

Editorial

Spirituality and evangelization

There is a growing conviction that in every process of evangelization, in any of its forms, the ingredient of spirituality cannot be lacking. Moreover, it is thought that this must be the vital basis of evangelization, the breeding ground for it.

Thinkers and great theologians of the twentieth century have echoed well-known academic claims that the twenty-first century will be religious or not; the Christian will be mystical or not; Christianity will be theological or will not be, as expressed by André Malraux, Karl Rahner and Juan de Dios Martín Velasco, successively. This close relationship between religion in general, the Christian and the theological specifically, calls for progress in the reflection on the relationship between spirituality and evangelization.

In this regard, it is important to highlight how the recurring theological publishing that emerged from the Second Vatican Council has devoted various issues to exploring the new horizons of spirituality. Specifically, the International Journal Concilium devoted for several years an annual monographic issue in regards of spirituality. In the first issue dedicated to this regard (No. 9, November 1965), Ch. Ducoq, in the presentation, claimed that sometimes "spirituality" was confronted with theology or Christian reflection. He invited then to look at the new conditions of the time, to be aware of the new forms of existence in the world, to go to the root of spirituality, which is the Gospel, in order to solve different questions that arise in the new era inaugurated with the Second Vatican Council.

After 50 years of the event of the Second Vatican Council, and of many ecclesial events (Synods, General Conferences of the Bishops, diocesan processes), it is necessary to be mindful so that the basis of every pastoral and evangelizing process does not lack the spirituality that takes inspiration from the Gospel and rescues the best of the first centuries of Christianity.

Voices often re-emerge that seek to reduce spirituality to the private matter, establishing the opposition between the public and the private, with the aim of reducing or removing the public influence of Christianity. When the impact of faith on social life has been stressed, communities or their social leaders are accused of interfering in politics. This phenomenon has been experienced especially in Latin America, under the influence of the current critical thoughts: consciousness-raising education, liberating philosophy, liberation theology. It is when these currents have been accused of Marxists and of distancing themselves from the true spirit of the Gospel reasons why they have been monitored, controlled and even condemned.

In this context, the Prefect Former of the Faith Doctrine, Cardinal Ludwig Gerhard Müller, when invited to participate in a seminar on contextual theologies in Lima (Peru) in 1988, had the experience of discovering

that the contextual theology of Latin America, represented by its initiator, Fr. Gustavo Gutiérrez, more than a social or methodological question, it was a commitment to life, a lifestyle, a way of living the faith, in short, a spirituality. An echo of these approaches can be found in the joint publication G. Gutiérrez- L. G. Müller, *On the Side of the Poor*, published in both German and Spanish in 2004, with translations in other languages.

More recently the relationship between evangelization and spirituality has been more explicit in Pope Francis' programmatic documents:

1. In the Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii gaudium* on the 'Proclamation of the Gospel in today's world' (24 November 2013), the fifth chapter, entitled 'Evangelizers with spirit' (Nos. 259-287) Pope Francis proposes a first numeral on the 'motivations for a renewed missionary impulse' (Nos. 262-283) and a second numeral on 'Mary, the Mother of Evangelization' (n. 284-287).

2. In the Encyclical Letter *Laudato Sí* on 'Caring for the Common Home' (24 May 2015), Pope Francis devotes the sixth chapter to 'Ecological Education and Spirituality' (Nos. 202-246). Proposes successively the following subtitles: Betting on another lifestyle; Education for the partnership between humanity and the environment; Ecological conversion; Joy and peace; Civil and political love; Sacramental signs and celebratory rest; The Trinity and the relationship between creatures; Queen of all creation.

3. In the Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia*, on 'Love in the Family' (19 March 2016), Pope Francis devotes the ninth chapter to the theme of 'Matrimonial and Family Spirituality' (Nos. 313-325). It offers the following guidelines: Spirituality of supernatural communion'; Together in prayer in the light of the Passover; Spirituality of exclusive and free love; Spirituality of care, consolation and encouragement.

4. In the Apostolic Exhortation *Gaudete et exsultate*, on the call to holiness in today's world (19 March 2018), Pope Francis devotes his entire exhortation to "to resonate the call to holiness, seeking to incarnate it in the present context, with its risks, challenges and opportunities." (n. 2). The fourth chapter devotes him to pointing out some notes of holiness in today's world: Endurance, patience and meekness; Joy and a sense of humor; Boldness and fervor; In community; In constant prayer.

The Fundación Universitaria Monserrate, Unimonserrate, in the reflection being done to better concretize its future horizons, insists on great values that although they can have a very human and secular connotation, are also at the root of all spirituality: service, equity, solidarity, transparency and transformative social commitment. It is for this reason that, The Theology Program intends to dedicate this monographic essay to this topic considered of vital importance for the Christian life of communities which in the academic field seeks support and foundation to promote the evangelizing processes with the ability to transform the communities and society in which they are integrated.

Having called on researchers and teachers to take time to reflect on these issues and offer their contributions, we now have the joy of sharing with interested readers, pages that will surely contribute to enrich and point out horizons in this important matter of human beings and the work of individuals and communities that want to be a leaven of transformation in the midst of the world.

We thank the authors of the articles published in this matter for their valuable contribution in regards to the relationship between spirituality and evangelization. The variety of approaches and insistence will surely contribute to enrich the reflection on spirituality for today's world, while leaving new questions opened, new concerns and new horizons for further reflection on this important topic, which is at the basis of processes and projects that will have an impact on the reform of the Church and on the mission that the Church has in the midst of the world to be a sign and instrument of renewal and transformation within the evangelical requirements of the Reign of God.

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