FORMATION UNIT 5

«AND THE WORD WAS MADE FLESH; AND HE PITCHED HIS TENT AMONG US» (Jn 1:14)
Spirituality of Incarnation – Incarnation of Spirituality

1.- OPENING PRAYER

2.- REVIEW OF HOMEWORK

3.- OBJECTIVES

- a) To expand our knowledge of the concept of spirituality
- b) To analyze the fundamental aspects of Christian spirituality
- c) To study the elements that define Scalabrinian spirituality

4.- INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITY

5.- STUDY SESSION

- 1) Introduction to spirituality.
- 2) Fundamental aspects of Christian spirituality.
- 3) Elements of Scalabrinian spirituality

6.- HOMEWORK

7.- EVALUATION

8.- CLOSING PRAYER
1.- OPENING PRAYER

Pray in two choruses

THE SCALABRINIAN CREED

I believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is seen and unseen. We give you thanks, God, Father of all, who love to pour out the abundance of your gifts. Open our hearts to receive them and, like you, may we spread them among migrants, especially the poorest: they are like sorrowful seeds scattered across the earth bearing your future for the Church and the world.

I believe in Jesus Christ, Son of God, Word who has pitched his tent among us, sent by the Father as pilgrim and migrant in order to save humankind. I believe in the living presence of Jesus Christ in our midst, who sends us as missionaries to serve migrants. I believe in Jesus Christ, who sanctifies us so that we can be prophets and healers in the Church and in the world. I believe in the power of the Eucharist, which fortifies the Scalabrinian families journeying on the Exodus road: true manna, which transforms them into food for migrants. I believe in Jesus, who is love, who helps us recognize his features in today’s migrants.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, Spirit of freedom and creativity, gift offered to all, Creator of communion and fraternity and yet cherishing the precious identity of each one of us.

I believe in the Catholic Church, made of many people and races and intended for all, a Church faced with the challenges of creating a future city. I believe in a Church that dreams of a more just and fraternal world.

2.- REVIEW OF HOMEWORK

Share the relevant aspects of the readings about Scalabrini.

3.- OBJETIVOS

a) To expand our knowledge of the concept of spirituality.
   b) To analyze the fundamental aspects of Christian spirituality
   c) To study the elements that define Scalabrinian spirituality.

4.- INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITY

After reading the following text, form small groups to reflect on the reading. Why did Scalabrini entrust his mission and congregation to the protection of Saint Charles Boromeo? Once the groups finish, come back together.
IT IS WONDERFUL TO CONTINUE THE WORK OF SAINT CHARLES

We want to remember some of the points that were particularly important for St. Charles. Although they are distant in the time, they remain valid guideposts for today’s Scalabrinian. It was for this reason that the Founder wanted to call us: Missionaries of St. Charles. There are three pastoral concerns in the work of St. Charles Borromeo.

First – Teach prayer

St. Charles said that teaching prayer is extremely necessary for an authentic Christian life. He wrote letters for families about nighttime prayers, recommending to them the prayer of the rosary. He told teachers, workers, and even businessmen that they too were responsible for their spiritual life. He promoted the Eucharist and the devotion of saints, mainly of the Virgin.

How wonderful it is to be followers of St. Charles when we pray in community!

Second – Preach the Word

Preachers must feed themselves with biblical and catechetical texts, and with the liturgy in order to communicate the foundations of faith to others. St. Charles frequently reminded his priests to preach God’s Word and to teach the way of the faith to all Christians. Today we would call this Christian formation, Biblical formation, and adult liturgy education.

How wonderful it is to be followers of St. Charles, committed to a journey of faith with migrant workers and their families!

Third – Teach the catechism to children

St. Charles wanted all parishes to have a School of Christian Doctrine. He exhorted parish priests to take care of this highly important work. Where there was none, he himself sent special people in charge of start them. St. Charles visited churches to make sure catechism programs were in place and being developed. In each school he assigned a team of ten people in charge of the catechesis. The classes were developed mixing theory with songs, psalms, and prayers to make them more pleasant and enjoyable.

How wonderful it is to be followers of St. Charles, building communities and enlivening groups in their journey of faith in preparation to receive the holy sacraments!

It is because of this that Blessed Scalabrin entrust the Congregation to the protection and intercession of a man with a heart so full of God and with such a grand pastoral vision. This is truly beautiful and should awaken in us the spirit of evangelical mission. What a wonderful example of a man of untiring prayer, a wise teacher of the Word, a shepherd full of apostolic fervor and enamored with the pursuit of Jesus!

P. Sergio O. Geremia, c.s.
5.- STUDY SESSION

1. INTRODUCTION TO SPIRITUALITY
   - Power Point Presentation

2. FUNDAMENTAL ASPECTS OF CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALITY

   1) The encounter with the living Jesus…
      «The gospels relate many meetings between Jesus and the men and women of his day. A common feature of all these narratives is the transforming power present and manifest in these encounters with Jesus, in as much as they initiate an authentic process of conversion, communion and solidarity.»  (John Paul II, The Church in America, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, 1999, # 8.  «To encounter the Lord is before all else to be encountered by the Lord…»
      (Gustavo Gutierrez, Drinking From One’s Own Well, p. 63.)

   2) …Within the context of our earthly reality…
      «The experience of God neither presupposes nor occasions any escape from history on our part. Rather it demands of us, and inspires in us, a greater and better entry into that history.»  Spirit and practice must join hands. Without spirit, practice can always degenerate. Without practice, spirit will remain vague, sidelined, even alienating.»
      (Jon Sobrino, Spirituality of Liberation: Toward Political Holiness, 1985, pp. ix, 58.)

   3) … becomes an experience of faith…
      «Although the meaning of the term ‘experience’ is quite difficult to pin down, there is a strong conviction that human experience is the very ‘stuff’ of spirituality. ‘Experience’ is a term used to describe whatever touches our lives, whether religious, mystical, theological, ethical, psychological, political, or physical.»

   4) … which leads to the following of Jesus, each according to our own calling.
      «As the body is one having many members and all the members while being many, form one body, so it is with Christ. All of us, whether Jews or Greek, slaves or free, have been baptized in one Spirit to form one body,… The body has not just one member, but many,… Now, you are the body of Christ and each of you individually is a member of it. So God has appointed us in the Church. First apostles, second prophets, third teachers. Then miracles, then the gift of healing, material help, administration in the Church, and the gift of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Can all perform miracles, or cure the sick, or speak in tongues, or explain what was said in tongues?
      (1 Corinthians 12:12, 14, 27-30).
5) The discipleship of Jesus is a life according to the Spirit… (Rm 8:14)

“Spiritual,” then, refers to the whole of our existence as Christians, as filled with the Spirit of Christ. We are filled so much with this Spirit that Paul can say, ‘I live no longer I, but Christ lives in me’ (Gal 2:20). As Christians, we follow Christ, we share his death and resurrection (Phil 2:10), we breathe with his breath. Christian spirituality deals with the progressive transformation of our whole lives by the power and presence of Christ’s Spirit. Obviously, spirituality does not refer only to our interior lives nor primarily to mental and rational activity…. While it surely includes these, it involves my whole person and our whole life. … No one lives ‘Christian spirituality’ in the abstract. We all live at specific and particular moments in space and time; in other words, we live in a definite historical and cultural context…. The concrete and changing circumstances of our lives cannot but affect the way we live out our Christian spirituality. It is on this secondary level that we can speak of different Christian spiritualities, that is, different styles, modalities, or modifications of the one common Christian call to holiness.”

(Michael D. Guinan, To Be Human Before God. Insight from Biblical Spirituality, 1994, pp. 3-5.)

6.-… in a community of faith.

“At all times and in every race, anyone who fears God and does what is right has been acceptable to him (cf. Acts 10:35). He has, however, willed to make men and women holy and save them, not as individuals without any bond or links between them, but rather to make them into a people who might acknowledge him and serve him in holiness.”

3) ELEMENTS OF SCALABRINIAN SPIRITUALITY

Each participant should spend a few minutes to write an answers to the first question.

► a) According to what was previously read about Blessed Scalabrini, and your own personal experience: What elements of spirituality would you consider to be fundamental for those who today are in charge of and work for migrants?

► b) Break up in groups and share the answers to the previous question. Afterwards read the following texts and try to clarify the aspects of Scalabrini spirituality.

► c) Come together again to compare and exchange your answers regarding the definition of Scalabrinian spirituality.

Some characteristics of Scalabrinian Spirituality

(By Mons. Redovino Rizzardo, cs, taken from the International Symposium of Scalabrinian Spirituality, pp. 116-120.)

Those who receive the grace of discovering the beauty of Scalabrinian spirituality discover one of the most beautiful and attractive spiritualities of the Church today. It basically means to make one’s own the mission of Jesus Christ, just
as expressed in his «pastoral sermon» (Jn 17:21). Scalabrinians gives their lives for the transformation of the world. They have the Holy Trinity as a model to emulate in its relationship of equality, fraternity and liberty within a society that respects and appreciates diversity.

This is neither a dream nor a forced inference. From the first to the last of his writings about migration, Scalabrini perceived the movement of migrants and the evangelical service that offers the congregation as a special way towards the civilization of love. For example, in 1887 at the start of his ecclesiastical service toward migrants he wrote: «the words of disgrace created by resentment and hate will disappear, arms will open wide in a fraternal embrace, hands will greet with a warm sign of love, lips will smile and kiss, with all classes and differences eliminated, we will understand the Christian significance of the aphorism: Homo Bomini Frater in all its splendor.»

Even toward his final writings, which were sent to the Holy See in May of 1905, a few days before his death, he referred once again to the utopia: «No more extermination of people, instead fusion and adaptation, through which the diverse nationalities relate to each other and acquire new strength. This is how new people are formed. Despite the differences, these new people show specific characteristics and particular religious and civil tendencies typical of a national group.

Despite all this we can establish that the search for equitable and fraternal relationships constitute the heart of the charism of our Church. If we want to open a parenthesis here, to try to explain and define Scalabrinian spirituality, we can do so in terms of its three main elements:

- The first main element is to «convert into a migrant amongst the migrants.» This covers the missionary spirit, the sense of availability, to feel and make others feel at home at any place, and to always be in movement, like God, who always goes beyond our hopes.

- Secondly, Scalabrinian spirituality is based in catholicity and universality, following the example of the Founder who was considered who had the world as his house. As Saint Frances Xavier Cabrini responded to those who tried to interrupt her work at Columbus Hospital in New York: «The world is too big to confine ourselves in one place; I would like to embrace it all, to be able to go to all places.»

- The third element of Scalabrinian spirituality is acceptance, which manifests itself as solidarity with the Incarnation. This was the main reason why Scalabrini thought about forming the institute to help migrants: «We now have an obligation to support the freedom to migrate, but at the same time there is an obligation to oppose the liberty to reject migration.» The governing class has the obligation to obtain useful employees from the working class, to help them get out of poverty and guide them in their search for a living-wage job.
6. - HOMEWORK ▪

Select one of the following assignments to share in the next meeting.

- a). Interview a Scalabrinian missionary about the characteristics of Scalabrinian spirituality that he or she lives daily.

- b). Interview a migrant about his or her spirituality. For example, you might ask:
  1. Who is God to you?
  2. When did you encounter Him?
  3. How do you pray to Him?

7. - EVALUATION ▪

Each participant is primarily responsible for his or her formation. Therefore, all members of the group have the responsibility to help with and actively participate in the formation meetings. They might suggest new ways of presenting the topics, emphasize certain parts of the content, or propose activities or additional readings. At the conclusion of each unit, the leader of the group will open a space for dialogue to elicit and discuss suggestions and observations about the unit. The leader will write them down and send them to the redaction committee within ten days of completing the unit.

Example:

- a) General evaluation of the unit. What did you think? How did you feel?
- b) Unmet expectations.
- c) Content.
- d) Additional resources used
- e) Suggestions

8. - CLOSING PRAYER ▪

Let us give thanks to God for allowing us to serve. God bless Blessed John Baptist Scalabrini in our pilgrimage through this world.

We also thank you, Lord, for Blessed John Baptist Scalabrini, a man of prayer and faith. Through his teachings he shows us the way toward your will.
■ We thank you, Lord, for Blessed John Baptist Scalabrini, a man of boundless love, who showed us how to live our lives at the service of the migrants, especially of those most in need of You and of our love.

■ We thank you, Lord, for Blessed John Baptist Scalabrini, who is an inspiration for all those men and women who dedicate their lives serving the migrants, people of all races, nationalities, and cultures.

■ We thank you, Lord, for Blessed John Baptist Scalabrini, who exhorts us to listen the cry of the migrants, listen to them in Your love, and seek justice for them.

■ We thank you, Lord, for Blessed John Baptist Scalabrini, who implores us to set our sights on our Blessed Mother. Through her maternal protection, she is a sign of hope and consolation for us.

■ Blessed are you, Lord, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is Jesus who consecrates us in You. Open the hearts of government leaders to create fair laws for all. Bless all of the migrants. Bless the youth among us and give them the grace to listen to your voice that invites them to walk with and serve the migrants. Help all those who are part of the Scalabrinian family and the lay members to live the charism of Blessed John Baptist Scalabrini. Amen.