from modernity; some speak about the “monotheism of the INDIVIDUAL” or “the valueless lay character of the state.” It is an awareness of oneself as an individual called to express his own liberty through pure choice. Freedom is in the ability to choose anything one pleases. This is the value - the axiom - the truth. It is independent of any thing or rule; it

cannot be determined from outside.

The INDIVIDUAL is the arbitrary creator of meaning, goals, means and how to achieve them. One understands others as one understands oneself. This is the origin of pluralism and the equality of goals, meaning and means; this is the origin of the tolerance of fragmentation and diversity. One is quick to create “rules of the game” to head off inevitable conflict. This is the origin of “corporatism” a collection of particular, like interests forming groups and societies that eschew the sort of “solidarity” one would find in a “Social State”; that considers state intervention meddling and hypocrisy. For example, the distinction between the public and the private. If classical modernity was tolerant in accepting differences by distinguishing between the private and the public, this is not the case with post-modernity. Every difference-diversity has the right to be publicly approved, recognized and explained through the media. The sovereign individual demands this. A classical example of this is heterosexual and homosexual marriages. Both have equal dignity and rights.

c) Post-modernity can be defined as a grouping around a recognized and shared reality: the global market is the hub around which post-modern modernity revolves. Its truth and its center can be found in the individual, in the publicly held corporation and in the market. Post-modernity is a way of being and shaping a society in conflict, society as opposed to classical modernity, in which the individual replaces God and takes on the ethical obligations of being-with- and-for-others and the control of institutions. This concentration on the individual, in spite of the original intentions, has produced solitude on the one hand and special interest groups on the other. It has broken out into class warfare (socialism) and extreme nationalism (Nazism/Fascism). Post-modernism is one possible terminus for the long journey that began with the affirmation of the individual.

WHERE ARE WE IN THIS CRISIS?

A Christian must find a place to exist in this modern, post-modern dialectic. How can we live in this world?

a) We must accept the world as it is, without regret and without longing for the past. The Western Christian has been born “under this dispensation.” This is his natural habitat, his vital environment.

b) We must love the world as it is. God in His Son loved the world this way (*Jn* 3,16; *1 Jn* 4, 9-10). God, in His Son and through His followers continues to love modern and post-modern humankind. We should indulge in no “apocalyptic” flight from the “evil” (*1 Co* 5, 11b); ours should be the language of love, that makes us companions, we travel together without judgement or condemnation (*Jn* 3,17; *1 Co* 5,12-13) examining everything and keeping what is good (*1 Th* 5, 21). Our love should be seasoned with wisdom, grace, courtesy (*Co* 4, 5-6), mildness and humility (*Mt* 11, 29). This is the necessary “soil” lest our proclamation (*Acts* 4, 31) degenerate into arrogance.

c) We must not deprive the world of newness. The modern/post-modern man does not ask the disciples of the Lord for a culture which conforms to his mentality (*Rm* 12,2) but for a demonstration that it is truly possible to live a life of sunshine as children of the light. To be outsiders in the eyes of the world does not imply flight from the world, but rather to live in the world as citizens of heaven, in view of evangelical conversion which is God’s gift to the

world. The gift of creatures who conform to Christ (*Rm* 8, 29), icons of the Icon, of creatures who conform to the Trinity. God gives those who resemble His Son to today's man who searches for His image; God gives community as a sign of sharing in diversity to today's man who searches for different relationships. The language of love is translated into the language of being - it is apparent and intelligible to all (2 *Co* 3,1-3).

d) Language turns into action. To discover the body as the *locus* in which the passion and the compassion of God become concrete gestures in-with-through us. We extend our hearts and our hands freely and expect no return to those in need or joy: to friend and enemy, good and bad, just and unjust, believer and non-believer, Jew, Muslim, Christian, Buddhist, Hindu ..., white or black, man or woman, heterosexual or homosexual, north or south, east or west,... particularly attentive to the most vulnerable, the poor. The *language of the Gospel scandal*: to provide a voice for those who have no voice (cf. *Ecclesia in Africa* 70).

e) Finally, the language of song and expectation. To sing to our God (*Col* 3,16) and to expect Him (*Rv* 22,17; 1 *Co* 16,22) - new heavens and a new earth (*Rv* 21, 1; 2 *Pt* 3,13; *Js* 65,17). We must love the modern and post-modern world; we must keep alive the quest for meaning and the future; we must inform the world that it is human and beautiful to live and die with a passion and compassion for mankind that is a reflection and prolongation of a Love that has freely and gratuitously come among us.

f) The Christian makes his contribution to the world in crisis through the language of love - companionship, newness of creation, gesture and song. A provocation that is ever ready to "render account." (1 *Pt* 3,15). It goes beyond the language of flight, reconquest, moralism, fundamentalism or traditionalism that can only divide and condemn.

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MULTICULTURALISM

Remember that you believe in efficiency:

Your Christ is a Jew.

Your automobile is Japanese.

Your pizza is Neapolitan.

Your beer is German.

Your perfume is French.

Your democracy is Greek.

Your coffee is Brazilian.

Your watch is Swiss.

Your shirt is Indian.

Your radio is Korean.

Your vacations are Turkish, Tunisian, Moroccan.

Your numbers are Arab.

Your letters are Latin.

And ... you accuse your brother of being a FOREIGNER!

APPENDIX

II

IN PRACTICE ...

At this point each region or jurisdiction can describe the actual cultural situation of their area.

INDEX

PRESENTATION

I. INCULTURATION IN THE BIBLE

1.1. THE EXPERIENCE OF ISRAEL

- 1.1.1. Assimilation of their own Culture: awareness of being unique
- 1.1.2. Israel and the culture of idol worship
- 1.1.3. Israel and its encounter with another culture: the Septuagint

1.2. THEOLOGICAL-CHRISTOLOGICAL ASPECT

- 1.2.1. *Galatians* 4, 4-7: the Word is made flesh at a specific time, in a specific culture
- 1.2.2. *Matthew* 1, 1: The Word became flesh in the history of Israel
- 1.2.3. *John* 19, 19-20: *Luke* 3, 38: discover the “King of the Jews” in every language, in every time
- 1.2.4. *Philippians* 2, 6-8: the Son of the Most High became flesh in the lowest and most alien of conditions
- 1.2.5. Conclusions

1.3. ECCLESIOLOGICAL ASPECT

- 1.3.1. *Acts* 2, 1-12; *Genesis* 10, 1-32: to make oneself heard in a dominating language or in all languages?
- 1.3.2. *Acts* 15, 1-35: do not impose the burden of Hebrew culture on a pagan who believes in Christ
- 1.3.3. *Acts* 17, 16-34: start with what is right in local religious values
- 1.3.4. *I Corinthians*: promote the encounter of Christ’s Gospel with every culture

1.4. APOSTOLIC ASPECT

- 1.4.1. *I Corinthians* 9, 1-27: take on the culture of all
- 1.4.2. Synthesis
The Life of Christians

II. INCULTURATION IN THE CONTEXT OF EVANGELIZATION, MARIAN DEVOTION AND FORMATION IN THE SERVITE RELIGIOUS LIFE

2.1. INCULTURATION

- 2.1.1. The term “inculturation”
- 2.1.2. A twofold movement

2.2. EVANGELIZATION

- 2.2.1. The command to evangelize
 - 2.2.1.1. The obligation to preach the Gospel
 - 2.2.1.2. Why the Gospel seed bears fruit
 - 2.2.1.3. In today’s world: three situations
- 2.2.2. Some questions
 - 2.2.2.1. Language and means of expression
 - 2.2.2.2. Faith

- 2.2.2.3. Liturgy: celebrating the faith
- 2.2.2.4. Family and the ecclesial base community

2.3. MARIAN DEVOTION

- 2.3.1. Virgin
- 2.3.2. Woman
- 2.3.3. Wife
- 2.3.4. Mother

2.4. FORMATION IN THE SERVITE RELIGIOUS LIFE

- 2.4.1. Being aware of context
 - 2.4.1.1. In a new foundation, in a young Church
 - a) Cultivate a theology of religious life with the local culture
 - b) Communicate Servite identity and charism
 - c) Treat members realistically and respectfully
 - d) Be zealous in formation and discernment
 - 2.4.1.2. In a modern/post-modern society
 - a) the ability to share
 - b) service to the most vulnerable around us
 - c) liturgical prayer
 - d) practice hospitality
 - 2.4.1.3. In places hostile to Christianity
 - a) Faithfulness
 - b) Communication
- 2.4.2. Some questions
 - 2.4.2.1. Education and formation
 - 2.4.2.2. Common life
 - 2.4.2.3. The vow of chastity: love God as one's only love; love all without exception
 - 2.4.2.4. The vow of poverty: love God as one's only possession; desire to share
 - 2.4.2.5. The vow of obedience: love God as the one's only path; desire to do His Will

III. INCULTURATION PRINCIPLES AND APPLICATIONS

3.1. SOME ELEMENTARY PREMISES

- 3.1.1. Culture: an historical and collective process
- 3.1.2. Two levels of culture: symbols and values
- 3.1.3. Two areas of culture: modern and popular

3.2. THEOLOGICAL PRINCIPLES AND METHODOLOGICAL APPLICATION

- 3.2.1. The "identity" of the Faith
 - 3.2.1.1. Principle
 - 3.2.1.2. Application
 - 1. Keep identity, unity of the Faith firm
 - 2. Basic respect for Faith's diverse cultural expressions and how they all fit together
- 3.2.2. The "incarnation" of the Witness of the Faith
 - 3.2.2.1. Principle
 - 3.2.2.2. Application
 - 3. Cultural kenosis - or dying to oneself
 - 4. Love other people's culture

5. Become one of the people
6. Gather seeds of the Word (*semina Verbi*) in modern or popular culture
- 3.2.3. The “Critique of the Cross”
 - 3.2.3.1. Principle
 - 3.2.3.2. Application
 7. The need for “cultural prophecy” - to know how to challenge culture
 8. Pastoral understanding - practicing patience 59
- 3.2.4. The “Paschal Fullness”
 - 3.2.4.1. Principle
 - 3.2.4.2. Application
 9. To cultivate the seeds of the Word (*semina Verbi*)
 10. To universalize possible forms of inculturation
- 3.2.5. “Reciprocity”
 - 3.2.5.1. Principle
 - 3.2.5.2. Application
 11. The courage for confrontation: to dare face a confrontation between faith and culture
 12. To recognize the sovereignty of faith

That they might be holy ...

FOR FURTHER STUDY
Documents of the Church
 Studies

APPENDIX

I. INCULTURATION IN THE MODERN AND POST-MODERN WORLD MODERNITY

Genesis of Modernity

1. The religious fragmentation of 1500-1600
2. The interminable conflict between reason and revelation
3. Modernity was freed from ecclesiastical supervision

The Shape of Modernity: faith, secularization

- a) Substitution of the principle of transcendence
- b) Substitution in favor of man and his history
- e) Concepts of individual-society and freedom-truth remain firm

Post-Modernity

- a) A denial of organic visions of the world based on racism or utopianism
- b) A radical self-affirmation of the individual, the subject
- e) A grouping around a recognized and shared fact

Where do we stand in this crisis?

- a) Accept the world without regrets or nostalgia
- b) Love the world
- e) Do not deny the world something new
- d) Language which becomes gesture
- e) Language as song and expectation
- f) The Christian contributes to the resolution of this crisis through the language of love

Multiculturalism

II. IN PRACTICE

(to be filled out by each region)

INDEX