

Xaverian Mission and Spiritual Experience

1. When Jesus sends his eleven disciples (Mt 28,16-20) it is necessary to note two very suggestive points: 1) Several of them were "hesitant" ... 2) Jesus' words are spoken with such force that there is no doubt about his divine authority. Jesus does not say, "please pay attention to what I say to you..., if you have time, if you can, if you like, if you feel it in your heart..." No, Jesus bluntly says (with verbs in the imperative), "Go, announce, teach all that I have commanded." Mission is not a matter of volunteers, it is an assignment, a responsibility, a task inherent to our baptism and our charismatic consecration.

2. Mission is a necessity for all of Christ's disciples (only if there is a mission does life have a future). They were hesitant and yet, he sends them... Because the mission is his, of his Spirit who resides in each of his disciples, and He will be with them every day until the end of time. Doubts do not exempt us from the mandate to testify and announce!

3. Today humanity is in the midst of circumstances that offer spirituality the opportunity for a new spring. There is a need for a new spiritual elaboration of existence. Today, the very word spirituality arouses hope. However, in this awakening that opens up to the encounter with spirituality not everything presents itself in a positive light. There are risks of regression towards fundamentalisms such as a search for "immediate" divine facts (angels, esoteric movements etc.), for sorts of "uncommitted religious intimacies" and "magical ritualism".

4. Even within the Church, there is an insistent quest for spirituality, for a new and authentically evangelical spirituality. Many lay people today take up leading roles in new schools of thought and spirituality, in movements, something that indeed support the religious experience and journey of large groups in the Church.

5. Compared to the internal reality of our Congregation, as we reach the 120-year history, we Xaverians recognize that, in the face of the great challenges of the mission today, it is urgent to renew in each of us and in every community the spiritual and missionary dynamism of our Founder. To this respect, the words that the *Ratio Missionis Xaveriana* used are still valid:

- "The serious nature of the situations in some of the countries in which we are based ... raise some serious questions about our traditional way of carrying out the mission and how we should face the future" (RMX 4).
- "We recognize the necessity of a more intense, personalized and profound apostolic and spiritual life" (RMX 22).
- "This spirituality has been enriched by the experience of the first 100 years of the Congregation's existence" (RMX 22).
- Our Xaverian way is already a spiritual path proven as effective by the Church who "welcomed it and sets it before us as the way to fulfil our missionary vocation" (RMX 22).

- Circumstances similar to the present did not discourage Conforti. “Following his example, and discerning the signs of the times, we, his sons, also wish to find in our faith in Christ and His Gospel the strength for re-launching the mission and renewing our commitment to it” (RMX 5).

6. We Xaverians by identity and vocation share a very essential spirituality, which has its foundation in the mandate that consecrates us all for the mission. What is specific about us Xaverians is our consecration for a mission *ad gentes* (at the service of non-Christians), *ad extras* (beyond our borders, our language, culture and customs), and *ad vitam* (for all our life and with all our life).

7. The project or ideal of life that Mons. Conforti proposes to his sons for the realization of our Xaverian specificity is structured according to five master lines, usually defined by us as *the five constants* of our charism: centrality of Christ, missionary purpose, religious consecration, family spirit and rich and "perfect" humanity.

8. Let us rediscover, therefore, the effective elements and resources we have to open ourselves to that specific and strong spiritual experience that gives birth to and nourishes the Xaverian mission. “Taste and see that the Lord is good!” (Ps 34.8).

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