

Religious Life: Fulfillment of the Being

Religious life, before being seen from the outside as an apostolic commitment, should be experienced from within as a transformation of the being. But the being, in the human experience, especially in the Christian experience, is to "be with;" in other words, it is to start off on the path to follow the one who calls: "Then come, follow me."¹

We must be constantly listening, on this journey where the Son of God is revealed as the Son of Man to fill my humanity with the abundance of his Life. This Life, worthy to be lived, draws from the momentum of my existence, mobilizes my talents and contributes to the fulfillment of life in others.

God enters our history to transform it. This transformation starts the journey towards universality. The inner attitude is that of availability, which enables one to welcome diversity and to take a step into interculturality or intercultural living.

Religious Life Offers a Space of Freedom

And in my fully human experience that is working towards growth, the framework of religious life has gently offered itself, despite its challenges, as a space of freedom in which I have been well served by:

- a life of discipline that helps me to work on my instincts, to direct my passions;
- a life of prayer that helps me give up my self-centredness so that I may centre myself on God;
- a fraternal life in which God, through the others, sharpens my ability to love and purifies my desire to be loved;
- a spirit of service in the Church's great mission in solidarity with all human beings for the Life to come.

The life of the community is too often drawn towards outside activity. Today there is a demand to rediscover the spiritual heart of the deep inner being. It is a pathway of disorientation, of stripping away and self-emptying that is rooted in the mystery of the Passion-Resurrection. It's taking up again the path of the Scriptures in order to rediscover them.

Remaining Yourself in the Midst of Diversity

The expression of my religious life, whether it be in preaching or in great silence, enables me to be served by the One who "came to serve." During his act of service *par excellence*, where he stooped to wash the feet of his disciples, I have to humbly accept to allow myself to be "washed" by Him in order "to share with Him." He who is my dear Master, my Lord and my God, which is also the extraordinary term of the holy man, in the image of the Father, to whom I extend my whole being in joy and hope. "You must therefore be perfect, just as your heavenly Father is perfect."²

¹ *The New Jerusalem Bible's* translation of Mt 19:21.

² *Ibid.*, in Mt 5:48

We must remain ourselves in the midst of diversity, otherwise there is great risk of fragmentation. When mankind no longer reaches out to one another, God no longer has a dwelling place in the world.

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