



LA SORGENTE

BOLLETTINO DEL TEOLOGATO INTERNAZIONALE MARISTA

June 2019



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Casa di Maria - newsletter number 4/ 2019



As I write these words it is the morning after the installation of our new lectors and acolytes and the end of year dinner on the roof. Yesterday the newest member of the community arrived: Celestin Christian

Ngoura from Cameroon. Tomorrow

the community will begin to disperse for the summer. Tomorrow, also, our senior seminarian and deacon, Kenneth, completes his initial formation at Casa di Maria. He is returning to Cameroon after four years studying theology here in Rome.

We are grateful for the prayers, practical support and encouragement of so many.

One hundred years ago the world was beginning to recover from the terrible war that had been fought in Europe and other places from 1914-1918. Pope Benedict XV wrote a letter *Maxim Illud* about the propagation of the faith, about mission.

In the letter he highlighted the history of the spread of the Christian faith throughout the world. He referred to many great missionaries who had been key figures in the spread of the gospel. People like Augustine of Canterbury, Cyril and Methodius, Patrick, Boniface, Bartolomeo de las Casas, Francis Xavier, and many others. He wrote how the gospel spread from Palestine to Asia to Europe to Africa. Then later to the Americas and Australia and Oceania, in which Peter Chanel and our early Marist missionaries were so involved in.

Pope Benedict was concerned in those times that the missionary work of the church would be caught

up with colonialism and nationalism. He asked who would take up the challenge of evangelisation in those days? He wrote of the need for the development of indigenous clergy, of local religious and priests. He emphasised the need for good quality formation. He stressed the importance of prayer and vocations and resources to support this work.

So what qualities did he believe that those going on mission needed?

- The man who preaches God must himself be a man of God.
- He recognised the importance of witness: as he said, preaching by example is far more effective.
- Let them be humble and obedient and chaste.
- Language and practical skills.
- People of learning.

They are still the qualities that missionaries need today. One hundred years later the church still needs missionaries. In fact mission is the work of the church – no matter where we are. As Pope Paul said: Evangelizing is in fact the grace and vocation proper to the Church, her deepest identity; she exists in order to evangelize. Pope John Paul II: to preach the gospel is the first task of the Church.

Our mission is the same as the apostles, and all those who have gone before us. It is to be sent out, to share the Good News, to meet those we do not know with an openness of heart and to receive hospitality. May we have much to share when we return!

Tony Kennedy sm



OBEDIENCE IN THE RELIGIOUS LIFE : THE ANALOGY OF KENOSIS



The word obedience comes from the Latin ob-audio which means « to listen to someone » hence the implication of being submissive or listening.

Approaching the notion of obedience, one must remember that the word « obey » means to listen. Moreover the word responsibility also means to give an answer. Obedience and responsibility are two inseparable concepts in religious life. Obedience therefore implies a very active and dynamic attitude that appeals to the whole person.

If we want to find an anthropological foundation of obedience, we have to look at Jesus Christ. The meaning of obedience of religious in human reality is understood fully only in the mystery of the incarnation. It is the person of Jesus who gives content to obedience.

Religious obedience is to be understood according to four major axes:

1. Obedience to God. First of all, listen to what God has to say to me about my life and then discover what I could do to realize it fully. It is the whole notion of vocation, of call, which is played out. Naturally this obedience to God, to the inspirations of the Holy Spirit in the heart of my life, involves the three other points that follow.

2. Obedience to oneself. There is also in the vow of obedience an obedience to oneself. A congruence as psychologists would say. This obedience could be defined as what I would like to achieve at the end of my life. Obeying therefore implies a knowledge of oneself and one's deepest aspirations, in order to be faithful to oneself, in order to be able to listen to oneself in truth.

3. Obedience to the world. To listen, to obey, also means to welcome the world and its inhabitants, who are my brothers and my sisters in this world. To listen to them in order to be able to welcome them

in their struggles and their distresses, and to engage in them according to what I could discover of myself while listening to God and others. Obeying means having your heart in readiness, listening to the world in order to identify the points of convergence between what I carry as aspirations and what the world expects of me, what my brothers and sisters in community expect of me and what God expects of me.

4. Obedience to my religious family. Finally, to obey as a religious is also to choose once again, every day, the project of religious life which is ours and where God has led us. For our congregation it means that we have chosen, to respond as best as we can to this obedience to oneself, to the world and to God. This obedience means to become each day more and more responsible for our project as religious. Because this project is for us a credible model to live as a disciple of Jesus.

The vow of obedience implies that one renounces to dispose of one's own life to put it in the service of the Church through the superiors that the congregation has designated. It is like the expression of a will to surpass, of self-appropriation for the service of God. Who obeys agrees to give up his own preference for a greater good as expressed to him by his superior. The clumsiness of certain superiors must not make us forget the profound meaning of this vow of obedience which assures the Society of Mary a great part of its efficiency in the service of the Church

There are many false problems: should we obey an order contrary to our conscience? Of course there are borderline cases, we must never accept to perform an immoral act, but, in so far as it is a wise decision, which simply has the defect of not responding to our personal view of things, we must submit to them, preferring the judgment of someone more knowledgeable than ourselves. Obedience is not then a form of violence made to the individual conscience, but a normal mode of exercising that consciousness. Obedience is like kenosis, you have to make yourself small. By the vow of obedience you renounce.

Guy Roger Assogoma, sm

PERPETUALLY PROFESSED BROTHERS OF THE SOCIETY OF MARY



The Society of Mary, the Marists, is an international religious congregation of priests and brothers. The word “Marist” is derived from the name “Mary”, the mother of Jesus. Marists are

those who bear her name, endeavour to live her spirit, and minister in the Church and the world under the name of Mary.

Ciao! & Bula vinaka to all.

It is indeed an honour to contribute to this second edition of our International Theologate Newsletter. In this article I will be elaborating my personal reflection on my experience on the brothers in our Society.

When I tell people about the Marist (SM) brothers, one of the responses I often hear is, “So what does a brother do, what distinguishes a Marist brother from a Marist Father?” Usually I smile and say, “Well... it’s not so much a matter of what we do as it is who we are.”

Religious priests, sisters, and brothers all partake in this kind of witness, but each in their own way. The same for the Marist brothers. They remind the Church that we are all sisters and brothers in Christ with the same Father in Heaven. Women religious offer the unique gift of sisterhood and make known the feminine experience and reality of a life in Christ.

Marist Brothers, as men who live in community and as brothers to the Marist Fathers and to the human family, similarly are witnesses to fraternity in a world that is so often divided and in which human relations at all levels are breaking down.

Just as religious sisters bring to the Church their unique gifts as women, so Marist brothers, with a masculine perspective, offer their gifts to the Church as men.

Marist brothers work at winning souls back to the Lord. They are just like other religious. They always remind the church that whether one is married, ordained, single, or a religious, each person expresses that universal call of baptism in a particular way. For religious, living the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience give witness to the life of Christ, and to the future resurrected life of all humanity in the heavenly kingdom. Marist SM brothers are also called to be a light within the Church as the Church is meant to be Christ’s light in our world.

How do brothers in the Society of Mary operate? They do many different things. They are retreat directors, teachers, professors, missionaries, nurses, administrators, chaplains, campus ministers, social workers, carpenters, cooks, writers, artists, and many other things. But their unique and oftentimes overlooked vocation is to be a certain kind of man in this world.

Marist Brothers in communities with Marist priests and Marist seminarians often undertake advanced studies and enjoy equal standing with ordained members. However, in the Marist context as equal members of the same community, both priests and brothers would consider themselves brothers in the fraternal, communal sense of the term.

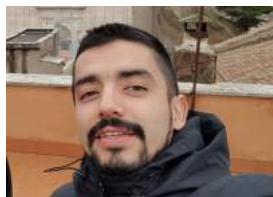
In conclusion with my own experience of these great men of God the Marist brothers, *I say A friend loves at all times, and a brother is there for times of trouble.* In times of difficulties, worries, anxiety or troubles a Marist brother will always be there to meet the needs of the situation.

Vinaka Vaka Levu.

Iosefo Amuri, sm



MARÍA MODELO DE LA IGLESIA



María ocupa un lugar importante en la vida de los cristianos. Con frecuencia recurrimos a

ella para pedir su socorro e intercesión. Ciertamente ella tiene un lugar especial en la historia de la salvación como Madre del Redentor. Por esa misión especial que recibió de llevar a Cristo en su seno y educarlo tenemos la confianza en recurrir a ella. Sin embargo, su rol en la historia de la salvación no se queda sobre un pedestal dentro de las Iglesias, hay un misterio aún más grande que nos recuerda cuál es nuestro destino final como hijos de Dios.

La fiesta de la Asunción nos habla, por ejemplo, de la resurrección gloriosa que nos espera al final de los tiempos. Cuando Dios hace una alianza con nosotros, su pueblo, y promete la salvación, no nos deja varados a la deriva sin saber dónde ir, Él cumple sus promesas y nos muestra además el camino para llegar a la meta. María, de hecho, vive en esta realidad gloriosa gracias a su fiel respuesta que dió a Dios durante toda su vida. Cuando alzamos los ojos hacia ella es entonces cuando comprendemos que Dios no olvida a sus siervos sino que los lleva a la plenitud de la vida, ella es la estrella de la mañana y puerta del cielo.

Por otra parte, María también nos puede enseñar cómo vivir nuestra vida cristiana. Sin duda, la Iglesia puede proclamarla como modelo suyo porque ella es la “sin mancha”, aquella que aprendió a hacer la voluntad del Padre. Podemos imaginarla en su vida

terrena acompañando a Jesús en su misión del anuncio del Reino y colocándose siempre como un discípulo más del Maestro. Jesús es claro, su parentela verdadera es aquella que aprende a escuchar la Palabra del Señor y la pone en práctica. ¿Por qué no consideraríamos a María cómo esa perfecta discípula si, desde el principio con su sí, la Palabra de Dios se hizo carne en su seno y fructificó hasta la cruz y resurrección?

La Iglesia no es ingenua en amar a María y pedirle su ayuda. Además, como Maristas tenemos impreso en nuestra vocación emularla. Considero que aún más en estos tiempos estamos llamados a vivir nuestra identidad marista, porque es María quien será nuestra mejor maestra para que vivamos plenamente el evangelio.

Hace poco platicaba con un amigo de otro rito cristiano sobre la clase de Mariología que habíamos recientemente tenido. Él estaba perplejo porque no comprendía por qué María ocupa un lugar muy importante y esencial entre los católicos. Tiempo después, al final de mi año académico comprendí que el ser auténtico y verdadero cristiano no es una utopía inalcanzable. Hoy, más que nunca, necesitamos ponemos nuestra esperanza en sus manos y saber que, como ella, si escuchamos la Palabra del Señor, podremos algún día alcanzar la vida eterna que Dios nos promete. Por eso, ella no puede ser abandonada en una esquina de las Iglesias. María vivió plenamente lo que Dios pide de nosotros, y nos enseña que es posible abrimos a la gracia del Espíritu Santo y vivir como Hijos de Dios.

Ricardo Navarrete Gutiérrez, sm

PREPARAÇÃO PARA PROFISSÃO PERPÉTUA E DIACONATO



Um dos episódios bíblicos que mais me inspira ao meditar sobre minha vocação à vida religiosa consagrada é a resposta de Maria ao Anjo Gabriel em Lc 1, 38: “Eis a escrava do Senhor faça-se em mim segundo a tua palavra”. Essas palavras me inspiram porque me representa um compromisso vitalício de entrega total a vontade de Deus. Maria ao pronunciar aquelas palavras me mostra que o seu sim é um verdadeiro exemplo de escuta, de fé e de obediência à vontade divina. É uma resposta que lhe permite uma identidade totalmente nova, aquela de ser mãe do Salvador e de se tornar sua discipula. Eis aqui nas palavras de Maria o significado simbólico de profissão perpétua e de diaconato.

Quando penso em professar os votos perpétuos de pobreza, castidade e obediência na Sociedade de Maria me vem em mente duas coisas. A primeira é que a profissão perpétua significa um ato canônico pelo qual cada Marista se consagra e se torna membro definitivo da Sociedade. Ele é convicto de que não está realizando seus próprios desejos, mas aquele de Deus. Através da profissão perpétua cada Marista se entrega à Deus assim como Maria

se entregou quando recebeu a mensagem do anjo Gabriel. Ela escutou atentamente as palavras no seu coração e creu que elas não expressavam a sua própria vontade, mas, a vontade de Deus. A segunda coisa é que com a profissão perpétua o Marista ganha uma nova identidade, aquela de ser presença ativa de Maria na Igreja e de portar o seu nome. Isso implica pensar, julgar, sentir e agir em tudo como Maria, no seguimento de Cristo. Do mesmo modo, no diaconato, cada Marista se configura à pessoa de Cristo vivendo o espírito de Maria: um espírito de serviço ao próximo, de humildade, de prudência e de oração.

A preparação à profissão perpétua e ao diaconato na Sociedade faz crescer em mim um olhar atento às necessidades mais urgentes do povo de Deus e dos desafios atuais da Igreja de Cristo. As palavras de Maria, em resposta ao chamado de Deus, me ensinam que o seguimento de Cristo implica um esvaziamento das minhas próprias ambições e projetos, e me faz colocar todos os meus dons e minha própria vida ao serviço do Reino de Deus.

Leandro Martins, sm





Celebrating religious life



Our new lectors



New acolytes