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M.M.

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In this second talk, I want to address the implementation of the basic principles we have gone over in the first talk. We will see first the practical aspect of communion. In a second time we will see the “kerygmatic dimension” of our renewal, that is “how do we announce the gospel, as a community, to people who have no knowledge of religion whatsoever. Finally, we will address the question of the Liturgy as the engine of the mission.

## 1. The ecclesiology of communion

We can start with the words of Pope Saint John Paul the Second in *Christifideles laici* (32): “Communion and mission are profoundly connected with each other, they interpenetrate and mutually imply each other, to the point that communion represents both the source and the fruit of mission: communion gives rise to mission and mission is accomplished in communion. It is always the one and the same Spirit who calls together and unifies the Church and sends her to preach the Gospel ‘to the ends of the earth’ (Acts 1:8)”

When we discover the church as “the house and the school of communion” we go over the dialectical opposition that we have seen in some speeches over the past decades; this opposition between the people of God and the church as a hierarchy, between Christology and Pneumatology, between the institutions and the charisms, between sacramentality and evangelization, between spiritual life and temporal engagement, between proclamation of the gospel and dialogue. Hans Urs von Baltasar used the expression of catholic symphony to speak about ecclesial communion. Indeed, the church is the place of communion both magisterial and sacramental. It is through her and in her that the mission of Christ is accomplished with the power of the Holy Spirit. In the Church, God allows man to answer Him in a conscious way. For the works of God should not only be known call him they should also be welcomed so that men can be saved.

### 1.1. The challenge of communion

Today one of the major and new challenges of our Christian communities is to gather practicing people who are more and more different, and even foreign to each other and whose positions toward Christ and the church are plural. Moreover, cultural differences between Christians, have the tendency to intensify. How do we articulate human communities if they are so disjointed? How do we avoid the mere piling of activities? How do we generate new forms of presence and of pastoral

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practices in order to bring out communion? Furthermore, the diversity of our modern society demands a more inventive charity to welcome new poverties new force of solitude of exclusion of the crisis of sense and the loss of marks.

Nevertheless, this great religious diversity is very relative. In our postmodern world, the individual imposes, sometimes out of the institution, his or her own beliefs. Some people seem to go shopping to the religious supermarket where they find many symbolic and spiritual goods. But in the end, like in other areas, the economy produces the standardization of production and the personalization of consumerism.

The ecclesiology of communion, which subtends the missionary activity of the Church, prevents Her from a dangerous fragmentation. Indeed, the missionary tension is not a dispersion through which the community risks to disband itself into fatigue and activism. It only works with the grounds of Trinitarian and fraternal communion. The challenge of communion today is therefore to build unity on the model of the Trinity, and not on something like uniformity or consensus. We simply cannot build human fraternity if there's no communion with God.

As Christians we are called to believe, but also to belong to a body. "You are the family of God" as Saint Paul says to the Ephesians (Eph. 2:19). Our faith grows when we share it with everyone. The participation of the Christian community can even foster social integration, in certain cases. For instance, in certain neighborhoods, the parishes have welcomed Christian immigrants and help them to integrate the culture of the country.

The emergence of a globalized culture of the individual has made our society a potpourri of very different and even opposed cultural universes. This social fragmentation questions the Church in the expression of her Sacramentality and of her missionary option.

## **1.2. The ecclesial dynamism of communion**

The Christian community serves the spiritual and human growth of those who are part of it. The Risen Christ himself gives to the community its sacramental fruitfulness and allows her to spread grace among all of its members. This missionary growth of the community is expressed in its internal structure, and it's organic consistency through which an offer is to each Christian faithful support and proximity.

From the point of view of the ecclesiology of communion, the missionary dynamism leads to gradually integrate in the community, the person who has been touched by the proposition of faith. This dynamism of communion includes different levels of application:

### **1.2.1. Being welcoming**

Intervenous the gratuity of us but tell it he, availability are attractive expressions of our cherry. Love begets empathy. It creates synergies and gives us the taste to work. A catechumen once told: “only when I saw the way I had been welcomed did I eager to come back”. We always need to go deeper in our fraternal communion. Newcomers should feel our openness and disposition to welcome them no matter where they come from. In fact, missionary communion grows with the commitment of the members of the community.

What are the essential needs of the newcomer in a parish?

- First, the person needs to know other people
- Second, the person needs to grow in his or her faith through a solid and structured teaching with an accessible language though.
- Third, the person needs to receive the sacraments of the Church. It might start with a very formal question, a simple asking of a ritual. But it is truly an occasion of a catechesis of initiation or a catechumenate (if needed). In particular, the sacrament of confession can truly help people open the hearts in order to welcome and experience divine mercy. In a both anonymous and wounded world, there is very little space to open one’s heart and to find the way for hope and reconciliation.
- Four, people need to find activities in the parish where they can experience convivence, attentiveness and fraternal prayer.
- Five, newcomers in the parish should feel there’s a spot for them in the Church, whatever might be their personal history
- Finally, the person should feel that we trust him or her. Why not offering them some kind of commitment, even very humble, in the parish?

### **1.2.2. Taking into account pastoral demands**

The parish is the place were different demands meet. Some of these demands are linked to sacramentality (for instance regarding funerals, baptisms, or wedding). Other demands regard catechism. Others concern religiosity and piety (blessing of objects, prayers for liberation from evil powers). Finally, we have some more practical and material demands or even the simple need for an encounter. Our pastoral efforts consists in taking these demands in order to evangelize them, to find out in each of them a certain dynamism that opens the person beyond himself. The mere material answer is clearly not enough. Since they bear in themselves the “seeds of the Word”, these demands need to be brought to Christ. Moreover, we need to purify them from any kind of superstition, of spiritual closemindedness and of introspection.

People’s needs are open doors for a real encounter with Christ. Very often, the pastoral activities that we offer only concern the usual suspects. We truly need to adapt two people who are still in search of Christ. Actually, we need to rethink everything: our language, the style of our meetings, the atmosphere, the environment etc.

### 1.2.3. Organizing everyone's journey

The journey of everyone rests on the quality of the fraternal life within the Christian community. What we want here is benevolence, proximity, gratuitousness, availability and the personalization of relationships. The liturgical life, the proclamation of the Word of God, the role of the ordained ministers remind us that we receive our communion from Christ and from the Church. We cannot be content with affective subjectivism. Different kinds of spiritual journeys help to structure the conversions and the evolutions of everyone : Alpha for beginners and re-beginners ; “evangelization cells”, or “houses of the Gospel” for a further development in fraternity; and of course Bible studies and other propositions of new religious communities.

### 1.2.4. The circles of commitment

Based on the sense of belonging to the parish community, we can draw seven inclusive circles of commitment.

1. The clerical team
2. The parish council
3. Committed parishioners
4. Regular parishioners (faithfully practicing)
5. Episodic parishioners (practice once in a while)
6. Exceptional parishioners (come only for wedding, baptism or funeral)
7. No contact with the Church (stay on forecourt during funerals, for instance)

Our missionary project should integrate a specific pastoral for each circle, the aim, being to get closer to the first three circles, where we experience parochial fraternity. This integration process will be an evolution for the Christian faithful from the status of *observer* to the one of *consumer* and finally to the one of *actor*. The actor will take into account the vitality of the community and consider it as a personal good, his own home. This incorporation is the fruit: on the one hand of a spiritual work to make grow the attachments to the Church; and on the other hand, of the transformation of the community to allow each and everyone to find a place and to leave out a life of proximity and engagement.

Indispensable to the spiritual growth, the integration process entails some elements:

- **The insertion of the newcomer in a small group**, which he can choose according to his will and needs. This group should include a catechumenal journey that fosters a real encounter with Christ.
- **A personalized accompaniment** throughout the different steps of the journey. The attendant will help to get the habits of Christian life, that is, prayer, reading scripture, sacramental life...

- **Continuous formation** (adult catechesis or catechumenate). The integration in the Church necessitates to go deeper into the teaching of the Church. The conversion of the heart entails the one of the mind in order to live “in reason” of our faith.
- **Participating in the activities and services**, which allow to live the faith with others and to know the Church from within. Being involved in a service at the school of communion and interdependency. In choosing the service one should take into account the capacities, characters, needs and talents of everyone. It might be useful to establish a “job description” and to organize some times of reporting and, if needed, some formation.
- **Serving the poor.** The spirit of community starts with the bottom of the social pyramid. The real Christian fraternity makes it possible for sharing our poverties without feeling judged or disqualified. Welcoming vulnerabilities is a way for self-acceptance and care, since these frailties draw for a believer, the face of the crucified.  
The spirit of service extends, not only to the inner part of the parish, but also to the Christian presence in the World. For the spirit of service Christians feel called to meet with the frailties of our times and to engage in charities that honor the gospel. Our society will change if the presence and convinced word of the Christians instill the gospel in the World.
- **Proclaiming the faith**, within the framework of the community. Our modern society considers the faith as a personal opinion... matron every baptized person is in fact called confess publicly his or her adhering to Christ and to the Church. The sacrament of confirmation is what it is: the sacrament that confirms, through the gift of the Holy Spirit, the attachment to the faith of the Church.

### 1.2.5. Parochial fraternity

It is highly recommended to generate a small community gathered around the pastor, composed of priests, of consecrated people in a flight people. This community will be called to share the missionary vision. This hard-core constitutes, with the pastor and the priest a “parochial fraternity” of prayer, of spiritual and pastoral sharing in order to bear together the missionary and community animation. It is generally among them that we can choose the member of the parish consul, which is the first instance of communion in the parish. In order to work together we need a climate of confidence and of mutual understanding.

The parochial fraternity aims at witnessing the possibility of a life of communion and co-responsibility turned toward mission. It should promote the process of growth with the missionary vision that all the actors of the pastoral share together.

The parochial fraternity constitutes the leadership team of the missionary project. It's role will be:

- To **mobilize** the community around the vision of growth, with the help of personal relationships, information meeting, and preaching. The specific spiritual program will be offered to form Christians to the missionary commitment.
- To **boost** the community. Informing about the existence of the project is not enough. We still need to make it our own with enthusiasm and conviction and to prepare the community to live these changes.
- To **give responsibilities** to the members in order that they become committed actors. The success of the project depends on each and everyone of them. Identifying and preparing leaders is indispensable to implement the project.
- To **communicate** ad intra and ad extra in order to create synergies.
- To **delegate**. The steering committee (parochial fraternity) will take advantage of the competences and charisms of the members so that they implement the principle of subsidiarity.

The committee can gather regularly around the clerical team in order to pray together, to share the Word of God, to receive formation, and to discern together about the life of the parish community.

### 1.2.6. The communion of pastors

One also builds communion from the “head”, that is, from the priestly team gathered around the pastor or the moderator. Configured to the priesthood of Christ in order to be servants of the baptismal priesthood of the Christians, priests are sent to men as pastors and evangelizers, like the Apostles (cf. Acts 2: 42-47). The priest should look at the territory of the parish as a “land of mission” and consider the parishioners as missionaries by helping them to deploy the resources of this call according to the charisms of everyone. They are the primary contributors to the vitality of the missionary communion in the parish.

The ministry of the priest entails a spirituality of communion. The priest works with *others* for the service of *others*. The lay faithful become the cooperators of his mission. The priest structure is his ministry of presidency with the diversity of ministries, of charisms, of vocations, and of tasks. He encourages the relationships of cooperation of fraternal correction, of evaluation, a fraternity, of mutual confidence by delegating spots, by avoiding the temptation of omnipotence and omnipresence.

*Pastores dabo vobis* (18) spoke about a “new style of pastoral life” for priests. In fact, priests have to learn to leave as brothers, cents for the same mission, they have the vocation to live between them the communion that they have the responsibility to share with all; to deploy the spiritual life rooted in their apostolate and in the Word of God. The pastoral vision cannot be built if we don’t have this sharing of the Word of God.

The Christian community thus gives a double testimony to the world: on the one hand, the witness of lay faithful who are, by their baptism, at the service of the sanctification of the ordinary human condition, (by their family life, but also through their professional, social and cultural life) ; and on the other hand, the witness of the minister the ordained minister who recalls the transcendent origin of the salvation in Christ and the mystery of grace that all men are called to share. The complementarity of these vocations are indispensable for the growth of the mission in the parishes. The efficacy of the missionary action requires, in particular, that the priest doesn't find himself always in the background of the scene, waiting for people to come up to him if they need him. He should refuse to put his missionary responsibility on the shoulders of the lay faithful. He should get directly involved in active evangelization and in the formation to evangelization.

The priest doesn't do everything but he is vigilant that everything is done. Three deviations are possible:

- Willing to do everything and to decide everything (monopoly)
- Letting people do everything (abdication)
- Getting people to do things for oneself (demotivation)

## **2. The kerygmatic impulse**

“Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved. But how are they to call on one in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in one of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone to proclaim him? And how are they to proclaim him unless they are sent?” (Rm 10: 13-15)

For the apostle Paul, faith arises from the kerygma, which is the seed of the first proclamation. It comes before the Didache, which is the explanation of the kerygma and prepares for the catechesis, which is the organized presentation of the faith. Kerygma ⇒ Didache ⇒ Catechesis

The transmission of the faith establishes a link between these three elements. But in many cases, our ecclesial structures and our journeys of formation have been thought for the Didache or the catechesis but not for the kerygma. In our parishes, we should start to value more and more the kerygma.

### **2.1. The pertinent and impertinent kerygma**

Christians should step out of their mutism and the mediatic-cultural enslavement they have been put into. They must free themselves from the fear to displease the world and open a breach between the dominant culture (which organizes the deletion of Christianity and the impoverishment that this deletion creates. The arrow of the proclamation meets the expectations of the new generations. Indeed these new generations experience a great spiritual thirst, more than we think! Even if certain members of the Church have disheartened young

people, I am always amazed at the capacity for young folks to proclaim the Gospel to their friends. Formula Niels, the relationship between faith and life is no longer visible. The new generations are generally not opposed to the faith, but they simply don't see its "advantage". Christ and the Church appear as mere additions. If the new evangelization replaces the kerygma at the cutting edge of ordinary pastoral, and if all the baptized people attest of the credibility of being Christians, a new impulse of faith will be able to open the hearts of our modern fellows. Christianity will no longer exist from the birth, but it will be the result of an aware and determined choice.

## **2.2. The content of the kerygma**

"The core of the proclamation always remains the same: the Kerygma of Christ who died and rose for the world's salvation, the Kerygma of God's absolute and total love for every man and every woman, which culminated in his sending the eternal and Only-Begotten Son, the Lord Jesus" (Pope Benedict XVI, Message for the World Mission Day, 2012)

The kerygma constitutes the plowshare that opens the soil and turns it over. There is an assertive dimension in the kerygma, which proclaims that Jesus is the Messiah that the Scriptures promised, that he is true God and true man, come in our flesh, risen from the dead, Lord of glory who brings forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body and eternal life. The Carrie my also proclaims that Christ has founded the church in order to actualize his presence. Through the proclamation of Christ, the character establishes a personal, intimate and vital relationship with God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

## **2.3. The Proclamation of the Word**

At the center of the kerygma, is the proclamation of the word of God. This word, who comes from above, penetrates us like a sword. It can transform us as much as we proclaim it the fullness of its beauty, that is the splendor of the truth. The word of God accomplishes what it means. "It is not a matter of preaching a word of consolation, but rather a word which disrupts, which calls to conversion and which opens the way to an encounter with the one through whom a new humanity flowers." (Benedict XVI, *Verbum Domini*, 93)

It is not what is politically correct, nor a moralizing rhetoric, nor subjectivism (which reduces the truth to some kind of emotion) that can meet the expectations of our audience and speak to their freedom in order to change their lives. The impoverishment of our culture, engulfed with screens and mercantile or affective logic, this impoverishment calls for a rediscovery of the Gospel. We forget that words have a tremendous power and that the Word of God bears intrinsically through its proclamation from the capacity of conversion and illumination. The Word creates his own conditions of receptivity because people are in need of a

word of salvation. Saint Thomas Aquinas affirms that in each man, there is a natural desire to see God.

The kerygmatic preaching can be very specific on certain occasions like conventions or times of prayer. This preaching will impact people inasmuch as it will be performed in a joyful, musical and fraternal ambiance.

#### 2.4. A personal testimony

Proclamation of the word and the confession of the faith are illustrated by some testimonies of life. When we assert the truth, we ought to show that it is realized in us. Only a converted life can convert. The contemporary man believes witnesses rather than masters, experience rather than doctrine, life rather than theories. Fruit of personal and community experience, the testimony of faith becomes convincing, at once sign of contradiction and sign of hope lived as key event.

In the work of evangelization, exemplarity is not enough. Personal testimony must lead to a confession of faith in the proclamation of the world. Of course, the testimony links our behavior to what we propose to others. But the risk is to bring the other to oneself and nuts to Christ who is the source of our behavior. The Word, which refers to the Gospel and Christ, truth of our faith, offers the meaning of our acts. The testimony strengthens the Word, but it doesn't replace it. It is only one part of the proclamation.

Furthermore, the example doesn't always speak to our contemporaries because our culture is no longer a Christian culture.

#### 2.5. Charity for the kerygma

The proclamation is not the pressure. It doesn't work with coercion or blackmail. On the contrary, it works with attentiveness and respect. It calls for personal freedom taking into account the power of the word of God. The truth of the faith can be proposed from the beginning of the encounter with the person to evangelize, but with respect to the state of mind of the person.

But there are a lot of implementation bumps along the way of the charity of the missionary:

- The first is **proselytism**, which tries to recruit the interlocutor, forcing the way, and speaking more about doctrinal disputes than about Christ
- The second one is **egocentrism**. When the evangelizer brings back the conversation to himself or to his favorite topics.
- The third obstacle is **human respect**. By fear of being exposed to the reactions of the other, some people decide to sit on the sidelines. But the real charity has the courage to speak with modesty courtesy and kindness.
- The fourth one is **formalism**, when we stick to a ready-made presentation, too worldliness, without having a real encounter.

- The fifth one is the **lack of attentiveness**. Following Jesus, the proclamation needs first to meet the other starting with his or her own demands, without judging. It is a bit of a sacrifice to start not with what we would like to say but with what people really need to hear in order to meet with Jesus Christ.
- And finally the sixth obstacle is the **absence of prayer**. The proclamation of the faith is not a commercial. It leaves the major space for the Holy Spirit so that He can prepare the hearts the proclamation also entails to entrust to the Lord the persons we have met.

## **2.6. The different ways to proclaim the kerygma**

The proclamation of the faith associates three things: the *Logos* (rethoric), the *Pathos* (emotion), and the *Ethos* (the truth of the message). It can take him different modalities and used different methods: “door-to-door” evangelizing, visiting, street evangelization... it can happen on particular occasions like children ages, parish missions or in certain places like bars or fairs. But overall, the proclamation happens through the day today contact on the places of life and of work, and on the occasion of questions that people ask us...

The kerygma also finds its place on the parochial pastoral: during the catechumenal journey or when people want to come back to the Church. Many people who are “sacramentalized” are not evangelized. The gospel shows that the contemporaries of Christ came to him with their own questions their own need for sense for relationship come up for security, for health, for reconciliation... the love of Christ converted these needs into a seeking for salvation and truth. It is the role of the kerygma to make this transformation of the needs.

## **2.7. The kerygma in the Christian initiation**

The engaging effect of the current month should lead to take care of the person. After passion and beginnings, the reality of Christian life is more austere. To go on, one must sometimes “convert from his or her conversion”, understanding that this conversion is not fully achieved, that the faith means walking forward in the day-to-day life.

This care can happen in different ways but always being vigilant that people are living out their faith in a fraternal way...

## **3. The Liturgy, engine of the mission**

The liturgy is the most vacations instrument for the edification of the Christian life and the promotion of the mission peered it is the most complete

Padago G of the faith because it combines the gathering of the community around the Paschal mystery, the prayer of the whole Church, the proclamation of the Scriptures, the sacramental grace offered to the faithful, the teaching of the truth of the faith, the beauty of the songs and of the symbols... the liturgy is the beginning of the mission and its submit.

The liturgy is the submit towards which the action of the Church is directed. At the same time it is the source from which flows all the virtue of the church. The apostolic task is aimed at the gathering of all men in the Church in order to praise God, to participate in the sacrifice of Christ and to eat the Lord's supper.

Sacramental pastoral has some principles:

- **Celebrating with respect, dignity and integrity.** There is no room for chitchatting or improvising in the Liturgy. The assembly cannot rearrange the Liturgy according to its sensitivity. The Liturgy would then lose its universality and its objectivity. Pope Francis recalled that "The Holy Mass isn't a show. It's where we go to be present for the Passion and Resurrection of Jesus."
- **Articulating the rational truth of the faith and the power of symbols.** The G in itself is the first predication of the community. And values at once the beauty of the Christian mystery and the testimony of the word of God, the inspiration in the expression.
- **The rediscovery of simple signs.** Our tradition has passed on to us very powerful signs, which speaks to both the mind and the heart of the faithful (rather than making up a false symbolism).
- **The full and active participation of the faithful** to the celebration of the Paschal mystery. The liturgy is not a show in which clerics would show off in front of a passive and distant audience. Verticality produces the gathering because men gather under something that surpasses them.
- **Faithfulness to the liturgical year.** We need to respect the cyclical rhythm with no addition and with a great emphasis on the feast of Easter in order that the time be filled with God.
- **The rehabilitation of the day of the Lord.** Sundays after Sundays, the believer punctuates his journey of faith and of growth, with the weekly gathering at the table of the Lord. The day of the Lord gives a direction and a submit to the chronology of time. It structures time.
- **The promotion of a mystagogical homily,** that is a homily that explains the Christian mystery and builds from the word of God. After hearing the Word and before the celebration of the sacrifice, the homily constitutes a transit point. It actualizes the word, which will be accomplished in the sacrament. The homily should not be a mere pious exhortation, something knowledgeable or moralizing. "The homily cannot be a form of entertainment like those presented by the media, yet it does need to give life and meaning to the celebration." (*Evangelii Gaudium*, 138). The homily should become good to cases come in the etymological sense of the word, "an echo

of the word of God”. As a simple commentary of the word of God, the homily has its simple and accessible character.

- **The formation of liturgical teams** contributes to making the liturgy a community prayer. Pope Francis recalled in one of his catecheses that: “A central theme that the Council Fathers underlined is the liturgical formation of the faithful, which is essential for a true renewal”
- **Provision and maintenance of the churches**, of the liturgical space, of the iconography, of the sacristy, of the vestments, sacred objects and linens. All of this is not primarily an aesthetic search but the expression that we value the worship we owe to the Lord. “Nothing is too beautiful for God” as would say the cure of Ars.

Many other things could be said about mission in the parish. I hope these elements will be of some interest in transforming your parishes. But I truly think that the parish needs these three things: fraternal communion, kerygmatic proclamation and decent liturgy.

Thank you all. God bless you !