



Seminar on Interculturality and Inculturation

Order of the Pious Schools

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**Seminar
on Interculturality
and Inculturation**

Rome, February 2020

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Autor: Order of the Pious Schools



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www.icceciberaula.es

In charge of the team of translators: P. José Pascual Burgués

publicaciones@scolopi.net

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Introduction

Between February 3-6, 2020, the Order of the Pious Schools held a SEMINAR on the challenges of INTERCULTURALITY and INCULTURATION, two different but complementary dynamisms in the life and mission of religious institutions.

The seminar was convened by the General Congregation of the Order, seeking to create a space for reflection that could help in the process that we are living in the Pious Schools, characterized by a growing globalization of the charism, which is being placed and consolidated in diverse contexts and is being lived, increasingly more often, in deeply intercultural communities.

The publication in your hands includes the various materials that were worked on in the seminar, as well as the conclusions that were approved. In addition to this publication, the General Congregation has prepared a series of Ongoing Formation materials, aimed at reflection in Piarist communities and presences.

The seminar was configured from the SEEING-JUDGING-DOING scheme. We fully respect this in this publication. These are the materials of each of the phases of the work carried out:

Seeing

Path traveled by the Order and current reality

1. Historical notes on our processes of interculturality and inculturation. (Fr. José Pascual Burgués)
2. The current map of our reality: intercultural communities and dynamisms of inculturation (Fr. General)

Round-tables

3. Interculturality (Fr. Fernando Negro, Fr. Carles Gil and Fr. Miguel Artola)
4. Inculturation (Fr. Danilo Mutia and Fr. Eloí Chavez)

Specific experiences

5. Reflections from the experience of Austria (Fr. Jean de Dieu Tagne)
6. Asian expansion (Fr. Roberto Dalusung)
7. Experience in Senegal on inculturation (Bro. Ferran Sans)
8. The inculturation of the charism in the Andean context (Fr. Osvaldo Espinoza)

Judging

1. Cardinal Gianfranco Ravasi, Prefect of the Pontifical Council for Culture: “Fundamental approaches to be made by the Church and religious congregations in the face of the dynamism of interculturality. Main keys to take into account in order to address well the challenge of interculturality in Consecrated Life and in the Educational Mission.”
2. Fr. Tiziano Tosolini (Xaverian Missionary): “Interculturality and inculturation in the evangelizing task of the Church and of religious institutions”.
3. Fr. Pietro Trabucco (Former Superior General of the Missionaries of the Consolata): “Guidance to advance in the proper experience of interculturality in a religious Order”.
4. Various materials sent to participants in the seminar.

Doing*Special areas of reflection, proposed criteria*

1. Initial Formation.
2. Our educational ministry.

3. Expansion of the Order.
4. Community Life.

Order Projects

1. Going Forth.
2. The co-responsibility of the Piarist laity in this process.
3. Proposal of ideas for the 48th General Chapter.

With the publication of presentations and reflections, we want to give the whole of the Pious Schools all the ideas that were worked in this intense week, in order to favor not only information, but above all the shared personal reflection on these great challenges.

To all seminary participants, and to those who read these materials, our gratitude and best wishes.

In Rome, July 1, 2020
The General Congregation of the Pious Schools

Participants

1. Fr. Pedro Aguado
2. Fr. Francisco Anaya
3. Fr. Pierre Diatta
4. Fr. József Urbán
5. Fr. Juan Carlos Sevillano
6. Fr Javier Alonso
7. Fr Emmanuel Suarez
8. Fr. Fernando Negro
9. Fr Roberto Dalusung
10. Fr. Jean de Dieu Tagne
11. Bro. Ferran Sans
12. Fr. Carles Gil
13. Fr. Martin Sagna
14. Fr Samson Ehemba
15. Fr. José Pascual Burgués
16. Fr. Thomas Pallithazhathu
17. Fr. Osvaldo Espinoza
18. Fr. Joseph Kunnel
19. Fr. Eloí Chavez
20. Fr. Miguel Artola
21. Fr. Danilo Mutia
22. Fr. Nicholas Zunún
23. Fr. Julio Alberto Alvarez
24. Fr. Victor Gil
25. Fr. Stefano Locatelli

Seeing

Inculturation and interculturality in the history of the Pious Schools

“Nothing new under the sun”

*Fr. José Pascual BURGUÉS Sch. P.
Archivist and General Historian of the Order of the Pious
Schools.*

Someone might think that we are now inventing inculturation and interculturality in the Pious Schools. Nothing further from reality!

The first Piarist to be inculturated was Joseph Calasanz. Just think of that when he arrived in Italy, he spoke Catalan, Spanish and Latin correctly, but the Romanesque he found on the streets of the Eternal City would sound rather strange to his ears in the first months. He, leaving aside a few years spent in cities while doing his higher education, was accustomed to the rural environment of Peralta and the Catalan Pyrenees, and would need time to adapt to the ways of a city like Rome. It took five years not only to change his schemes (from canonry to school), but also to inculturate himself in that new environment for him. Many more years passed until he could write of himself that he was “di natione aragonesa ma di senso et costumi Romano”.

The Pious Schools are born in an “intercultural” context. Of the first 15 to receive the habit on March 25, 1617, 2 are Spanish, 5 Romans and 8 Tuscans (5 of them, from Luca). Although Calasanz founded the Italian provinces, and most of the natives stayed in their land,

he always acted with “spirit of Order”, and sent people from one province to another when he thought it was convenient. Cherubini, from Frascati, was sent to Naples, as did Berro who was from Liguria. And the same many others.

The Pious Schools spread without difficulty in Italy, especially in the Papal States and in the regions submitted to the Kingdom of Spain. All Italian states had a very similar cultural framework, even if the political situation was different. The real challenge was the first foundation in Central Europe, in Nikolsburg, Moravia. On 2 June 1631, after a two-month journey (physical and also cultural distance) the first eight Piarists arrived in Nikolsburg, among which there was a Spaniard, a Swiss, two Germans and the other Italians. The Piarists could speak with Cardinal Dietrichstein, who had called them, and with other authorities in Latin, a language they would also use to teach older boys in school; the Germans and the Swiss understood the official language of the empire, but it should not have served them much, because the language of the country was the Moravian language, a Slavic language of their own, which they would have to learn all in order to relate to normal people and to younger children. And they would also have to be inculturating in customs, food and weather. Cardinal Dietrichstein himself asked Calasanz for permission so that the Piarists in winter could warm up more, wearing socks, which they did not do in Rome.

And when they had grown accustomed to Moravia and Bohemia, they had to flee, in 1642, because of the Swedish invasion, to Poland. Pietro Casani had traveled to Warsaw with two companions, commissioned by Calasanz to go to found, at the request of the King of Poland Ladislaus IV, to Pomerania, in northern Poland. But this time, for sickness or other reasons, our Blessed backed out: perhaps Casani’s only weakness in his lifetime. Inculturation is sometimes very hard. Those who didn’t fail were the Germania fugitives. They met in Poland with other language, other customs. Providence had by then given the Order a Polish vocation, Father Casimiro Bogatka, who was able to act as a bridge. For Slavic Piarists, moreover, would not be very difficult to adapt to Poland. Another thing was when the foundations began on Hungarian territory, where the language was completely different, and customs, in part, too. As was the religious

situation: suddenly they were, in Podolín, as in Prievidza, Brezno and Svaty Jur, in a Protestant context, supported by a Catholic government that wanted to unify the religion of its domains. It was not uncommon for religious incidents to occur in which the Piarists would be involved, such as the sacrilege of Olas, the Protestant attack of Prievidza or the martyrdom of Frs. Tomás Sperat and Esteban Kinzel.

From Poland the first Piarists arrive in Hungary (to what is now Slovakia). According to the catalogue of 1698, in 1698 the hungarian's vice-province consisted of 24 religious: 2 Moravians, 6 Germans, 10 Slovaks, 2 Hungarians, 1 Polish, 1 Croatian and 2 Bohemians. Already province, according to the catalogue of 1727, Hungary had 58 religious: 1 Polish, 15 Germans, 1 Prussian, 19 Slavs, 1 Moravian, 2 Hungarians and 18 Hungarians-Slavs. It is clear the intercultural origin of the province...

The Sardinian and Neapolitan Piarists who arrived in Spain in 1677, sent by P. Pirroni, had not many problems; after all, they were subjects of the Crown of Spain, and they spoke Spanish. Although, over time, conflicts arose between Sardinians and Neapolitans, and they all returned to their country. Leaving, at the same time, a new conflict between Catalan and Aragonese Piarists, each in their land, without mixing...

Nor did the arrival of the Piarists in Cuba in 1857 constitute any difficulty; it was a Spanish colony, just like Puerto Rico, when the first Piarists arrived there in the late 19th century. The General Vicars of Spain Manuel Pérez and Francisco Baroja had put on their feet the project of the "generalicios", Piarists of various places in Spain expressly recruited for American expansion. It is a pity that the project only lasted from 1885 to 1904: on the death of Father Baroja, the 4 Spanish provincials "fell" on the loot to distribute it: both the foundations and the vocations generated. And, despite all relying on the Vicar General of Spain, when the first 6 Piarists arrived in Chile in 1885, the Superior Fr. Félix Sors of Catalonia sent the three Aragonese fathers to Yumbel, to take care of the parish, while he with two other Catalan fathers stayed in the city, Concepción, to teach in the diocesan seminary. As he did not like to be under the direction of the rector, he soon moved tab: he and his two companions passed to Yumbel, and the three Aragonese, to Concepción. It

was clear to him that Catalans and Aragonese could not work together; he had its own concept of interculturality.

Nor found greater difficulties the Piarists when they were expanding in other Latin American countries: Chile, Argentina, Mexico, Colombia, Nicaragua, Dominican Republic, Venezuela, and even Brazil. Relying on the efforts of the “mother” provinces.

More difficult was the foundation in the United States. On the one hand, there was the difficulty of the language, unpopular in those years among the European Piarists. On the other hand, the reluctance of the Archbishops of Los Angeles and New York to accept new religious foundations, especially from foreign congregations. The Hungarian and Polish Piarists had more luck in Buffalo, because they found the generous heart of Bishop O’Hara, who not only allowed them to settle and gave them work, but also, when he was transferred to Philadelphia as archbishop, again he offered them his diocese so that they could open the first school of Piarists in the United States, in Devon. The Piarists of this area also had the strong financial and moral support of the Hungarian refugees who abounded in the territory after the two world wars. Fr. Encuentra, responsible for the Aragonese Piarists in New York, who found so many difficulties in establishing a foundation in New York, was welcomed with open arms, instead, by the bishops of Ponce and San Juan in Puerto Rico. California’s Piarists made the choice to work with Hispanics who migrated to the USA.

We must not forget the interesting attempt to institute an international juniorate in San Pantaleo after buying back the house in 1923. Fr. Del Buono and Fr. Tomek supported it with all their might. It is true that they sought first of all that some Piarists would study in the Gregorian University, and then be teachers in our own juniorates (pushed, by the way, by the Holy See), but that experience proved very positive for the Order by its intercultural character. As the number of students increased, Fr. Tomek wanted to have an exclusively juniorate building in Rome, and after numerous difficulties the SIR was finally inaugurated in 1967. But they were already years of “skinny cows”, many young people left the Order and the house was closed in 1970.

Japan is a special case. The 1947 General Chapter had approved the proposal to establish Piarist presences in “infidel lands”, authentic “ad gentes” missions. Fr. Tomek found the goodwill of Vasconia Province, and the first missionaries were sent to that distant country. Those fathers had to make a strong inculturation effort. Some went there directly, and started studying Japanese from the beginning, while others did so through the USA, to first learn English, which they would later use to teach at the eventual school based in Japan. Within the difficulties of inculturating in such a different country, those early Piarists found some advantages: the country was under American control, which provided facilities for foreign missionaries to come and settle there; the Japanese people, sunk by the defeat of the recent war, were in crisis; many Japanese opened themselves to new values, seeing where the traditional ones had taken them. Some religious authorities believed that a mass conversion from Japan to the Christian religion would take place, and in fact in the early years baptisms were relatively abundant. Our brothers were inculturated admirably: just look at the history of all of them, including those still there, to understand it. And the same can be said of Filipinos who have come later: although their Asian identity brings them closer than Europeans to Japanese culture, the linguistic difficulties are the same, with the particularity that the Japanese look them over their shoulders, which they do not do with Europeans or Americans.

The next great inculturating effort made by the Piarists was when the first Catalans arrived in Senegal. Africa was a new continent for us, not only because of differences of all kinds, but because of the new challenges it represented for the Order. Not only did we have to think about the attention to the existing Catholic communities, and to the education of children, but also the challenge of the social promotion of people, in the best sense of “reform of the republic” that Calasanz spoke. And they certainly inculturated well, as did other Italian, Spanish and Polish Piarists who went to other African countries. And so did those who later arrived in new Asian countries.

I think it can be said that the first phase of Piarist inculturation is almost complete: in the short and medium term it does not seem that the European provinces will be able to send more religious

out of their nations (at least permanently), because of the long vocational crisis we are going through. We are now experiencing the beginning of a second phase of inculturation, in which it is the African and Asian Piarists who come to help the European and American provinces. No doubt they too must make a great effort to adapt to the context in which we live in our most technically developed nations, but with other types of profound deficiencies. Some get it, and very well; others face insurmountable difficulties and return to their countries; and there are those who get lost for the Pious Schools. But the same was happening, let us not forget, in cases where it was Europeans (or Americans) who went to Asian or African foundations. Let's say, by the way, that Fr. Perrando's dream is being fulfilled. Perrando, former General, wrote on October 2, 1870 to Father General C. Casanovas, noting that the weight of the Pious Schools was moving from Italy to Spain: "In the meantime, being a cosmopolitan in the Piarist world, I receive comfort in seeing the expansive power of the Pious Schools in Spain, and I pray that Saint Joseph would continue to have them under its patronage. It should also be said that our Patriarch particularly assists those of our brothers, if Fr Cabeza also succeeds in propagating the Calasancian Institute in the new world. The Piarists, apparently, follow the path of the sun. May the good God, after sunset in old Europe, have their noon in America. Walking to the west our brothers of the future could return to where they departed, amen."

And it is that, among other things, there is a psychological condition for achieving a successful inculturation. And that condition is the ability to put yourself in the shoes or on the skin of another, the different. When I know only one culture, in which I have been raised, and which I consider the most rational and superior to the others, I try to pass it on to others, who will possibly reject it, because they think the same of theirs. They may even pretend to adopt it, as long as it suits them. That is, then, the wrong way. When one is faced with a new culture, first of all, one has to open his eyes so that he can discover all that is good in it, without making comparisons with the goodness of ours. With the pure eyes of the little boy who discovers the world. And then he must open his heart, to accept it and make it his own flesh of. It is one thing to learn the language of another country, to get to know its history and its customs. It is

another thing to accept this new culture as a second chance that God gives me to be born again, and to discover so many wonders unknown before for me.

And there remains the third phase of our inculturation, perhaps the most difficult: and this is to welcome in our communities, in our lives, the brothers who come from another culture, and accept them as they are, without pretending to change them. With our eyes and hearts open, so that we can discover the wonderful gift that God gives us in the different brother. Only when the Piarists will reach that point, will the process of inculturation that began with our Holy Founder be completed.

The reality of Interculturality and Inculturation in the Pious Schools. Intercultural communities and inculturation dynamisms

*Fr. Pedro AGUADO Sch. P.
Superior General of the Order of the Pious Schools.*



A picture is worth a thousand words

Tokyo Community. Fr. Lorenzo Errandonea, in his hospital bed. He was sent to Japan in 1953. He has therefore been a missionary

in Japan for 67 years. He is accompanied by his community: Cao Tri (Vietnamese), Marino (Filipino, he studied theology in Japan), Adam (Polish), Raju (Indian) and Danilo (Filipino, who is present at our Seminar).

I highlight a few paragraphs of the salutatio I wrote about Japan.

In our Order there is a very deep experience, which has marked us decisively, and which has never ceased to be part of our reality, although today it coexists with other ways of functioning: the Piarists went to Japan not to return. They knew their missionary sending was forever. They left their house and province knowing they wouldn't come back. They left without knowing where they were going, what was going to become of them, what fruits their mission would bear. They were absolutely open to God's will, simply trusting in Him.

Having spoken to many of our elders, I can say that I am still moved by this profound experience of faith, I would say Abrahamic, to go out to "the land that I will show you"¹, of which Japan's Piarists are perhaps one of the most extraordinary examples.

But I would like to say that in the "new missionaries we have in Japan," the youngest Piarists of our Mission, I see the same experience and conviction: they want to continue in Japan. They feel sent by the Order to carry out the Piarist mission in the country, and are deeply committed to it.

I enjoy when I see them and I listen to them. You know why? Because they've become Japanese. Not only because they have learned the language, or assumed their customs, but because they love the people they serve. Even the gestures of the Japanese are part of the lives of our brothers. It may seem like a small thing, but I think it's a big deal. Our brothers live, express themselves and communicate like Japanese.

Gestures come from the depths of the person, and have meaning, intent, and form. And all three aspects are inseparable in every gesture. When one learns and assumes the gestures of another culture, one is incarnating himself into another re-

1 Gen 12, 1.

ality. It's like we're in another body. It's a total exit. I thank God for the "going forth mission" our brothers live in Japan. I am convinced that this is the only way to prepare a womb capable of giving birth to a new being that belongs to the new world to which we have gone, not the old one we have left behind. I know that this will happen at last in Japan, in the time and way in which God, the sole Master of the Mission, will dispose it.

The Gospel is embodied in every culture, to imbue it with the Good News². When our brethren learn the language, they assume gestures, they become Japanese, they do something very profound: they teach us that the Gospel is present in every culture, and that by becoming brothers of our brothers we receive from them a wonderful gift and we can offer them an extraordinary one: Jesus Christ, who is also Japanese.

Facts for our reflection

A global vision

We are 1400 religious, distributed in 21 demarcations, working in 41 different countries, and coming from 47 different countries.

We have 11 demarcations made up of more than one country (one to five), in which religious from different nations and cultures live together. And in Provinces of one country we have important experiences.

We have many communities made up of religious from different cultural and religious contexts, from which we can reflect in depth on the dynamisms of interculturality and inculturation.

We are increasingly "missionaries", without a doubt. We are preparing new missions and Piarist presences. And the "mobility" of the religious is growing outside the framework of the demarcation itself. These are key dynamisms for the two topics that interest us in this seminar. We must feel increasingly challenged by them.

2 PABLO VI. Exhortación apostólica "Evangelii Nuntiandi", nº 20, del 8 de diciembre de 1975.

We are working hard for Asian and African expansion, and we maintain the effort for Europe and America. We have a group working for Vocational Pastoral in new Asian countries and we perceive interest and concern in African provinces for new presences on the continent.

The very dynamics of the Piarist Laity introduce important aspects into the life of the Pious Schools, because it is clear that we open “new cultural stage” from this sharing between religious and laity.

We have some particularly significant demarcations (of course, many communities) in terms of the experience of the intercultural. I highlight Japan-Philippines, Austria, EPAO, PAC, USA-PR, CAC, Nazareth, Argentina, etc.

A more particular vision

Europe

Obviously, the realities of **Central Europe** are, for the moment, quite “uniform” (if you can use this word) culturally. There is no doubt that language influences this. But proposals for sending young Asians or Africans to study in Central European countries emerge. And the key is the desire for openness that the provinces have.

Austria. It is a very interesting reality, which we will have the opportunity to know more in depth. In a very particular European context, 12 religious from Catalonia, Central Africa and India, and one of Austrian descent, are working. It is an interesting example of the two dynamisms that occupy us in this seminar.

Italy. In this Province we also have religious from Cameroon, Poland and the Philippines. Like the rest of the Order, the Italian Province walks and will walk towards multiculturalism.

Spain. Interesting experience in the Aluche Juniorate, with young people from Spain, Italy, Indonesia and Timor Leste.

America

American reality is deeply multicultural. But we can highlight some interesting points of our Piarist reality, without the intention of completeness.

Nazaret, with presence in three countries and with Piarists of the urban world and the Andean world.

Bolivia-Brasil, with Bolivian presences in an Andean area and a tropical area, and in a province with Brazil and with the presence of religious from 9 different countries.

USA-PR, with 50 religious from 13 different countries.

Central America and Caribbean, in five different countries.

Argentina, with a beautiful formative and mission experience of Indian religious.

Asia

Asia is deeply open to the Order. From having only one presence in Japan, we have moved to six different countries (and very large and varied).

Let us recall what we said in 1997, in the first document “Pious Schools in Asia” adopted by the General Congregation: “Our attitude is one of respect and admiration for the ancient cultures and religious traditions of Asia, rich in spirituality and humanism. That is why the Mission in Asia goes through interreligious dialogue and Gospel inculturation. Nothing positive and beautiful about Christianity and cultures will be lost, if it proceeds in open dialogue and respect for freedom of proclamation. It must be responsible and respectful, recognizing any flash that indicates Truth and leads to a fraternal and friendly relationship of peoples and countries³”.

Let us also recall the decisions that the General Congregation made after the Asian Piarist Conference, held in Manila in December 2013.

- a) The proper, systematic and coordinated functioning of the Asian Demarcations, with the structures and dynamisms of a Demarcation.
- b) Real and progressive advance towards an Asian circumscription in the Order.

3 Congregación General. “Testigos de Jesús y discípulos de Calasanz en Asia”. Colección CUADERNOS, punto 67.

- c) The renewed – and expanded – momentum of pastoral on vocations in all the countries in which we already are present, and in the new ones we have just approved.
- d) Initial Formation, especially in some dimensions: the training of new trainers and those who already are, formators' teams, formation projects and personal accompaniment.
- e) The consolidation, in all respects, of the Manila International House and its formative connection with all the houses of the Order in Asia whose young people will then be sent to the said Seminar.
- f) The search for economic resources and the establishment of projects management team, in each demarcation.
- g) The systematic effort to expand our ministerial works, both in schools and other educational platforms.
- h) The care of people and the vocational consistency with which we live our Piarist being.
- i) To call for and boost the participation of other Provinces in this precious challenge of consolidation and growth in Asia. There are several ways to do this: with financial resources, with people who can dedicate some years of their lives to these new missions, assuming some new foundation, collaborating in the formation of religious youth, etc..

India, with religious from five different states (language, culture, traditions, context...).

Japan-Filipinas, with religious from ten different countries and promoting Pastoral on Vocations in new Asian countries.

Indonesia, with religious from three different countries.

Especially significant presence in **JAPAN**, of which we have already spoken, and the houses of formation of the Philippines, true crucibles of interculturality.

Africa

We have two Provinces located in different countries. But the cultural reality of each country is also profoundly diverse. We can set

an example, looking at two countries where our presence is particularly large, Senegal and Cameroon.

In **Cameroon** there are large cultural areas: the large northern Muslim majority, although with a large Christian population in the far north; the great south with a Christian majority, albeit a Muslim presence in certain towns and villages. The great south is composed of coastal, jungle and savannah villages, each village with cultural features in connection with its natural environment.

The Anglophon part is only in the great south and has a part of the savannah village (the Grassfields) and another part of the coast. The majority ethnic groups are: the Bansa in Kumbo, the Nkwen in Bamenda, the Bakweri in Buea etc. The French-speaking part is in the north and south. In the north there are the Peuls and foulbe (generally Muslim), the Mundan (generally Christians or local religions). In the south there are the Bamileke and the Bamoun; to the west of the country, the Fang - Beti to the far south (they are in Cameroon, Gabon and Equatorial Guinea) and the Bassa and Batanga. To the east are the Pygmées who more than the other peoples have preserved their system of life in communion with nature.

Most of the Piarists are from the great south, Anglophones and other French speakers. The Anglophone Piarists are mostly Bansa (from Kumbo). In the French-speaking part, most of the Piarists are from the Bamileke area. In the east there are very few. There are some from the Beti area; from the coastal area, few.

Senegal also has a deeply multicultural reality. Although it is a secular state, we can say that religion is present in the day-to-day life of Senegalese society: almost 100% of its inhabitants claim to belong to some religion among which Islam (mostly Suni), a religion practiced by 94% of the population. The Christian community represents 5% and the remaining 1% of the population belongs to some traditional African religion.

It is also an ethnically very diverse country. Although the official language is French, its residents speak many different languages.

- The wolof represents the largest ethnic group (43% of the population).
- Fula and the Toucouleur (24%)

- Serer (14.7%).
- Diola (4%).
- Mandinka (3%).
- Maurers, Bassari, Soninke and other communities.

For example, in our Dakar Juniorate (studies of Philosophy), the 31 young people belong to 23 different ethnic groups. The diversity of the “map” of the demarcation is very clear...

In addition to internal diversity, Senegal is currently hosting a large number of foreigners who promote this cultural diversity that characterizes the country. There are around 24,000 refugees and asylum seekers in Senegal, most of whom are from Mauritania. There are also about 50,000 Europeans, mostly French, as well as Lebanese and small groups of Moroccans and Mauritians. In urban areas, there are small groups of Vietnamese and a growing number of Chinese immigrant traders.

Our two African Provinces have an interesting composition. The PAC has religious from eight different countries (Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea, Democratic Republic of Congo, Gabon, Senegal, Nigeria, Spain and Poland). EPAO, also from eight different countries (Senegal, Ivory Coast, Benin, Togo, Congo-Brazzaville, Burkina, Catalonia and Democratic Republic of the Congo). And communities are a clear reflection of this reality.

Our presence in Mozambique is made up of religious from Senegal and Cameroon, and some will be formed in Brazil. And it belongs to the Emmaus Province, with the language being Portuguese and Macua.

Criteria and dynamisms that should be taken into account

Interculturality and inculturation are **different but complementary dynamisms**. We can say that they are the two sides of the same coin. Interculturality without inculturation provokes “foreigners”, and the second without the former tends to forget the processes from which it is produced and consolidated.

Interculturality is not the same as plurality. The finding of plurality is not sufficient. What is important are the dynamisms that make it possible for this diversity to become shared responses, in common life, in fraternal approaches, in witness to communion and dedication to the mission.

Inculturation is not simply about adapting to new realities, but about **loving them to transform them.** The Gospel is inculturated when it is placed in the cultural roots, to transform them, humanize them and open them to God.

Both need **training processes.** They are not “learned” spontaneously. Initial and Permanent Formation should take all this very seriously.

The **GOING FORTH project** seeks to offer a new perspective to the Order, online for interculturality, inculturation and missionary dynamism. We’ll have a chance to dig deeper into it.

Interculturality and inculturation must **permeate the life and mission of the Order.** They must reach the life of communities, the dynamisms of formation, spiritual approaches, the way of understanding and living the charism, etc. They must be thoroughly thought and incorporated in a smart, shared and Calasactian way to the life of the Pious Schools.

The **critical discernment** of what we do and live must also be something very clear between us, in order to avoid accepting dynamisms, styles and customs that can and must be changed, and which are even different - and maybe contrary - to what we want to live as Piarist religious. Attention to the priesthood style, to the dynamisms too influenced by belongings, to economic functioning, etc.

Inculturate the charism from intercultural communities. This can be a good synthesis of what we need to live and promote. I think it’s clear that we’re slowly entering that dynamic. But maybe we’re not thinking about it too much. That’s why we have this seminar.

Interculturality – Inculturation

Fundamental approaches

*Fr. Carles GIL Sch. P.
Provincial Assistant of the Province of West Africa.*

Introduction

- All the great reports and articles of international institutions mention the subject, it is spoken, it is in the environment.
 - *#Kebetu (It's the hashtag Senegalese use to express what it is common, what it's talked about, in Wolof).*
- But they don't develop it.
- We, the Pious Schools, the Church... but also GPE⁴ (capacities of XXI), UNESCO (rethinking education), Incheon 2030...
 - *Everyone mentions this talisman word.*
 - *Intercultural dialogue.*
 - *To foster interculturality.*

4 GPE (Global Partnership Education). <https://www.globalpartnership.org>
UNESCO Declaration 2015-2030, known as Incheon Declaration (South Korea): <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000245656>
Rethinking Education (2015): <https://unevoc.unesco.org/e-forum/RethinkingEducation.pdf>

- *But you would say they do it ingenuously, as a be it done, a fiat, what people use to call a wishful thinking⁵.*
- *Worse, they believe that simply by mentioning it they are going to change reality, as if it were Austin's performative⁶ language.*
- Concretely in the Pious School, interculturality and inculturation can be understood in three ways:
 - *The one affecting the Piarists, the Community, the Order.*
 - *The one that affects the mission: students, children, and young people with whom we work.*
 - *And more subtly, the one that affects the educational environment, the programs, pedagogy⁷.*

Conference plan

1. Context.
2. Conceptual framework.
 - Definition of Interculturality, Inculturation and Culture.
 - Starting point:
 - *Openness as a key.*
 - *Spirituality as Openness.*
 - Challenges:
 - *Incomplete process.*
 - *Deconstruct to build.*
 - *Implementation.*

5 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wishful_thinking

6 John L Austin: *How to Do Things with Words*.

7 Indeed, we could find ourselves in a healthy intercultural environment (with students from different cultures) with an educational program paid for by USAID and that is nothing inculturated, or make it a copy-paste of the French model.

3. Good Practices (the voice of experience):
 - The easy, enemy of the good.
 - Alterity.
 - *Teamwork.*
 - *The other one builds me.*
 - Tools (for Alterity): emotional dimension.
 - *Empathy.*
 - *Assertiveness.*
 - *Honesty.*
 - *Humility.*
 - Reconciliation, as system shutdown.
4. Difficulties (such as asymmetries):
5. Conclusions.

Context

World:

- 2007 UN: 50% population in cities⁸. 2018: 56%. Manel Castells⁹.
- IOM (International Organization for Migration).
 - *Immigration. Current policy.*
 - *Weather*¹⁰.
 - *20% immigration between 2000-2010!! (First major migratory wave in Spain, Catalonia).*
- The texts (including those sent for the Interculturality Seminar) written in **2000 do not serve us!!**

8 <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.RUR.TOTL.ZS>

9 <https://www.oxfordscholarship.com/view/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198716082.001.0001/acprof-9780198716082>

10 <https://news.un.org/en/story/2019/07/1043551>

Order (by their actions you will know them):

- 1980 – 2010 (30 years) are less different than between 2010-2020 (only 10)!! *The photos of the chronicles of our communities are a good thermometer that reflect our (lack of) interculturality.*
- To see the current importance of the topic, please use the example of the chronicle of the 1st group of Pious Schools going Forth¹¹:
 - *From 14 days of sessions, in 6 we talked about interculturality.*
 - *In Kikonka there was a monograph on the subject.*
 - *Also a round table (among those more animated).*
 - *The theme appears strongly in the conclusions¹².*
- Senegal: it has 27 languages recognized by the constitution (of them, 6 are encoded: they have their grammar).

West African Pius Schools, we have:

- *The whole of the Piarists have 7 passports (and they are of 30 different ethnic groups).*
- *4 countries (Senegal, Ivory Coast, France and Burkina Faso).*
- *French is spoken, and people learn Spanish (philosophy) and English (theology).*
- *The Daniel Brottier choir (from Uganda's Martyrs Parish) has just won the Oscar to the most intercultural chorale, for the diverse origin of his vocalists (17 countries) and a careful repertoire of songs from all over Africa.*
- *Notre Dame d'Afrique, my community.*

11 Written by Antonio Entrena (Emmaus) and Anil Amalose (India).

12 *Pious School Going Forth – Learning Organisation* (it is the assessment of training in Kikonka).

- *Out of 35 Piarists, we have 23 different ethnic groups and 30 mother languages.*

All this (and are just a few brief examples) leads us to say that we are in front of one:

Urgency and Need.

- It's not an option. It's a fact. *A being there..*
- It's a **reality**
 - *to manage*
 - *to manage: Initial Formation + Ongoing Formation.*

The **challenge** is that the **tempo** of reality (described above) is higher than the tempo of personal and organic adaptation. The context accelerates and these changes step on our heels, without *time* to **metabolize them**.

Interculturality – Multiculturalism – Inculturation – Culture

Some notes on the 4 concepts

I find it a powerful intuition to unite interculturality with inculturation

- The saying is frankly rightly timely: *to be the 2 sides of the same coin..* Because between the two there is the same reality; yet the faces are not seen, they are not spoken. They turn their backs.
- Often, the most intercultural community (or presences) are the least inculturated..
 - *One reason may be that intercultural communities, because of their mission, their raison d'être, have a higher rotation of religious. One example would be the so-called international communities.*
 - *Or they are detached from the context, from the ambience, given a very specific mission (studies, formative stage, very determined work...).*

- Inculturation, if one thing it asks, is time.

Interculturality is more powerful than multiculturalism.

In literature on the subject.

- The first (inter) proposes the interbreeding, the contagion... a new way of living.
- Taken to a higher degree, it has to be able to progress (sublimate) culture to embrace a new cultural context (**inter and inculturated**).

Therefore, it is essential to work more on the **framework** (the *worldview*) than a list of good practices and lived experiences (even if they are always useful) at best, or a rosary of anecdotes at worst (which I see that is what abounds...)¹³.

Culture

It's a highly polysemic word.

- Kultur / Bildung¹⁴.
- Customs of nations /peoples (folklore).
- Intangibles¹⁵.
- **Second matrix.**
 - *Natura (1st) + Culture (2nd).*
 - *Given the world-man misfit, this develops the culture to fit better. Culture is deployed through technique, language, religion, economy... interculturality.*
 - *Interculturality as the new culture that helps me adapt to the world (place, time) that I have to live.*

13 So it's not so much about making impossible menus for everyone to have their national dish once a week (it's a community, not a theme park, not a folk tour) or singing mass every day in a language... but especially of entering intercultural dynamics, and together, to create something new, that is **common place**.

14 German tradition. Aristocracy of thought.

15 From thousands of items: <https://hbsp.harvard.edu/product/R0402C-PDF-ENG?itemFindingMethod=Other>

- *Fittest (the most adapted), I re-adapt to the world.*

Starting point

Therefore, to weave the story about interculturality we will start from a premise, which is the one that will illuminate the whole talk.

- Interculturality is a subject more **of attitude** than **learning** or content
- It's more of a **how**, than a *what*.
- That is, it is more a question of **personal OPENING**, of character, of the profile of the person (of the religious, of the layman) than of culture learned.
- Culture that we can **learn** as opposed to the culture that makes us **change**. In this sense, it is very personal.
- The key to success is **more openness than culture**.

Openness also has a relation to spirituality¹⁶

- The more **Christocentric** we are, or simply, as off-**centered** we are, the furthest away is my *ego* from my axis, from my center of gravity, the easier interculturality will be.

Challenges

There is no definitive intercultural construction

- Process: slow, irreversible, and **necessarily incomplete**.
- It must be built every time, in every **place** and at every **moment**.
- It's *ad hoc*.
- I can't get used to it, I can't get tired.

16 More topics:
*Philosophy (theology) of the **Meeting***:
 Fertility.
 Incarnation.

- In each new community, at each new addition of a single Piarist to the community I have **to restart** interculturality.
- It has always been done like this, this is the custom of the-house.

Deconstructing to build

In this sense, we take advantage of two authors, whose thinking goes in this line:

- **Jacques Derrida**¹⁷ and his:
 - *Dis-construct.*
 - *Deconstruct.*
 - *Build.*
- **Joseph Schumpeter** and his *creative destruction*¹⁸.
 - *Deconstruction and de construct.*

All this **adapted to the Pious Schools:**

- Deconstruction:
 - *Calasanz.*
 - *Pious Schools.*
 - *What is the culture of the Pious Schools?*
 - *What belongs to interculturality and what does not?*
- We have to purify.
- What is false and what is authentic about our culture? And the real thing, let's get it back.

Implementation challenge: the “who” has always proved to be more important than the “what”.

- Plans and strategies do not work miracles, but with respect to **who operates them.**

17 <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/derrida/>

18 *Schöpferische Zerstörung* https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Creative_destruction

- Interculturality **depends on people**, rather than on method.
- If by the mere fact of writing things these became a reality, our communities would be the antechamber of paradise.
- How much literature we've written about community life, about leadership. And we're right there.
- The secret of sauce is not a good theory, not even a good slogan. The secret of good cuisine is never the recipe but the cook.
- Therefore the intercultural person is a person who has a musical ear, who knows how to create poetry, or who preaches well. We can all do it, but there are some who are more apt, naturally more gifted than others.
- This fact that seems a truism is capital at the moment of thinking intercultural dynamics.
- An intercultural community is not saved by its programming or formation, but by the "critical mass" of people open to interculturality.

Corollary

A community will succeed as an intercultural community, not because of its community programming, but by people with open vital convictions, with a predisposition to interculturality.

Good Practices / Needs

THE EASY is the enemy of the good:

- If it's being easy, it's that I'm not on the right track.
- To be able to see the traps that install us, which prevent us from leaving the comfort zone.
 - *Next to who do we sit, in community life?*
 - *Next to the friend? To the one who speaks my language?*

ALTERITY

- It has to do with more intimate preconceptions.
- What's the other one for me? What is my first instinct?
- Fear? Friendship?
- Our beliefs evolve according to our pre-conceptions.

Interculturality is a team effort

- It is not a single person.
- There is no one complete, well stocked, like the Renaissance man... Or the Cuétara Biscuits! *Well rounded*¹⁹.
- But we all complete each other.

There is more: the other really constructs me

- The other is the one who sees my blind angles, and I can reflect myself.
- The other one completes me: it's more than just discovering my blind angles.
- I win my true self with the others.
 - *Mit sein*²⁰.
 - *This is much more than being recognized.*
 - *It's deeply anthropological.*
 - *I am fully man to the extent that I am with others*

Tools for Alterity

In the light of our premise, that attitude is the key to success of Interculturality, necessarily the said tools to facilitate the successful encounter with the other, the alterity, we find them in the field of the **emotional** dimension of **the person**.

19 Terminology of US universities that on their candidates' CVs seek the plurality of gifts.

20 The real man is the one who builds with others. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heideggerian_terminology

EMPATHY

- **Empathy** (always fundamental), rooted in this context, translates as knowledge (**anthropology**) of sensitivity.
- Again, **knowing the sensitivity** of the person given his culture is more powerful (and practical) than simple cultural themes (dances and flags).
- The ability to project ourselves, to feel in the shoes of the other is limited. In this sense, we cannot overestimate the empathetic capacity of people.
- Unfortunately, empathy is in the hands of those who are most sensitive, and not all of us have the same sensitivity.

Assertiveness

- Life in intercultural dynamics is prone to generate more misunderstandings and frustrations than in watertight, more comfortable and less rich contexts.
- Having the gift of opportunity to express how one feels, knowing that my assertion is going to affect the other, is basic.
- The good news is that we do not need to possess this gift, we can create the agreed space, which enables this sincere and necessary expression.
- Am I able to promote spaces of trust? To create healthy bonds?

Honesty

- It is paramount that *culture* must **never be an alibi** for hiding conflicts of another kind.
- I fear that many conflicts that we camouflage as cultural are simply conflicts that such a person would have lived or carried indistinctly.
- The continuation of the topic will be discussed *below*, in the cultural alibi.

Humility

- Feeling truly limited by expression in another language, other contexts without cultural references that are crutches for our effective communication.

- Having ever felt a stranger?
- Don't master the codes.
- The humility of accepting not to have all the tools that a native does.

Reconciliation

Reconciliation closes the tool system. Where all the tools that precede us fail, reconciliation can be the last resort.

- With **awareness** of being a community of adult people, we have half of the problems solved.
- Ability **to examine oneself**.
- Effective conflict resolution²¹ must be agile (not sheared) and solvent (effective, leading to a new stage).
- The intercultural community must be a healing community.

Risks / Avoid

How aware am I of my **prejudices**? And my ease in detecting my mistakes, and the maturity to recognize and accept them?

All risks, could be synthesized into one, asymmetry. However, it is worth deploying all kinds of asymmetries that dynamit intercultural life.

Asymmetries (of power):

Hegemonies

- Great cultures and traditions, too accustomed to cultural dominion. These cultures are at risk of *single child* syndrome. They have more difficulties when they have to start relationships with another new culture, for the first time. There is a correlation between great hegemonic cultures, and the study of second languages.

21 Not the prevention, which is naive, given that conflicts are sure to appear.

- Next door, some cultures with *endangered whale* syndrome. That is, some cultures, which because their geopolitics and history, are used to having to fight for their identity.
- From one language to another, there is zero difference; neither is superior to the other. All cultures have the same value.
- *Ainés*²², founders who cannot turn the page of the founding moment, and permanently have the role of honorary president.

Self-referentialism

- No one as me.
- The great defect attributed to the Jesuits, unable not to quote themselves.
- The *chez moi*, as in my home country, no one.
- Who are the “we” whenever we make the claim that “we do it this way”? What place does my current community occupy which does not enter this “we”?
- It is not even objectively true, nor it is appropriate for comparisons to be permanent.
- *New dominations* deserve special attention:
 - *An intercultural content or form with a marked cultural bias (of the one who he has thought it), probably western.*

Economic

- The **poor** cannot *abandon* the security (whether conscious or unconscious) he receives from the family, from the community. He is less free.
- I cannot emancipate myself if I do not do it financially too²³.

22 Word widely used in French. Literally *older brother*. It also involves a great respect, for age, for preceding in rank on a list.

23 Several examples: older children who don't leave fatherly home; divorced - gender issue - who cannot be separated because they cannot afford a new home.

- In intercultural encounters or communities, economic bias can be weighed²⁴.

Equality – History

- This does not necessarily have to lead to negative consequences, as have policies of positive discrimination, both gender and ethnic. Admittedly, they are not without controversy.
- Context and history weight more than justice..
- What is the effort of inculturation to go to a corner of the world classically labeled as a mission land? And what is the effort of inculturation to live in Rome, Paris...?
- In an intercultural context, the member of a minority group tends to enjoy privileges and attentions that the majority group cannot afford.

Cultural alibi

- In an intercultural community, its members can defend their own interests by using cultural differences as a shield.
- Going too often to the cultural excuse to camouflage antivocational behaviors, claiming that such behavior is taboo for culture, is not only deplorable, but difficult to salvage, because it does not enter the talking circle to resolve the conflict.

Cultural submarines

- A variant of the alibi are cultural submarines.
- Under the guise of healthy intercultural community life, there are, in fact, unidirectional cultural highways without exit and entry points.
- When am I not subject to community public life (prayer, meals...), what do I do and with whom do I spend my free

24 The famous pocket money, or the specific economic capacity of the Piarists, differs according to the demarcations of origin. Who pays for dinner, at an international meeting?

time? Are there ethnic, national WhatsApp groups...? When I vote, is my vote fair, do I give it to someone who, in my opinion, deserves it or to someone who shares a history with me?

Next Steps / Conclusions

The path of interculturality brings to rethink mission and life.

- No retreats (ethnocentrism), in **going forth** attitude. .
- Having in mind the same is our **kryptonite..**

There is no interculturality without a personal, missionary, institutional **conversion**.

Interculturality has to be (because it already is, it already exists!) a **normal dimension** of consecrated life.

- What skills does it require from the religious?
- We have to get prepared for the adventure.

Like Abraham, the father of the prophets, let us leave our lands to build a new common place.

Interculturality and Inculturation from the United States-Puerto Rico

*Fr. Fernando NEGRO Sch. P.
Provincial Superior of the USA-PR Province.*

Interculturality

- A unique time where our communities are becoming more 'international' and 'intercultural' every day. Our USA-PR province is made up of religious members of 13 nationalities:
 - *Puerto Rico: 3 priest, 1 Diaconus, 1 solemn vows, 2 juniors, 1 pre-novice, 2 aspirants. TOTAL: 11*
 - *Spain: 10 priests, 1 priest guest. TOTAL: 11*
 - *Cuba: 1 priest and 1 pre novice. TOTAL: 2*
 - *USA: 6 priests. TOTAL: 6*
 - *Mexico: 4 priests, 1 deacon, juniors. TOTAL: 12*
 - *Guatemala: 1 priest*
 - *El Salvador: 1 priest*
 - *Colombia: 1 priest, 1 junior*
 - *Peru: 1 junior*
 - *Hungary: 1 priest*
 - *Nicaragua: 1 priest*

- *Cameroon: 1 priest*
- *India: 1 priest*
- *BIG TOTAL: 51*
- Sometimes you see a certain level of racism or exclusivism, if we are not attentive, if we underline the differences, rather than underlining the possibilities; if we underline exclusivity rather than being inclusive.
- In my community in the Bronx, NY, we are: 2 Puerto Ricans, 2 from USA, 1 Colombian, 1 Peruvian, 1 Mexican, 1 Spanish, 1 Cameroonian.
- They are not the same:
 - *Multiculturalism: different cultures that coexist, but without a relational project of mutual knowledge, help and human enrichment*
 - *Interculturality: the interaction and relational dynamism, from the variety and diversity that unites us. Interculturality helps me get out of myself and my comfort zones.*
- Interculturality is that moment of ‘grace’, which requires the deliberate effort to go beyond the known, expanding our comfort zones. In interculturality we learn to relativize our own, to come out to meet the different. The final product is that I never lose connection with my roots and, in addition, I am enriched by people and the experiences that interculturality offers to those who dare to live it.

Interculturality is both grace and a project:

- *It is grace, because we are given by the fact of having the missionary Piarist vocation (remember that, from the beginning of our Order, we were members of the Pontifical Missionary Works),*
- *It is a task, because it involves leaving oneself, unlearning the badly learned and learning new ways of doing, seeing and looking at reality, thinking and building*

the Kingdom of God. When we do not put the work into building interculturality, we fall into monotony, routine, traditionalism and mediocrity.

- Relationship between:
 - *Globalization (very close to the world economy): globalization is given to us by the financial situation that coldly analyzes reality, studies the possibilities of profit, and makes decisions, regardless of cultural respect and customs*
 - *Interculturality: more 'human' and humanizing concept, which we have talked about above. I live in the Bronx neighborhood of New York, and I live interculturality without realizing it, living daily with Hispanic people from all over South America and the Caribbean, African-Americans and Africans, Asians from India, Bangladesh, China, and the Philippines, above all.*
 - *Inculturation: a concept that involves a 'process' of evangelizing learning. It is to help the seed of the Word, of the Good News, already planted in the heart of each person, every people and culture, find a field prepared to grow and develop, until it becomes a leafy and fruitful tree.*
- Alongside Interculturality, there are other related topics, such as Ecumenism, or Interreligious Dialogue. It is important that, from mutual respect, we dialogue without losing our identity, to enrich ourselves and work in harmony with our people.
- Interculturality in the Pious Schools:
 - *Map of the Piarist Interculturality. Every day new points of implantation and rooting are developed. Examples:*
 - *Our USA-PR province is, together with the province of Mexico and the Vice Province of Californias, about to begin the foundation in Guatemala.*

- *In a year or two we believe we can start a new community near Houston, TX.*
- *History of current Piarist Interculturality, since the early 80s. I think it was in the early 80s to this day, when the Order of the Pius Schools has made giant leaps to be present in the middle of the world. And the challenges don't stop.*
- *The fruit of the well-lived Interculturality and, above all, of inculturation is the multicultural vocational emergency. Something I have lived in Cameroon, India and now USA-PR province. In this respect, I believe that we should go with our heads high, offering young people our way of life as a happy path of holiness. To do this, we must not ask for forgiveness or permission from anyone.*
- *Interculturality entails a plus of creativity in the development of our charism and ministry in various places of the world, in response to the Master's invitation: "Go all over the world and announce the Good News".*
- *My experience of interculturality: 6 years in Spain, 16 years in Cameroon, 3 and 1/2 in India, 12 years in the USA. I live in a demarcation that embraces: USA, which is legalistic and orderly, distant and cerebral, and Puerto Rico, which is Hispanic, spontaneously open and jovial. In recent years, PR has suffered greatly due to Hurricane Maria (2017), and now with earthquakes (January 2020). Many leave the island, the population is decimated by those who go outside and by the lack of a sustainable birth rate.*

Inculturation

- Inculturation as a religious and evangelizing spiritual concept. Pedro Arrupe, SJ, is one of the pioneers in understanding and commissioning it, as General of the Jesuit Order he was.
- The assimilation of culture, without losing the essence-identity of who we are and what the Church and the Gospel is:

it is about bringing the Gospel closer until it is implanted in the hearts of people, who will affect the culture, without breaking it, but transforming it.

- Inculturation requires entering into a learning process to know how to read the signs of the times, in the freedom of a heart that puts the Gospel before prejudices, judgments and convictions.
- Inculturation is in close connection with the mystery of the Incarnation: Jesus is embodied in a particular people, and not precisely in Judea, but in the “Galilee of the Gentiles”. In this multicultural and unorthodox atmosphere of contact, he surely learned not only Hebrew, but Aramaic, Greek, and Latin, at least.
- In every process of inculturation the language of our people is of paramount importance. Learning a new language is not optional when we are at the heart of the masses. It’s a really ‘essential’ thing. We must incarnate from the root, following the divine dynamics of The Word (the Sense, the Meaning) became flesh (it was emptied, lowered) and inhabited among us (to elevate us to a new vision of all things, to a new self-perception)”.
- Conditions for positive inculturation:
 - a) Decision to love and love people unconditionally, where they are, as they are.
 - b) Decision to learn their language, at all costs. The language of people is the common thread and the binder of its culture. By proposing a symbol, the language is like the main river to which the other tributary rivers such as music, folklore, dance, myths, crafts and artistic work, the way of dressing, religious expressions, food, funeral rites, cosmic understanding of the created, etc. go.
 - c) My experience has taught me, especially in Cameroon (from 1987 to 2003) that children are our best teachers on the subject of inculturation, because of their innocence, their spontaneity, and because they too are in the same learning process.

- d) We must learn to unlearn what we have badly learned, to learn what is new about the culture in which we live.
 - e) May our dress be clean, poor, but dignified. We cannot be strident to ‘appear’ an external inculturation that does not respond to reality, as if we were tourists, while the heart is far from the people, especially the poorest and neediest.
 - f) Following the symbolism of our dear Pope Francis, in order to inculturate the Gospel consistently, we must be “Sheep-scented Shepherds”
 - g) We must also avoid community styles far from people, full of external fanfare and legalism.
 - h) Inculturation is not a fashion, a “new” way, a modernist chip that is fashionable, but an evangelical need, following the example of our Master Jesus of Nazareth.
- It is very important to consider community life, as it is not only individuals who are in-cultivated in a personal capacity, but the Pious Schools.
 - It should be borne in mind that the first months and early years are crucial in the missionary process of inculturation. Many missionaries end up burned by the loneliness and spiritual abandonment they enter, when they do not care for the community and the human experience of it.
 - I think it is important that young Piarist missionaries, if possible, have some satisfactory ministerial and community experience in the country and province from which they come, for several years. In this way they will go with an integrated human and spiritual consistency, which will be the best platform for a well-on-the-board process of inculturation.
 - I propose some concrete points to learn how to manage the challenges of any Piarist inculturation process, based on the incarnation of Jesus:

- *Love is the first foundation. Without this base, one gets tired and throws in the towel right away.*
- *You have to learn to love people at the new mission site. It's a decision. "I, every morning, choose to love." (Helder Cámara)*
- *Never compare what I have learned to what I am learning, that is, avoid denigrating comparisons between my culture and that of the people with whom I live and whom I serve.*
- *Fundamental option to learn the language of the new mission site.*
- *Don't be afraid of diseases when they arrive. It is a price that is gladly paid, out of love for Jesus Christ and the Gospel. The disease, in the context of the mission, helps to put us at the level of the simplest and most vulnerable people.*
- *However, it must be prevented, rather than cured.*
- *You have to have a lot of humility, to recognize that 'we are learning something new', and that sometimes we will slow down, because we are no longer "children" who learn easily.*
- *We don't have to give people what they don't ask of us, but what they need. Otherwise we rude them and can present ourselves as "Santa Claus".*
- *It is there to know how to manage the "dark nights" that in every process of inculturation arrive sooner or later. Dark nights come under the guise of loneliness and even depression. You must not be afraid, for it is part of the elementary dynamic of those who gradually move at the center of their securities, and it seems that it visits him as a vertigo and uprooting. You have to be patient and persistent in your efforts.*
- *"The new is measured by the new," not with the often badly learned. When we act like this, we are learning to grow and be transformed.*

In terms of inculturation, I think it is very important to observe, to value the symbolic world of people and to help them to value it and introduce it into the liturgy:

- In Cameroon, instead of Palm Sunday, we call it Domingo Nkeng (Peace Plant)
- Salt as an element of reconciliation.
- Gun shooting in consecration during solemnities.
- Applaud three times in the time of consecration (an element that is realized when receiving the traditional authorities.
- We decorate the Church with the stations of the Cross and the atrium, with elements of African culture.
- Dances with horsetails, very common in traditional dances.
- The communion of the saints is very in tune with communion with the ancestors.
- Our liturgical attire always with traditional elements of their dress and their traditional performances..
- The use of the “dong” (cow horn) in meetings, to drink palm wine in it.
- The use of tam-tam or drum instead of bells to summon the Eucharist.
- Greet the elderly only with your right hand as a sign of respect.
- The people of Nkwen gave me the name Azefor, a name given by the King of the tribe, His Highness Ngufor III. Bafut gave me the name Ngwa.
- Visit meetings and join communal dances, especially at traditional funerals.
- Learning the main sentences in the Nkwen language.
- Share people’s suffering: their malaria attacks (I had it 38 times), their means of transport, their insecurity (my community was attacked 7 times in a violent way).

- We started a youth group called “Bo be naka’a” (Sons of Light) with a process of development based on psychology, Christian tradition and the symbolic elements of their cultural traditions.
- We design liturgical garments with African symbols.
- Statues or paintings of Jesus, the saints, Our Lady, etc. were always made following African patterns.
- Emblem of marital enrichment: the nkeng on the horn with the inscription: “We have believed in love”.
- Constant preaching in Pidgin English and Nkwen language.

Inculturation, vocational pastoral care and training

- Every missionary founder puts a mark of foundational DNA that will be sealed in the history of the foundation, and of the future demarcation. This is clear, although it is not necessarily that native Piarists should imitate the missionary. It is rather an environmental style that the Piarist founders left reflected in their works, their architecture, their community lifestyle, etc.
- There is no better pastoral on vocations than that of attraction and contagion through passionate lives that convince with the facts of life, rather than with words.
- Not to be afraid to ‘screw up’ or to be wrong especially at first; on the contrary, have *parresia* and daring in the call. Without asking permission or forgiveness from anyone.
- To bear good community witness, without seeking power in the midst of intestinal struggles based on: tribalisms, ethnicisms, nationalisms, caste system, etc.
- The missionary must be freed from all desire for personalism. You must also intuit when it is time to quietly leave the stage, to leave a dignified relief to the native Piarists.
- Exacerbated personalisms announce Piarist institutional failures.

- Inculturation is not to deny our roots, but to connect them with the breadth of the Gospel, which is to have the same gaze of Jesus on the world.
- We must implement the Order of the Pious Schools and also help its growth and expansion. To do this, explore new possibilities of Houses, Joint Training Projects at the territorial level, Pastoral and Educational Projects, etc.
- It is important to work on the issue of interculturality during the Initial Formation, creating a strong sense of belonging and Piarist identity.

Anecdots

- a) Archbishop Paul Verdzevov defended us when I started teaching in elementary school full-time, and he told us to keep doing what we were doing. On one occasion he said to me, ‘Fernando, keep doing what you do, teaching in the elementary school of Futrú, for you are bringing a silent revolution to the archdiocese of Bamenda.’
- b) When he encouraged us on the subject of the Marriage Encounter, he saw in it another “quiet revolution”.
- c) When Nkwen’s Fon, Ngufo III, wanted to give me as a gift: a woman, a field and a house.
- d) We created the ‘Nkwen Translation Committee’, and collaborated in the establishment of the ‘Nkwen Linguistic Association’.
- e) We begin to translate the Word of God into Nkwen, every Sunday (reaction of rejection at first, as an expression of resistance and of inferiority complex).
- f) At first, we wanted to form two provinces in Cameroon, until we realized that it was better to create ONE Province, but bilingual.
- g) When I made my novitiate (1973-1974), I never thought that one day I would see the Pious School as rich in their cultural variety as we do today.

Dynamics that could be made in the meeting

- Round-tables on specific topics of inculturation in the current school context.
- Exploring together new possible Piarist mission scenarios in the current context.
- Exposing the difficulties of intercultural integration in our missionary communities.
- Creating the basis for a document that may serve as the basis for a Piarist inculturation.

Vice-Province of Japan-Philippines and Interculturality

Fr. Miguel ARTOLA Sch. P.
Vice-Provincial Superior of the Vice-Province
of Japan and the Philippines.

Some statements around inculturation and interculturality

“Because the earth has become smaller than yesterday and because migrations will multiply in the near future, the encounter between different cultures will become increasingly frequent”.

(Luis Gonzalez-Carvajal. *The challenge of cultural diversity in The Christians of the twentieth century.* p.62)

«The expression culture indicates everything with which man tunes and develops his innumerable spiritual and bodily qualities. He seeks to subdue the same terrestrial orb with his knowledge and work. He makes social life more human, both in the family and throughout civil society, through the progress of customs and institutions. Finally, through time he formulates, communicates and preserves in his works great spiritual experiences and aspirations, so that they may serve as a benefit to many; even more, to the whole humankind.

It follows that culture necessarily carries with it a historical and social aspect, and that the word «culture» often assumes a sociological and ethnological meaning. In this

*sense, we speak of plurality of cultures. **Diverse lifestyles and multiple value scales find their origin in the particular way of using things, working, expressing, practicing religion, behaving, and establishing laws and legal institutions, cultivating sciences, the arts and beauty.** Thus the customs received form the proper heritage of each human group.»*

(Gaudium et Spes n.53)

Clarifying concepts

Inculturation comprises two complementary aspects.

- **The process of being inculturated in one's own culture, or in other words, being critically aware of it.** Without inculturating one's own culture, one cannot achieve full maturity for total participation in social life. Critical awareness of one's own culture is the condition for relating positively to cultural diversity.
- **Inculturating in another culture:** It is like moving to the house of another family, where one arrives as he is and where he learns about another universe of social relationships according to which meaning and significance is given to life. There is always a dialogue.

Inculturation is always an incomplete process. Social contexts change a lot and quickly. Cultures develop according to the traits that characterize local and international trends. Discerned inculturation.

Interculturality. This can be a simple description: **a mutual exchange between cultures that leads to the transformation and enrichment of those cultures involved in the process.** However, it should be remembered that interculturality does not replace or oppose inculturation. On the contrary, it helps deepening in the process.

The Church has been sent to all cultures and from all cultures to help liberate all men and peoples. For this reason, the Church is on the way, as Pope Francis describes it, committed to the promotion of a dignified life for all human beings.

No one is born intercultural. **Inculturation and its transition to interculturality require a process of formation and a profound transformation similar to incarnation.**

Interaction between cultures. Not just multiculturalism, but members of different cultures that interact with each other and enrich members and the community. This implies **recognition** of the other cultures – **Respect** for the different ones - problem of dominant cultures - **Healthy interactionn, with a sense of belonging**

Intercultural dialogue

The result of an authentic dialogue will not be the cultural cross-breeding, that is to say the fusion of all cultures into one (deep impoverishment for humanity), but the development of the hidden potentialities that each one of them had dormant waiting for a catalyst to activate them. Active process of evolution from the inside. It is not a pure cession to the instances of the other, but a deep fidelity, stimulated by them, to their own original inspiration.

The dialogue between cultures becomes impossible if there is no climate of reciprocity

Two extreme ways to understand multiculturalism

- The one that does not produce true integration but is limited to a low level of tolerance.
- Another for which an assimilation occurs with substantial elimination of differences. A dominant culture is usually imposed.

There is a multiculturalism that leads to the passing over the religious dimensions of cultures, considering them as private realities that should not interact with as such with society. Which in turn must be based on a secular concept, in the sense of religious separation. This kind of secular approach has led to a marginalization of Christian faith in society, but above all it has shown itself incapable of confronting Islamist culture, in which the relationship of religion vs social reality is so close.

There is a growing number of international communities and multicultural religious communities. Being in a certain context entails: learning a language, adopting a lifestyle, food, housing, transport, openness... shared Mission.

The question of criterion: “logic of discovery”

It is not easy to find a criterion that can be accepted by all as the basis of dialogue. Many have been proposed, but no agreement has been reached. (...) it attempts to apply a deductive logic where a true dialogue requires an inductive logic or, perhaps better, a “logic of discovery” or invention. **The “humanum” as a constitutively open criterion.**

The Vice-Province of Japan-Philippines and interculturality. Countries and Pious Schools

Japan: ¿Can we talk about multiculturalism or interculturality in Japan?

Japan is a country with a very marked culture of its own. Respectful country, with democratic and relatively open government. It is possible to find people of various nationalities especially in large cities or industrial areas. It has welcomed foreign immigrants but not in large numbers, especially those from Japanese families who emigrated to other countries in the 20th century (Brazil, Peru, Bolivia), but also from the Philippines, Vietnam, etc. Currently faced with the strong decline in birth rates, it is facing a dilemma, welcoming more foreign immigrants, which would affect a supposed loss of elements of his own culture by mingling with others from different countries and cultures, or continuing to limit that entry of immigrants, which will cause the Japanese economy to be resented with an ageing population.

The hosted ones are treated with respect and can carry out some cultural activities of their own, but as soon as they live in Japan, they have to adapt to the rules of life of the country. It is not uncommon to hear comments of this kind: the difficulty of being accepted by the Japanese community, although one may establish more or less strong bonds with some people. You are always a foreigner. On

the other hand, the tongue is a strong barrier. Hence another comment from a missionary: if you come to Japan, get the idea that you will be 60% of who you are here.

You can talk about a country with a certain multiculturalism, but in reduced terms. Talking about **interculturality is a little more difficult**. Although young people maintain a little more contact with other cultures, such as American, European, and are influenced in various ways (mass media, internet, music, etc.), this mutual enriching process that occurs in interculturality is still a somewhat distant utopia.

The Pious Schools in Japan and its inculturation. Can we talk about multicultural Piarist communities in Japan?

Perhaps we should talk before of the Pious Schools, their experiences of multiculturalism – interculturality, inculturation, their structures, etc.

It is clear that as an Order the Provinces have been, sometimes directly, sometimes at the suggestions of the respective Superior General, who have dedicated themselves to opening themselves up to other countries. They did it with members of the Provinces themselves. The process of inculturation began. After a while, there was a situation of living with vocations native to the place where they were present. Much of the openings to countries in the late 19th and mid-20th centuries took place in countries considered close from a cultural point of view.

A certain multicultural atmosphere was lived in the Juniorates from the mid-20th century

Multi-culturality within the Order possibly requires another new way of structuring and organizing and which can be combined with the existing one.

Stage 1: 1950 to 2000. For almost 50 years, the Piarist presence in Japan has been limited to members of a single Province (Vasconia). Presence with a very small internal renewal: the last missionaries sent there were in the late 1960s. There was a sending in the early '80s, but it didn't fit.

Those who remained there tried with great effort and willingness to learn the language, and inculturate themselves in the country (food, customs, and contact with the Japanese both in school and in parishes). You cannot talk about multicultural experience in communities.

Stage 2: from 2000 to 2020. During this time following the creation of the Delegation of Japan-Philippines, new members were sent to Japan who lived with the remaining religious of the previous period. At first most of them are Filipinos. The first few years studying Japanese and entering the country. A Polish religious later arrives, and more Filipino Piarists, one from Vietnam and one from India, are added up.

Being small communities, it is difficult to talk about multiculturalism or interculturality in communities. The first reference is that of the Piarist community vs. Japanese groups of our activities in the works (parishes – schools). At the same time, the field of action has been expanded by serving immigrants native to other countries, Filipinos, Brazilians, Peruvians, Bolivians, Vietnamese, Indians...

Already in previous Chapters the importance for the Piarist communities in Japan to be international, that is, formed by Piarists of different nationalities, as other Religious Congregations (SVDs, Salesians, etc.) already had been emphasized, and this composition has been requested on several occasions, even if it is not easy.

Philippines

It is an open country that welcomes immigrants, even if their number is not excessive relative to the total population (they can be around 2% residing in the Philippines). It has suffered a major influence from the USA over the last hundred years and that influence remains. In addition, many Filipinos live in the USA and Canada. The presence of immigrants in the Philippines occurs in large cities (reasons for studies, or business). The Philippines has a conservative style but is tolerant of the residents of the country. There are many Religious Congregations that have students from other countries studying Philosophy or Theology, mainly in Manila. The capital, Manila, has a certain cosmopolitan air.

Interculturality or multiculturalism. On the one hand, it should not be forgotten that more than five million Filipinos live in different countries of the world. They travel with some regularity to their own country for holidays or family reasons mainly. Here is a flow of cultural exchange that is felt, and makes Filipinos welcoming people from outside. On the other hand, there is the area of students from other countries who come here to complete their studies (from Indonesia, Malaysia, Middle East, India, etc.) as well as students from the various religious congregations. In such cases, we can talk about multiculturalism that can produce a certain interculturality. There is a certain respect for other ways of living, although it is sought to live according to the style of this country. And of course, all the mass media (Facebook, Youtube, Whatsapp, etc.) have a great influence on the youth field. Within the countries of Southeast Asia it can be said that the Philippines is the most open and that its welcome and tolerance is recognized.

*The Pious Schools in the Philippines.
Interculturality – multiculturalism.*

It should be noted, first of all, as an important fact, that the foundation in the Philippines was **promoted directly by the General** Congregation. In other cases, there might be a suggestion from the General Congregation, but it was the Provinces that were responsible for putting it into practice.

The foundation started with people from other countries. The choice that was made in the beginning, to work mainly in the vocational and formative area marked a style of action. At first, the vocations that arrived were all Filipinos. Efforts were made to live according to the Filipino style, but on the other hand, the decision was made to promote English as a basic language for the presence of the Pious Schools in Southeast Asia, while the natives were invited to better mastery of their own native language. When the vocations came from areas where we were not known, great importance was given in the houses of formation to the theme of the Piarist identity, by highlighting the figure of the Founder, his writings, his charism, the Piarist style, and the first pastoral activities turned to the children (Saturday's Workshop), as typical of the Piarist ministry...

Within a few years, vocations from other countries, of different languages and cultures (Vietnam, Indonesia, East Timor, later the novices of India) arrived. Mutual respect was emphasized, in the vocation and charism received, and in the strength of the Spirit that called us. Normal difficulties were given to achieve a good coexistence between different characters, temperaments and styles, but it can be said that there was good collaboration and mood on the part of all to work for what united us.

Those who arrived had to get used to a new lifestyle, different meals, learning English. The good climate created, the openness to others, the relationships with people from other countries, are the fruit of that good disposition shown by all. This joint coexistence has been an enrichment for all, and will make it feel even more when the Piarist presence grows more in Southeast Asia.

Vietnam

It is a country of communist rule. The number of immigrants from other countries is very small and, therefore, one can hardly talk about a multicultural country. It is very marked by its own culture and language, which gradually opens more to the outside. Tourist visitors are increasing, who are welcomed without major problems.

Pious Schools in Vietnam: Interculturality

Most members of our community in Vietnam are Vietnamese, except for a Filipino, who has been there for 5 years and is assisting in teaching English. Possibly the arrival of Piarists from other countries in Vietnam (without getting into the problem of visas), would be done to help in English. It is clear that English here as elsewhere in the area has been accepted as a language of exchange in the Piarist community, but the ministerial presence in these countries requires knowledge of the native language and this already raises other questions. (Let us think of Vietnam, Myanmar, Thailand, Malaysia...)

Preparing for interculturality

Four fundamental changes pointed out by Fr. A. Pernia on how to approach the mission.

- **From activism to contemplation.** Importance given to the credibility of what we testify. To being more than doing. Encounter with mystery, contemplation.
- **From individualism to collaboration.** From considering ourselves the only ones to knowing that the mission is of God, and we are collaborators with Him and with others that He calls.
- **From conquest to dialogue.** To carry out the mission from a position of power, to a position of humility and minority.
- **To only evangelize to be evangelized, to give and to receive.**

Three considerations

- **Theological Motivation: offering the testimony of unity and diversity of the Reign of God.**
- **Intentional Community: It is essential that members of intercultural communities consistently assume the intention to be an intercultural community for a specific purpose.** That does not appear by a simple gathering of people from different cultures who live under one roof. It must be intentionally promoted and that requires certain attitudes, community structures and a particular spirituality.
- **Interaction between cultures.** Not just multiculturalism. This implies **recognition** of the other cultures - **Respect** for the different ones - problem of dominant cultures - Healthy **interactionn, with a sense of belonging**

Some Congregations propose to create greater multicultural communities. Can the Piarist create larger communities by counting on the number of people we are?

A sacrifice must be recognized: the feeling of abandonment (the question of being alone or accompanied by others of the same culture). You never feel totally comfortable in a cultural environment that is not your own.

Practice some virtues: **empathy, humility, the necessary abandonment in the intercultural spaces, hospitality...**

It is necessary to distinguish between:

Multiculturalism of the nations where we are - Multiculturalism of Religious Communities.

In addition, here *a new distinction* between multicultural houses **of formation** (Rome, Manila...) and communities **directly related to the mission** (case of Japan, where the presence of Piarists is requested to be more international, or in other countries, as well as the recent experiences of Brazil, Austria)

Formation houses: located in countries where there is a certain multiculturalism. Houses where a certain culture of the place predominates. Accommodation to the circumstances. Exchange of styles and ways of life, languages, customs, formation... Richness and difficulties in the day-to-day life of coexistence. What kind of organization we prefer and give ourselves. Difficulty sending to places where these people are victims of racist attitudes... or considered inferior...

I have seen missionary congregations sending young people from Congo, or from Brazil to study theology in the Philippines. CICM .

Piarists who send their young people to study theology in Rome (after completing their studies in their places, or to Paris, or Bolivians sent to do the novitiate in Colombia, or theology in Brazil, or Senegalese or Cameroonians studying in Brazil.

Would we send Brazilians or Hungarians, or Poles, or Spaniards to study theology in Yaoundé?, or in Dakar? or in Belo Horizonte?

Lessons from the past to consider for the future

It is not difficult to see how interculturality tends to become multiculturalism and multi-ethnicity, the tendency to meet with people like us. There are fences that are good and strengthen in the heart, but each relationship has its verification in the openness that generates and in docility to the encounter with the others.

In the history of any mission, from its foundation until it becomes an independent province, the inculturation phase is crucial. Becoming a Province is a big step. In this context, the request to be intercultural again is sometimes perceived as contrary and finds great resistance. We cannot be surprised by the rude nationalism or cultural pride.

This tends to happen more in small nations than in those with hundreds of millions of inhabitants. Inculturation has to be balanced with interculturality.

Love the Stranger

Fr. Danilo MUTIA Sch. P.

*Rector of the Tokyo-Yokohama Community,
in the Vice-Province of Japan and the Philippines.*

Introduction

Following the theme we see, I reflect on the inculturation of the Catholic Church with the concrete focus on the realities in Japan.

To start with, the Japanese for wife “kanai” 家内、husband “shujin” 主人, and foreigners is “gaijin.” 外人.

Statistics of top 10 foreign residents

Country	2018	2017	2016	2014	2012	2011	2010	2006	2000	1990	Main Activities
Total Foreign Residents	2,637,251	2,471,458	2,232,189	2,121,831	2,002,656	2,078,508	2,134,181	2,011,555	1,885,444	964,455	
 China	741,656	711,486	666,842	654,777	652,668	674,879	687,156	619,961	335,575	137,499	Chinese people in Japan
 South Korea	452,701	452,953	457,772	501,230	530,046	545,401	565,969	580,687	635,269	681,038	Koreans in Japan
 Vietnam	291,494	232,562	146,958	99,965	52,364	44,890	41,781	29,932	16,908	6,316	Vietnamese people in Japan
 Philippines	205,803	251,534	225,595	217,565	209,974	209,376	210,181	187,261	144,871	98,925	Filipinos in Japan
 Brazil	198,781	185,967	173,437	175,410	190,581	210,032	230,552	302,080	254,394	14,258	Brazilians in Japan
 Nepal	65,321	74,300	54,775	42,346	34,068	30,383	17,525	8,923	3,649	989	Nepalis in Japan
 Taiwan	58,458	54,358	48,723	40,197	22,773						Taiwanese people in Japan [1]
 United States	58,834	54,818	52,271	51,256	48,367	48,815	50,667	48,390	44,850	34,900	Americans in Japan
 Indonesia	51,881	48,350	35,910	30,210	25,530	24,800	24,885	25,097	19,348	2,781	Indonesians in Japan
 Thailand	51,028	48,952	45,379	43,081	40,130	42,750	41,279	37,703	29,288	5,542	Thais in Japan [2]

Catholic Church in Japanese Society

Inculturation is the mutual relationship between the Gospel and cultures of the world. And they enriched each other. From the time Christianity was introduced to Japan in the 16th century by St. Francis Xavier, inculturation has been a serious issue. With the help of a native Japanese convert, St. Francis translated into Japanese the Gospel of St. Matthew, the Apostles's creed, basic and most important teachings and prayers of the Church. In this way, St. Francis did not only plant the seed of Christianity in Japan, but he also laid the foundations for the field of Japanese language studies, or a scientific study of Japanese as a language that included the character of the people, their culture, social, and political situations. This might be one of the reasons why he was successful. In his few years in Japan, he had converted more than 800 Japanese and had good relations with influential men, who were Lords and monks and other leaders. By 1630s, it was estimated that there were 760,000 Catholics in Japan, roughly 6.3% of the total population. I cannot help but compare that to today's Catholic population which is approximately 0.35% of the population, with a figure of less than 500,000.

Catholic influence on Japanese culture is surprisingly deep. For those of you who are familiar with Japan, you probably have heard about the tea ceremony. It is said that the tea ceremony was influenced by the rituals of the Catholic Mass. They also have a famous cake called *kastira*, from the word *Castilla*. The famous dish called *tempura* was originally fried battered cut vegetables, now there are wide varieties of *tempura*. It is derived from the Latin word "tempora" which refers to "quatuor tempora, " the period when Catholics refrain from eating meat.

From 1640 to 1873, Japan became a "closed country." By the time Emperor Meiji ended the persecution 1876, and the French missionaries arrived, it was recorded that there were 18,435 Catholics in Japan. No one will ever know what really happened during those two centuries when Japan was closed to Christianity. More than 200 years had passed without priests, the hidden Christians were still able to find ways to express themselves in Latin, prayed and chanted in Latin, called the priests *Pater*, and that they know that one day they will go to *paradiso*.

It is noteworthy that Catholicism's appeal was not limited to farmers and fishermen, but also among the elite of society, the diplomats, intellectuals, and even the imperial household.

- As a Filipino myself, I know of **Blessed Takayama Ukon**, whose feast day is February 3, who was a *daimyo* who chose to lose his titles, vast lands and properties and to live in exile in Manila, than to renounce his Catholic faith.
- Even Japan has more Catholic prime ministers (3) (**Hara Kei** (1918-1921), **Yoshida Shigeru** (1948-1954), and **Aso Taro** 2008-2009) than the United States has had Catholic presidents.
- The **Empress Emerita Michiko** was raised and educated as Catholic.
- **Prince Asaka Takahiko** and **Princess Todo Chikako** became the first converts from the imperial clan when they got baptized in 1951.
- **Nobuko Aso** became the first baptized person to become a member of the imperial family when she married Prince Mikasa. She is now known as Princess Tomohito. She is the sister of former Prime Minister Aso.
- There are also famous and respected authors who were Catholics, like **Endo Shusaku**, maybe the best known Catholic Japanese, the author of *Silence*.
- **Nagai Takashi**, the author of *Bells of Nagasaki*, became the best-selling book, then a basis for a popular movie and song. But for me, the best of Nagai was his way of witnessing that he has been called "the saint of the atomic wasteland." He was a medical doctor, and a university professor. He treated the victims of the atomic bombing in Nagasaki, the very bomb that killed his beloved wife. Due to his exposure, he died of leukemia. He was well aware of the danger but he was committed to serving others. He also called for peace and forgiveness and considered those who died as burnt offering, which angered many in the beginning, before being understood.

I can continue to name more Catholic figures, but I am sure that by now, you have understood that there are also some fertile soils for the seed of the Gospel to grow in Japan.

Another characteristics that I want to share with you is the way people celebrate the anniversary of Nagasaki and Hiroshima nuclear bombings. It is a common observation that Nagasaki's anniversary celebration is solemn and prayerful, with the message of peace, reconciliation and the total abolition of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. While Hiroshima's anniversary is tainted with political rallies. I truly believe that the presence and influence of the Catholics in Nagasaki plays a vital role in leading the community and society to reflect on pain, suffering, and loss of loved ones in connection with the suffering Christ. A wonderful image of enriching each other. The Church is enriched by the living witnesses of the lay faithful, and the lay faithful being enriched by the teaching of Christ.

Truly, one of the characteristics of Catholic missionary work in Japan, which is also true in many parts of the world, is on the emphasis of serving the disadvantaged, the poor, orphans, and the sick. The famous Mt. Fuji is the most sacred mountain for Shinto. But deep into a wooded part of this volcano mountain stands a tall statue of Our Lady Help of Christians, locally called as Our Lady Help of Mount Fuji. This is the government's gift to the Salesian Sisters as a recognition for their service to the poor and orphans after the war.

With the statistics below, we can imagine the difficulties on having native vocation. Even the diocesans are facing this great challenge.

カトリック教会現勢 2012

信者数 Catholics in Japan

教区 /Diocese	面積 Area(km ²)	人口 Population	信者数 Lay Catholics	信者率 % of Lay Catholics	聖職者・修道士 神学生数 Clerics, Religious, Seminarians	信者数 Total Catholics	信者率 % of All Catholics
札幌/Sapporo	83,457	5,474,216	16,564	0.303%	373	16,937	0.309%
仙台/Sendai	45,568	6,995,409	10,331	0.148%	302	10,633	0.152%
新潟/Niigata	28,658	4,610,853	7,119	0.154%	118	7,237	0.157%
茨城/Ibaraki	22,634	14,089,212	20,532	0.146%	246	20,778	0.147%
東京/Tokyo	7,186	18,846,890	94,246	0.500%	2,012	96,258	0.511%
横浜/Yokohama	26,977	15,669,647	54,797	0.350%	709	55,506	0.354%
名古屋/Nagoya	35,306	12,379,509	26,297	0.212%	379	26,666	0.215%
京都/Kyoto	17,833	7,177,068	17,817	0.248%	279	18,096	0.252%
大阪/Osaka	15,024	15,271,006	91,561	0.338%	864	92,425	0.343%
広島/Hiroshima	33,819	7,525,510	20,709	0.275%	295	21,002	0.279%
香川/Kagawata	18,793	3,994,099	4,539	0.114%	120	4,659	0.117%
福岡/Fukuoka	14,555	7,725,151	29,829	0.384%	481	30,110	0.390%
長門/Nagasaki	4,106	1,431,485	61,834	4.306%	969	62,803	4.373%
大分/Oita	13,894	2,340,548	5,844	0.250%	318	6,162	0.261%
鹿児島/Kagoshima	9,045	1,706,081	9,174	0.538%	209	9,383	0.550%
沖縄/Oaha	2,277	1,422,938	5,887	0.414%	36	5,988	0.421%
合計/Total	365,126	126,659,682	436,670	0.345%	7,771	444,441	0.351%
2011年	365,115	126,220,625	436,079	0.347%	7,648	445,927	0.351%
2010年	377,917	127,097,869	440,301	0.347%	6,139	446,440	0.353%
2009年	377,915	127,075,183	441,592	0.348%	6,112	447,704	0.353%
2008年	377,344	127,069,178	443,872	0.349%	6,268	450,138	0.353%
2007年	377,330	127,055,171	439,360	0.346%	6,360	445,720	0.352%
2006年	377,323	127,055,023	444,045	0.349%	6,528	450,571	0.353%
2005年	377,911	126,899,307	444,309	0.350%	6,491	450,800	0.357%
2004年	374,007	126,824,166	441,514	0.348%	6,611	450,125	0.353%
2003年	374,829	126,828,354	441,102	0.348%	6,823	449,925	0.353%
2002年	377,887	126,478,672	440,997	0.349%	6,850	449,927	0.356%

Foreign Catholics in Japan

In the 1980s, the growth of the Church of Japan had stopped. On the other hand, the number of foreign Catholics keeps on increasing.

A report from the Catholic Commission of Japan for Migrants, Refugees and People on the Move in 2005 pointed out that “there are about **529,452 foreign Catholics in Japan**. For the first time there are more foreign Catholics than the **449,925 Japanese Catholics.**”

Example, the rapid increase of young Vietnamese who are active Catholics. There are Masses for them in several parishes. Our very own, Fr. Cao Tri says twice a month Mass with more than 1,000 Vietnamese in St. Ignatius Church of the Jesuits. The statistics of foreign residents could tell us a lot about their effects on the dynamics of the Catholic Church in Japan.

Piarists in Japan

Our arrival

The first Piarists missionaries to Japan arrived in October 1950. That was our first presence in Asia. There were three of them from Spain and I count myself fortunate to have met one of them. Through my ministry at international school, I also met a Spanish missionary sister who happened to know a lot of stories of our first missionaries. She is now close to 100 years old and still very sharp in her cognitive functions. So I learned a lot from her especially about the struggles of our brothers. Our brothers arrived in Japan a few years after the end of the world war. Economically, Japan was struggling and so were the first Piarists missionaries. So I could imagine that it was all but natural that missionaries help each other especially those who came from the same country and region. One of the Piarists contacted tuberculosis which was incurable in those days in Japan. He was told “return to Spain to be treated and live or stay and die.” The option was clear, so Fr. Pedro Perea, returned to Spain. After he recovered, he then returned to Japan and spent a long years of service to the Church and to our Order. He died in Spain 4 years ago, on the 1st of February 2016, having witnessed the expansion of our presence to other countries of Asia.

Our Ministry

We are working in three parishes as pastors and cooperating priests in several parishes. We extend our services for the international communities, such as the Filipinos and the Vietnamese. We integrated several national celebrations into our liturgy and festivities, such as Coming of Age, and Day of Respect for the Aged. We open our arms to be enriched by these civil celebrations into our ministry.

Our school students in our schools are almost 100% Japanese and have a very small number of Catholics. But they have no problems participating in school-organized liturgies. We respect and follow Japanese laws, rules, and ways. As Archbishop Isao Kikuchi of Tokyo said that “*In Japanese society, it is difficult to find tangible success in missionary activities.*” The archbishop also said that Catholic schools “*unfortunately ... did not become a place for missionary ac-*

tivities.” He pointed out that, while “schools should be independent from national politics, unfortunately they are tied up with subsidies from the country, and thus they are gradually losing their uniqueness, with only the name ‘Catholic’ remaining.” This may not be the reality of some Catholic schools, but this is a real challenge in ours.

But there are valuable experiences that give me much consolation. The frequent visits our former parishioners and students old priests receive speak volumes. They have indeed made an impact on the lives of the people they served, both Catholics and non-Catholics. It is enriching for me to witness these visits because it will help me appreciate their approach in their ministry that they have done their best.

My School Ministry

I am a campus minister of an international school with students from around 50 nationalities, with teachers and staff from more than 10 countries. I am privileged to be enriched by this experience. I would like to cite our school cafeteria menu as an example of enriching each other.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I would like to express the importance of inculturation within our religious formation. We should take advantage of our international formation houses. I have been fortunate to be always in an international community. During my novitiate, we were 20 candidates from the Philippines, Vietnam, Indonesia, and India. My present community in Tokyo-Yokohama is composed of 6 priests from 5 countries, Spain, the Philippines, Vietnam, India, and Poland. We live in three different houses, separated by more than 30 kilometers. The universality of the Catholic Church is clear in my formation and in my ministry.

Lunch Menu February 2020

Steamed rice, funkake, salad dressing and salad condiments also included with Set Lunch Soup **not included** in Bento Lunch
(Notes regarding bento/delivery note issues)

3	4	5	6	7
Teriyaki Chicken Vegetable Yakisoba Diyon w/ dipping Sauce Stir Fry Vegetables w/ Baby Corn Acharaga (Tofu) Soup Sweet Ononaga	Spaghetti Bolognese Fried Amabara w/ Eggplant Freshly Baked Calabita Vegetable Caponata Tuscan Bean Soup Mixed Berry Panna Cotta	Tandoori Chicken Palak w/ Tzatziki Sauce Pita Bread Roasted Vegetable Masala Pumpkin Soup Mango Chutney	Pepperoni Pizza Margherita Pizza Fartale Pasta w/ Hot House Vegetables Italian Vegetable Sauce Cream of Broccoli Sticed Melon	Sichian Basil Chicken Eggplant Parmesan Potato Pomodoro Stirred Green Beans Lentil Soup Fruit w/ Dried Cranberries in Syrup
Cal: 894 Prot: 40	Cal: 924 Prot: 45	Cal: 988 Prot: 39	Cal: 670 Prot: 23	Cal: 809 Prot: 45
Weekly Special: Japanese Curry				
10	11	12	13	14
Barbeque Chicken Cubed Vegetables Scalloped Potato Gratin Buttered Corn Pea & Ham Soup Peach Chutney	No School Student Led Parent Teacher Conferences	Crispy Seared Chicken w/ Multigrain Gravy Grilled Asparagus w/ Peppers & Tomatoes Roasted Sweet Potato Sukiyaki w/ Lemon & Garlic Corn Chowder Banana Cake	Beef Lasagna Vegetarian Lasagna Baked Focaccia Cauliflower w/ Broccoli Mushroom Soup Chocolate Cake	Indian Chicken Curry Vegetable Masala Cous Cous Roasted Pumpkin Mulgata Curry Mango Yogurt
Cal: 752 Prot: 33		Cal: 888 Prot: 38	Cal: 824 Prot: 37	Cal: 828 Prot: 38
Weekly Special: Thai Food				
17	18	19	20	21
Chicken Natchos Vegetable Bean Natchos Corn Chips w/ Cheese Sauce Vegetable Pajita Mashed Soup Mixed Pasta	Juicy Beef Burgers Grilled Vegetarian Burgers Crispy Potato Wedges Mushrooms & Peppers Solan Vegetable Bean Soup Peaches w/ Yogurt & Raspberries Sauce	Thai Holy Basil Chicken Green Vegetable Curry w/ Fish Sauce Pad Thai Eggplant w/ Garlic Soy Sauce Tom Yum Soup Mango House	School Holiday	School Holiday
Cal: 543 Prot: 32	Cal: 980 Prot: 27	Cal: 920 Prot: 52		
Weekly Special: Italian				
24	25	26	27	28
Haystack Beef Crispy Tofu w/ Sesame & Garlic Sauce Oden Style Vegetables Soup Pasta Tonjiru Sponge Cake	Japanese Pork Curry Vegetable Curry Croustilles Nimono Gobo Miso Soup Jelly	Salmon w/ Lemon Sauce Vegetable Scallope Noodles Crispy Thai Chicken w/ Sweet Chili Sauce Stir Fry Cream w/ Garlic Pumpkin & Coconut Soup w/ Tofu Coconut Tapioca	Roast Chicken Tofu Hishi Hamburg w/ Soy Mayonnaise Mashed Potatoes & Gravy Roasted Carrots French Onion Soup Caramelized Peas	Herb Crusted Whitefish Boscabeiro of Seasonal Vegetables Parsley Blended Noodle Zucchini & Eggplant Prawn/Cat Cream of Corn Soup Herringbone w/ Mixed Berry Compote
Cal: 994 Prot: 33	Cal: 902 Prot: 32	Cal: 901 Prot: 51	Cal: 760 Prot: 38	Cal: 995 Prot: 42
Weekly Special: Singaporean Pasta				

Steamed rice, funkake, salad dressing and salad condiments also included with Set Lunch

Soup **not included** in Bento Lunch

What does the challenge of inculturation mean for the Order?

Fr. Eloí CHAVEZ Sch. P.

Provincial Assistant of the Province of Mexico

“Inculturation is a term that, mainly in the Catholic Church, means the harmonization of Christianity with the cultures of peoples. The catholic Church’s performance under the papacy of John Paul II, in Africa revolved around inculturation”.

This implies a process of integration from the different cultural elements, such as the language; system of values and beliefs; religion and rituals; clothing; culinary traditions; games and sports; arts: music, dance, architecture, etc.

I would like to start from a premise fundamental for me:

The first step in a good inculturation process is self-knowledge

From this premise: What demands do we have?

Generating processes of self-knowledge and cultural identity, with openness to dialogue with the other. Who am I? Where do I come from? What are the myths, the stories, and the symbols that allow me to recognize myself?

Once the person understands his own process, it is appropriate to think about the relationship with the other, the dialogue, the external inculturation. The Incarnation is the clearest example of a process of inculturation. God becomes man in history, in a people and in a specific time. On the other hand, for me one of the most interesting debates in theology, the debate for the messianic consciousness of Jesus, shows an example of the same process of God in history.

We also comply with the requirement to share common narratives. Culture is created by narratives, our narrative capacity distinguishes us as human beings. As Piarists we have common narratives. From this, a question: How can we generate and build, consolidate our common narrative, our myths, our symbols?

We have the challenge of continuing to study and generate shared histories. How can we do that? Sharing life, creating a deep world of relationships between us. Creating processes of formation from the person in his space and time, in his history, properly inculturated. Developing the maximum human potentials for growth. As companions and provocateurs of inculturation processes, we must guide and point out, we are facilitators of them. The image of the catalyst in chemistry can be a good example.

We must facilitate personal histories, and common stories, together, as a nation-people, as a culture, as Christians, as Catholics, as Piarists. As Piarists we have various common stories, and shared narratives, they are just growing and developing some projects that I find fundamental in the processes of creating common narratives:

- Culture of Order
- Calasanz Movement
- Shared Mission: Participation
- Itaka Escolapios
- Piarists Going Forth

We have the requirement and the opportunity to generate open formative processes. In my initial formation process, I made a stop between philosophy and theology, following a deep crisis experience. I had the opportunity to initiate a process of personal discernment in Bolivia, a country outside mine. I was able to recognize who I am from contact with other cultures. I never felt more Mexican, and at the same time, so astonished and driven to love the earth (pachamama). Deepening the Bolivian culture, and trying to understand the deep worldview and own language, allowed me to get to know myself better, and at the same time to have a greater commitment and identity with the Pious Schools.

The center of inculturation is relationship

First of all, I relate to people, and from them, to their cultures. What does man and woman seek but fullness of existence, fullness of being? Man is understood and grown from deep relationship. Numerous studies on happiness decant the importance of relationships as an effective path of plenification and growth (Robert Waldinger; John Powell)

Therefore, a process of inculturation would be like that of a spinner, who with patience and wisdom, weaving ties, uses the tools he has to establish a deep relationship. Without a doubt, the first and most important tool is language; but not only from a rational path, but from the profound being of the person.

What have I thought about my Piarist life about it?

A week ago, I had the opportunity to share my life with two brothers, Antonio Entrena and Eloy Fernandez (Piarists from Spain and the world)... A student asked me, among the many activities and visits, why was I there? My immediate answer was, because here is Antonio... At that moment, I did not think much of it, but now I understand it better. My relationship of Piarist brotherhood with Antonio took me to Granada, if Antonio was not there, most likely the visit would not have made so much sense.

We are human beings in constant relationship; relationship is a saving principle. Is our relationships as Christian humans, in our shared religious history, from our common narrative, not leading us to establish mystical relationships? Is our relationship a relationship of God that communicates with God? If we could understand the deep divine communication that exists among human beings, our processes of inculturation would be “bread eaten”?

By all this I mean one thing. My personal process of inculturation involves a deep knowledge of who I am in a multiplicity of aspects, and the recognition of common stories with the other. The recognition even from my faith, that God dwells in the other; and that God himself who dwells in me, wants to communicate deeply with you. God himself is relationship. The God we believe in is Triune, he is community.

Empathy represents the tool by excellence for the process of inculturation and interculturality. I can understand that the most immanent is the most transcendent, that is, the small details equal us and bring us closer to God's experience. We're more alike than we think. We have common stories and experiences as human beings on this planet..

Inculturating involves knowing oneself; no one loves what he does not know, I can only love from my own culture, and love myself in my culture. And when I develop empathy and get closer to the deep mystery of the other, I am on my way to inculturation.

Culture is something dynamic, in constant dialogue. It would be absurd the approach that isolates culture in order to preserve it. The culture that does not open up to dialogue from one's own identity, is doomed to drown.

The real intercultural dialogue will be developed through the recognition of one's identity. Who am I? Where do I come from?... I can be a Christian in any culture, each with its own difficulties and reinterpretations. Just knowing who I am, I can try to understand who you are.

Other tools that can be explored to generate deep processes of self-knowledge and inculturation would be: unconditional positive acceptance; openness to experience; active listening.

I have nothing left but to reaffirm the principle from which I started, as a conclusion, I consider that the first step in a good process of inculturation is self-knowledge. This presents us various demands in different areas such as human formation, and the development of tools that facilitate deep relationships with those who are different from me.

Thank you.

Interculturality and Inculturation

Intuitions from Austria

*Fr. Jean de Dieu TAGNE Sch. P.
General Delegate of the Province of Austria.*

I would like to share with you some elements about the following question: how do Piarists from different cultures make possible (the) Piarist life in a culture where there is no more a native Piarist?

Presentation of the Piarist presence in Austria

It may not be necessary to come back to the presentation of the province of Austria because, in their respective presentations, Fr José Burgues (historian of the Order) and Fr Pedro Aguado (Superior General) gave a brilliant summary of both the history and the present of the Piarist reality of our province.

It suffices here to say, that Piarist Fathers are present in our province from the time of our Founder Saint Joseph Calasanz. In our mission of Horn till today, we follow the same pattern that existed in those early times of the Order: a village that wants the presence of the Piarists invite them, give them a house and food and the Piarists serve the village in education. This continues in Horn till today; there is a foundation that offers a house for 2 fathers and a lunch for one of them; the fathers serve in the Piarist church for celebrations and accompaniment of the faithful of the Piarist church in that village.

Our parish Maria Treu is the oldest serving parish of the Order. 300 years of continuous service to the people. Last year was our jubilee

year and it was greatly celebrated with the presence of the Cardinal of Vienna at the opening ceremony and the presence of our Superior General at the closing ceremony.

Now there are 12 Piarists in the province of Austria: 7 are coming from India, from 3 different cultures and 2 liturgical rites; 3 are coming from Cameroun, from different 3 cultures; 1 is coming from Spain (Cataluña) and 1 is a Spanish-German with Austrian passport. We are essentially intercultural in all our communities. We form 3 communities in 4 houses. We have a provincial assembly every month, rotating in the different houses. The ministry in the schools is basically led by lay people: our provincial administrator is a lay man; the directresses of our schools are lay women. Our archive is being reorganised with the help of lay archivists from the province of Hungary.

We are hoping to grow in the German speaking world, by getting back to some of the historical places that we lost and by opening to new realities.

The motto of our province is “***we are growing in love, peace and joy!***” This motto that we have established since last year is present on our letterhead, and the people around us in the parish and in the schools know it and share it. Everyone knows that there is a bright intercultural future for the province of Austria.

We are working very much on this ***new narrative***. For this reason, we employed a professional of communication, to make the Order present in German language, in the useful forums and in conformity with the present legislations on communication. Information about Austria is now present in the Order (Facebook, Ephemerides, Annual book etc.); information from the Order is translated into German and share to all our collaborators (The *Salutatio*, important events from other provinces, etc.).

Austria is deeply connected to the Order and for that reason, Austria is alive and is growing.

Intuitions from our experience in Austria

The 2 intuitions that I’m going to share with you are deeply linked to 3 stories that I’ll just mention without narrating them.

Here are my 3 stories

1. A dialog with Card. Christoph Schönborn who affirm in two public occasions that “the Piarists, who, some years ago, were thought to be disappearing are now growing in Vienna”;
2. On the day of my installation as new parish priest of Maria Treu, the Parish Pastoral Council offered me a drum (tam-tam);
3. The excuse for my German mistakes (the strength of my weakness)

Now come my two intuitions:

The two intuitions form a process from inside out.

Identity as key to Interculturality

There is an urgent need of a Piarist culture: **“Be a piarist and do whatever you can!”** In our reflection about the future of the Order, this is the best formula we found in our group Angel Ruiz. It is in fact a paraphrase of the famous expression: “love and do whatever you want” of Saint Augustine of Hippo, the great African philosopher and theologian; it expresses also the deep passion of Paul of Tarsus to the Galatians: “it is not more I that live, but it is Christ who lives in me”.

Most of the difficulties we found in our communities have their root in identity. We have forgotten along the line our common identity as Piarists. When I become promoter or defender of my tribe or culture of origin, the other members of my community coming from a different tribe or culture may feel repressed or colonised.

The solution to such problems is found in the development of a common Piarist Culture that grows through **connection to the Order**. There is something beyond our individual cultures and that is the common Piarist culture that brought us together.

Some characteristics of this Piarist Culture that will enhance our growth in identity are:

- Clear reference to Calasanz; “Calasanz unites us; Calasanz keeps on founding the Order; we are called to be a new Calasanz, etc.”
- The Constitutions and Rules of the Order, the general directories and other documents of the Order. These are our common references that are regularly updated to serve

their purpose of transcultural guidelines for all; (ignorance of our Constitutions and other piarist documents are a source of problems in our communities;

- The common symbols of the Order;
- The dynamics of the Order in the sense of “Being with the Order in its present movement”: following the keys of life, participating in meetings; fluent communication from the Order and to the Order.

Incarnation as key to Inculturation

In the Gospel of John, the expression used to speak of Incarnation is the following: “*O logos sarks egeneto*”. On one hand, there is the “*logos*” and on the other hand, there is “*sarks*”. In all his teaching, Jesus has a deep conscience of his identity. He knew that he came from the Father and that he will return to the Father.

This consciousness of our own identity and our own mission is central to inculturation. We can frame it in the following questions: **who are you? Why are you here?** It’s important to ask ourselves frequently these questions. If not the difficulties and the distractions on the way can take us away from the reason of our presence.

Sometimes we focus too much on the difficulties, but I would like to open our eyes to other distractions: economical, emotional, philosophical, etc.

For a proper Inculturation to take place there is a need of connection with the local reality. The local reality means the **culture and aspiration** of the people. Allow me to quote *Gaudium et Spes* (n. 1): “*The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the men (and women) of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ. Indeed, nothing genuinely human fails to raise an echo in their hearts. For theirs is a community composed of men (and women). United in Christ, they are led by the Holy Spirit in their journey to the Kingdom of their Father and they have welcomed the news of salvation which is meant for every man (and woman). That is why this community realizes that it is truly linked with humankind and its history by the deepest of bonds.*”

When this teaching of the Church is properly assumed, then come the practical or merely technical needs like: learning the language,

getting to understand the educative system, learning the ecclesiology, the foods and dressing codes etc. Most of the times, the excuses come from this practical things, but these are excuses; the deepest reasons are the reasons of the heart.

Talking about language, a word that has come up here often in the past days, I would say, the real language we need to learn is the language of the connection to the heart of people. The vocabulary and grammatical nuances are of course important but they are not the essential part of the language of a missionary. And this, for many reasons: a) the words have many meanings; you can understand literally all the words but fail to understand what people are saying; b) many people have dialects beside the original language; you may learn the official language, but when people do not want you to understand what they are saying, they speak in a dialect.

Learning the language of the heart is to be able, by means of words and silences, to manifest to those around you that their presence is valued, that you care for them that you are there for them.

Sharing the aspiration of the people: what are the real aspirations of these people? Are you part of the solution or part of the problem? Sharing the aspiration of the people is to let them univocally understand, that you are of their side to face their real challenges: the fight again poverty, exploitation, ignorance, etc.

A good message for Inculturation should be: "I'm not coming to take away from you; I'm coming to give you, to make you more". And in this sense, the personal talent of the Piarist missionary is important. Which skill do you know that can help people in their real life?

Conclusion

Let me finish by recalling one great, but forgotten document of Paul VI on this topic: *Populorum Progressio*. Development is the new name of peace. This is not only true for the so-called poor countries; this is valid for all the countries and cultures, since "every human being wishes to have more in order to be more". The seed of the Gospel, while growing in a given culture, has to enrich the people there with more economical possibilities, more intellectual facilities, more emotional balance, etc. And that is what gives its true meaning Inculturation and Interculturality.

Interculturality and Interculturation in the context of pastoral care of piarist vocations and formation in Southeast Asia

*Fr. Roberto DALUSUNG Sch. P.
Asian Coordinator of Vocations Ministry.*

Yesterday, we had a discussion that inculturality and inculturation must begin during initial formation. Now, I would like to begin my sharing with you by quoting from John Paul II's document regarding this topic: and I quote "If you know how to form new vocations for the inculturation you can expect to have missionaries capable of collaborating in the unit of sanctifying a legitimate diversity". Three key words here that we can apply and I think very important in promoting vocations and in formation: inculturation, missionaries, and legitimate diversity.

1. Interculturation and Interculturality. In the many articles sent to us by Fr. General, there are words that we can better understand these concepts: integration, encounter, insertion, infusion, penetration, sowing, incarnation. On the one hand, interculturation and interculturality is internal, inside (ad intra), subjective reality and on the other hand, (ad extra) outside external reality because it is a mutual exchange and enrichment of ourselves living in a multi-cultural reality.

2. My context. I am living in the formation house, which is international for our Asian brothers in Manila who are practically at the initial stage of their formation: beginning to know our Order, our

life, mission, spirituality, all aspects. To date, in that community there are six nationalities: Vietnamese, Timorese, Filipinos, Laotian, Burmese, and Spanish. At the outset, it is just a multi-cultural community because it's just a conglomeration of brothers from different countries. Also it is intercultural because in that formation house there is an evidence of mutual exchange of cultures, life, ethos, mores, customs, spirituality, etc. In doing so, there is an enrichment reality. As Fr. Miguel said, inter-culturality is only evident in the formation houses (true), yet in other working communities in the Philippines, majority are Filipinos (but Filipinos too have different ethnic groups: remember that Philippines is composed of many islands, archipelago, in a way there is also an intercultural experience).

3. Asian expansion and vocation work. In our context, these two realities are one. The Vice province of Japan-Philippines took the responsibility of responding to the thrust of the Order regarding expansion. Expansion however is not immediate expansion, but like a mustard seed sowed, then it will be in full blown reality. We know this reality in Vietnam and in Indonesia. We begin with the recruitment of vocations from different Southeast Asian countries; bring them to Manila for English language training, studies, and other aspects related to Piarist formation. And hoping in the future, after the formation, the locals will be the prime mover or protagonist in planting the seed of Calasanzian charism in their own country (imagine, if Piarist in Japan did not go to the Philippines, I am not here, also there will be no Piarist community in Indonesia and Vietnam). With the blessing and support of our Order, we did a vocation visit and exploration in Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Cambodia, Myanmar, and Laos. After the first round of visit, we prioritize the countries to focus our vocation work, with set of criteria regarding that decision. To date, together with my vocation team, we are doing our vocation work in four dioceses in Myanmar (North, North-eastern and Southwestern states, and Yangon as our stop over); two dioceses in Malaysia (East Malaysia, Northern Borneo); one apostolic vicariate of Southern Laos, and when situation comes in Thailand. I will not describe in details each country because I think this is out of the topic. If you are interested, all our vocation work in these countries are well-documented in the cloud (google drive), if you like I can send it in your email, just tell me.

Asia is a complex and vast continent: multi-cultural, multi-lingual, multi-ethnic, multi-religion. It is interesting to note that there are cases in some Southeast Asian countries culture and religion are one, the same. Example: in Myanmar, to be a Burmese is to be a Buddhist, the same in Cambodia, Thailand, and Laos. In these countries, Christianity is expressed in such a way there is a Buddhist touch, i.e, inculturation. In Laos and Thailand, for example, masses are celebrated in chanting like the Buddhist monks chanting while praying in their Pagodas. Pope Francis during his recent trip to Thailand, he encouraged the priest and religious to inculturate the gospel so as not to appear that Christianity is a religion of the white or foreign religion. In Malaysia, to be Malay is to be a Muslim, a true Malay is a Muslim and not a Christian. This is the challenge of the Church of Malaysia, there is a growing Islamization. Because there's a privilege attach to it if you are a Moslem; in terms of work, promotion, government seats, much privilege are given to a Malay who is a Muslim than to a Christian Malay. In Laos, a persecuted local Church, there is a growing 'more' communist thinking, as compare to Vietnam. In fact, the sole Cardinal of Laos once told his seminarians, 'be ready to be martyrs anytime, anywhere'. In Thailand, religious tolerance is very evident as we have seen during the visit of Pope Francis, but very rooted in their Buddhist tradition. In Myanmar, as they are in transition from totalitarian rule to democracy, they are confronted by different realities: human rights violations, discrimination of minorities, violence, poor living condition, lack of health and educational services, and exploitation of natural resources.

4. The vocation and formation work under an intercultural point of view. I think, vocation work should take into account the different current realities and challenges of each country. There is a need to see each country differently, in different contexts, different situations such as: safety and security, socio-economic structures, religious tolerance, the relationship of the local church to the government (totalitarian tendency), language, religious traditions, and geopolitical situation in the international spheres.

Vocation and formation work in inculturation and inter-cultural context. I would like to suggest attitudes based on my personal experience. As the vocations are for the Order not only for the demar-

cation, we must develop the attitude of openness and respect- to be more open to culture, religious traditions, beliefs; see things differently, not an imposing attitude in order to enrich ourselves, food, language, celebrations, worship; and develop a trustful community wherein favoritism or favoring one culture over the other should not exist, hence, sensitivity must develop.

Inculturation from Senegal's experience

*Bro. Ferrán SANS Sch. P.
Formator in West African Province.*

*Salam aleekum. Maa ngiy leen di nuyy, ku nekk ci turam
ak santam*

(literally translated from Wolof)) Peace with you.
I greet each of you in your name and in your family name.

Two prerequisites

1. I was asked to talk about inculturation in Senegal. It is obvious that my experience will come out that is rather poor, because I only am for 29 years in the country and there are others who have preceded me and who are here for around 50 years; I arrived in Senegal in 1990, 27 years after the beginning of the foundation. I will alternate, therefore, rather personal elements with elements that could come out of the experience of the predecessor group.

2. I must confess that in my inculturation in Senegal I had a great advantage: I had been “inculturated” before for 23 years in a poor neighborhood on the outskirts of an industrial city of Catalonia, Terrassa. My first inculturation had skipped the steps I will mention after, that’s why I say that I was “inculturated” directly by the reality. And I want to notice this because I dare to say that it seemed to me that we have forgotten a little what I find fundamental to our charisma: inculturation in the world of the poor. It can be done in your own country of origin. Perhaps it is different from other types of inculturation because it only responds to a radical option that

comes from God? Perhaps it is a grace that God gives to whomever he wants? I don't know. Excuse me, I didn't have time to delve deeper into the theme. Perhaps leave two questions on this theme:

1. The inculturation in the world of the poor, the most abandoned... deserves a separate chapter, because it is fundamental to us Piarists? Should we also think of a specific strategy for this inculturation?
2. Is there a history of communities in a working-class environment, similar to that of other foundations? (My experience tells me that communities in working-class areas are not too sustainable, at least in Catalonia) Have they been a work of charismatic people like Chinchachoma, Pancho Botey, Alfaro, etc., which disappear with people?

Having said that, I move on to formulate some ideas that seemed remarkable to me, about inculturation in Senegal.

I will talk about two fundamental steps: 1st, Preparation and 2nd , Inculturation as such. Finally, I'll finally will set out four questions.

Preparation

1-There is a basic, profound preparation that goes to the root: a life of solid faith manifested in the total and joyful gift of the profession. If "obedience," to speak in this way, sends me to another community, with my vision of faith, after a good discernment, I must joyfully and enthusiastically accept the new destination. I measure my words and I repeat:

1. A VISION OF FAITH.
2. and AFTER, a good DISCERNEMENT..
3. Finally, ACCEPTATION WITH ENTHOUSIASM.

TWO OBSERVATIONS: First: It seems to me that the 3 are absolutely necessary; but probably with the first clear attitude, A VISION OF FAITH, we can already start and there must not be any other preparations. The dynamics of engagement lead you.

SECOND: On discernment. I believe that it is not only the spiritual director, nor the superiors only, but also all those to whom we have

served with all our strength in our previous mission (I am talking about students, teachers, committed and uncommitted people of the neighborhood, monitors, EBCs, etc.). This is out of respect to all these people. It seems to me that we cannot leave a mission overnight. If we do that, I think we will say that there was not a good rooting in that mission. I would say even more: as far as possible (always in my opinion), we should involve the people of the mission, in a way, in the new mission; not completely cutting the links, but involving them in the new mission. So far, the basic preparation.

As immediate preparation (having already made the option freely and by our faith in Jesus Christ who sends us) I will propose the following:

- Study, as much as possible, of the new mission: geography -physical and human-, history ... everything related to culture in general. Because we're going to DISCOVER AND KNOW to collaborate better.
- Special mention on LANGUAGE. I was lucky enough to be able to study during my studies at the college of my childhood; a month in Toulouse before going to Senegal; and for a year at the Alliance Française in Dakar. In addition, for 3 years, Wolof classes at UCAD. But the best was to have been 4 months of living in a family in a Wolof village, in total immersion. I know that my illustrious predecessors before coming to Senegal came to the South of France to learn French. And that they were role models because they mastered the diola (the language of their mission in Casamance) that they had learned on the spot. But that was their primary concern. I cite three examples: Fr. Antonio Sala had made a very rich record of Diola vocabulary: he had hundreds of cards. Fr. Mateu Trenchs had translated all the texts (including readings) from the Mass to the Diola. Fr. Jaume Salas spoke Diola better than young people, for he frequented the elders and around palm wine he learned many twists and turns.
- Third preparation. There is no inculturation without renunciation: Give up the past to start almost at 0. Without geography, without history, without the previous lan-

guage, without friends, only with faith in God, the God of Jesus. That is, decided to know deeply the new geography, new friends and the new language (two personal details: my diary, from my stay in France, I have always done it in French; full of mistakes, at first, but the important thing was the change; in addition I did not want to read books in Catalan during the first years) (Another important fact: with the Catalans who were in my community, we had agreed to adopt among ourselves, even in our moments to be alone, to always speak in French).

In the Dakar region, unfortunately, only Fr. Paco Garcia de Haro had made a great effort to learn Wolof and he dared to preach in Wolof. He also led a UNICEF-supported National Language Literacy Project, which had 50 classes in 50 different neighbourhoods.

And finally: Sam Sam's primary school, which is already 23 years old, has never ceased its option for the national language and until now learning to read, writing and numeracy is done in Wolof, to move already to French in the second year.

Perhaps we have not been able to convey this importance of language, because I see that there are too many difficulties in learning Wolof, Serer and Diola by the new Piarists. Piarists should be "doctors" in the local language.

- And fourth preparation: to have a humble attitude of discovery and collaboration, a look of inculturation. Once, in Barcelona, I had spoken in a conference of three possible views on Africa (among others): a) From height, like a bird, (especially vulture) the look of one who wants to take advantage from the other. It would be the look of a colonizer. b) the "saviour" look; it seems to me that it is a look from top to bottom (diving), of one who thinks he is superior and who will bring solutions to the problems he believes exist; this is the danger of some NGOs. c) The look of collaboration, of one who puts himself on the same level as the other and who looks, with him, in the same direction. I believe that our attitude should be above all this last: a humble look, of respect, of apprentices (the one who learns), of admiration even because we discover wonders. Jesus is the

model: he became one with us. Chinchachoma is another model: he had put himself on the same level as the street children because he had shared the street with them; he also shared the same language. (End of preparation steps)

3 Steps in the concrete inculturation or inculturation as such

1. Nihilistic stage. It can be more or less long. In my case, around six months. We often ask ourselves: what are you doing here? You feel bad, you don't do anything. It is only faith and prayer that support us.
2. We start seeing the possible collaboration, the possible place of intervention. THIS IS WHEN CONCRETE WORK IS ASSIGNED TO US. In my case, it was an extraordinary project: setting up a popular educational institution on the outskirts of Dakar. For this project I emphasize two values that I think are very important to hold in our foundations: 1) That the project is not the work of one person, but of the whole province. And so it was. 2) Always move with people, at people's pace. This project was decided in 1989. In 1993, two Piarists were sent to a neighbourhood to study the environment: this study lasted 3 years. And in 1996, with the Congregation, we chose the neighborhood and we went there to settle first in a rented house, which had no water or electricity, like all the other houses in the neighborhood.
3. You move forward with people. For me, this is a very important principle: ADVANCE WITH THE PEOPLE. The opposite can lead us to build on fictitious, non-solid foundations.
4. To make reality the interculturality between two religions, such as the Muslim and the Catholic, it seems to me fantastic the sharing of Calasanzian charism. We meet in action, in the education of poor children ("The poor, path of unity", said Jean Vanier). It is because of this that we were accepted in the neighborhood by the religious authorities and the population; and we shared the admiration for Calasanz with our Muslim teachers.

5. Do not put limits on our inculturation: “Until death will separate us.” After that, perhaps another “obedience” will fall and we will have to surrender to Providence. But the attitude must remain there: forever. I think our options must be radical.

And finally.

Four questions. A silly question and three more normal ones

1. Should the option for the poor be so radical that it is not subject to religious obedience to superiors? Is it unlimited?
2. The fact of mobility in communities does not go against a good inculturation? Is it a hindrance? (How can you inculturate if you only are for 4 years in a community?)
3. Sometimes you can be in a community that doesn't participate in your commitments. On the one hand, you want to integrate into the middle of people; on the other hand, you have to be a community with your brothers. There is a tug of war on which side the commitments should be made?
4. In order for a good inculturation, can we know the CULTURE OF POORS, without a real presence among them?

The Inculturation of the charism in the andean context

*Fr. Osvaldo ESPINOZA Sch. P.
Provincial Assistant of NAZARET Province.*

Introduction

In America, there are many ethnicities and many indigenous nationalities that were born before the conquest. They are anchored mostly in the American Andes, usually in the heights. This even physical reality has given characteristics to peoples, and throughout history has developed a culture with elements common to all Andean nationalities, as they are often called.

The inculturation of the charism, I believe that it must be read in the context of the whole process of evangelization of these peoples since the conquest itself. The conquerors came with the Bible in their hand. I do not think it is time to do a critical reading of the story.

My experience is part of the Quichua Saraguro people (A population, at the moment with 50% indigenous people and 50% mixed-breed). A people who until the 80s were victims of every expression of racism. They had no property in the small urban center, they had no profession, they were tools of work, they were workers and employees of the “whites” of the village, exploited in every way, undervalued in their physical and above all intellectual abilities, and in many cases, deceived and stolen in their few properties. They lived and still they live the experience of faith and its belonging to the Catholic religion, from fear. In any case, throughout history cultural elements were developed that link the Catholic religion and the customs of a

people that joins all its expression and symbolic experience with the main ritual elements of the Catholic religion: in the celebration of Holy Week, at Christmas, etc. There are cultural elements typical of Saraguro culture as an expression of their life in faith.

The idea of the foundation in indigenous peoples of Ecuador has been proper since the first foundation in 1964 in Cañar. My hometown. Then, Saraguro in 1974. In this way it was possible to attend to two places where there was an indigenous population. I mean, we went to small, poor towns, as Calasanz said.

I believe that an initial element of inculturation of the charism was to open schools for the poor and rejected of society.

The current reality of these peoples (Saraguro) since 2000 has changed a lot, and I think it is good to see and reflect on it in order to know how to give a charismatic response. It is a people that go from a strong family structure to a growing experience of deconstructing it. Maybe emigration broke the family and the main values. The phenomenon of globalization and digitization, and communication has produced people who open their hearts to drugs, to sensuality, to the search for easy money, to have in many cases a meaningless life. From my point of view, just as a reaction contrary to what they never had, and with passing the time have it all, but they have not received the elements to have it.

***What has helped me to discover life and feel part of the Saraguro people (Other Indigenous Peoples).
Inculturation***

I do not live in Saraguro now. I live in Loja, the capital. When I am with someone and I see some Saraguro Indian, I usually say: "look at my countryman." I say it from the heart, and not on many occasions, I have seen bad faces because racist feelings still exist. It is for this reason that the first thing that has helped me to be inculturate is to love all the people where you live. And I learned to love them because I discover many of my roots in indigenous peoples.

A second element I call it Humility. I experienced from the first moment feelings of respect, of equality, without any arrogance, without feeling possessed of any truth, avoiding any discriminato-

ry feeling, approaching all the realities that these peoples live. Not like the one who brings something, but as living with them from my being and vocation.

A sign of respect is to make the effort to know the reality and the people where you live. We studied with a brother of community the Quichuan language; we participate in assemblies and community work. We listen long to people in their needs; visited families and share everything they are and live, and above all we care for the children of indigenous communities to have facilities to access and get to school. It was a struggle.

Valuing all the cultural expressions of the Saraguros helped us, helped me. I learned to discover the same values of the Gospel (blackboard) and to teach them to read from Jesus. I believe that evangelization or education from Calasanz is an act of reading and discovering God's will in human beings anywhere in the world.

You have to make a school open to everyone and with the same conditions for everyone. Where the person arriving feels that he comes home. He should feel he is accepted with everything he is. From what you believe and live. This aspect has been a struggle, since only a few years ago has the government begun to discover that the education system neglects, now yes, the multiculturalism of the Ecuadorian people. They try to make changes.

Being faithful to your vocation, it is necessary to enlighten, from the Gospel and the charism. When you feel accepted, you can talk about what you believe, about your own culture, your own being and you offer the Gospel, the same educational processes as elements that help to energize, and even change things that culturally hold back the human being.

It gives me great joy to feel loved by the Saraguro people. I say this because the best thing you can do is be true to who you are. Living from your being a priest, religious, educator, and live it with freedom and coherence.

What most inculturates you, if it is well said, I think is when you approach each human being, after all that we have said, and you listen to him, welcome him, you look at his interiority in his hopes, joys and pains. Many hours of confession and many hours of accompa-

niment. All human beings are equal and I believe that humanity and its dynamism, even in the experience of the transcendent, are marked by the spirit of Jesus.

Challenges that a process of inculturation in the Andean world poses to us

There are many indigenous peoples, Andeans, who have been losing their cultural identity. Their cultural expressions are theoretical and superficial, and are limited, in many cases, to clothing, and in few places to the language. Like all, they are victims of processes of globalization, digitization and accelerated communication that has called into question deep cultural elements, such as community experience, God's experience and faith, commitment, dedication, etc. Children and young people, from different peoples, are becoming more and more the same. This reflection and what we can do from school are challenging to provide educational elements that promote the person and his identity.

I believe that another great challenge is in the formation of the Piarists and lay people who share with us the charism. From the documents we receive I rescue this idea: "we must take care of the discernment of candidates for religious life and acting at levels of formation that offer adequate instruments to be effective presence in an ecclesial context that is mobile, that is interconnected, in which attention to the local, to cultural specificity coexists with openness to the global". Interestingly, we must be strong vocationally to respond to a changing world.

To form our collaborators in the Piarist Calasanctian Identity, and create processes of continuous growth in all our presences. With the same challenges as our religious in initial formation. I believe that all over the world lay Piarist vocations arise.

In Nazareth, we have been breaking the localist mentality. It was a policy a few years ago to make training houses for Equatorians. Today there is a formation house in Quito without any Equatorian. This change of mindset opens up horizons, generates another type of Piarist open to the world.

The Andean world needs "quality" education centers. Not quality in terms of statistics in standardized tests, but in a human quali-

ty that generates true processes of social and ecclesial change. It is for this reason that the reflection on the reality that we have in our presences is fundamental, because we must respond and make our schools, the soul of processes of personal identification, of Christian identity, centers that promote social change from the education of every human being.

I think another challenge is learning to live and grow in community life. We are not individuals who are dedicated to work and who share a house. We are community-based and this aspect must be reflected in our experience and in our formation. I say this because many of the realities of the Andean peoples are communal. With one spirit, with the ability to work as a team, with the ability to discover the gift of others, where you give yourself to serve, etc.

To look beyond your current reality. On many occasions, we marry meaningful experiences that bring you joy and satisfaction. In America, I believe that there are still places where they are waiting for us and they want us to arrive with the very need to speak to them and show God. Peruvian Experience.

To be open to leave when you are not significant.

As a Conclusion

The Gospel is born inculturating itself. Jesus is embodied in a people, in a family, in a concrete reality and with his own name. This living gospel passes through history and culture. Therefore, I believe that the life of God is energized, recreated and shown in every human being above every cultural expression. In every child and young person that shows God, finds meaning our vocation as Priest educators.

Calasanz taught us that Jesus is in every human being. Anywhere in the world. I think inculturating ourselves has a final goal and we have to discover it, so that discovering it, we welcome it.

Judging

Fundamental approaches to be made by the Church and Religious Congregations in the face of the dynamism of interculturality

*Fundamental keys to consider
to address well the challenge
of interculturality in Consecrated Life
and the Educational Mission*

*H. Em. R. Gianfranco, Cardinal RAVASI.
President of the Pontifical Council for Culture.*

In modern times, the word “culture” has become something of a keyword that opens a wide number of doors. When the term was coined in Germany during the eighteenth century (*Cultur*, then *Kultur*), the underlying concept was clear and limited: it embraced the high intellectual horizons and aristocracy of thought, art and humanism. For decades now, instead, this category has been “democratized”, it has widened its borders and acquired a more general, anthropological nature, in the wake of the famous definition created by Unesco in 1982, a definition that has been placed at the opening of this collection of articles; indeed, today, the adjective “transversal” is used to indicate the multiplicity of areas and human experiences it “embraces”. In the light of this, we can

understand the reservations of the German sociologist Niklas Luhmann, who is convinced that the term “culture” is “the worst word ever coined”, and he is echoed by his American colleague, Clifford Geertz, who declared that “it is devoid of all heuristic potential”.

Nevertheless, this lack of precision takes us back to the classical concept, in the days when other, very important synonymous terms were in use: we only have to think of the Greek *paideia*, the Latin *humanitas*, or to our own “civilization” (the word preferred by Pius XII, for example). It was in this more open perspective that the word “culture” was resolutely embraced by the Second Vatican Council which, following the magisterium of Paul VI, used it 91 times in its documents. We now have in our hands this sort of anthological “*Enchiridion*” of the most important texts of the Church’s Magisterium on the topic, which opens with the Council’s *Gaudium et Spes* and moves through 17 documents, between encyclicals and apostolic exhortations, and touches upon a variety of other authoritative ecclesial documents, resulting in a work that truly reflects various diverse nuances of a concept that is important, indeed crucial, for theology and past ministry.

In 2003, the Pontifical Council for Culture—acting on the inspiration of its then president, Cardinal Paul Poupard (one of his texts is included in this *Enchiridion*) —also published an “anthology of papal magisterium texts from Leo XIII to John Paul II” under the title *Faith and Culture*, with the conviction that, as John Paul II said in his address to the assembly of the United Nations (1995), “every culture is an effort to ponder the mystery of the world and in particular of the human person: it is a way of giving expression to the transcendent dimension of human life. The heart of every culture is its approach to the greatest of all mysteries: the mystery of God”. We will not attempt to map out the Church’s teaching on this vital issue, since it emerges in a clear and limpid manner throughout this volume. Instead, we shall offer some essential and simplified considerations on the question of interculturality.

Acculturation or Inculturation?

Obviously, as an introduction, we must mention another preliminary concept that has led to an infinite number of reflections and clarifi-

cations, namely, “acculturation” or “inculturation”, which an essay published in the *American Anthropologist* in 1935 defined as: “All the phenomena that occur when groups of individuals with different cultures engage in primary contacts for a long time, causing a transformation in the cultural models of one or both groups”. The term then took on a negative meaning: the hegemonic culture does not yield to osmosis, but tries to impose its mark on the weaker one, creating a degenerative shock and a true and proper form of colonialism.

In less abstract terms, we could think of the Euro-centric ideology that has imposed, not only its “epistemological heritage”, but also its practical and economical model of the “world system”, which has often turned out to be the interface of colonialism in Africa and in Asia. This process dragged Christianity too into becoming one of the acculturation components. We can thus understand the phenomenon of the reaction of the “revivalist” movements, or forms of ethnocentrism, nationalism and indigenism, such a vigorous phenomenon that led not a few observers to change the terminology from “globalization” to “glocalization”.

This explains why the contemporary Church prefers to avoid the term “acculturation”, and use “inculturation” instead, to describe the work of evangelization. John Paul II, in *Slavorum Apostoli* of 1985, defined inculturation as “the incarnation of the Gospel in native cultures and also the introduction of these cultures into the life of the Church”. A dual dialogical movement of exchange, therefore, by which—as John Paul II said to the bishops of Kenya in 1980—“a culture, transformed and regenerated by the Gospel, brings forth from its own living tradition original expressions of Christian life, celebration and thought”. Thus, the term “inculturation” denotes, especially at a theological level, a co-penetration between Christianity and cultures in a fruitful encounter, which was gloriously corroborated by the encounter between the Christian theology of the first centuries and the mighty Greek-Roman classical heritage.

Ethnocentrism and Comparativism

At this point, it is only natural that we should consider—albeit in a very essential way—the question of the more specific relationship and the interactions between the different cultures that come into

contact with each other. As we said previously, the term *Cultur/Kultur* was coined in Germany during the eighteenth century, and people began to speak also of “cultures” in the plural, thus laying the foundations for recognizing and understanding the phenomenon we now define as “multiculturality”. This path, which surpassed the Eurocentric and intellectualistic perimeter and opened the way to new and wider horizons, was inaugurated by Johann Gottfried Herder with his *Ideas for the Philosophy of History of Humanity* (1784–91); among other things, in 1782 he had already produced the work *On the Spirit of Hebrew Poetry*. The idea, however, was still being elaborated in the thought of Vico, Montesquieu and Voltaire, who recognized the emergence of a cultural pluralism in the historical evolutions and involutions, environmental conditionings and the incipient encounter between peoples, in the wake of the various discoveries, in the first ideal, social and economic osmosis.

Undoubtedly, this approach was inserted into an ancient dialectic which—simplifying matters somewhat—saw the intersection of ethnocentrism and comparativism. There has been a constant fluctuation between these two extremes and we are still witnesses of this today. *Ethnocentrism* becomes exasperated in political or religious fields that bear the mark of integralism, proudly clinging to the conviction of the absolute primacy of their own civilization, on a scale of various degrees that even result in the depreciation of other cultures, which are classified as “primitive” or “barbarous”. Tito Livio, in his *History of Rome*, succinctly states: “With foreigners and barbarians, all Greeks ever have been and ever will be at war” (31, 29). This attitude is proposed again to us today, under the guise of the “clash of civilizations”, which was codified in the famous essay, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, written in 1996 by the political scientist, Samuel Huntington, who died in 2008.

This text listed eight cultures (Western, Confucian, Japanese, Islamic, Hindu, Slav- Orthodox, Latin American and African), emphasizing their differences to the extent that it set off alarm bells in the West for the self-defense of its own patrimony of values, which were under siege from alternative models and the “challenges of non-Western societies”. An important intuition perceived that there was a hard and profound core of a cultural and religious matrix beneath the surface of political, economic and military phenomena.

Undoubtedly, however, if we adopt the “clash of civilizations” paradigm, we become entangled in the spiral of an unending war, something that Tito Livio clearly understood. In our own times, such a model has found favor in certain contexts, especially when we consider the relationship between the West and Islam, and it can be used as a theoretical manifesto to justify political-military operations of “prevention”, whilst in the past it endorsed interventions of colonization or colonialism (the Romans were masters in this).

Comparativism, instead, though not exactly the best term, is used to indicate a very different approach to multiculturalism. It is based on the recognition of diversity as a necessary and precious flourishing of our common “Adamic” roots. Consequently, attention is focused on study and dialogue with previously ignored or remote civilizations, which now forcefully emerge into the cultural limelight that was until now occupied by the West (besides Islam, we can think also of India and China), an emergence that is favored, not only by the current globalization, but also by means of communication that cross every frontier (the world wide web is its capital symbol). These cultures, which are “new” to the West, demand an interlocution that is often imposed by their imperious presence, to such an extent that we now tend to speak of “glocalization” as a new phenomenon of planetary interaction.

Interculturality

In the context of this debate between ethnocentrism and comparativism, whose terrain of implementation is multiculturalism, we can configure an approach that we shall now outline in a very brief and approximate manner, and which we could define as *interculturality*. It is a complex task of comparison and dialogue, of cultural and spiritual exchange, which we could represent in an emblematic manner—in the Christian theological text—through the fundamental characteristic of Sacred Scripture. The Word of God is not a sacred aerolite that has fallen from the sky but, rather, the interweaving of the divine *Logos* and historical *sarx*. Thus, we are in the presence of a dynamic comparison between revelation and the various civilizations, from the nomadic to the Phoenician-Canaanite, from the Mesopotamian to the Egyptian, from the Hittite to the Persian and the Greek- Hellenistic civilizations, at least as far as the

Old Testament is concerned, while the New Testament Revelation encountered the Palestinian Judaism and the Diaspora, with the Greek-Roman culture and pagan cultic expressions.

In 1979, John Paul II, in an address to the Pontifical Biblical Commission, declared that, even before becoming flesh in Jesus Christ, “the same divine Word had previously become human language, assuming the ways of expression of the different cultures which, from Abraham to the seer of the Apocalypse, offered the adorable mystery of God’s salvific love the possibility of becoming accessible and understandable for successive generations, in spite of the multiple diversity of their historical situations”. The experience of fruitful osmosis between Christianity and cultures—which gave birth to the “inculturation” of the Christian message in far-off civilizations (we only have to remember the work of Matteo Ricci in the Chinese world)—was also a constant element in the Tradition that began with the Fathers of the Church. We only have to quote a passage from the *First Apology* of St. Justin Martyr (II century): “We have been taught that Christ is the first-born of God, and we have declared above that He is the *Logos* of whom every race of men were partakers; and those who lived reasonably are Christians, even though they have been thought atheists; as, among the Greeks, Socrates and Heraclitus, and men like them” (46, 2–3).

For an Authentic Dialogue

Nevertheless, we cannot ignore that there are some underlying risks in this intercultural and interreligious dialogue. Lack of space prevents us from looking further into the recent complex dialogue among the religions, but the theologian Heinz R. Schlette was right when, back in 1963, he observed in his essay *Towards a Theology of Religions* that “we find ourselves on a new dogmatic terrain, which can be compared to the white areas of ancient atlases”. The traditional paradigm of “exclusivism” (*extra ecclesiam nulla salus*) has been replaced by “inclusivism”, suggested above all by Karl Rahner, while the Second Vatican Council pushed for “dialogue and collaboration with the followers of other religions” (*Nostra Aetate* 2), and further mediations were attempted between these paradigms with the proposal of a “relational” Christianity.

Yet we could also have drifted towards a pluralism that would practically strip Christian theology of its identity by restricting, if not extinguishing, its own nature. By way of example, we only have to think of the so-called “geocentric” paradigm proposed by the British Presbyterian theologian, John Hick, in his two works *God and the Universe of Faiths* (1973) and *God Has Many Names* (1980), which aimed at cancelling the Christological specificity. In a less theoretical and more ethical-political context—and, therefore, with less assertiveness—we also have the famous *Toward a Global Ethic*, elaborated in 1990 by Hans Küng and adopted in 1993 by the “Parliament of the World’s Religions” of Chicago: it is based on a minimum moral consensus towards which the great cultural and religious traditions should converge in order to be at the service of the *humanum*, in view of building a “just, peaceful and sustainable” world.

If it is true that ethnocentric and integralistic fundamentalism is an explicit denial of interculturality, the same can be said of the expressions of syncretism and relativism, which are more easily tempting to tired civilizations that have become weaker in their identity-making, such as the western civilizations. This attitude—like those that proposes vague “unitary” religions based on pale and inoffensive common denominators (for example, the theories of the English historian, Arnold Toynbee, or of the Indian thinker Vivekananda)—oppose authentic dialogue. True dialogue, in fact, presupposes that the two partners compare ideas and values, certainly for a mutual enrichment, but not for a dissolution in a generic confusion or in a leveling out. Just as the excess of identity assertion can become, not only a theoretical duel, but also armed conflict, so also can a generic concordism degenerate into a colorless uniformism or a relativistic “confusion”. The preservation of the harmony of diversity in dialogue and encounter, as we see in a musical duet (which creates harmony even in the radical difference of tone between a basso and a soprano), is the goal of a genuine and fruitful multicultural and intercultural experience.

Interculturality and inculturation in the evangelizing task of the Church and religious institutions

Experience and challenges

Fr. Tiziano TOSOLINI SX.

Director of the Center for Asian Studies in Osaka (Japan).

I thank Fr. Pedro Aguado for inviting me to this assembly of yours that has decided to deal with a very important and always current issue in the Church and the various religious institutions;

However... I immediately point out that from the beginning of the short epistolary exchanges with Fr. Pedro I have informed him that he should not consider me a specialist in interculturality or inculturation. I wrote to him, on the contrary, that “I am only a missionary who has spent some time in Asia (and more precisely 20 years in Japan) trying to reflect on what it means to bring the gospel in a context other than the European one and to think about what the lines or ideas suggested by the Church would be for an inculturation of the Word of God in an Asian environment...”. And I ended this initial exchange with a question: “Will it be enough to respond to your request to attend your seminar? I honestly don’t know...”.

Fr. Pedro, without knowing me, replied that “This is exactly what we want to think about”... and now I am here, obviously aware of my limitations, but eager to make a short journey of reflection with you

to approach these fundamental issues for the Church and for each of us who wishes to inculturate the Gospel.

Since Fr. Pedro asked me for a brief initial intervention and then, later, leave room for questions, I thought to concentrate the most “theoretical” theme in this first part, and then let the “experiential” element into the second. This first part will therefore attempt to briefly clarify some concepts, such as that of “culture”, “evangelizing of cultures”, “inculturation” and “interculturality” and then devoting ourselves to a deepening on what I believe are some of the challenges that must be taken into account by those who wish to be faithful to the mandate proclaiming the Gospel message. Moreover, since in recent years I have had the opportunity to reflect on the changes taking place in both the West and Asia, I will try to point to three challenges that I think are important on both the east and the west.

Definition of the concept of culture

The term “*Cultur/Kultur*” was coined in the 18th century (especially by Johann Gottfried Herder, 1744–1803) to indicate a well-defined horizon: that of the aristocracy of thought, art, humanism. Taken by the nascent social sciences - ethnography, anthropology and sociology - the term has gradually acquired more general characters, gradually replacing the classical concept of “culture”²⁵. On the other hand, unesco states that “Culture in a broad sense can be considered as the set of unique spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional aspects that distinguish a society or social group. It encompasses not only art and literature, but also ways of life,

25 From the narrow lexical point of view, it is of Latin mint and is attested already in Cicero, but in the material sense of cultivation of the fields, which is declared a metaphor of the education of the soul through philosophy. See M. T. Cicero, *Tusculanae disputationes* 1,13: “As a field, although fertile, it cannot be fruitful without cultivation (*agger quamvis fertilis sine cultura fructuosus esse non potest*), so the soul without teaching. In fact, one thing without the other is unproductive. Now, the cultivation of soul is philosophy (*cultura autem animi philosophia est*): it removes the vices at the root and prepares the spirits to receive the seeds and it entrusts the soul so to speak in them sows what then grown will bear copious fruits”.

the fundamental rights of human beings, systems of values, traditions and beliefs”²⁶. This definition has the advantage of being accepted by all 195 member governments of the Organization (and therefore by representatives of all ideological tendencies) and its importance is *to place man at the centre of the universal interest*. It is an idea of culture based on normative and ethical elements, open to spiritual as well as material values, and which emphasizes human rights, freedom and moral responsibility. Culture appears as the supreme realization of man, called to continually overcome intellectually and morally himself, in his own individual and community life.

For its part, the Council Church²⁷ seems to have taken the term “culture” with conviction in its most open modern sense. The wording found in the document *Gaudium et spes* at n. 53 states: “With the generic term of culture we want to indicate all those means by which man refines and expresses his multiple gifts of soul and body. He causes to reduce the cosmos itself with knowledge and work in his power; it makes social life more human both in the family and throughout civil society, through the progress of customs and institutions. Finally, as time goes on, he expresses, communicates and preserves in his works the great spiritual experiences and aspirations, so that they can serve the progress of many, indeed of all mankind.”

According to this formulation, *there is no other culture but that of man, through man and for man*. It is all man’s activity, his intelligence and his affectivity, his search for meaning, his customs and his ethical references. Culture is so inherent in man that his

26 UNESCO, *World Conference on Cultural Policy. Final report of the international conference*, Mexico City, July 26–August 6, 1982. The Declaration later clarifies how one becomes a man through one’s own culture: “Culture gives the man’s ability to reflect on himself. It makes us beings specifically human, rational, critical and ethically engaged. And through it we discern values and make choices. And it is for it that man expresses himself, becomes self-aware, recognizes himself as an unfinished project, calls into question his own achievements, tirelessly seeks new meanings and creates works that transcend him.”

27 For an overview of the Council and post-council texts on the subject, see T. Tosolini, *Chiesa e cultura*. Asian Study Centre, Osaka 2009.

nature has no face except when it is realized in his culture. More specifically:

- a) Culture has to do with knowledge and values. It is an attempt to understand the world and the existence of man in the world, not in a purely theoretical sense, but oriented to the fundamental interests of human existence.
- b) Culture has an essential link with history. Culture is not isolated from the dynamic river of time, but in its historical unravelling, it develops meeting new realities and with the emergence of new intuitions. The historicity of a culture therefore means its ability to progress, and this depends on its ability to be open and to transform through encounter.
- c) Culture, in its deepest core, means an openness to the divine. This is linked to the notion that the individual transcends himself into culture and is brought into a broader social subject, of which he inherits intuitions, gives them continuity and develops them.

However, if there is no denying that man is always in a particular culture, one cannot deny the fact that “man does not end up in this same culture. Moreover, the very progress of cultures shows that there is something in man that transcends cultures. This “*something*” is precisely the nature of man: precisely this nature is the measure of culture and is the condition that man is not a prisoner of any of his cultures, but affirms his personal dignity in living in accordance with the profound truth of his being.²⁸”

Later, the post-council church more circumspectly used terms of an anthropological matrix to express the correct Gospel/culture relationship. This is evidenced by the wide-ranging debate that has developed in recent decades on the use of terms such as “accultura-

28 John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Veritatis Splendor*, August 6, 1993, No. 53.

tion”²⁹, “evangelization of cultures”, “embodiment of the gospel in indigenous cultures”, “inculturation”, “inter-culturality”³⁰.

Evangelization of cultures

Vatican II, revisiting the Gospel/culture relationship, had spoken of adaptatio-acomodatio, “incarnation”, “insertion”, “rooting”. Paul VI, on the other hand, aware of the complexity of evangelizing action, in the *Evangelii Nuntiandi* called with particular urgency the “evangelization of cultures”. An evangelization, that goes deep and goes to the roots of each culture, to transform it, purify it, convert it and elevate it from within, upsetting, if necessary “criteria of judgment” and “models of life”, but also fostering new interactions in the common growth towards universal values, respecting a legitimate and dutiful pluralism. For the Church, *evangelizing* is:

Bringing the Good News to all layers of humanity; is... transforming it from within, making humanity itself new... The purpose of evangelization is... inner change... the Church evangelizes when, by virtue of the divine power of the Message it proclaims, it seeks to convert the personal and collective consciousness of men, the activity in which they are engaged, the life and the concrete environment of their own³¹.

29 In cultural change, some anthropologists, especially in the United States, routinely distinguish two processes: *Inculturation* and *acculturation*. The first to indicate the processes with which the individual acquires the culture of his own group (family, ethnic group, religious community, social class, national society...) or one of its segment. On the other hand, the whole of the the processes of conscious or unconscious acquisition of culture or at least some of the cultural traits of another social group is defined as acculturation. This, therefore, presupposes the presence of two different cultural models as a necessary condition. L'emigration is one of the frequent cases of acculturation between human groups in which the two contact cultural systems “swap” and perhaps “transform” the patterns of behavior of each group.

30 See International Theological Commission, “Faith and inculturation” In *Documents 1969–2004*. Studio Domenicano Bologna 2006. Pp. 353–78; J. Ratzinger, “Christ, faith and the challenge of cultures” Cit. In Fr. Rossano, “Gospel Acculturation”, In *Dialogo and Christian Announcement*. Pauline Editions, Cinisello Balamo 1993, Pp. 193–205; F. Follo, “Inculturazione and inter-culturality in John Paul II and Benedict XVI” In *Oasis*, March 29, 2010.

31 Paul VI, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 8 December 1975, No. 18.

It is important here to remember how, at the magisterium level, Paul VI was the first to speak of “evangelization of cultures” as a priority and decisive missionary task for our time:

All this could be expressed by saying this: it is necessary to evangelize - not in a decorative way, in the likeness of superficial paint, but in a vital way, deep and up to the roots - the culture and cultures of man, in the rich and extended sense that these terms have in the Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, always starting from the person and always returning to the relationships of people with each other and with God. The Gospel, and therefore evangelization, are certainly not identified with culture, and are independent of all cultures. However, the Kingdom, which the Gospel announces, is lived by men deeply bound to a culture, and the construction of the Kingdom cannot fail to avail itself of the elements of human culture and cultures³².

In a broad sense, therefore, we could say that the term “evangelization” sums up the entire mission of the Church: her whole life, in fact, consists of the *traditio Evangelii*, the proclamation and transmission of the Gospel, which is “God’s power for the salvation of anyone who believes” (*Rm* 1, 16) and which ultimately identifies with Jesus Christ (cfr. *1Cor* 1, 24)³³.

Inculturation

With John Paul II, the theme “culture”, in its humanistic, anthropological and multicultural meaning, took on a new centrality. In his speeches on the subject, alongside the expression “evangelization of cultures”³⁴, the neologism “inculturation”³⁵ soon appeared, be-

32 Ibid. N. 20.

33 Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *A doctrinal note on some aspects of the Evangelization*, 3 Dec., 2007, No. 2.

34 See John Paul II, *Discourse to the Plenary Assembly of the Pontifical Council for Culture*, 12 January 1990. Post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation, *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, 25 March, 1993. Apostolic Letter, *Inde a Pontificatus*, 25 March 1993. *Discourse to the Plenary Assembly of the Pontifical Council for Culture*, 18 March 1994. *Discourse to the Participants in the Plenary Assembly of the Pontifical Council of Culture*, March 14, 1997.

35 At the level of papal documents, the term “Inculturation” was first used in the Post-synodal apostolic Exhortation *Catechesis tradendae*, October 16, 1979, No.53.

coming gradually pre-eminent. In the Encyclical Letter *Slavorum Apostoli*, John Paul II will affirm: “In the work of evangelization, which they (Cyril and Method) accomplished... it contains a model of what today bears the name of inculturation - the embodiment of the Gospel in indigenous cultures - and together the introduction of them into the life of the Church”³⁶. This dynamism is no longer expressed in a “uni-directional” movement as is the case with the process of “evangelization of cultures” (in which the Church addresses cultures that must be evangelized as if they were a passive vessel of such an effort), but inculturation produces a “double movement”. On the one hand, cultures receive the Christian message at the deepest levels of their peculiar mentality, and on the other hand, they convert into a new expression of Christianity, within the Church.

The inculturation of the Gospel and its criteria

Inculturation in its righteous process must be guided by two principles: “*Compatibility with the Gospel and communion with the universal Church.*” Guardians of the “deposit of faith”, the bishops will cure fidelity and, above all, discernment, for which a deep balance is needed: there is, in fact, the risk of uncritically moving from a kind of alienation from culture to a superestimate of it, which is a product of man, therefore and marked by sin. It too must be “purified, elevated and perfected.”³⁷ Inculturation is a difficult and delicate task, because it calls into question the Church’s fidelity to the Gospel and the Apostolic Tradition in the constant evolution of cultures³⁸.

From these principles comes the importance of the anthropological *discernment of cultures to be evangelized*. It is necessary to learn to analyze cultures in order to discern the obstacles, but also the potential for the reception of the Gospel. We therefore need a full

36 John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Slavorum Apostoli*, June 2, 1985, No.21.

37 John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Redemptoris Missio*, 7 December 1990, No. 54.

38 Other documents have repeatedly observed: “About rapid cultural, social, economic and political changes, our local churches will have to work on a process of always renewed culture, meeting the following two criteria: *compatibility with the Christian message and the union with the universal Church...* In any case, you will take care to avoid any syncretism” John Paul II, Apostolic post-synodal Exhortation *Ecclesia in Africa*, September 14, 1995, No. 62.

understanding of the realities of faith and the cultural realities involved in evangelization. This discernment, of a socio-theological nature, is indispensable to reconcile the elements that enter into dynamic tension in the process of inculturation. Inculturation must safeguard both the *distinction between faith and culture* and the need for *unity and pluralism in the Church*.

Distinguishing faith and culture

From a certain point of view, we can say that *faith is itself culture*. There is no such thing as naked faith or pure religion. In concrete terms, when faith tells man who he is and how he should begin to be a man, faith creates culture. The word “faith” is not an abstraction; it has matured through a long history and intercultural relationships in which it has formed an organic system of life, the interaction of man with himself, his neighbors, the world and God. This also means that faith is, in itself, a community that lives in a culture, which we call the “People of God”.

However, *faith must also be radically distinct from any culture*. Faith in Christ is not the product of a culture and is not identified with any of them, it is absolutely distinguished because it comes from God. But this distinction between faith and culture is not dissociation. Faith is destined to imbue all human cultures to save and elevate them according to the ideal of the Gospel.

Let us add that faith is truly lived only if it becomes culture, that is, if it transforms the mentalities and behaviors of man. There is a dialectic that must be respected between the transcendence of the revealed Word and its destiny of fertilization of all cultures. Rejecting one or the other of these needs leads to exposing inculturation both to syncretism (which confuses faith with human traditions), and to a fictitious and superficial accommodation of the Gospel to contingent cultures.

Safeguarding unity and pluralism

On the other hand, inculturation will aim to safeguard together the unity of the Church and the pluralism of its ways of expression. Evangelization serves to build the Church in her essential unity and identity. Of course, the announced message has been translated, in the past, into the categories of thought belonging to particular cultures, but these cultural interdependencies do not invalidate the permanent

value of the elementary conceptualizations of faith. Evangelization conveys a teaching enriched by generations of believers and thinkers whose contribution is an integral part of the Christian heritage.

But *unity should not be confused with uniformity*. Inculturation must, therefore, be able to reconcile unity and diversity in the Church. The guiding principle of every effort to inculturate theology, preaching and discipline is therefore the growth of the *Communio Ecclesiae*, the communion of the universal Church, which is a communion of particular Churches. It is also, by extension, a community of nations, languages, traditions and cultures. Each age or civilization brings its own gifts and heritage to the life of the Church. *With inculturation, cultures welcome the treasures of the Gospel and offer the whole Church, in return, the riches of their best traditions and the fruit of their wisdom. And it is this complex and delicate exchange that inculturation must promote for the mutual growth of the Church and of every culture.*

Interculturality and beyond

These two instances (“distinction between faith and culture” and “unity and pluralism of the Church”) were immediately accepted by Benedict XVI, when still a Cardinal, he disputed the concept of “inculturation” by proposing that of “interculturality” considered intrinsic “to the original form of Christianity”:

We should no longer talk about “inculturation”, but about the meeting of cultures or “inter-culturality”... In fact, inculturation assumes that faith, freed from culture, is transplanted into another religiously indifferent culture, where two subjects, unknown to each other, meet and merge. But this way of conceiving the encounter of faith with cultures is first and foremost artificial and unrealistic, because, with the exception of modern technological civilization, there is no faith without culture or a culture without faith... While it is true that cultures are potentially universal and open to each other, inter-culturality can lead to a flowering of new forms³⁹.

For Benedict XVI, interculturality implies both a positive attitude towards other cultures and other religions that make up its soul,

39 J. Ratzinger, “Christ, faith and the challenge of cultures”, Op. Cit. 149.

and a work of purification and a “courageous cut” indispensable to any culture that wants to remain open and alive. As described, the encounter between cultures is made possible by two assumptions. The first is the *universality of natural law*. Despite all the differences that separate them, people share one nature: their reason is open to Truth. The second assumption is the idea that the *Christian faith*, which arises from the revelation of truth, *produces what we might call “the culture of faith”*, whose characteristic are to be found in any people or cultural subject. There is therefore no neutral faith, abstracted from any kind of culture, which can be grafted into different religiously indifferent contexts. The Christian faith is not identified with any determined culture. It is intrinsically linked to a certain pluralism.

The emphasis on the cultural dimension of the religious fact has allowed Benedict XVI to highlight the profound differences between the cultural tradition born of Christianity and the secularized drift of the present Western culture, to strongly denouncing the Western civilisation’s moral crisis and addressing issues central today, such as the dignity of the human being and religious freedom.⁴⁰

40 Benedict XVI, Encyclical Letter *Caritas in Veritate*, June 29, 2009, No. 26: “Culturally, compared to the cultural level of Paul VI’s era, the difference is even greater. At that time, cultures were quite well defined and had a better chance of defending themselves against attempts of cultural homogenization. Today, the possibilities for interaction between cultures have increased considerably, giving way to new prospects for *intercultural dialogue*, a dialogue that, to be effective, *must have as a starting point the intimate awareness of the specific identity of the various interlocutors*. However, it should not be overlooked that increased commodification of cultural exchanges today favours a *double danger*. First, you notice a *cultural eclecticism* often assumed acritically: cultures are simply juxtaposed and considered essentially equivalent and interchangeable. This promotes a relativism that does not help true intercultural dialogue. On the social level, cultural relativism causes cultural groups to get close or coexist but separated, without authentic dialogue and, therefore, without real integration. Secondly, there is the opposite danger, which is the *flattening and homologating behaviors and lifestyles*. In this way, the profound meaning of the culture of the various nations, of the traditions of the various peoples, is lost, within which the person is measured by the fundamental questions of Existence. Eclecticism and cultural flattening converge in the separation of culture from human nature. Thus, cultures no longer know how to find their measure in a nature that transcends them, eventually reducing man to just cultural data. When this happens, the humanity runs new dangers of enslavement and manipulation”.

Similarly, Pope Francis, in *Evangelium gaudii*⁴¹, identifies in indiscriminate globalization and rampant secularization, imposed by “economically developed but ethically weakened” cultures, the cause of the “accelerated deterioration of cultural roots” (n. 62) of the peoples. This makes “the need to evangelize cultures to inculturate the Gospel” (n. 69), both in countries of Christian tradition and in countries of other religious or deeply secularized traditions.

Extending a concept: “New Evangelization”

Finally, we can briefly focus on one of the typical expressions of John Paul II’s teaching: that of the new evangelization⁴². The expression and its variants, “second evangelization” or “re-evangelization”, indicate a new approach of the Church regarding its task of evangelization in the present world. The task of evangelizing consciences and cultures today presents particular difficulties, because often the environments to be Christianized have, over time, been marked by the message of Christ, but the Good News has then been forgotten in indifference or practical agnosticism. In fact, there are entire populations that have actually been baptized, but have not really been evangelized, and their initial faith has not been strengthened by a personal experience of Christ, by a doctrinal and moral formation made through the sharing of faith in love and joy, with the support of a Christian community, close and alive. Many

41 Pope Francis, Exhortation Apostolic *Evangelii Gaudium*, November 24, 2014.

42 John Paul II stated that “mission lands are in our daily environments: in countries of the oldest Christian tradition it is now an urgent need to bring the announcement of Jesus through a new evangelization” in John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation *Christifideles laici*, December 30, 1988, No. 4. In subsequent pronouncements, John Paul II affirmed: “Today the Church faces other challenges, projecting itself to new frontiers both in the first mission *Ad Gentes* and in the new evangelization of peoples who have already received the announcement of Christ and that’s why we need a “new evangelization, or rievangelization”, in *Redemptoris Missio*, Cit. nn. 30, 33. For John Paul II “the new evangelization does not consist of a ‘new Gospel’, must not concern the content, but the attitudes, the style, the effort, the programming, the method of apostolate, the language, which must be such as to make accessible, penetrating, valid and profound the response to man of today, without at all altering or changing the content of the Gospel message”. In *Speech to the opening of the work of the 4th General Conference of the Latin American Episcopate*, Santo Domingo, 12 October 1992, No. 6.

are today Christians only in name, living in practical indifference, who have rejected a religion that has remained, in their psychology, at the childish stage and appears to them morally oppressive, and in the name of freedom, religion and the Church are rejected as alienating.

It is then a question of *creating a passage through the wall of indifference*. In Western countries, secularization has spread a climate of religious indifference, of non-credibility, of spiritual insensitivity, of disinterest in religious fact. The tragedy is that the Gospel is not completely ignored or not entirely new. Faith is together as present and absent in spirits. We must react against a culturalization of Christianity reduced to words only, to secularized facts, to desecrated customs.

Inculturation in the East and the West

The questions that Pope John Paul II wanted the Pontifical Council of Culture, which he set up in 1982, with the aim of intensifying the dialogue between the Church and the cultures of our time, to ask, were the following: “You must help the whole Church answer these fundamental questions for current cultures: How is the Church’s message accessible to new cultures, current forms of intelligence and sensitivity? How can the Church of Christ be understood by the modern spirit, so proud of its accomplishments and, at the same time, so restless about the future of the human family?”⁴³ Below we will look at some of the challenges facing the Church in the contemporary world.

Today’s Challenges in Asia: the triple dialogue

Since the initial and programmatic document of 1974 (*The Evangelization in Asia Today*), Asian bishops have stated that a genuine evangelization in Asia must go through dialogue with culture, through which the Church is made “really present in people’s lives”; with *religious traditions*, so that “the seed hidden in them can fully flourish”, and with the *poor*, “joining with them to establish a more

43 John Paul II, Pontifical Council of Culture, 15 January 1985, N. 3

human world". The document assigns only to the first aspect the concept of "inculturation", but it seems clear that these three dialogues are all part of what we would today call "the process of inculturation" of the Gospel message in Asia.⁴⁴

This triple dialogue is repeated consistently in almost all FABC (Federation of Asian Bishops Conference) documents, although not always in the same order. There is no priority required by the documents, and therefore it seems fair to conclude that all three of these aspects are necessary for the pastoral aspect to take on a typically Asian aspect. If the Church truly continues to engage in these three dialogues, it will indeed become an "Asian Church and not simply a Church in Asia" and will no longer be felt as an external and foreign body.

There are certainly many issues that need inculturation: the need to understand and exploit the power of the media; the importance of lay people as primary agents of inculturation; the imperative to develop Asian training programmes for religious and seminarians; concern for women, family, ecology, refugees... Here we will focus on three themes, one for each dialogue we have mentioned, thus helping us to exemplify the possible challenges facing the Church in Asia today.

Dialogue with culture: Asian values and human rights

Despite the various voices that attempt to reconcile the language of human rights with those of their own religious and cultural tradition, supporters of the so-called "Asian values" are convinced that there are economic, social, political and cultural aspects of Asian states that do not allow an uncritical assumption of human rights and/or a spontaneous adjustment to their claim of universality. On the contrary, some supporters of these "Asian values" claim an ideological and practical precedence of these values over those of human rights, so that the latter can be subordinated to local principles and the national priorities or needs of a given Asian

44 Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences, "Evangelization of Asia today". First Plenary Assembly, Taipei, April 27, 1974 in D. Colombo, And. ., *Enchiridion. Documenti della Chiesa in Asia, 1970-1995*. Editrice Missionaria Italiana, Bologna 1997, pp. 60-71.

state⁴⁵. Well, what are these values that are mentioned to counter the application of statutes relating to fundamental human rights?

- a) *In the East there is the law of duties, not that of rights*, and these duties immediately derive from its participation or affiliation to a group. Thus, the regent has a duty to rule equally over his citizens and the rich have a duty to help the poor through donations or offerings, but this does not mean that the citizen has the right to be governed with justice, or that the poor have the right to be assisted and helped.

However, this concept of “duty” is really connatural to these Asian cultures, or is it but the historical product of a political imposition (also supported by religious exegesis) protracted over time? It is a well-known fact, in fact, that the form of government of many Asian countries that extol the value of the citizen’s submission to the established power, present the characteristic traits of totalitarian regimes and absolutist political systems. The so-called “consensus” would therefore be nothing more than a masked form of “coercion”, “harmony” a simple ideological cover for “order and control”, and “participation” only a more nuanced expression by “submission”.

- b) *The East is communitarian and the West individualistic*. Asian culture first tries to protect and safeguard the community in which the individual is inserted and to which the person must constantly refer. It is the group, and not the individual, the ultimate custodian of rights so that the bonds that the subject feels towards the community are much more important than the rights that the individual can receive from it.

45 Article 8 of the *Bangkok Declaration* of 1993, for example, asserts: “It is recognised that human rights, while by their nature universal, must be considered in the context of an international standards adoption process that is dynamic and developing, having the value of national and regional peculiarities and the different historical, cultural and religious legacies”. Signatories include Bahrain, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Brunei, Cyprus, China North Korea, South Korea, United Arab Emirates, The Philippines, Fiji Japan India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Kiribati, Kuwait, Laos, Malaysia, Maldives, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Oman, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Syria, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Viet Nam.

However, elements of individualism are present in Asia itself. According to Confucian thought, for example, the rebellion against an unjust regent or against a tyrant who was crowned with success, not only proved that the fact that the Mandate of Heaven had passed into other hands, but also indicated that this rebellion was possible thanks to the moral autonomy and political independence of those who had cultivated their own identity by learning and internalizing Confucian moral principles. Individualistic tendencies are also found in Buddhism, in the sense that although Buddhists reject any attachment to the ego (or self), they profess a boundless confidence in the spiritual awakening of the subject and consider the pleasures of family, love and other community attachments as mere earthly passions and illusions, or *klesa*. In addition, more attention should be paid to the rapid social changes that are sweeping Asian countries and which tend to make the individual stand out more than the community: rapid economic development in the region is now accompanied by accelerated urbanization; market infiltration into community relations; the dissemination of competitive and meritocratic mentality; the widening of educational opportunities; improvement in access to information...

- c) *Priority given to the contentment of socio-economic rights over civil-political rights.* For supporters of Asian values, the community and its economic progress are so important and strategic that a state can temporarily restrict or suspend the political and civil rights and freedoms of its citizens in order to defend or promote the general well-being of the country⁴⁶. And this is done by means of a two-pronged strategy: either

46 You could here also speak of an “Asian state of exception” as here the sovereign is targeting not so much, as in the West, suspension laws written to overcome a situation of *political instability* distinguishing those who, under these circumstances, should be considered as a friend or foe (this was the meaning with which the term was used by the jusconstitucionalist Carl Schmitt). The “Asian exception status” is rather a suspension that aims to safeguarding (or promotion) of a given *economic structure*. On the concept of “state of exception” and its history, see G. Agamben, *The exception state. Homo, Sacer, II, I* Bollat Boringhieri, Turin 2003.

by stating that satisfying the immediate need for survival is preferable to the achievement of other needs (such as civil ones) that are considered superfluous compared to the first (“you eat with work, not with rights”), or by arguing that the adoption of civil rights is a privilege that must be postponed until a sufficiently adequate level of economic sustainability has been achieved. (“first bread, then freedom”).

However, there are examples of Asian states (not least Japan, with its miraculous economic renaissance from the ashes of the Second World War) in which the democratic system has contributed to the economic growth of the country by redistributing profits in such a way as to overcome the discontent and malaise of those who suffered from sudden social change, thus coming to form a national consensus on the priority of economic development just undertaken. In fact, the formation of this democratic consensus can facilitate (and not prevent) the pursuit of development policies because it strengthens the legitimacy of the government that asks its citizens for the self-discipline and austerity that represent the essential (and initial) elements for economic growth. An authoritarian regime, on the other hand, can only be a structural obstacle to economic development: members of the ruling class, free from any democratic control, can feel encouraged to interfere politically in the market economy and promote their own interests.

- d) *Dichotomy between the Christian (or Judeo-Christian) West and the Confucian (or Confucian-Islamic) East.* There are many who claim that Asian civilization is mostly influenced by the Confucian vision, which sees in filial piety and obedience to the regent the essential way to learn to behave as a true human being⁴⁷.

47 In the words of the former Minister of Singapore Lee Kuan Yew: “The Confucian vision of order between the subject and the ruler helps the rapid transformation of society... It is the exact opposite of the American rights of the individual. A country must develop more discipline than democracy. Democracy leads to conditions of indiscipline and disorder” in *The Economist*, April 27, 1994, p. 5. The five basic relationships for Confucianism are: sovereign-subject, father-son, husband-wife, older brother-younger brother, friend-friend.

However, the world's major religions (not only Confucianism and Islam, but also Hinduism and Buddhism - without mentioning the myriad of indigenous religious movements-) are present and exert their influence within the Asian continent: indeed, it could be said that it includes in itself a religious heterogeneity even greater than that found in the West. The religious and cultural diversity of Asia, then, cannot be circumscribed and matched with the borders of a state: many Asian countries (including China, Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia... all countries whose governments openly and vigorously support Asian values) are multi-religious, multi-cultural and even multi-national within them.

To conclude: could *human rights* be regarded as *the grammar of faith*? Conflicts to be resolved in Asia with some urgency seem to arise fundamentally in four areas: the right to religious freedom; gender equality; minority rights and the problem of cruel and degrading punishments. Without going into further detail, however, we would like to point out that the call to "dignity of man" could help to define the initial approach of the missionary announcement. It would be a question here of trying to think of human rights as a kind of "grammar" that, precisely because adopted by all the countries of the world, has already begun to introduce terminology ("man", "right", "dignity", "freedom", "equality", "consciousness", "brotherhood"... to limit ourselves to those we encounter in art. 1 of the Universal Declaration)⁴⁸ to be attached to to begin a missionary discourse. This would be all the more urgent in Asia, given that many concepts of Western origin, unrelated to the Asian environment, are difficult to understand and assimilate. The discourse on human rights, in this case, would act as a kind of *preambula fidei*, that is, as truths that precede revelation not in the fundamental sense, but as conditions of its being possible to happen. Here, of course, it would not be a question of "using" human rights to make their way within

48 "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and must act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood."

a different culture and then, once the goal is achieved, replace them with evangelical discourse. Yet could it not be thought that the values they promote can help people question their further foundation and justification?⁴⁹

Dialogue with religions: interfaith dialogue

Both the Decree on missionary activity of the Church *Ad Gentes*, and the Declaration on the Church's relations with non-Christian religions, *Nostra Aetate*, have opened new horizons to the mission. Addressing all humanity not in terms of "believers or non-believers" but on the basis of common humanity, the Council recognized in the cultural and religious traditions of peoples "elements of truth and grace" (AG 9), "seeds of the Word" (AG 11), "real and holy things" (NA 2).

In the post-council years, the exhortation to the practice of dialogue with the cultural and religious traditions of peoples has found a profound echo in Asia and in many countries *significant experiences* of cultural adaptation and interfaith dialogue have been put in place, both at the level of *dialogue of life*, works, theological exchanges and *religious experience*. Despite this, much remains to be done to promote the encounter between the Gospel and the cultural/religious traditions of the Continent and to educate to a mentality of dialogue that, finally free from mutual prejudices, be able to heal the wounds of the past and open new horizons for the future.

A realist look at the entire Asian continent shows, in fact, how it is, today more than ever, torn by conflicts, contrasts, cultural, religious and political fundamentalism, in turn generators of discrimination, persecution and cleanliness in the name of specific cultural and religious identities or political ideologies. These conflicts make it difficult, and often impossible, not only dialogue and the evangelical proclamation, but also that healthy and necessary cultural interaction without which there is no growth and progress of societies.

49 The *preambula*, according to the meaning of the scholastic of the thirteenth century, have not the task of demonstrating faith, but only to make intelligible the content of the revealed doctrine.

In this context, it would be a question of re-reading and reflecting further on the guidelines and guides present in the three documents published by the Pontifical Council for Interfaith Dialogue: *Dialogue and Mission* (1984) in which the Church recognizes dialogue as a mode of mission; *Dialogue and announcement* (1991) where he lays out how to coexist dialogue and announcement (knowing each other; collaborating; telling the reasons for one's faith; witnessing one's faith to each other) and finally the document *Dialogue in Truth and Charity* (2014), knowing full well that, as Jean-Louis Tauran, the former president of the Pontifical Council for Interfaith Dialogue would say:

- a) we are “condemned” to dialogue: either we speak or violence will prevail;
- b) theological study of religions is of utmost importance, and must be continually promoted;
- c) there is a need for the formation of a strong Christian identity, particularly in young people, that is at the same time open to other religious and cultural identities. Knowing the content of our faith is necessary first to live it and live it, and then to be able to enter into a true dialogue with believers of other religions;
- d) freedom of conscience must be educated: no reason can be valid to limit or erase the right to freedom in religious matters;

Finally, it is important to note that interfaith dialogue, at least in Japan, has been promoted and continues to be solicited thanks mainly to the effort, passion and vocation of the Church. If other religions or spiritual expressions are understanding the value of dialogue, we owe it to Christian men and women who have decided to listen to each other with humility and a spirit of welcome.

Dialogue with the “poor”: offering young people opportunities to change “

The category of the poor that I intend to briefly consider here is not that of the “materially” poor, although massively present in the Asian world, but that of a category that we could define as “the poor

in spirit” particularly sacrificed or not immediately flashy today in the East, namely that of young people. In this regard, I think it is enough to consult the various *Preparatory Documents of the 15th Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops on Youth* drafted by the various Asian Bishops’ Conferences in 2017 to see how the Church is lagging behind in responding to the various spiritual needs of young Asians.

In the Japanese context, for example, it is stated that the Church, by paying close attention to the reality of youth, expresses its concerns about certain social phenomena affecting the lives of young people and that seem to highlight a situation of deep dissatisfaction. Here it is mentioned that they are so busy studying and working (or looking for a job) that they cannot find time off to think about their existential situation; or also because they have difficulty in forging meaningful relationships (also because of the low level of communication skills they suffer) with their colleagues or schoolmates. The Church, for her part, admits that the responses she has tried to develop to give spiritual relief to young people in these difficult situations are insufficient for both the *linguistic distance and the real interests* that separate young people from the Church, and to gradually widen.

Not without some feeling of alarm, in fact, the bishops ask themselves: what are young people looking for today in and from the Church? What atmosphere do they intend to find there and what are the major obstacles that do not allow the Church to offer what the youth are asking for?

The answer offered to these questions is quite complex, even if blunt.

- a) Young people seek first in the Church *a place where they can gather to regain a certain spiritual and mental serenity* (so far from all those social obligations that, regardless of what young people think or believe, require them unconditional obedience); a place, above all, where they can find someone who patiently listens to their problems.
- b) Young people feel the need to confront their fellows, to establish disinterested friendships, to find an environment

in which to strengthen their autonomy of *thought* and in which they can be recognized in their individuality and esteemed for their faith.

Despite their desire, the Church admits that it is not always able to respond adequately to these desires: firstly because of the small number of priests (engaged mainly in the pastoral care of the sick and the elderly), it fails to offer a Church open to young people. Secondly, and perhaps even more worryingly, although it is noted that many young people participate in activities such as those of liturgical ministers, altar servers, catechists, communication workers and the various parish groups... where the parish is not too open-minded, the elderly treat young people as labour to be exploited. Young people who have long participated in parish life are often forced because of their long relationship to hold certain roles and therefore tend to avoid taking responsibility because they do not feel free to act as they wish. More space must therefore be given to the creativity of young people, their resourcefulness and the visions with which they intend to collaborate to grow the Church. For its part, the Church must support these efforts by giving them all the human and spiritual solidarity they need. The Church is also aware that it must seek to attract and involve young people who are not *Christians*. In this regard, and in order to get in touch with these non-Christian young people, it considers important to take advantage of all possible opportunities, from the most properly ecclesiastical (such as the celebrations of weddings and funerals in which many young non-Christians enter a Church for the first time), to the more traditional ones (such as parties and volunteering activities) to the most innovative ones (the digital world, internet and social media). Particular attention should be given to academic structures, i.e. those environments in which young people spend most of their time.

The words spoken by Pope Francis are revealed here as prophetic: "Dear young people, I will be happy to see you run faster than those who are slow and fearful. You are attracted to that much loved Face, which we worship in the Holy Eucharist and recognize in the flesh of the suffering brother. The Holy Spirit pushes you into this race

forward. The Church needs your momentum, your intuitions, your faith. We need it! And when you get to where we have not yet arrived, have the patience to wait for us.”⁵⁰

Today's challenges in the West

In a recent (and private) interview,⁵¹ Card. Ravasi, President of the Pontifical Council for Culture, said that the most dramatic area facing the Church today is the anthropological one. This, according to the Cardinal, is known that there is no longer at the cultural level, a shared concept of human nature, let alone truth. This is mainly about the European or American context, but with globalisation, it is also affecting the other countries of the world. The anthropological question therefore poses a whole series of corollaries and problems. As with today's challenges in the East, we will look at three of these challenges facing the West.

Digital and computer culture

What we mean here by digital culture and information technology is not just about a technical issue, but rather a question of changing the cultural environment. To realize how profound this change is, let us think of the process that led to the advent of the *fourth revolution* to which the scholar Luciano Floridi mentions in a recent book.⁵²

- a) The first revolution, in his opinion, was the Copernican revolution, the one that took the Earth out of the center of the universe and made us mobile, and no longer immobile. The man at the centre of the universe gives way to a decentralized man, who is central to the universe, of course, but still a man who remains at least at the centre of our planet, as his privileged being;

50 Pope Francis, Post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Christus Vivit*, March 25, 2019, No. 299.

51 The interview took place on 21 June 2019, at the headquarters of the Pontifical Council of Culture.

52 L. Floridi, *La quarta rivoluzione*. Raffaello Cortina Editore, Milan 2017.

- b) Darwin, with *The origin of the species* (1859), also subtracts man from this centrality. Each species has evolved over time by means of natural selection. Therefore, man is not at the center of our biological universe, but it is just one of its various manifestations. Having lost the centrality with respect to the universe in general, and to the biological universe of the Earth, it seems that man has no but the centrality with respect to himself: we are *res cogitans*, and at least we know that;
- c) Freud, with the third revolution also ousts this certainty: the mind is not autonomous, but is moved by the invisible strands of the unconscious, and therefore man can no longer consider himself transparent to himself;
- d) Since the 1950s, another revolution has emerged, the most devastating. Leading this revolution is the genius of Alan Turing. In his ironic and provocative article in which he exhibits his famous test⁵³, Turing opens the door to what Floridi calls the *fourth revolution*, namely the fact that our centrality now resides in the *infosphere*, in “that informational environment built by all processes, services and information entities that include information agents, their properties, interactions and relationships.” This is a rather special space in which we live by information and manage information, but it does not belong only to man. Most of the time we deal with entities that are *smart* and that know how to do the job much better than

53 A. M. Turing, “Computing Machinery and Intelligence”, *Mind*, 59 (1950) 433-460. Italian translation in: V. Somenzi, , R. Cordeschi, *La filosofia degli automi. Origini dell'intelligenza artificiale*, Paolo Boringhieri, Turin 1986, pp. 157-183. The test of Turing it can be described as follows: it places a computational machine and a human being in two separate rooms. From an external location, an examiner, without knowing the identity of the interlocutors, asks them questions through a terminal, receiving their answers. If after a reasonably long time, the examiner fails to recognize the machine from man, it is concluded that the former behaved exactly like a human being, so much so that he could not be distinguishable from this. It means that there is no substantial difference between the way a machine processes and the thinking of man, and therefore the machines are intelligent.

us (landing a plane, parking a car, playing chess... much better than us).

Information and technology, increasing dizzyingly their impact on our lives, make us *infor*, or “interconnected information organisms”: man is no longer a moderately isolated entity, but an organism that share with biological agents and engineering artifacts a global information-built environment. This blurs the clear separation between our online and offline lives. Ours, to use another term coined by Floridi, is an *OnLife* experience, in which we travel into an eternal present of connections.

Now, *if we are our information, the privacy protection assumes a capital importance because it indicates the preservation of one’s personal identity*. Therefore, a concept of “zero privacy” as presented for example by Facebook, means being immobilized in a profile that no longer corresponds to who we are. It is therefore a dehumanizing practice, and that is the reason why privacy must be protected as part of *human dignity*⁵⁴.

Technology is the new onto-logy

The philosopher M. Heidegger, in his *Humanism and science in the atomic age*⁵⁵, argued that *techno-logy* has now become our true onto-logy, that is, the only way in which man controls, interprets, and shapes the world in which he lives. To realize this fact, it is enough to reflect on some new sciences that are imposing themselves on the technological scenario.

1. First of all, *genetics*: intervening on DNA means wanting to create a new anthropological model (a new phenotype, that is, the set of all the characteristics manifested by a living organism, hence its morphology, its development, its biochemical and physiological properties that include behavior). The currents of thought that most promote these ideas are those of trans- and post-humanism.

54 It is in this context that we should read the provocations of Jaron Lanier (developer of Microsoft), described in its recent *Dieci ragioni per cancellare subito i tuoi social accounts*. Il Saggiatore, Milan 2018.

55 M. Heidegger, *Humanism and science in the atomic age*. La Scuola, Brescia 1984.

- a) *Transhumanism* is an intellectual and cultural movement that proposes the alteration of the human condition through reason and technology. Historically, transhumanism can be described as an extension of humanism. In addition to the objectives of the humanistic tradition - longevity, health, youth, strength, intelligence, knowledge, courage, well-being and happiness - evolved sciences such as genetic engineering, cybernetics, robotics, nanotechnology, information technologies representing the means by which to achieve the intended purposes are supported⁵⁶.
- b) The *post-human* is instead a generic category used to indicate the radical alteration of the characteristics of the human being, that is, the phase that follows the transformation carried out by transhumanism. Through the use of these new discoveries, the transhumanists say, humanity will very soon enter a new phase of its evolution, a phase characterized no longer by natural selection, but by intentional selection, no longer by Darwinian evolu-

56 For these technologies, in English is usually used the acronym "GRIN" (Genetics Robotics Information and Nanotechnology). The *Biotechnology* are technologies that control and modify the biological activities of living beings. In the biomedical field, for example, there are recombinant DNA technologies that allow the structure and function of genes to be analysed, manipulated and reintroduced to the internal cell or a new cell. They consist of cloning genes, amplifying them at will, in building synthetic genes, in inserting genes into animals or higher plants so that these organisms acquire new useful functions, in the insertion of genes into the man to treat hereditary diseases and cancers, etc. The *Robotics* it is a branch of cybernetics related to the theory, construction technique and study of the possible applications of robots. The *technologies of Information* are the technologies that enable collection, storage, retrieval, electronic processing, transmission and dissemination of Information. Finally, *Nanotechnologies* are the technologies that allow to modify the properties of matter by intervening directly on individual molecules and even on a few atoms. The "individual" manipulation of molecules transforms them directly from one type into another, operating as if you had the small bricks of a construction game to be assembled at will. For a study of transhumanism and post-humanism, and its theological repercussions, we refer to our *Man beyond man. For a theological critique to transhumanism and post-Human*. Dehoniane Editions, Bologna 2015.

tionism, but by the evolution of improvement. Contrary to the natural evolution that has so far proved too slow, uncontrollable and unpredictable, the new evolution will be much faster, targeted, and produced entirely by human ingenuity.

Now, what is it that irritates transhumanists of human nature?

- a) On a *moral and spiritual level*, transhumanists claim that the specific characteristics of our human nature (or our species) are indeed a source of wonder and amazement, but also home to unspeakable horrors and sufferings (just think of the predisposition to disease, violence, betrayal, genocide, torture, racism...). Wouldn't it be logical, the transhumanist thinkers continue, to reject this "natural order" and instead reform our nature in accordance with humanitarian values and personal aspirations?⁵⁷.
- b) On the physical-material level, on the other hand, transhumanists would like to eliminate from the human condition all those aspects that are considered undesirable or unsuccessful: finitude, fragility, illness, handicap, ageing, death...

57 However, it should be noted here that technological, and even cultural, development of the modern and post-modern West has not only failed to eliminate totalitarianism, mass genocide, world wars, inequality and poverty, but indeed, and at times, it has even been the protagonist. In this sense, there is no certainty that the history of human beings, smeared as it is of injustice and violence (as well as sin), can change into a reality free of poverty, hatred and injustice only because it has now reached a state of higher intelligence. On the contrary, today we are witnessing an increasingly clear separation between the world of values and the world of technology, between scientific discoveries and the *Telos* they propose to reach. One of the forces that seems to support scientific development, for example, is not the level of harmony and social justice that could be achieved through its inventions, but rather the level of usability and consumption imposed by the capitalist system that funds and makes possible that same development. Despite the use of science to the various liberal values of which it considers to be the promoter (altruism, cooperation, ecological discourse, etc.), in fact, the imagined future of the transhumanists will almost certainly be diverted in the service of increasing the wealth of its lenders.

2. Another area that is imposing its discoveries in the cultural and social spheres is the *neuro-cognitive sciences*. If once, in the theological field, the mind (or soul) is distinguished from the brain, now the prevailing opinion among specialists is the physical (or materialistic) opinion, that is, the one that argues that brain and mind are the same thing, that everything can be traced back to an electrical, neuronal phenomenon. Now, think here of all the ethical consequences that arise from these sciences: is it possible, for example, to speak again of conscience, of freedom, of responsibility?

Ray Kurzweil and Hans Moravec, two of the leading figures in the field of artificial intelligence, for example, argue that the information contained in the human brain (composed of a subject's memory, experience and personality) can be digitized. In the near future, sophisticated tools will be able to scan the brain to collect this information and transfer it to computers. After the information has been stored and organized, it can be downloaded to a robotic body and/or entered into a virtual environment. Through frequent downloads and uploads of this memory, and with the care of having saved it with multiple *back-ups*, the process can be repeated indefinitely, so that the subject would become at this point virtually immortal.

Now, and as these thinkers contend, because nature has failed to produce a sufficiently reliable and durable body, technology has a duty to intervene to make up for this defect and invent a better device on which to install information. By freeing the mind from the body structure, we do not lose anything essential: indeed, the information that constitutes the subject can now be stored longer and in a virtually immortal environment. In the famous words of Hans Moravec:

Body identity assumes that a person is defined by the matter of which a human body is made. Only by maintaining the continuity of the matter of the body can we preserve that individual as a person. *Structural identity*, on the contrary, defines the essence of a person, myself, for example, as the structure and processes that take place in my head and body, not the machinery that supports

this process. If the process is preserved, I am preserved. The rest is just jelly.⁵⁸

It can therefore be said that transhumanism, although it opposes every religious discourse and any consoling philosophy (both accused of “rationalizing” death, that is, to consider it as something positive for life, thus slowing down progress technological and scientific that aims instead to defeat death itself), in fact proposes and supports its escatological theory - exemplified in the fact that men will be saved from their finiteness and temporality and their flesh will be transformed into information that will last forever. Death, in the not too distant future, will therefore be only a bad memory or, in the case, the result of a personal choice. The transhumanist position on the ethics of death is clear: death should be a voluntary choice. In other words, anyone should have the right to extend their life if they wish.

3. A special mention deserves here the issue of *artificial intelligence* (AI) that is imposing itself on public opinion without, moreover, we had made it the subject of democratic discussion or had voted on its massive introduction into the dynamics of our lives. In televised debates, for example, no politician ever mentions this subject, and this means that in the future it will be a minority to make the decisions that really matter for the existence of the community.

Considering the theme of artificial intelligence here means referring to machines with a certain self-consciousness, and an important distinction that is used by the philosophy of AI is the existing between “weak (or cautious) artificial intelligence” and “strong artificial intelligence”. The first argues that a computer can only “calculate”, but not “think”, and that therefore it can never be able to match the human mind, but only get to *simulate* some human cognitive processes without being able to reproduce

58 H. Moravec, *Mind Children: The Future of Robot and Human Intelligence*. Harvard, University Press, Cambridge 1988, p. 117.

them in their complexity⁵⁹. The second, on the other hand, states that a computer can truly be endowed with pure intelligence, not distinguishable in any meaningful aspect of human intelligence. In this case, machines would not so much simulate human thought, but rather become self-conscious and mind-equipped, without necessarily exhibiting thought processes similar to human ones⁶⁰.

This means, according to the thinker Yuval Noah Harari⁶¹, that a class of men considered useless is being created. AI is simply making us unnecessary, and this is already happening in the field of work (mechanization and robotization of production), in the military (use of drones), in the medical field,⁶² as well as in the economic field (think of the crisis of the US financial system with the bankruptcy of the Lehman Brothers due to the powerful high-frequency negotiations led by mathematical al-

59 As an example of weak artificial intelligence you can think here about this digital assistant called *Siri*.

60 It is worth remembering here the difference between the techniques of *ordinary programming* and the ones of *genetic programming*. The first allow to programmers to write each line of code so that the process they run between input and output can (at least in theory) be verified in every step. *Genetic programming*, on the other hand, uses an evolutionary algorithm to optimize computer programs according to an adaptive passage determined by the program's ability to achieve a valid result from a computer point of view. This means not only that the code produces results that scientists are incapable of replicating, but also that the latter lack the understanding of the process used by the program to carry out the task given. And the development of this type of programming now seems to be enjoying increasing popularity. However, as the cybernetics professor Kevin Warwick warn us, "we won't really be able to understanding why a super-smart machine made the decisions it made. How can you reason, how can you bargain, how can you understand what a machine is thinking when it's thinking in a dimension that we can't even conceive?"

61 About this about see Yuval Noah Harari *Homo Deus. Breve Storia del Futuro*, Milan, Bompiani 2017 and *21 Lessons for the 21st century*, Milan, Bompiani 2018.

62 Think here, for example, of the story involving Angelina Jolie's well-known actress, to which a computer had found an 87% chance that, given her genetic history, "My mother fought the disease for 10 years, and this made her 50 years old. My grandmother died at 40. I hope that my choices will allow me to live a little longer" - she could have developed breast cancer, and the actress chose to perform preventive mastectomy surgery and ovarian removal.

gorithms that have acted in on the markets of equities, options, bonds, derivatives).⁶³

New languages

For new languages, we're referring here to

- a) *Music*: all young people are now equipped with head-phones and mobile phones to listen to as much music as possible, anywhere, at all hours. Music has become an irreplaceable part of their day, as well as being engraved on

63 Speaking at the Davos Forum on how to survive in the 21st century, Harari stated that in addition to creating a class of “useless men” separated of an increasingly powerful elite, the A.I. can create inequality even between states. If you do not distribute the benefits and power of the countries of the world, the A.I. will create immense wealth for a few high-tech states at the expense of other countries, which will either go bankrupt or become simple *digital colonies* to exploit. What will happen to states when someone in San Francisco or Beijing is aware of the entire personal and medical history (as well as of all the sexuals trends, mental weaknesses and corrupt conduct) of each politician, judge and journalist in a given country? That country can still be independent, or it will become a digital colony? When you have a certain wealth of data, you don't have to send any soldiers to control a country. But in addition to this inequality, it can also be expected the birth of a *digital dictatorship* able to monitor anyone. The equation here is simple: B (biological knowledge) x C (calculation power) x D (data) = A (the ability to *hack* man's body, brain and life in such a way that one can understand the other better than he knows himself.) You will thus be able to know the personality, political preference, sexual tastes, fears and the most recondited hopes of each of us. This system will be able to predict and manipulate my feelings and choices and, not least, will be able to decide for me. Of course, the power of *hacking* human beings can serve the good of humanity (e.g. in the medical field), but if this system falls into the hands of some dictator, we will witness the most totalitarian regime imaginable. The powerful or the rich will certainly not be excluded from this regime, indeed: the more powerful one is, the more it will be supervised by the regime in charge. In any case, decision-making has already shifted from the hands of men to that of algorithms: we trust the algorithm of Facebook to know the news, of that of Google to know the truth, of that of Netflix to know what we need to look at and Amazon's to know what we need to buy. Very soon new algorithms will tell us where to go to work, whom to marry, and whether we can get a mortgage or not. And if you ask why I can't access a mortgage, the answer will always be the same: “Because the computer said no.” Gradually man will lose control of his life and the ability to understand the various policies put in place. Who really understands the financial system today? What will our life mean if all the decisions are made by algorithms?

the score of their skin... The latest found in this area is the so-called “sound tattoo”. The creator of this *trend* is Nate Siggard, and he is originally from Los Angeles, California. The *soundwave Tattoo* idea came about when Nate had just made a tattoo for a couple of friends. His partner Juliana, in a simple conversation, exclaimed, “Wouldn’t it be nice if we could listen to the tattoos?” From this sentence, Nate took the cue and posted online a video that went viral on social networks. Hence, the development of the specific app that allows you to listen to the audio track combined with the tattoo. First, you have to choose a song or phrase that we like, maybe linked to a beautiful memory of a person or a joyful moment of life. Secondly, we need to get the sound wave tattooed as if it were any kind of tattoo. At this point, through a special sound tattoo app connected to the smartphone camera, you can play the sound wave of the same tattoo from the electronic device.

- b) Another language that should be taken into account, especially for its sudden degradation and debasement is that of sport. If you look closely at this phenomenon, you will easily realize that sport reflects all the negative conditions of society: violence, racism, doping, economic corruption, pedophilia...
- c) Lastly, we must not forget the language of art, understood as beauty and fantasy that is continually challenged and humiliated by digital culture. The Church must be capable of being and having a place where the person finds there beauty, light, harmony, a well-executed liturgy...

The missionary task in the West: parresia and hypomoné

In conclusion, it could be said that in Occident there is a fundamental question that we can no longer elude, namely the simple fact that we can no longer dialogue with this world and with this society if we approach them with a conceptual equipment that is too weak. We must certainly be experts in theology, but this is no longer enough to enter into dialogue with these new cultural, scientific and technological areopagues, and with their particular languages. We must, as far as possible, specialize (each according to their own

skills and/or intellectual inclinations) to become in turn our own interlocutors of the various issues that must be spoken with the equals. It must also be realized that, as Pope Francis recently said,

What we are experiencing *is not simply an era of change, but it is a changing of era*. We are, therefore, in one of those moments when changes are no longer linear, but epochal; they are choices that quickly transform the way of living, of relating, of communicating and processing thought, of relating between human generations and of understanding and living faith and science... Brothers and sisters, we are not in Christianity, no longer! Today we are no longer the only ones who produce culture, neither the first nor the most listened to⁶⁴.

The new cultural context therefore sees Christians as a minority, but also as a minority that must be and remain active, in the sense that even if it is no longer a creator of culture, it has the duty to persevere and to enter into a serious, constructive and cultured dialogue with the interlocutors who are shaping society.. As Pope Francis says again: :

The healthy attitude is... that of being questioned by the challenges of the present time and grasping them with the virtues of discernment, *parresia* and *hypomoné*. The change, in this case, would take on a different aspect: from a contour element, from context or pre-text, from an external landscape... would become more and more *human*, and even more *Christian*. It would always be an external change, but accomplished from the very center of man, that is, an anthropological conversion⁶⁵.

64 This “changing of era” mentioned by the Pope, could be compared to the “paradigm shift” studied by Thomas Khun. For *Paradigm*, Khun meant “a whole constellation of beliefs, values, procedures, etc. that are shared by members of a given community” in Id., *The Structures, of Scientific, Revolution*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago 1962, p. 175.

65 Speech of Pope Francis to the Roman Curia for Christmas greetings. Clementine Hall, Saturday, December 21, 2019. *Hypomoné*, you can translate with “under-stay”, bearing, being persevering. That is, staying and learning to inhabit the challenging situations that life presents to us. *Parresia*, on the other hand, could be translated with “the courage to say-the-true”, which commits man to embody “the truth-that-he-says”. On this last aspect, see T. Tosolini, “Paolo e la *parresia*” in Id. *Paolo e i filosofi.. Marietti 1820, Bologna 2019, pp. 115–37.*

Conclusion

The dynamism of evangelization is realized only in the encounter with Jesus Christ. He is the only mediator by which the Kingdom of God is realized, he is the one who has come to bear witness to the truth (*Jn 18:37*), is the only one that allows us access to the Father (*Jn 14,6*). The dialogue with cultures, like that with individual people, finds its sole effectiveness in the strength of the Spirit, in prayer, in the testimony of faith, in participation in the mystery of the Cross and redemption. It would be a vain temptation to want to change cultures with a simple psycho--social or socio-political intervention.

Evangelization, especially in *the dark night of faith*, and in the *spiritual night of cultures*, requires a conversion to the mystery of the Cross. Enduring this purification and hoping in the mysterious but certain ways of the Spirit is an indispensable provision to face the work of evangelization. It is not a comfortable thing to live in the anguish of a new world that darkly takes shape around us. Evangelizing, after all, means announcing without stopping the radical salvation in Jesus Christ, which purifies and elevates every human reality, making it pass from death to resurrection, thus transmitting that deep love of God that welcomes and recreates any culture.

Guidelines for intercultural improvements in a religious missionary institute

Fr. Pietro TRABUCCO IMC.

Former Superior General of the Missionaries of the Consolata.

Introduction

My presentation does not presume to provide any scientific overview about interculturality. Its main goal is to highlight instead the progress made by Istituto Missioni Consolata in this field, in particular referring to both basic and ongoing formation. As far as my real and practical suggestions are concerned, I will mainly refer to my personal experience during my service at the Head office and in collaboration with the brothers in several Provinces on four continents. I found particularly useful the Conference that the Head office of the Institute organized in 2009, entitled: “Interculturality - the new paradigm of the mission”⁶⁶.

The Institute started being interested in interculturality firstly considering the field of training, since the wide range of the cultural backgrounds of our students subjected us to pressing questions. From the educational field, the interest for interculturality shifted to other fields such as communication, co-existence, the missionary work, in which the inculturation of faith went hand

66 *L'interculturalità: nuovo paradigma della Missione*. Edizione Missioni Consolata 2010.

in hand with the interculturality in our missionary communities. We often ask ourselves: how to enhance the differences and facilitate an intercultural dialogue, especially in the communities? Is it possible to avoid a distinction between our European origin and the cultural demands of the Institute's new members coming from other cultural areas, namely African ones? Is it possible to co-live in a pacific and positive way, as our beatified Founder Allamano insisted?

It goes without saying that we were not the only ones in searching for answers to these new questions. Other Institutes and Orders, namely those with a strong missionary disposition, were on the same path as we were. Considering the Church, interculturality and inculturation of faith aroused great interest. I have to mention my enriching experiences in the biannual meetings organized by the USG, in particular during my three years as secretary general of the Union (2005-2008). There were many questions about whether the ecclesial communities, our Institutes and Religious Orders were leading back to a new Pentecost or another Babel⁶⁷.

Thinking about the formation of our future religious made us ask ourselves even more agonizing questions: does the plurality of cultures still bring a "united family" around a charism, as the Founders wanted for sure? How a culturally-related charism can be passed on to people of different cultures, in such a manner that it can be understood in its authenticity? What kind of formative journey do we have to implement in order to help youth to face these challenges in a positive way?

In order to answer appropriately to these questions, I wish to start with the inculturation of charism, which is strictly related to the interculturality of our Orders. The charism, a gift of the Spirit, given to us by the Founder, needs to be constantly inculturated. Not only cultures in the Institute increase in the number, but they are also susceptible to a constant change. Before having a respectful and useful intercultural dialogue within our Religious Families, it is necessary to be people who wish to implement the inculturation

67 Commissione Teologica dell'USG, *Verso una comunione pluricentrica e interculturale*, Roma 2000.

of charism. Who avoids it is unlikely to live the interculturality in a positive and constructive way.

Charism inculturation

Since it is hard to choose the right term (inculturation, enculturation, acculturation, adjustment), I am going to use the term as it is commonly used today in the documents of the Church concerning faith. In my opinion, one of the most fitting descriptions of «faith inculturation» is the one given by Pedro Arrupe SJ years ago: «Inculturation is the incarnation of both Christian life and message in a particular context, so this experience not only finds its expression through the own elements of a particular culture but it also turns into a principle that inspires, leads and unifies the culture, by changing and reshaping it, almost making a new creation»⁶⁸. Some terms such as incarnation, dynamic principle, transformation, new creation are increasingly used in the Church's and Religious Orders' documents nowadays.

The term inculturation of faith originated in the 1960s, even before Vatican II. It was used for the first time in ecclesial documents by the Bishops of Asia (FABC) in 1974, then by Paul VI in “*Evangelii nuntiandi*” and finally by John Paul II in “*Catechesi tradendae*”⁶⁹.

Considering the consecrated life, the expression “charism inculturation” took a parallel path to the one taken by the concept of “faith inculturation.” While faith inculturation experienced a great liveliness in the primitive Church, faith formulation was monopolised by the great cultures over the centuries and started losing its power. The same thing happened to the charisms of the religious life: they were born in times when the monocultural atmosphere was predominant, therefore thinking or talking about inculturation was impossible, since charism, conceived in the western culture, could only be used in the same way every-

68 34 General Congregation of Jesuits, *La nostra missione e la cultura*, n. 13.

69 There is a particularly evocative passage by Vincent of Lerins about the “Development of Dogma” which is also reported by the Breviary. It can be applied to both faith and charism.

where. Also in the missions, the charism of an Institute continued to be used in the same way as it was used in the motherland (Europe). Only in recent years, when the conception of faith inculturation emerged within the Church, charism inculturation started to attract the interest of both religious men and women as well.

Several factors helped to pay attention to this phenomenon: the decolonisation and the recognition of local cultures; the growing influence of young churches; a substantial increase of vocations coming from these churches; a stronger and more defined international figure of religious Congregations. Questions such as “How to live a consecrated life in a significant way in new cultural contexts in such a manner that the consecrated life is not perceived as a break from the own cultural identity?” were not only theoretical anymore. “Creative loyalty” to the charism of the Founder, wanted by Vatican II, demands the inculturation of charism. Loyalty does not mean repeating the Founder’s teachings, but releasing the potential of novelties contained the charism.

To have a right process of charism inculturation, it is necessary to take a progressive and organized path to avoid penalizing its effects and reach.

- *Understanding culture and charism* – It is the first essential step. Religious, who commit to inculturate charism, must be aware of both their own and others’ cultures: they must see and study it in all of its forms. Then, the understanding of the culture has to be deep and dynamic, because it constantly develops. As well as the charisms: it is not enough to know the teachings of the Founder to have a deeper understanding of a charisma; it is necessary to also know the history and the “cultural heritage” of the Institute⁷⁰.

70 It reminds me of an experience I had in Tanzania many years ago in translating the charism of the Institute to African cultures, in such a manner that it could be better understood by our students in the same way as it was perceived by the Founder. An interesting experience that we were not able to repeat again unfortunately.

- *Critical discernment* – Inculturation requires a critical discernment of both culture and charism. It is necessary to distinguish the essential elements of charism from its cultural expressions, linked to a particular time, which continuously change. Sacralizing and absolutizing cultural expressions, including those of the Founder, make inculturation impossible. The discernment separates the key elements from the temporary and transitory ones: an impossible but necessary task. We must remember that every culture was marked by sin and had both valuable elements and dehumanized and incompatible ones with the Gospel.
- *Mutual exchange* – We read in *Ecclesia in Africa*: “Inculturation includes two dimensions: on one side the profound transformation of real cultural values, through its integration in Christianity, and on the other side the inclusion of Christianity in the different human cultures.” (59) This dual dimension implies mutuality, without which inculturation becomes depleted and dialogue dies. What it has been said about Christianity, it can be referred to charism.
- *Creative expression* – Charism can be creatively expressed only after a careful reading, penetration and interpretation of charism itself exposed to new cultural situations. Without this difficult process, there will be only adjustments but never new expressions.
- *Transformation* – Inculturation ends with a transformation of both culture and consecrated life. However, “transformation” does not mean “change.” Consecrated life is therefore re-interpreted, its different dimensions are re-expressed and culture purifies and enriches itself as well. Then, it can be said that charism embraces culture and culture embraces charism.

Inculturation must be a community task, not the job of some “superior mind.” The Institute can have its prophets who help to see, but all members must be aware of this vision and put it into practice. It is clear that community meetings are important in our Institutes, as well as the gatherings and thoughts in the Provinces and the Institute.

After these preliminary remarks, we can get into further details by keeping in mind the key elements, especially those that are not negotiable in the encounter between charism and cultures.

From internationality to interculturality

Without going into the subject scientifically, quite complicated⁷¹, I try to explain the meaning of these categories applied to our reality of consecrated people who live in today's pluricultural society but above all live in communities consisting of people from different backgrounds and cultures.

In the 1980s, "international communities" started being more common, when communities consisting of brothers of different nationalities, generally continental, arose. In the past, all Orders and Institutes were considered "international" because they were in many nations. However, individual communities were always created on a consistent basis at a national or regional level (Provinces). The internationality of individual communities was evident only in the composition of the General Governments or in some rare community of students specialized in theology.

Three main reasons caused the explosion of internationality in several Institutes, mainly in those that had a greater missionary thrust.

- The independence reached by many nations after decades of agonizing colonialism led also to the spread of an awareness of the values of different cultures and to the belief that all of them had the right of citizenship within both societies and the Church⁷².
- Vatican II meant the end of both western Christianity and the mission seen as an expansion of this Christianity. The Church considered itself "Catholic" because it consisted of different people and cultures, with equal dignity.

71 The notion of interculturality was born in an Anglo-Saxon context and translates the term "cross-cultural." Then other terms surfaced such as "transcultural," "multicultural," "pluricultural," "policultural" with different connotations.

72 My Institute started its first vocational recruitment in Kenya in 1970, exactly 70 years after our first evangelization in the country.

- The decrease of vocational stream in the western nations coincided with the strong increase of vocations from the southern hemisphere. Many Congregations suddenly changed their conformation in just a few decades.

Only recently we have started talking about “intercultural communities,” because we are more aware that “internationality” is not only an accidental fact of numerical strength, but it is leading people to make valuable choices and promotes the creation of new attitudes (tolerance, openness, hospitality, dialogue, creativity, valorization of diversity).

In general, interculturality is understood and experienced in two different ways by Religious. First of all, in their apostolate or mission, when they are in contact with people from a different culture and to whom they are preaching the Gospel of Christ. They are aware to be part of a different culture and they need to interact with a local culture. This connection makes them feel the need of living in intercultural contexts to better understand people, study their language and culture, sympathize with their world, namely to “incarnate” in a people that has become theirs (acculturation). There is another way of living interculturality - the one we are more interested in - namely co-living with brothers from a different culture, who are now part of our own community, who drink from the same charismatic spring, who belong to the same family, who have the Founder himself as a Father. On one side, different cultures, different way of thinking and behaving, different sensibilities exist. On the other side, these different “brothers” now belong to me as I belong to them, even if I am different. Bearing this in mind, a process based on reciprocity, dialogue, acceptance and comprehension begins. The process is not easy, it still comes with difficulties of all kinds. But this path is necessary, essential and very enriching.

A strong spirituality for a right introduction to interculturality.

To build positive intercultural relations within religious communities, it is necessary to start from a strong «mystic» spirituality, which is always the foundation of every human coexistence. Subsidies coming from human sciences (anthropology,

sociology, psychology) can be helpful, but they are not enough. Every human coexistence, mainly the one requested by intercultural situations, needs *a soul*. For us, this soul comes from spirituality, comes from the Word, comes from a clear reference to God. New intercultural religious communities can be built only starting from Jesus Christ, our “cornerstone,” because they can only be “one heart and one soul” if they concentrate on Him. (Acts 4, 32) Trinity is the most meaningful image of our intercultural communities: “May we all be one: just as you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they be in us. Then, the world will believe that you sent me.” (John 17, 21) Three different Persons who become “one” in love and communion.

Only some elements of this spirituality are highlighted: they support individuals’ and communities’ paths in order to develop positive and constantly growing intercultural coexistence.

Koinonia

The first one is the “spirituality of communion” because John Paul II wanted and promoted it as a fundamental need and urgent answer to our time and the millennium which has just begun. Spirituality itself is also the soul and heart of our international and pluricultural communities and of all human kind. We read in “Novo Millennio Ineunte”: “*It is the domain of communion (koinonia) that embodies and shows the own essence of the mystery of the Church. Communion is the labor and manifestation of that love that, pouring out of the heart of the eternal Father, flows into us through the Holy Spirit that Jesus gives us (Romans 5,5) in order to make us “one heart and one soul.” (Acts 4,32) By creating this communion of love, the Church shows itself as a “sacrament,” namely a “sign and instrument of the intimate union with God and of the unity of all mankind.”(42).*

We all can be one, beyond our differences and limits of any kind, if we constantly live the presence of the Risen within the community, by continuously referring to Him, who is both Word and Eucharist. Every Christian community is always a gift that comes from Above and its construction is always the result of the collaboration between heaven and earth. Every Christian community cannot be only a system of convergent and homogeneous choices, but it always finds its strength in God, through Christ and the Holy Spirit.

Kenosis

This biblical term means “emptying” and it is mostly referred to “Word made flesh.” To be human and to “inculturate” among us, the Son left his divine condition⁷³. Who wishes to welcome his brother from another culture must follow the same path. This “emptying” implies freedom and openness, availability towards others and a universal glance.

To take the first steps towards an intercultural coexistence, I must be ready to “die,” to “empty myself” and, in a certain way, to get rid of my culture. Others, with their cultural background, then can come into my life. Religious, who gave way to God in himself, are aware that they are more willing to welcome their brothers who love God as well and among them there are also those who have a completely different culture.

To love my brother, I must be ready to welcome him into my life. Hospitality means to give way to him, to empty myself and get rid of all those things that do not allow him to come in. Pride, confidence in your own opinions, self-reliance, “wealth” of your own culture do not allow others to fully come closer.

Passion for men

Paying attention to people, their values and their history is a fundamental element in the Christian spirituality and in the formation of consecrated people. Founder gave rise to spacious “families” that reach out to *the outside* and to those who are poor, far away, in need. Who cannot get closer to his “brother,” who is similar to him since they share the same vocational mission and charismatic background, cannot choose the poor.

Christ invited his disciples to reach the ends of the world and this means that all world’s horizons are fully accessible. Hospitality and conviviality with brothers of different origin and culture make us able to offer to both Church and world a reliable witness of human fraternity and solidarity, to which the Church is called.

73 Cf. Philippians 2, 5-11: “he emptied himself taking the form of a slave, coming in human likeness”.

Learning the art of listening carefully

We all know how difficult it is to listen to others, not only with your ear but especially with your heart. Maybe we all experienced that unpleasant feeling of not being listened, being treated lightly or getting little attention. This shows the importance of training ourselves in the art of listening carefully because what people often say to us does not really show their intimate reality. It can stay hidden since many constraints make it difficult to understand.

Useful tips that can make the listening easier:

- We have to convince ourselves that others have something important and useful to say;
- Keeping a void and silence inside us so that the brother's message can enter inside us;
- Feeding our simplicity and humbleness to open ourselves to meaningful things and let us be enriched by them;
- Constantly cultivating a positive sentiment towards those who confront us;
- Calmly and quietly waiting for the interlocutor to express everything he has in his heart before giving our answer;

St. Benedict offers another suggestion to make the listening authentic. He states in the prologue of his Rule: "Listen carefully, son, to your master's instructions and pay attention with the ear of your heart"⁷⁴. In fact, the heart has a deeper perception of things and creates a spiritual harmony that allows us to get into the mind and the life of another person.

See others in the best light

In the book *Spiritual Exercises*, St. Ignatius of Loyola suggests to both the guide of the Exercises and the practitioner to make efforts to reach a mutual, positive, constructive agreement. In this regard, he writes: "...It should be supposed that every good Christian might be ready to offer a good interpretation of the others' success and

74 "Obsculta, o fili, praecepta magistri, et inclina aurem cordis tui".

not to condemn it. Moreover, if it cannot be interpreted positively, it would be better to ask what the other means. If this meaning is wrong, one should correct the other lovingly and, if this is not enough, it would be necessary to try any appropriate way through which the other's affirmation can be saved in a correct manner" (*Spiritual Exercises*, 22).

Prejudice and suspicion often choke the dialogue even before it has even started. Routing out the bad weeds means to pave the way to a constructive relationship that creates the real dialogue. This can happen easily if everyone personally cultivates the idea that both goodness and evil can be anywhere. Everyone is asked to find them even in those contexts that seem more hostile and unfamiliar. In fact, we know that God throws the seed of his Reign everywhere, without excluding any group, religion or culture.

Being positive means to acknowledge the work of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of all human beings and to be aware that the time of the Holy Spirit cannot be compared to ours at all. God's time is very long because his patience, his mercy and his kindness have no limits.

Always use "clarity, meekness, trust, caution"

Our communitarian relationships must know how to tap into some characteristics that find their reason to be in the Gospel. Paul VI highlights them in *Ecclesiam suam* (EV II, 196):

- *Clarity*: it avoids any ambiguity and duplicity. The real dialogue must be always expressed with the truth and a direct and understandable language.
- *Meekness*: is an attitude of vital importance. It rejects any imposition and violence, respects the other, welcomes at any time, always tries to build bridges. It also comes from the awareness that God works in the heart of every person and therefore nobody can expect more than the other person can give. Jesus Christ is an example, he said: "Learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart." (Matthew 11,29) Meekness teaches that dialogue can never be proud, stinging, offensive. The authority of a person lies in the truth he displays, in the charity he spreads and the example he gives.

- *Trust*: dialogue begins when the individual not only focuses on his own personal beliefs, but he also gives full confidence to his counterpart. This trust allows him to be completely honest, without neglecting the law of love. Interlocutors do not look at themselves but they seek the greater good.
- *Caution*: it is a great challenge for those who wish to have a serious and constructive dialogue. It refers to the discernment which is always a slow and laborious path towards the truth. Caution also refers to the search of a more suitable rhythm for our listeners, with respect and empathy towards any interlocutor.

Formation in interculturality: obstacles, suggestions and paths

We all are aware that interculturality, experienced within the communities or in our apostolate, has constant challenges. Despite this, we all know that it can be a gift and an opportunity for growth. Before analyzing some paths, I would like to mention two *obstacles* that can get in the way when you try to mature towards a peaceful integration in the intercultural community.

Ethnocentrism

It is always lying in wait. The inner tendency to consider our culture the best one exists in each one of us, therefore we always refer to it under any possible circumstance. This happens mainly because you find yourself in the majority group of a multicultural community. We expect that the “others” suddenly adapt to our culture and this criterion is used to justify some people and situations.

Ethnocentrism instinctively leads us to judge every new reality, which is different or unrelated to our cultural background, in a negative way. This phenomenon does not refer only to a bygone era or a society, but it can be found in our everyday life, also in the ecclesial and religious context.

Until we can overcome the obstacles of our own culture, our own way of considering life, our own cultural models, we will never get

closer to each other and understand the brother who comes from another society and culture. Communication is suddenly distorted.

Nothing hurts the intercultural community life more than some individuals and groups who believe to be the only ones to possess the truth concerning life, choices to make, the methods to use. To them, who thinks differently will never be right.

Prejudice

Not far from the ethnocentrism, we can find prejudices. Psychology explains that it is a preconceived opinion; you may develop it not because you have a direct knowledge of a fact, a person or a social group, but because you are influenced by some shared views. A prejudice may be considered an attitude and, as such, it can be passed on to others. We tend to shape our prejudices especially towards people belonging to a group different to ours, of which we definitely have a less detailed knowledge. Being prejudiced towards some categories of people often leads to a change in our attitude according to our beliefs, as it has been shown when I focused on the attitudes. For example, if we believe that women are less capable of using a computer than men and if we see a secretary making a mistake that causes the crash of an operating system, we would think that she has a lack of competence, meanwhile, if a friend or a brother makes the same mistake, we will consider it an oversight. On the contrary, if we see a woman who has great computer skills or a man who is not able to use a computer, we will consider them exceptions that confirm the rule, without risking doubting the prejudice we carry within us.

Is it possible to eradicate prejudices? It is not an easy thing to do, since prejudices are determined by a variety of causes that have roots in the social context and have a strong impact on individuals. Albert Einstein used to say that “*it is easier to smash an atom than a prejudice.*” To encourage contacts between different groups and enhance people’s knowledge towards those who are considered to be “different” can be useful to reduce prejudices, but of course people have to be willing to reconsider their own beliefs.

I am going to show some paths that can facilitate both relationships and intercultural dialogue in the religious communities and in the Orders.

Learning from our own mistakes

This is the first and main solution in order to grow in the spirit of interculturality. I am going to mention some of the most common mistakes that religious people easily make when they carry out their mission in a multicultural context.

To intellectualize challenges and problems of a reality, considering them aspects related to our human nature and not a legacy of a particular culture. We do not often foresee the impact that the cultural background may have on a person instead.

Be in contact with a brother keeping in mind only the cultural elements. This is the exact opposite of what stated above. When I have someone in front of me, I immediately look at his cultural features and I am not able to take a step forward and consider him an individual in his own right, values and uniqueness.

The urgency and necessity of personnel might require to introduce someone in an intercultural situation full of challenges, without a previous good and calm preparation. Here it comes the saying: “If you fail to plan, you plan to fail.” It is a mistake not to give to a religious the adequate tools to “see well” in an intercultural context.

To simply rely on the “good faith” of a religious may lead to unfortunate results. Even if you work hard to identify with people you are getting closer to or with whom you share the same mission, it may cause negative realities resulted in a specific cultural background if there is not the right enlightenment. It is always necessary to have a good training and critical thinking if you want to be in contact with other cultures in a constructive way.

Poor discernment in choosing the personnel. We must admit that people do not have all the same qualities or skills to face realities completely different from theirs or to co-live with brothers from other cultures. This does not erase the apostolic zeal of a religious. Not everyone can have the same heroism of St. Damian of Molokai in helping lepers. Not everyone can have the same apostolic skills of St. Francis Xavier. Some attitudes to face interculturality are learned by studying and training, others are personal innate qualifications.

I believe that a prudent discernment in choosing the religious, who have to face particularly challenging situations at a cultural level, is

needed. Despite this commitment, there are well-known examples of good people who had to give away upon some cultural environments that were too challenging.

Tell the story (storytelling)

During the Asian Missionary Congress, in Chiang Mai (Thailand) in October 2006, the Philippine Bishop Luis Antonio G. Tagle (Prefect of the Congregation for the Evangelisation of Peoples), in an interesting presentation entitled “Mission in Asia - Tell the story of Jesus”⁷⁵, highlighted an effective way to inculturate the Christian faith in that Continent: “tell the story.” The story of Jesus is the story that must be told all peoples in Asia in their specific context and in accessible way referring to their culture. He explained how telling one or more stories is a creative way to proclaim the Gospel in Asia, a Continent whose cultures and religions are deeply entrenched in great epic stories.

I am going to borrow some of his intuitions that can help us and make more effective the intercultural dialogue.

I believe that it is important to “tell the story” in order to dialogue effectively with people from different cultures and to let them know us better. Nothing is clearer and more understandable than real life. Nothing is more effective in the apostolate than sharing your own spiritual experience. In the European Middle Age, there were “storytellers.” In the African culture, telling stories is a fundamental aspect because it helps to pass on to the new generations the cultural values. You cannot imagine human life without “stories,” since life itself has a narrative structure. Telling stories comes so natural that we hardly notice them. Yet, stories help to get closer to people of any culture and unravel the deep meaning of life itself. Telling stories will be important and effective, if we keep in mind some conditions, such as:

- Even if told in the most appealing way possible, stories cannot have the same value of a story told by an individual who has implemented or implements what he tells to his own life.

75 “Asian Mission Congress 2006”, in RELIGIOUS LIFE ASIA, Vol. VIII, N. 4, October- December 2006

- Stories reveal who we are, the meaning of our life and where we are directed to. My story is both my autobiography and identity in broad terms. By telling my story, I give meaning to the context, the world in which I live and find myself (family, friends, society, culture).
- Stories are always dynamic, they never repeat themselves. They are always open to be re-interpreted and re-told. Stories help to remember and refresh memory. By telling stories, we remember and memory influences and shapes my present and the present of those who listen to me.
- Stories are the basis for understanding the spiritual, doctrinal and ethical symbology of a person. Your spirituality emerges from your story. The ethical, spiritual and doctrinal symbols, particularly dear to a person, always come from his story and life. It is important to reveal these stories and symbols to make others understand the spiritual or ethical values that are giving substance to our daily life.
- Stories encourage community. What has been said about stories and identity of a person also applies to a community. Common experiences and memories combine people in one body. Every community has its privileged “stories” that reveal the deep values underlying and underpinning the community itself. Celebrations, customs and rituals of a community immediately refer to facts or stories that the members of a community lovingly preserve.
- Stories, if listened carefully, have the power to change listeners. Important and meaningful experiences are better told as stories. When we experience something important in a positive or negative way, we look forward to tell someone else. This explains how every event or story needs to find someone who can share it. The story I am telling right now arouses in listeners the need of telling something similar occurred in their life and the will of reliving dormant or forgotten moments. Therefore, the listener becomes a teller.

If we apply this method of “telling stories” to intercultural dialogue in our Orders or our communities, we can immediately see how productive it can be.

1. Charism, as well as all traditional values, need to be told starting from the personal experience of the narrator. Communicating what has been heard, seen or touched (cf. 1 John 1, 1-4) is effective to make others understand and persuade them. Apostles used to tell their personal experiences and people answered immediately. We cannot forget the remarkable words of Paul VI in *Evangelii Nuntiandi*: “despite countless rejections towards God, the world paradoxically seeks him through unexpected ways and desperately needs him; it calls for evangelizers who tell it about a God who people know and is familiar to them, as they could see the Invisible” (76).
2. Telling charismatic experiences is an effective method to explain what the charism, the Founder and the mission are. All these realities are immediately comprehensible to any person even if this person and the teller come from two different cultures. Telling charism and the spirit of the Founder helps to keep them alive, to make them dynamic and vital. They are not museum pieces.
3. Stories can be told in multiple ways as well as multiple ways exist to pass on to other cultures the values of charism. This story must keep the characteristics of malleability and creativity. The examples of those brothers who embodied these values are the “living stories” that people of any culture love listening and know how to imitate.

Feast

Feast is another way that can make our dialogue inside and outside the community effective. Feast is an important symbol of human life, it gives quality to existence; human beings need to celebrate and have a feast. Feast marks existence and keeps distance from a functional and efficiency-driven conception of life, which puts work and productivity at the center of everything and constantly builds barriers to emphasize and preserve individualism. Feast is still a bright and meaningful element in all cultures.

Consecrated people must accept the invitation to feast and do not have to lock themselves in auto-sufficiency. Have a feast in the community and especially when invited from the youth, poor, those

“who are not with us.” They must know how to be wise and balanced, without demanding to be the main protagonists. We must remember that God is always there during a feast and real human encounters. God from the Bible loves feasts.

Consecrated people must know how to “invite to a feast” and build welcoming and friendly communities. Feast is always more similar to communion and relationships and the joy of being together. The Apostle Paul exhorts us to “make our kindness known to all men.” (Philippians 4,4-5).

Considering feast in our communities, *Fraternal life in communities* efficiently writes: “Do not forget that the peace and joy of being together is one the signs of the Kingdom of God.” The joy of living even in the midst of difficulties of the spiritual and human path is part of the Kingdom. This joy is the fruit of the Holy Spirit and embraces the simplicity of existence and the daily life routine. A joyless fraternity is a fading fraternity. Soon members will be tempted to seek elsewhere what they cannot find at their own place. A fraternity full of joy is a gift from Above to brothers who know how to ask for it and who accept themselves by engaging in fraternal life and trusting the action of the Spirit. The words of the Psalm come true: “how good and how gratifying it is that brothers live together. It is when the Lord grants blessing and gives life forever” (Psalm 133, 1-3) because when they live brotherly together, they gather in the assembly of the Church, they agree in charity and in only one will.” (28)

Forgiveness and reconciliation

They are important elements to avoid conflicts and restore broken relationships between people and different groups. In post-apartheid South Africa, they were broadly used to heal wounds and restore intercultural relationships between black and white people.

Loyal to the African saying “the court does not have a knife that cuts, but a needle that sews,” the “The truth and reconciliation commission,” instituted by Nelson Mandela and headed by the Anglican Desmond Tutu, carried out a particularly reconciling project that could be implemented in other nations. In the first years,

post-apartheid, well over twenty thousand people appeared before this Commission. Some were victims, others perpetrated horrible hate crime.

The Commission did not aim to acknowledge the crime and punish the perpetrators. It tried to ascertain the truth and grant amnesty to those who showed up to confess the crimes committed and ask for forgiveness.

At the basis of this principle, there is *ubuntu*: an African concept that indicates fraternity, friendship, sense of belonging. It is the system underpinning the African society, made of relationships, exchanges, cultural and ethnical belongings: being part of it means to be a “person.” The most serious punishment is to be excluded: it is like cutting off a branch from a tree. The purpose of this process is to urge every perpetrator to confess his guilt in order to be part of the new free South Africa. Although the past cannot be forgotten, that person can live his own life building it on new and different relationships. The confession of guilt and the plea for forgiveness give new meaning to individuals’ life and create different relationships from what the older ones used to be. They ensure a new future where these crimes will be committed no more. This means to break the spiral of evil. Revenge is replaced by forgiveness. It means to take a needle to sew new relationships and give to both victims and criminals the opportunity to be reintegrated in the community and live a new life⁷⁶.

Moreover, ESPERE (Escuela de Perdón y Reconciliación), started by my brothers in Latin America, has a lot of similarities with what has been done in South Africa.

I am going to mention some attitudes that religious, who live in intercultural contexts, must have and cultivate, giving rebirth to those traditional practices of his own Religious Institute:

- Any person or community, even in the consecrated life, is not free of conflicts, misunderstandings, inflicted or received wounds, resentments. To ignore them means to

76 Nicola Colasuonno, *Il perdono: la più grande esportazione del Sud Africa*, “Missione Oggi”, Feb. ‘05.

close your eyes to the evidence and the truth, and close in your isolation. To identify them means to create a path towards both truth and liberation.

- Each one of us must be convinced that all conflictual situations are always the result of personal inner conflicts. To overcome them means to take steps forward to reach brothers and reconcile. Reconciliation is self-driven.
- I must learn to live with dissents, divisions and conflicts. It is necessary to live them in order to feel them as real and turn them into real occasions of growth. To escape from them means to escape from your own shadow.
- Christian faith helps to see others' faces, that belong to another culture, that did me wrong; they are not enemies, but brothers to welcome and love. Forgiveness is possible and is necessary to obtain freedom and newness of life again.
- The pardon granted or required is a path of light towards a personal rehabilitation. It is a gift coming from Above and, at the same time, the result of a heart that opens up and is willing to welcome brothers.

Some training guidelines about interculturality

In conclusion, I am going to mention what *Ad Gentes* (a former magazine) published some years ago; it is the result of a comparative study among Italian Missionary Institutes about the adoption of interculturality and the implemented formation paths⁷⁷. I consider this study interesting and meticulous and, even if it was written many years ago, it is still contemporary and can draw the interest of members of any religious Institute, especially of those who are in charge of forming new members about their religious family. I am referring to this study to list some formation guidelines.

Since 1970s, several missionary Institutes started welcoming new members especially youngsters who came from so-called “mission

⁷⁷ Francesco Grasselli, *Internazionalizzazione e inculturazione del carisma degli Istituti Missionari*, in “Ad Gentes”, 1999, pp. 186-223.

zones.” At that time, it took courage to make this choice and there were still doubts. There were questions such as: is it reasonable to welcome youngsters to our Institutes since they should serve Churches in their own country that is facing new ecclesial paths? What are the real reasons why these candidates knock on the door of our international Institutes? Will the older brothers be able to accept them in their cultural diversity and lead them towards the educational path?

There is no doubt that first experiences were not free of problems that came from both candidates and members of the Institute. Inculturation of charism, that I have previously mentioned, was still not perceived as an urgent exigence in order to make new religious members understand the foundational legacy that passes from generation to generation, from culture to culture. Even when the Founders tried to stress the concept of “family” as a characteristic of the Institute, it seemed that they were putting limits to the universal vocation of the Institute itself.

Initially, the tendency to conceive charism as a static and monolithic reality led trainers to impose on the new young members coming from other different cultural areas the same lifestyle and communitarian habits of those Countries in which charisma was born and developed. However, as Vatican II wanted, a new deeper attention towards people, cultures and inculturation arose everywhere. Even in the context of both religious and training life, members started to consider having in their own Institute and in the same community brothers of different cultures not as a “problem” or accidental fact, but as an opportunity to grow; both Institute and all members felt this way. Formators asked for advice, students from several Institutes gathered together and shared their experiences and, in this way, a new conscience arose.

I abundantly refer to the comparative study on experiences of the missionary Institutes to answer to the following two questions.

What does an education to interculturality intend to do?

- Young candidates in the Institute as well as the old members must be aware that their own culture has no privileged *status* neither should have inferiority complex.

- Fully and peacefully identifying with charism and the Founder is a solid and important ground for co-living;
- Everybody must have the ability to relativize their culture and its values and, at the same time, must see the positive sides and values of other cultures;
- The values of the Gospel and those related to our Christian faith are criteria of judgement necessary to understand what it is positive or negative in any culture;
- Being able to cultivate “positive prejudices” towards others and their differences;
- Knowing how to peacefully co-live with those who have a different culture and being able to integrate at work and in the coexistence;
- The scheme “majority” and “minority” does not have to overcome the cultural aspects. Other criteria exist in leading towards communitary decisions.
- Knowing how to manage in a balanced way and with an open mind the mechanism of inculturation of charism and its “creative” loyalty; loyalty to both past and future; sense of belonging to “family” and reaching other Religious and ecclesial realities;
- Cultivating an open Catholic mind being aware that your own Institute and Province are not the center of the world; knowing how to find the place in the reality of the “Church.”

What are the most effective means to reach the goals previously mentioned?

- Highlighting in any situation the positive cultural aspects of the other and welcome them with empathy and in an active way;
- Identifying the wounds inflicted by historical, social, ethnical factors to heal it with the appropriate means;
- Identifying in ourselves racial, cultural and supremacist prejudices that may hurt others deeply;

- Taking advantage of all forms of dialogue that can ensure knowledge and mutual acceptance;
- Practicing in recognizing relative your own culture and daringly put it in the light of the evangelic values;
- At a communitary level, fixing some gatherings in order to better know the others' culture;
- To celebrate feasts, both religious and public ones, not only in the Country where you are, but also from those Countries where your brothers come from;
- Home, furniture, magazines, food as well, if possible, shall reflect the different cultures of the members of the community, keeping in mind though that the inculturation in the Country where we are in that moment must be influential;
- Using the official language of the Country without hurting and marginalizing any member of the community;
- Using a language respectful of the people and the Country where we are;
- Allowing the new members arrived in a Country to receive an adequate introduction to that culture and language;
- Considering both Provinces and Institutes, to pay attention to all languages and cultures;
- Allowing everybody to learn the "mother tongue" of the Institute;
- Including brothers with different cultural backgrounds in the Commissions or Secretariats of the Institute.

In conclusion...

Entrusting to our Founders, men of God driven by the Holy Spirit, the brave effort of our Orders and Institutes in facing those challenges derived from the interculturality, "a sign" of our time. My personal belief is that the best attitude is not to force in one single channel these new streams that are just gurgling from their spring, as saying: this is the path to follow! The "signs of time" need longer

periods to be understood in their complexity and need patience to mature and bear fruits. We have to keep having faith and follow with a positive attitude this new potential of the consecrated life. Eventual hitches and obstacles do not have to demoralize and stop the march. As consecrated people, we have to immerse ourselves in this new reality bravely, avoiding any temptation of sitting on the banks of the river and contemplating the passing of time. Two thousand years of Christianity are more than self-explanatory!

A little biography

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Doing

Pious Schools Going Forth

P. Carles GIL Sch. P.

Team Coordinator “Pious Schools Going Forth”.

In the **Jubilee** Year, Pope **Francis** encouraged the Pious Schools to enter the *Going Forth* dynamic to which he invited the Church.

- The Going Forth **Church** of Pope Francis can be synthesized in the following axes:
- **Cheerful** simplicity.
- The **peripheries** of the world and the Church as a place of mission.
- Globalizing **social justice**.
- **Spiritual** conversion, to remain in Going Forth dynamic, that we must sustain it personally on time.
- Reform of some ecclesial **institutions**, so that change is permanent.

How can we translate and contextualize this invitation by Pope Francis to us, the Pious Schools?

The first step was a reflection between the **General Congregation** and the starting coordination team (József Urban, Juan Ruiz, Christian Ehemba and Robert Dalusung) of the *Pious Schools Going Forth* project, which matured it throughout several meetings. Thus, on **March 6, 2019**, on the occasion of the **400 + 2 years** of the canonical erection of the Pauline Congregation, this new dynamic was officially presented to the whole Order.

Throughout the preparation, Father General through his *salutarios* and contributions offered us a good framework to develop and clarify what the Pious School Going Forth is.

A new way of understanding life, mission, availability, vocation, even organization, from the perspective of the **Piarist Pentecost**. With a Pious Schools:

- More passionate about **evangelization**.
- More available to new **mission fields**, even if they may be **complex**.
- More **Samaritan**.
- Closer to the **poor**.
- Less **self-worried**, more focused on its one Lord.
- More **bridge** maker and wall overcoming.

Under the sign of the Piarist Pentecost, opening ourselves to the Spirit, we answer **present** (adsum) to this exhortation, and we dare to start this **adventure**. We want to live this new Going Forth **culture**.

How can the Pious Schools live this Going Forth culture? As Piarists, in the community, in the mission, encouraged by the charisma to overflow borders and faithful to Piarist spirituality.

This framework question, in constellation with so many others, we wanted to understand them as an **appeal**, rejecting the catechetical method of single and closed question and answer, to live them as a challenge.

Fortunately, the literature and bibliography of the Pious Schools on revitalization, on refounding, on new missionary dynamics, on community models... are very abundant. It is a heritage that must be guarded zealously. That's why we haven't focused so much on the content, but on **the design**, on the method, about the style. Certainly, as the saying goes, all roads lead to Rome. However, not all roads are the same, and the path is decisive, the path configures, the path is the key for this *Going Forth* dynamic to become **sustainable** culture.

The members of the coordinating team work to point to our **own model**. Trying to avoid tempting copy and paste, discerning what has worked and has not worked lately; trying to escape the vain pretensions of a new project, beyond the reach of our capabilities. Just a model of our own, simmered, after much dialogue and **consensus**.

Succinctly, we propose the following **crosscutting** axes:

- **Shaking**, as Kant would say of Hume, awaken us from dogmatic sleep, to discover and recognize a wider horizon.
- To live a foundational moment, as at the top of Mount Tabor, essential to understand the mission to which we are called, and then return to our places of Piarist presence, **transfigured**.
- That the participants be the **protagonists**, the real actors. Young adult Piarists who have enough luggage to offer an adequate response to the questioning about the Pious Schools Going Forth. Construction is collective and from them.
- This construction, to the extent that it comes from the participants, is necessarily **open** and genuine. So, although the program may be similar, each generation will make its own journey.
- Feeling **community** is basic. As it was for Jesus. As it was for Calasanz. The feeling of belonging is a key element to the success of the project. 20 Piarists from the four continents, with impossible time zones, dedicated to absorbing ministerial chores, need a clear identity and a strong sense of generation in order to continue the project.

The **thematic axes** accompany the transverse axes:

- Delve into the **Piarist Pentecost**: are we able to overcome the comfort zone, to walk unprecedented paths? Or to build the way?
- **Prayer** as a life sustentation.
- Know the **disruptive in Calasanz** (and throughout the history of the Pious Schools), to learn and be inspired, tempting new responses with greater impact.

- Pious Schools, **land of mission**: growing in missionary dimension to respond to the multiple calls we receive, either in other countries or in the new needs and poverty of today.
- **Updating our charism** to effectively and creatively serve emerging educational, social and pastoral needs in our societies. Make them more impactful.
- To live the growing and unstoppable **interculturality** of our Order.
- The **accompaniment** so that our **communities** and fraternities are **life-generating** spaces.

Specifically, it is a **biennial proposal** that has **4 stages** (*Presentation of the video*).

- 1st **formative**, with a face-to-face moment in a significant presence of the Order. Its first edition was in Kikonka (DR Congo) lasting 15 days.
- 2nd: **virtual form** for a year, designed mainly to accompany the participants through the life teams (also virtual).
- 3rd is a short **missionary experience**, between one and three months, to live the received and told.
- 4th stage is to live fully in *Going Forth* **attitude**.
 - Being totally available to Provincials and The General Congregations to participate (or to found) in a Piarist presence where the mission calls us
 - Or remaining in his demarcation with a new vital horizon.
 - The *what* and *where* are very striking, true, but **the definitive is the how**. The *Going Forth* culture can and should be lived in any place where the intuition of Calasanz is necessary.

The first generation met in **Kikonka** (*photo presentation*).

Just talking about Kikonka, the first feeling that comes out is that of a deep gratitude. Thank you, *matondo!* (in Kikongo) to Félicien, Florent, Marcel, Milingui, also to Jean Claude and Godlove. How

not to mention the titanic and discreet work of the two pre-novices, John Kennedy and John. Nawe Mabimbi! Jesus totila! Kayala!

Just the day before we started the program, our dear Juan María Puig left us in a very unexpected way. We pray for him, and we accompany the best we know our brothers in Emmaus and Brazil Bolivia.

We did not choose Kikonka at random; it is the heart of the youngest demarcation of the Order, the newly founded Vicariate of Congo. It is a place that reminds us of what it means to «found», «to be among the poor», «to summon young people to the mission», to «build the Order».

Unanimously, and almost without thinking, participants to the first Program of Pious School Going Forth felt the need to be called Kikonka generation.

Calasanz set up his Pious Schools always GOINF FORTH. Let us be faithful and enterprising heirs to this founding gift

Let us dare to start this new dynamism with humility and audacity, to infect with our joy and impregnate **the Order of this new culture.**

Laity stewardship in the Interculturality and inculturation of the Order

*Fr. Emmanuel SUÁREZ Sch. P.
Delegate of the Fr. General for Participation.*

Assumptions

1. Inculturation is a fundamental requirement of God's relationship with man.
 - Of Jesus with his context.
 - Must be, from a common discernment, companion of the Evangelizing Mission.
2. Inculturation is always a way. It's always an incomplete process. Think that every culture could enrich the human face of Jesus.
3. Interculturality follows a «kenotic» path. It involves «being born again.» Overcome the issue of domination that is sometimes so inherent in many relationships and encounters, including within the Church and her mission. Going down.
4. Inculturation, Christianly speaking, involves fine-tuning the capacity for prophetic dialogue:
 - Openness to the Word.
 - To the world of the poor, from faith.
 - Open to «Inter» – «Intra».

5. Consecrated Life generates «cultural spaces» from a Charism and a Spirituality.
 - «Cultural spaces» that are relational, dynamic and changing.

Laity stewardship. Shared responsibility

1. Need of an «inculturation» in the culture itself. Rediscover – recognize – value – critical awareness. In our case and that of the laity we must immerse ourselves in our own «culture» of Order.
2. Need of inculturation in another culture. You come from what you are and you discover another universe. It's like moving into each other's house, but not as a «visit» but to achieve **transformation, enrichment and fertility**. *Shared passage between lay and religious.*
 - Creative fidelity.
 - Charisma with a lot of potential not yet discovered.
 - Living the charism in new geographical, cultural, ideological contexts...
 - A new Piarist subject.
3. It involves openness and «conversion»: Attention to the issue of domination.
 - From doing mission to being more missionary.
 - From individualism to collaboration.
 - From imposition to enriching dialogue.
 - From «evangelizing» to being evangelized.
4. The co-responsible interculturality with laity will lead us to a common discernment, the development of new projects, common projects and realistic evaluations.
 - **New** foundations. Doing new things and in a new way.
 - Red Itaka Escolapios.

- New projects from approaches, optics and criteria different to «traditional» ones.
5. It helps to recreate the charism.
- Living interculturality is easier to transmit life.
 - It is easier to witness joy and hope.
 - It is possible to propose a new way of living the Consecrated Life, so full of forms and schemes that they say little or have lost evangelical meaning and prophecy.
 - Revitalization, restructuring and expansion are possible.

Challenges

1. Communities that open, that come out, that serve, that inaugurate new paths and that are witness of joy. New subject building the Pious School.
 - Opening the Order (to let in and out).
 - Go out. Church going forth.
 - Serve in co-responsibility.
 - Witnessing joy and hope.
 - Inaugurating (walk new roads).
2. Facing the world. Don't turn your back on the world. Sympathy and empathy with the world.
 - Get away with this attitude.
3. To discern in common the way of introducing, in the context of the indigenous culture of the child and young man today, the message of Jesus. (urban, peasant, indigenous, different cultures...)
 - Language.
4. Emphasize the «Inter» – the «Intra».
 - Internal and external harmony: Intercongregational – intergenerational – intercultural – interterreligiosity – intercommunity – interpersonal – interconnection: Network.

5. To face current issues from our Charism: Migrants, women, indigenous people, sexuality – «new cultures», new anthropologies....
 - Know how to read the virtual, digital world, new technologies and what they are producing.
 - Transform Contexts.
 - Culture creators.

Proposal for the Pious Schools

Ministry

1. Promote network collaboration at the interdemarkional level, of the different formal and non-formal educational platforms; at the same time, to link with national and international educational networks, which help to improve the quality of our educational offer.
2. Generate an educational idearium that serves as a framework for all Pious Schools.
3. Advance the model of presence as an effective space for exchange and cultural reflection, valuing diversity as one of the axes of educational processes.
4. Promote spaces for pedagogical reflection on the Piarist ministry and raise the pedagogical level of the Pious Schools. Incorporating the current challenges in our educational models (ecology, new technologies, inculturation and interculturality, gender issues, solidarity, etc.) as well as promoting the integral school model in full time, open to the community.
5. Promote a pedagogy of encounter between people and diverse groups.

Initial formation

1. Include in the FEDE Formation Directory the dynamics of inculturation and interculturality of the Order.
2. Promoting in the learning of different languages.

3. Update formators in dynamics of interculturality and interculturalization especially updating the course of formators that the Order offers.
4. Create experiences or spaces to share, reflect, raise awareness, cultural enrichment to achieve a better inculturation of the charism and the Gospel, through seminars, courses, or other.
5. Include in the formation programs for theologian juniors of the Order significant pastoral experiences (which help the Piarist subject sent to discover the gospel in specific cultures) or academic exchanges with other provinces taking care of the financing plans for such transfers.
6. Introduce in the initial formation a specific curriculum in missionary theology in the key of interculturality and interculturalization, as part of the new missionary mentality of the Order Going Forth.
7. Use technological means to create common spaces that cause in the formees a new dynamic of cultural exchange and openness and acceptance of difference.
8. Assess the sending of candidates in formation from north to south and vice versa, from clear reference frameworks according to the current dynamics of the Order and what the Order seeks in the formation of the religious.
9. Promote and communicate a clear common Piarist culture, enhance the Piarist narratives of the Order or of each culture, the healthy traditions of the Order, as well as seek the presence of an older brother in the formative communities and the correct historical narrative of the development of the Piarist presence in a particular place.
10. Define the specific that intercultural competence in the human and Christian in the FEDE growing in dynamics of discernment, culture of evaluation, as well as a solid and adequate emotional maturity and psychological strength.
11. Promote the creation of intercultural groups of formators in such a way as to help the daily realization of intercultural dynamics and inculturation in daily life in houses of formation.

12. Enhance better coordination of the culture to inform, evaluate and monitor formation dynamics in such a way as to align the objectives of initial formation at different demarcation, circumscription, and general levels.

Community life

The community as a place of growth

1. We need to continually grow in our Piarist identity.
2. We have to be a space for reflection, or at least have times for reflection and community discernment.
3. Having frequent community meetings [how often?] to reflect on the Constitutions of the Order and other documents of the Order.
4. Our reflections should lead to common projects, a common mission in which we agree.
5. We need to be in a living relationship with the Order.
6. We need to speak a common language in the community.
7. In a situation of inculturation, it can be the language of the place.
8. Learn something about each member of the community's language.
9. We have to learn how to handle differences in the community: the generational differences we have, and we have to learn to welcome others, whether they are strangers or newcomers to the community.
10. 10. Our community needs to be close to the environment, not uprooted.

The community as a place of celebration

1. We need to celebrate the different feasts of the nations and cultures from which the members of the community come, and also of the place where the community lives.

2. We need to know how to cook – it is a task during the Initial Formation --, and we need to cook in the working communities.
3. We need to make present the different cultures in our prayers, our singing, our ways of celebrating.
4. We have to be vigilant not to run away from the company of others, going back to the closed world of our smartphones.

Community as a place of reconciliation

1. We have to face conflict; we need to know how to handle conflicts.
2. We need to detect the presences of asymmetry in the community. Aspects of asymmetry that lead to dominance, violence.
3. We need to learn to tell the truth, to listen to the truth that appears in ourselves, from where the importance of speaking the language of emotions, and to hear others talk about their perception of the truth.
4. We need to identify aspects that hinder human growth in the surrounding culture.
5. We have to celebrate reconciliation every day in prayer.

Community and inculturation

We need to have living relationships and collaboration with the local community, its civil and ecclesial bodies, other religious congregations, other entities involved in education and social work.

Expansion

The Orden must continue boldly and with perseverant patience this dynamic of “expansion”, this is how it will keep good health.

1. Strategic (highly), and prepare properly.
 - Mission-oriented foundations.
 - Vocation-oriented foundations.
 - Strategic (instrumental) foundations.

2. People (religious – lay)

- Laity:
 - We have counted on them for consolidation.
 - Also for expansion.
- Vocations:
 - Those necessary for the growth of the Order.
 - Option of Japan–Philippines.
 - International training house (open to all nationalities)
 - Proactivity in other countries without prior presence of Piarists.
- Discernment.
 - Specific vocations.
 - Customized itineraries for religious.
 - Person with the necessary vocation and capacity.
- Formation.
 - Missionary.
 - Interculturality.
 - Languages (international – national).
 - Entrepreneurship.
- Synergies with the Pious Schools Going Forth.
- Accompaniment.

3. New governance:

- Culture of Order.
- Effective collaboration of provinces.
- Comprehensive sustainability.

4. Rename (growth, development, new presences)

Other proposed lines

1. To continue the processes initiated in the current six-year term, for example, the keys of life of the Order.
2. From a humanist approach, reflect on curricular content, harmonizing faith and culture.
3. Promote topics in initial formation such as: leadership, interculturality, conflict resolution.
4. Generate more contact with students, and fewer administrative positions.
5. Define a renewed framework of our spirituality that takes into account the dynamics of interculturality and inculturation, such as discernment, forgiveness, kenosis, koinonia, listening, empathy, feast, testimony or diakonía, etc. connecting and renewing the charismatic being of Calasanz.
6. Include training plans for inculturation and interculturality in exchange and volunteering initiatives at different levels of Participation.
7. Promote student exchanges.
8. Continue to promote the translation of Piarist and Calasancian literature into various languages.

ROME, February 7 2020

FOR GLORY OF GOD AND THE BENEFIT OF OUR NEIGHBORS

