

S A N Y A S A

Journal of Consecrated Life

Consecrated Persons at the Service of the Youth

(Reflections on the Apostolic Exhortation *Christus Vivit* of Pope Francis)



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SANYASA

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CONTENTS

Editorial.....	05
<i>Dr. George Panthalanickal, CMF</i> Biblical and Ecclesial Portrayal of the Youth and Their Significance for Consecrated Persons	09
<i>Dr. George Kannanthanam, CMF</i> Today's Youth – Tomorrow's Consecrated Persons	29
<i>Sr. Michael Rita, FSJ</i> Pope Francis' Message to the Youth and Its Relevance to the Consecrated Persons	37
<i>Dr. Xavier E. Manavath, CMF</i> Call to Consecrated Persons for Transformation in the Light of the Gospel	43
<i>Dr. Sivy Koroth, SDB</i> Youth Ministry – A Daring Call to Consecrated Persons	57
<i>Dr. Smitha Gabriel, ASI</i> Consecrated Persons for the Service of Youth for Discernment	69

EDITORIAL

In his latest apostolic exhortation, released on 2nd April 2019, following 2018, Synod of Bishops on Young People – Faith and Vocational Discernment, Pope Francis has urged young people to embrace their role as the present and the future of the Catholic Church. He urged them to build relationships with their community and with God. The exhortation, *Christus Vivit* (“Christ is Alive”), is presented as a letter to young people and through them to the entire People of God.

This Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, is without doubt a shot in the arm for the ministry of the religious with young people. He draws in this Apostolic Exhortation from all his major writings thus far. The Pope writes this document with the warm personal style which we have come to appreciate in Pope Francis’ writings. Rather than written in the old style of “papal pronouncements”, this is a synthesis of the synod’s work including regular citations of various bishops’ conference documents and in places has a poetic literary style. “Dear young people, make the most of these years of your youth,” he tells them. He exhorts them saying, “Don’t observe life from a balcony. Don’t confuse happiness with an armchair, or live your life behind a screen. Whatever you do, do not become the sorry sight of an abandoned vehicle! Don’t be parked cars, but dream freely and make good decisions [...] don’t take an early retirement.”

The Church, the Pope tells young people, needs “your momentum, your intuitions, your faith,” and urges them to “make a ruckus” and run ahead even if it leaves the “slow and fearful” behind. But he ends with one request: when you arrive, “have the patience to wait for us.”

ICL: Institute of Consecrated Life – Sanyasa, unique Institute in India, committed to the renewal and re-visioning of consecrated life organises in the beginning of every year three days seminar on any relevant themes of consecrated life and the seminar presentations will be published in the second issue of Sanyasa journal (July – December). For some reasons, we have decided to organise the usual yearly seminar at the end of the year for only two days and the papers presented in the seminar will be published in the first issue of the Sanyasa journal (January – June issue). Thus, ICL organised its yearly seminar on 9th and 10th November 2019 on the Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, *Christus Vivit* on the theme “Consecrated Persons at the Service of the Youth” to appreciate its beauty and depth and apply

its profound insights for youth ministry in India. Altogether, there were six paper presentations on different aspects of youth ministry and two panel discussions in which young people were present as resource persons.

The first article is on the theme, “Biblical and Ecclesial Portrayal of the Youth and Their Significance for Consecrated Persons” by Dr. George Panthalanickal, CMF. The author taking insights from the book of Jean M. Twenge *iGen*, beautifully points out how youth should pass on from adolescence to authentic adulthood. He also presents “eagle icon”, as another background to explain the need for the youth to reach authentic adulthood. Having these two lenses at the background, the author then takes up certain biblical passages from both the testaments to present a two-dimensional program of life for the youth of today in the light of *Christus Vivit*. He also presents Jesus, Mary and a few saints as models for the Gospel program of life. Indeed, it is a very informative, in-depth and creative article that helps any reader to deeply enter into a program of life for authentic adulthood.

The second presentation is on the theme, “Today’s Youth – Tomorrow’s Consecrated Persons” by Dr. George Kannanthanam, CMF. He begins saying “Youth is the *now* of the Church and not mere future of the Church”. In the first part, he presents the positive aspects of the young people, the challenges of the young people and three areas of concern, namely the digital environment, the issue of migrants and different forms of abuses. Finally, he proposes ten solutions to deal with the issues of the young people.

The third article is by Sr. Michael Rita, FSJ on the title, “Pope Francis’ Message to the Youth and Its Relevance for the Consecrated Persons”. The author takes up three important elements from the document and analysing them from her own life experiences presents them as the captivating message of Pope Francis for the youth of today. These three striking messages are: a) God loves you; b) Christ is our Saviour and c) Christ is alive.

The fourth article is on the theme “A Call to the Consecrated Persons for Transformation in the Light of the Gospel” by Dr. Xavier E. Manavath, CMF. He stresses on the importance of internal transformation that every consecrated person should have in the light of the Gospel for a committed youth ministry. The author begins revisioning *fuga mundi*, the flight from the world. He invites the readers to move beyond our narrow enclaves. Then, he points out the need for being liberated from our own bandages and blinders. Youth ministry requires readiness to enter the new areopagus of the world. He then exhorts the readers to respect the uniqueness and complementarity of the different vocations and forms of life. Those who are

involved in youth ministry should become experts in building communion and keep alive the youthfulness of the church, he opines. He ends his article inviting the consecrated persons to engage the youth in partnership.

The fifth article is by Dr. Sivy Korothe, SDB on the theme “Youth Ministry – A Daring Call for the Consecrated Persons”. The author begins presenting the challenges in ministering to the young in today’s context. According to him, the huge disconnect between the young people and the church, insufficiency of traditional approach to youth ministry, inability to listen to the young, the judgemental and the condemnatory attitude of the Church, formation programmes that do not keep the fire of faith burning are some of the important challenges affecting youth ministry in India. Then he proposes certain remedies in the light of *Christus Vivit*. He proposes two main courses: outreach and growth. Finally, he recommends the consecrated persons to welcome the young people with affection and understanding, accompany the young, to be qualified academically, to reach out to all the youth, to take *Christus Vivit* to every young people and to give the young people God experience.

The last article is on “Consecrated Persons at the Service of the Youth for Discernment” by Dr. Smitha Gabriel, ASI. She begins her article explaining the importance of discernment and what discernment is in the light of the Word of God. Then, she goes on explaining discernment in the tradition of the church beginning with desert fathers and mothers. She also highlights Benedictine, Ignatian, Salesian spiritual traditions on discernment. Finally, she proposes the spiritual discernment cycle consisting of listening for emerging issues and invitations, framing questions, exploring the possibilities and the art of accompaniment and discovering a direction.

Let me take this opportunity to wish all the readers a happy and prosperous New Year 2020. May the good Lord abundantly bless you!

M. Arul Jesu Robin, CMF
Chief Editor

BIBLICAL AND ECCLESIAL PORTRAYAL OF THE YOUTH AND THEIR SIGNIFICANCE FOR CONSECRATED PERSONS

Dr. George Panthalanickal, CMF

INTRODUCTION

Vocation to consecrated life is certainly going through a dry spell in recent decades. It is certainly a matter of concern for religious institutes and the Church as a whole. But this phenomenon is no surprise to anyone who understands the characteristic behavior and life perspectives of the present generation of youth. The crisis is not only in the quality and quantity of vocation to consecrated life but also in all forms of life in the Church.

Christus Vivit,¹ the post-synodal apostolic exhortation of Pope Francis encourages all to formulate a right program of life to rise up to youthfulness. Concept of life is all about two dimensional relationship – relationship with God and one another. For the Pope, the concept of youth or aging is not referring to the narrow perspective of a period of life. It is taken in terms of the dynamism of life arising out of the presence or absence of certain values and syndromes that affects these two-fold relationships. In this sense this could be applied not only to persons but also to many other realities such as religious institutes, the Church, etc. The document offers a program of life for any of these above to make a passage to authentic youth. The introductory section of this paper is dedicated for introducing two icons to create an appropriate lens to read the introductory section of *Christus Vivit*. This section deals with a program of life deriving from the analysis of the biblical and ecclesial images of youth.

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Two Icons to Guide the Two-Dimensional Passage to Youth

The renowned psychologist and author Jean M. Twenge published a book in 2017, entitled *iGen*.² The book analyzes the characteristic behavior and life perspectives of the present young generation—the children, teens, and young adults born in the mid-1990s and after. They are vastly different from their millennial predecessors, and from any other generation. Today’s ‘Super-Connected Kids’ with iPods and iPhones, which brought everything like communication, information and entertainment to their fingertips, remain adolescents in their perspectives of life. They experience an arrest of growth in their perspectives of life and they are completely unprepared to make a passage to authentic adulthood.

The book *iGen* picks up the icon of adulthood rituals from the tribal cultures to guide the present generation to make the passage to authentic adulthood. The initiation rite of primal people involves fivefold program of life that will introduce them to the mystery of life. As a member reaches the biological age of adulthood, the community performs these rituals to infuse in him/her an adult perspective of life. The rites include certain actions which may appear as bizarre, like chasing the youth to a forest or a desert to survive by oneself, fighting against wild animals and adverse situations. Sometimes they are forced to humiliation rites and physical pains like pulling out nails or whipping. Anthropologists argue that there is a great spiritual learning behind these rituals. Jean M. Twenge who studied about these initiation rituals summarized their goal as initiating them into a fivefold program of life. Each of the fivefold program of life is two dimensional. They include both the values one has to cling on to and the syndromes one has to fight against and flee from.

Christus Vivit does not explicitly use the icon of adulthood rituals, but it certainly keeps its findings in the backdrop and proposes the same program of life enshrined in this icon. The document picks up images of another rite of passage from aging to youthfulness. This is hinted in a quotation given in paragraph 17 of the document taken from Psalm 103: “Your youth is renewed like the eagle’s” (Ps 103:5). While *iGen* proposes the icon of adulthood rituals to guide the adolescents to make a passage to authentic youth, *Christus Vivit* proposes this icon to help people shed aging syndromes and make a passage to authentic youth. The icon hinted in Psalm 103 is referring probably to a poetic imagination about the process in which an aging eagle makes a passage to youthfulness. It is an icon intended to guide the process of transformation and determination to live, making tough choices. According to this poetic imagination, this iconic bird eagle can live up to 70 plus years. But to reach this age, the eagle must make a hard decision and go through a very painful

process. In its 40's its long and flexible nails can no longer grab prey which serves as food. Its beak also becomes bent as it becomes old. Beak and nails are critical to eagles' ability to catch and consume food. Its old-aged and heavy wings, due to their thick feathers, become stuck to its' chest and make it difficult to fly. Once the eagle reaches this critical stage, it is left with only two options: die or go through a painful process of change which lasts approximately 150 days. The process requires that the eagle fly to a mountain top. There the eagle knocks its' beak and nails against a rock until it plucks them out. When new ones grow back, the eagle also starts plucking its old-aged feathers. And after five months, the eagle takes its famous flight of rebirth and lives for another 30 plus years!

While *iGen* speaks of the passage from adolescence to adulthood, *Christus Vivit* with its contribution of 'eagle icon' opens the scope of two-dimensional passages: from adolescence to youth and from aging to youthfulness. Icons guide the passage so that candidates acquire the values and shed the syndromes. Here youth-adulthood values refer to characteristic strengths of each stage of life. On the other hand, adolescence-aging syndromes refer to the symptomatic evils of adolescence and aging. As two dimensional, the fivefold program of life could be considered as an inclusive program of passage incorporating both the values one has to follow and the syndromes to fight against. They are also parallel to the program of life Jesus manifests at his baptism. In the gospel tradition, Jesus also wants his followers to make a passage to authentic discipleship. Hence, the two icons proposed above, along with the following parallel listing of the five-fold program of life will serve as the lens to study the biblical and ecclesial images of youth presented in the document.

Five-fold <i>iGen</i> Program (Initiation to Authentic Youth)	Five-fold Gospel Program (Manifested in Jesus' baptism and proposed for initiation to authentic discipleship)
Life is hard	Fight the instinct for comforts and embrace the hard way
You are going to die	Fight the instinct for self-preservation and embrace death
You are not important	Fight the instinct for ego and embrace the other
You are not in control	Fight the instinct for self-will and embrace God's will
Your life is not about you	Fight the instinct for self-serving and embrace the mission

1. Biblical Images of Youth

Having created the lens to analyse, we enter into the content of the document dealing with biblical models of authentic youth. Biblical models are given to present a program of life which is two dimensional: the values to follow and the syndromes to fight against or flee from. We look at the models from the Old and New Testaments separately.

1.1 *Models from Old Testament*

In the ancient cultures, shared also by the biblical world, the younger ones or the youth are often symptomatic of insignificance. But rooted very much in this ancient culture, biblical tradition presents a series of countercultural stories in which the younger ones are preferred to the elder. It is not a preference arbitrarily made; on the contrary, the younger ones in these stories are manifesting one or the other of the fivefold signs of authentic adulthood. In these stories, the behavior of the elder ones exhibit aging syndromes and paradoxically the younger ones manifest adulthood values.

The first of this series of stories from the biblical tradition is taken from the story of patriarch Joseph. Joseph was one of the youngest of his family (cf. Gen 37:2-3), yet God showed him a great vision of life when about twenty years old and he outshone all his brothers in adulthood values (Gen 37–47). Ironically, instead of adulthood values, the elder ones manifest aging syndromes such as jealousy, selfishness, arrogance, etc. The attractiveness of Joseph is that he shows greater maturity in inverse proportion to his brothers who are elder to him. Normally it is symptomatic of young people to keep oneself at the center of one's thinking, feeling, discerning, judging and acting, or in summary, to be self-indulgent. But something which makes Joseph stand apart is that he is always at the service of others, and keeps others at the center of his being, including his family members who betrayed him in the past.

As another example for the strong 'little tradition' of the Bible, the document picks up the story of King David. When the prophet Samuel was seeking the future king of Israel, Jesse offered as candidates his sons who were older and more experienced. Yet the prophet said that the chosen one was the youngest David, who was out tending the flock (cf. 1 Sam 16:6-13), for "man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart" (v. 7). The glory of youth is in the values of the heart, and the perspectives of life one is holding, more than in physical strength. In the accounts of his fight with Goliath (1 Sam 17:45) or conflicts with Saul, his

speeches (1 Sam 24:10-15; 26:9-11) manifest his values and life-perspectives. For example, to the arrogant words of Goliath and to the jealous actions of King Saul he responds with humility, giving glory to God.

Continuing this series of stories, the document presents the account of God overlooking Gideon's impulsive responses while choosing him. God is impressed by his youth value of genuineness and uprightness in contrast to the typical aging syndromes of double face and hypocrisy. In picking up Gideon as a biblical icon for youth, the Pope takes note of the frankness or uprightness of young people, who are not used to sugar-coating reality. When told that the Lord was with him, Gideon responded bluntly but with innate frankness: "But if the Lord is with us, why then have all these things happened to us?" (Judg 6:13). God was not offended by that apparent blunt speech and reproach, but picked him to use his youthful energy and power for His task and ordered him: "Go in this might of yours and deliver Israel!" (Judg 6:14).

After presenting stories where the conflict was between adult values and aging syndromes, the document turns to stories of youth who resist adolescent syndromes. Adolescents have often complaints about the generation gap with the elders and shows symptomatic rebellion against parental control and directions. Their passage from childhood to adolescence is often characterized by a change in their parental images—from heroes for imitation to villains to fight against. Against this stereotype, the document picks up the story of Samuel. Samuel was still a young boy, yet the Lord spoke to him. Thanks to the advice of an adult Eli, he opened his heart to hear God's call: "Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening" (1Sam 3:9-10). As a result, he became a great prophet who intervened at critical moments in the history of his country.

Another adolescence-syndrome is the craving for independence and the attitude of self-sufficiency, autonomy and 'self-fidence' (biblically opposite to *god-fidence*). The opposite of this syndrome is the value of desire for wisdom. Wisdom here is the right vision and perspective of life, seeing as God does.³ Wisdom is an umbrella term in bible under which all values are incorporated. Solomon, when he had to succeed his father, felt lost and expressed his *god-fidence*: "I am a mere youth, not knowing at all how to act" (1 Kg 3:7). Solomon trusts in God, asks God for wisdom and he devotes himself to his mission. Something similar happened to the prophet Jeremiah, called despite his youth to rouse his people. In his fear, he said: "Ah, Lord God! Truly I do not know how to speak, for I am only a youth" (Jer 1:6). But the

Lord told him not to say that (cf. Jer 1:7), and added: “Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you to deliver you” (Jer 1:8). When the boldness of youth is surrendered to the power of God in humility, his fear vanishes and he becomes the fire of God.

Here come two more models from the feminine traditions of the Bible. Biblical tradition has produced countercultural stories against considering youth as well as women as insignificant. These two feminine models demonstrated faith (*God-fidence*) that became instrumental in manifesting the wonders of the God of Israel. The first story presents how a Jewish servant girl of the Syrian commander Naaman intervened with her faith and helped him to be cured of his illness and realize the power of God (cf. 2Kg 5:2-6). In the second story, the generosity of young Ruth is presented: she stands by her mother-in-law in the hard times (cf. Ruth 1:1-18), and her determination and boldness produce wonders (cf. Ruth 4:1-17). Certainly these stories picked up by the document are truly representative of the biblical tradition that produces countercultural images of youth, both men and women.

1.2 Models from the New Testament

The document continues the series by presenting stories and texts from the New Testament tradition, in which real youth-adulthood values are contrasted with paradoxical adolescent-aging syndromes. Here the document focuses on the capacity of the young to change, to grow, and to start all over again, their flexibility, openness to new things, etc. They are in contrast to the characteristic aging syndromes, as in the ‘Prodigal Son’ story, where the elder son demonstrates jealousy, pride, arrogance, self-righteousness, intolerance, refusal to reconciliation, tendency to seek privileges, etc. Also the stories such as Martha and Mary (Lk 10:38-42) and Workers in the Vineyard (Mt 21:1-16) focus on the conflict between youth-values and aging-syndromes.

In the ‘Prodigal Son’ story (cf. Lk 15:11-32) the “younger” son at the beginning demonstrates adolescent syndromes such as seeking freedom from parental control, pleasure seeking, self-indulgence, impulsiveness, etc. (cf. vv. 12-13). But once his craving for independence turns into dissolution (cf. v. 13), and ends up in experiencing the bitterness of loneliness and poverty (cf. vv. 14-16), he discovers the youth values (cf. vv. 17-19). Young hearts are naturally ready to change, turn back, get up, learn from life and start afresh. But his elder brother is possessed by the typical aging syndromes of intolerance, self-righteousness, greed, selfishness, and envy (Lk 15:28-30). He stubbornly resists forgiving and receiving the younger one back. Jesus praises the young sinner who returns to the right path over the elder brother who considers himself faithful, yet demonstrates typical aging syndromes.

It is at this stage the document focuses on the need for transformation and renewal. Evoking the icon of the elderly Eagle undergoing a renewal ritual to remain young, it proposes a rite to remain young or make a passage to youth. Remaining young or old is not a biological reality but it is a matter of heart. The document brings out a series of texts from New Testament tradition, taking the theme of renewal, linking it with the reality of becoming new and young. Proposing the icon of the 'eternally young' Jesus, the document quotes Paul demanding passage to youthfulness: "cast out the old leaven that you may be fresh dough" (1 Cor 5:7). Saint Paul invites us to strip ourselves of the 'old' self and to put on a 'young' self (Col 3:9-10).⁴ To put on that youthfulness, Paul enumerates the following essential ingredients: "compassion, kindness, humility, meekness and patience, bearing with one another and forgiving each other if anyone has a complaint against another" (Col 3:12-13). The true content of life is relationship with God and with fellow human beings. In summary, true youth means having a heart capable of loving, whereas every tendency that separates us from others makes the soul grow old.

Then the document deals with another set of symptomatic aging syndromes such as attaching privileges to oneself and considering the younger as insignificant. Symptoms of this syndrome include looking down on the young or lording over them. On the contrary, Jesus insisted the adulthood value of respecting all: "the greatest among you must become like the youngest" (Lk 22:26). For him, age does not establish any privilege, and being young does not imply lesser worth or dignity. Hence, authority and position are privileged occasions to foster greatness in others.

Now the focus of the document shifts to the characteristic adolescent syndrome of rebelling against parental control and guidance. Making appeal to the scripture, the document urges the young people "to accept the authority of those who are older" (1nPet 5:5).

The Bible never ceases to insist that profound respect be shown to the elderly, since they have a wealth of experience; they have known success and failure, life's joys and afflictions, its dreams and disappointments. In the silence of their heart, they have a store of experiences that can teach us not to make mistakes or be taken in by false promises.⁵

Parental control is analogically compared to brakes in the vehicles. They control but precisely it is these controls that help us to ride fast and keep us from danger.

The Pope warns against another symptomatic syndrome of the younger generation of our time, that is, to be immersed in a cult of youth. One of the symptoms of this youth cult is to devalue or dismiss others simply because they are aged or from

another generation. Jesus tells us that the wise are able to bring forth from their store house both new and old (cf. Mt 13:52). A wise young person is open to the future, yet capable of learning something from the experience of others.

Another symptom of youth cult is an undiscerned craving to enjoy the power and passions linked with the biological youth. The document urges the youth not to feed those passions which are identified with the values of the world. With the power of passions, their heart becomes a ground for a very fierce battle between two wolves representing the passions for good and evil. As the age old tale of 'the two wolves inside of us' concludes, the one whom we feed ultimately wins the battle. In the Gospel of Mark, we find a typical rich young man who is experiencing such a fierce battle inside. Unfortunately he succumbs to the passion for the worldly values and kills his passion for the spiritual (Mk 10:17-22).

The Pope encourages and inspires the youth in this battle, like the mother of seven sons in the second book of Maccabees (2Macc 7). He tells them that they should never repent of spending their youth being good, opening their heart to the Lord, and living differently. None of this takes away their youth from them, instead, strengthens and renews it. This is a hard countercultural way they revive the authentic youth: "Your youth is renewed like the eagle's" (Ps 103:5). Saint Augustine and the young man in Mark 10:17-22 are given as examples of two possible outcomes of the battle inside. Saint Augustine, making a passage from adolescence syndromes to real adulthood values, could positively lament: "Late have I loved you, beauty ever ancient, ever new! Late have I loved you!"⁶ Manifesting the typical adolescent-aging syndromes, the rich man, who had been faithful to God in his youth, allowed the passing years to rob his dreams; he preferred to remain attached to his riches (cf. Mk 10:22).

Next is the turn of two groups of contrasting young people, this time from the feminine world. In the story of Ten Virgins (cf. Mt 25:1-13) one half is representing the adulthood values and the other half possessing the adolescent syndromes. Five were ready and waiting, while the other five were distracted and slumbering. The document encourages young men and women to spend their youth aspiring to beautiful and great things, and thus storing up a future full of life and interior richness.

The section on the biblical models concludes by picking up an appropriate icon from the gospel tradition: raising of the widow's son at Nain. Here the appeal to the youth is to make a passage from spiritual death to life. It is not biological death that one has to fear but the failure to cultivate meaningful relationships while one

is alive. It is because the true content of life consists in relationships. Inner vitality, dreams, enthusiasm, optimism and generosity are the basic ingredients of life and relationship. When human life loses these, one must strive to encounter Jesus who stands before us, as once he stood before the dead son of the widow. With all the power of his resurrection, Jesus urges us to make a passage from death to life: "Young man, I say to you, arise!" (Lk 7:14).

2. Jesus, the Youth: Model to Live the Values and Fight the Syndromes

In this section of the document Jesus is presented as young among the young. He becomes an icon for them to make a passage from the profane world to the identity of being consecrated to the Lord.

2.1 Baptism of Jesus as Evoking the Rite of Passage to Consecration

The gospel picture of the baptism of Jesus is a typical story to analyze from the perspective of the rites of passage. Jesus' baptism was a rite of consecration prior to taking up his great mission. In his baptism, we hear the formal announcement of the identity of Jesus as the consecrated: "You are my beloved Son" (Lk 3:22). After baptism Jesus was filled with the Holy Spirit, and was led by the Spirit into the desert. The temptations manifest Jesus' two dimensional program of life that makes him fit for the identity as the 'beloved or consecrated of God.' Baptism, desert experience, temptations and his conflict with the devil were occasions to manifest his program of life. He proves with his manifested values that he loves God with all his heart, all his soul and all his might. Configuring himself to this program of life, he goes forth to his mission. Every young person who feels called to a mission in this world is invited to hear the Father speaking those same words of consecration within his or her heart: "You are my beloved child". The necessary thing to accompany this call is a desert experience and the conflict with evil; there one has to manifest the firm and faithful adherence to the gospel values and the resistance to syndromes that are incompatible with the call. Understanding the baptism of the Lord as a rite of passage, we can analyze the whole life of Jesus in terms of a two dimensional fivefold program of life, to which he had configured himself.

i. Choice to fight the instinct for comforts and to embrace the hard way: In Matthew, the images we have of Jesus as a child are those of a tiny refugee in Egypt (cf. Mt 2:14-15) and a repatriate in Nazareth (cf. Mt 2:19-23). Matthew situates the time of the Lord's youth between two events: his family's return to Nazareth after their exile, and Jesus' baptism in the Jordan, the beginning of his public ministry. To achieve big goals, great athletes or sports persons allow themselves to be molded

by tough training; similarly, the early days and youth of Jesus, of which we have not much information, must have consisted of some precious preparation for his great mission. He tasted rejection and opposition from his home town, his own disciples and the political and religious leaders of the time. During his public ministry, he advocated his disciples to ‘enter through the narrow gate’ as he himself chose the way of the cross and death. His public ministry clock was studded with a series of rejections starting with the rejection at his home town Nazareth, later from his own disciples at Caesarea Philippi and finally by political and religious leaders at Jerusalem.

ii. Choice to fight the instinct for self-preservation and embrace death: In the gospel of Mark, Jesus showers no appreciation for Peter’s answer to the question, “who do you say I am?” (Mk 8:27); rather, he qualified it with the prediction of his passion and death (Mk 8:31) – the one whom Peter declared as Messiah must suffer and die! One can look at life from different perspectives; but if one’s perspective of life does not incorporate the most inevitable aspects of life (like death), one will be paralyzed when those realities strike him/her. It is because of this, Jesus in the gospel tradition was stubborn to look at his life only from the perspective of death. Earlier, to the demand for a sign to prove his identity, he was categorical in giving the sign of Jonah (Mt 12:40), which is the symbol of his death. As he had foreseen, the Lord “gave up his spirit” (cf. Mt 27:50) on a cross, when he was a little more than thirty years old (cf. Lk 3:23). In today’s terms, Jesus gave his life when he was a young adult. That ending was not something that simply happened; rather, he made his entire youth, and every moment of his life, a precious preparation for it.

iii. Choice to fight the instinct for ego and embrace the other: Jesus resisted all temptations to project himself as important. Starting from the temptations in the desert till the temptation on the cross, he always resisted all occasions to make a spectacle of his power or feed his ego. On the contrary, Jesus was a great master and leader who fostered greatness in others. Whenever somebody obtained healing or forgiveness from Jesus, he always appreciated the contribution of the beneficiary.⁷ As the hymn in the letter to the Philippians (2:5-11) describe, the life of Jesus was humility personified. It is a contrast to today’s ‘selfie culture’ in which one is immersed with oneself. It is a type of narcissism in which people fall in love with one’s own image: that is, thinking, feeling, judging, evaluating and discerning, always keeping oneself at the center. Jesus lived other-centered life and was always moved by compassion. His miracles were manifestations of his compassion. The multiplication of bread (Mk 6:3-44) in the context of Jesus and his disciples seeking some rest, after hearing the shattering news of the murder of his cousin and mentor,

John the Baptist, is particularly noteworthy. He always placed his personal concerns in the backseat, and was moved by the concerns of the people.

iv. Choice to fight the instinct for self-will and embrace God's will: Jesus accepted unexpected twists and uncertainties of life, letting God to take control of his life. Rejection at his home town Nazareth became a providential opportunity to extend his ministry to a larger horizon. In the gospel of Luke, the whole life of Jesus is framed between two statements articulated in the language of 'divine musts' in his life. At Jerusalem temple Jesus told his parents that he must be busy with his father's business (Lk 2:49). At the other end of his life, Jesus told the Emmaus disciples that it was necessary for him to suffer, die and resurrect (Lk 24:25). It is the 'divine must' language Jesus makes use to speak about his passion in all the three passion predictions (Mk 8:31; 9: 30-31; 10:32-34). It evokes the divine program of life to which he had configured himself at his baptism. Jesus turned his gaze to the future, entrusting himself into the Father's safe hands, in the strength of the Spirit.

v. Choice to fight the instinct for self-serving and embrace the mission: Jesus, in the years of his youth, was training himself to carry out the Father's plan. In his adolescence and youth, Jesus' relationship with the Father was that of the beloved Son. Drawn to the Father, he grew up learning the art of foregoing oneself and being concerned about His affairs: "Did you not know that I must be about my Father's business?" (Lk 2:49). Still, it must not be thought that Jesus was a withdrawn adolescent or a self-absorbed youth. His relationships were those of a young person who shared fully in the life of his family and his people. He learned his father's trade and then replaced him as a carpenter.

Jesus even as a little boy could easily mingle with young and old of his age. In fact, "Jesus did not grow up in a narrow and stifling relationship with Mary and Joseph, but readily interacted with the wider family, the relatives of his parents and their friends".⁸ Hence we can understand why, when he returned from his pilgrimage to Jerusalem, his parents readily thought that, as a twelve-year-old boy (cf. Lk 2:42), he was wandering freely among the crowd, even though they did not see him for an entire day: "supposing him to be in the group of travellers, they went a day's journey" (Lk 2:44). Surely, they assumed, Jesus was there, mingling the others, joking with other young people, listening to the adults tell stories and sharing the joys and sorrows of the group. Thanks to the trust of his parents, Jesus can move freely and learn to journey with others.⁹

The document addresses one of the symptomatic attitudes of this generation taking example from the early life of Jesus. The kids of the previous generation used

to spend a lot of time playing with their peer groups, and had to be forced in the evening to return home. Today's parents have to force their kids who are addicted to games with electronic gadgets to come out of their private rooms and mingle with their peer groups or relatives.

The above mentioned aspects of Jesus' life can be an inspiration for all those young people who are developing and preparing to take up their mission in life. The true content of human life consists in relationships. This involves growing in a relationship with the Father, in awareness of being part of a family and a people. In pastoral work with young people, we need projects that can strengthen them, accompany them and impel them to encounter others, to engage in generous service, in mission.

2.2 'Rising with Christ' – Configured to Risen Christ to Transform the World

Concluding the section on the analysis of the life of Jesus, the document picks up two contrasting images of young men from the passion-resurrection accounts in the Gospel of Mark. It shows how those who configure themselves with the risen Christ are making a passage to become agents of transformation. During the Lord's passion, we see a young man who wanted to follow Jesus, but in fear ran away naked (cf. Mk 14:51-52). Yet at the empty tomb, we see another transformed young person, "dressed in a white tunic" (Mk 16:5). He tells the women not to be afraid and proclaims the joy of the resurrection (cf. Mk 16:6-7). The Lord is calling us to enkindle stars in the night of other young people.

3. Call to the Church to Undergo a Rite of Passage to youthfulness

Once again keeping the transformation icon of 'eagle' in the backdrop, the document has made an appeal to the Church to shed its aging syndromes and to undergo a rite of passage to authentic youth. Keeping the analysis of the life of Jesus and his program of life before the analysis of the Church, the document makes the Church to stay in front of a mirror not to admire her self-image but to make her see the real image. In this mirror, the Church has to see the gap between what is real and what is ideal about her. The life of the Church as a radical program of life initiated by Jesus has been infected with syndromes in the course of its history. It has to make a passage to youthfulness. Youth is more than simply a period of time; it is a state of mind. That is why an institution as ancient as the Church can experience renewal and a return to youth at different points in her age-old history.

3.1 Call to Fight the Adolescence Syndromes and Make a Passage to Authentic Adulthood

First of all, the document hints at a possible distinction and contrast between the image of Jesus and that of the Church in the hearts of youth. It warns the Church against characteristic adolescence syndrome of self-indulgence. “Even though to many young people, God, religion and the Church seem empty words, they are sensitive to the figure of Jesus”.¹⁰ Consequently, the Church should not be excessively caught up in herself but instead, and above all, reflect Jesus Christ.

Secondly the document warns the Church against confusing another adolescence syndrome as youth-value. It is the danger of thinking that the Church is young when she goes behind everything new and accepts or dances according to everything the world offers. On the contrary, the Church is young when she is herself, when she is constantly renewed through the strength born of God’s word, the Eucharist, and the daily presence of Christ and the power of his Spirit in the lives of the members. The Church must dare to be different, to point to ideals other than those of this world, testifying to the beauty of generosity, service, purity, perseverance, forgiveness, fidelity to our personal vocation, prayer, the pursuit of justice and common good, love for the poor, and social friendship.

3.2 Call to Fight the Aging Syndromes to Make a Passage to Authentic Youthfulness

In any radical movement in the history, there is a temptation to replace the authentic with fake values— a kind of radicalism with what is comfortable and convenient. Christ’s Church has also yielded to the temptation to lose enthusiasm because she failed to hear the Lord’s calling for a hard passage to its youth, shedding her accumulated aging syndromes. First of all, pride and ego has prevented the Church from addressing its syndromes and being transparent. The Church has enormously suffered due to its fear to take risk, to be transparent and be exposed. God calls to take the risk of faith, to give her all without counting the dangers; she can be tempted to revert to seeking a false, worldly form of security. Here the Pope speaks about how the young people with their innate values can help to keep the Church’s youth. They can stop her from becoming corrupt; they can keep her moving forward, prevent her from being proud and sectarian, help her to be poorer and to bear better witness, to take the side of the poor and the outcast, to fight for justice and to humble herself and let herself be challenged.

To be credible to young people, the Church needs to regain her humility and simply listen, recognizing that what others have to say can provide some light to

help her better understand the Gospel. A Church always on the defensive which loses her humility and stops listening to others, which leaves no room for questions, loses her youth and takes herself into a museum.

The phenomenon of youth showing its back to the Church is a symptom to prescribe a scanning to the Church to trace the possible tumors inside her. The Synod recognized that:

A substantial number of young people, for all sorts of reasons, do not ask the Church for anything because they do not see her as significant for their lives. Some even ask expressly to be left alone, as they find the presence of the Church a nuisance, even an irritant. This request does not always stem from uncritical or impulsive contempt. It can also have serious and understandable reasons: sexual and financial scandals; a clergy ill-prepared to engage effectively with the sensitivities of the young; lack of care in homily preparation and the presentation of the Word of God; the passive role assigned to the young within the Christian community; the Church's difficulty in explaining her doctrine and ethical positions to contemporary society.¹¹

Another syndrome is rigidity and it has given the feeling that the Church is something outdated. For example, a Church that is overly fearful and tied to its structures can be invariably critical of efforts to defend the rights of women, and constantly point out the risks and the potential errors of those demands. Instead, a living Church can react by being attentive to the legitimate claims of those women who seek greater justice and equality. A living Church can look back on history and ensure a fair share of role to women in the existing male authoritarianism, domination, various forms of enslavement, abuse and sexist violence.

4. Mary: The Iconic Champion of the Gospel Program of Life

The document presents Mary as the model for a youthful Church that seeks to follow Christ's radical program of life with enthusiasm and docility. Mary certainly shines as an icon by heroically living a disciple's two dimensional program of life, namely, faithfulness to the values and leading the Church in its battle against syndromes (Lk 1:38). The life perspectives of Mary drawn from biblical and ecclesial traditions fit into Jesus' radical program of life revealed at his baptism.

Mary: Champion of Virtues and Fighter of Syndromes

i. Mary: Icon of Strength, Determination and Perseverance: From the moment she said 'yes' to God's Word, Mary began a journey of determination and perseverance. As an immediate challenge after annunciation, she had to face a

husband without whose knowledge she was pregnant. If Joseph had chosen to reveal it to others, in the Jewish tradition, she would have had the prospect of being stoned to death. As she approached the day to deliver her first born, she had to undertake a long journey and had to give birth in the most unfriendly atmosphere. Immediately after that, hearing that the life of her child was under threat, they had to flee to live as refugees in Egypt. At the beginning of the public ministry of Jesus, we have no information about Joseph and it is presumed that Mary had become a widow at an early age. Finally at Calvary she had to stand at the foot of the cross and lay her son's dead body in her lap. She shared his suffering, yet was not overwhelmed by it. She was the woman of strength who uttered her radical 'yes' and she supports, accompanies, protects and embraces anyone who suffers. From her, we learn how to say 'yes' with stubborn endurance. "A sword will pierce your own soul" was the prophecy that always defined her radical perspectives of life.

ii. Mary: Icon of Courage: While still very young, she accepted the message of the angel, yet like Gideon, she was not afraid to ask questions (cf. Lk 1:34). And with an open heart and soul, she replied, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord." Even when the men disciples failed, it was only Mary and some women disciples who managed to follow Jesus on the way of the cross, the most difficult road of all in following Jesus. She represents the kind of women who courageously turn up in the most hard places, who are there in difficult times, who watch, who attend, who observe, who care, even in the midst of extreme hostile surroundings. She is the icon of courage like the mother of seven sons in the book of Maccabees (2Macc 7).

iii. Mary: Icon of Faith: Mary allowed God the master artist to continue carving her picture, even when she did not understand its outcome. This is what is called the radical living of one's vocation in faith. Like any other believer, for Mary too, life was a reality lived forward but understood backward. She refused to rebel against God's master plan even at the moments of uncertainties of life.

We are always struck by the strength of the young Mary's 'yes', which is reflected in the strength in those words, 'be it done', that she spoke to the angel. Mary knew what was at stake and she said 'yes' without thinking twice. Hers was the 'yes' of someone prepared to be committed, someone willing to take a risk, ready to stake everything she had, with no more security than the certainty of knowing that she was the bearer of a promise.¹²

iv. Mary: Icon of Service: Mary was energetic, ready to set out immediately after knowing that her elderly cousin needed her service (Lk 1:39). When her young son needed protection, Mary set out with Joseph to a distant land (cf. Mt 2:13-14).

She was ready to intercede when a family was in trouble in the context of a marriage celebration at Cana (John 2:3). Seeing her role, the ecclesial tradition has rightly given her the title ‘Mother of Perpetual Help.’

v. Mary: Iconic Fighter against Evils: The ecclesial tradition considers Mary as the Ark of the Covenant, taking inspiration from her iconic image in the book of Revelation (Rev 11:19-12:10). The ark is the symbol of God’s presence in the Old Testament. But for the Church, Mary means the definite presence of God, Jesus. The new ark, like the old ark, is associated with the battle against enemies. Mary, the ark of God, is still powerful, when the Church, the new Israel, is in battle with the forces of evil. In her apparitions, she customarily announces to the Church a new phase in the battle and she announces her new engagement in this battle. The document presents Mary as the mother who guides the Church in her passage to Jesus’ radical program of life, and leads the battle against syndromes.

5. Young Saints: Heroic Champions of the Gospel Program of Life

The Church has an army of young saints who devoted their lives to Christ, many of them even dying a martyr’s death. They were precious reflections of the young Christ; their radiant witness encourages and inspires others to configure themselves to the radical gospel program of life. The Synod of Bishops on Youth (2018) pointed out that “many young saints have allowed the features of youth to shine forth in all their beauty in the Church. Their example shows what the young are capable of, when they open themselves up to encounter Christ”.¹³

5.1 Young Saints: Icons of Values and Fighters against Syndromes

“Through the holiness of the young, the Church can renew her spiritual ardor and her apostolic vigor. The balm of holiness generated by the good lives of so many young people can heal the wounds of the Church and of the world, bringing us back to that fullness of love to which we have always been called: young saints inspire us to return to our first love (cf. Rev 2:4)”.¹⁴

The document picks up young saintly models from the entire length and breadth of chronological time and geographical space of the Church to give us representative models. They represent people who radically lived the threefold program of life of the Church. The threefold program of life of the Church includes evangelization, worship and care of the poor. The individual young saints mentioned in the document are heroic champions of any one among these threefold typical actions of the Church; at the same time, each one necessarily involves the other two also. Analogically the three popes of our recent times are champions of one among the

threefold typical actions of the Church. Pope John Paul II was a champion of evangelization, Pope Benedict XVI of worship, and Pope Francis of caring for the poor.

5.2 Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati

Among the many saints proposed in the document with focus on any one of the threefold program of the Church, I have picked up a 20th century young Italian saint whose focus was on caring for the poor, but necessarily involving the other two traits also. Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati was born in Turin on 6th April 1901. He died in 1925 at the age of 24 and was the son of a very wealthy and influential couple from Italy. His father was the owner of one of the leading Italian newspapers, “La Stampa,” and his mother was a well-known professional painter. Frassati himself was a mountaineer and a swimmer with the prospect of becoming a sports icon. But from his childhood he developed a passion for the poor and devotion to the Eucharist.

Upon his graduation his father asked him to choose either a car or a sizable fund as a gift; he chose the latter so that he could give it to the poor, rather than use it for himself. Due to his association with the sick, he developed tuberculosis and died in his early twenties. At his death his influential parents expected a lot of rich and influential people to pay homage to their son, but to their surprise, thousands of poor people flocked the streets to pay homage. While participating in the funeral, the poor people were surprised to learn that their friend, who walked with them as one among them, was from one of the richest and most influential families of Italy of that time. Thus Pier Giorgio Frassati championed one of the threefold programs of the Church, namely, care for the poor, and literally lived the kenosis of Jesus as it is presented in Phil 2:6-11. He represents all the youth who heroically fight against adolescence syndromes of craving for pleasures and self-indulgence.

Conclusion: A Program of Life for the Two-dimensional Passage to Youth

The book *iGen* and other contemporary studies on youth make a critical analysis of the characteristic life-perspectives of the present young generation. *Christus Vivit* keeps the findings of these studies in the backdrop and offers a program of life, proposing counter cultural models from biblical and ecclesial tradition. This paper has proposed two icons as the lens to analyze the program of life of biblical and ecclesial models of youth highlighted in *Christus Vivit*. These two icons used in this paper have served to uncover the metaphorical reality of youth and aging as individuals and the Church as a whole.

The paper has attempted to summarize the principles for the passage to authentic youth or discipleship into a two dimensional fivefold program of life. As part of the program of life to make the passage to authentic youth, *Christus Vivit* enumerates a list of aging syndromes one has to fight against. They include Jealousy, double face, self-sufficiency, pride, arrogance, gender discrimination, intolerance, stubbornness, refusal to reconciliation, rigidity, anger, revenge, hatred, and a lack of vitality, lack of dreams, enthusiasm, optimism, generosity, etc. The list of adolescence syndromes to fight against include: rebellion against parental/adult control and direction, turning their back to God or lack of faith in God or fear of God, laziness, sloth, pleasure seeking, self-indulgence, uncritical seeking and acceptance of anything new etc.

The paper made use of these two icons to analyze the program of the life of biblical models, Jesus and the Church including its young saints. Icons guide to a two dimensional passage that is from both adolescence and aging to authentic youth with the appropriate program of life. Consecrated life is the very radical following of the two-dimensional fivefold gospel program of life. When the members and the Church as a whole especially the youth recapture the gospel program of life reflected in the life of Jesus and other biblical and ecclesial models, the Church will be once again a flourishing ground for vocation to consecrated life.

Endnotes

¹ *Christus Vivit*, Post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation of Pope Francis to Young People and to the Entire People of God (March 25, 2019).

² JEAN M. TWENGE, *iGen*, Washington 2017.

³ G. P. EVANS, "Gifts of the Holy Spirit," in *The New Dictionary of Catholic Spirituality*, Bangalore 1995, 437.

⁴ *Christus Vivit*, 13.

⁵ *Christus Vivit*, 16.

⁶ AUGUSTINE, *Confessions*, X, 27: PL 32, 795.

⁷ For example Jesus to the sinful woman: "Your faith has saved you" (Lk 7:50)

⁸ *Amoris Laetitia* Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation of Pope Francis on Love in the Family (19 March 2016), 182.

⁹ *Christus Vivit*, 29.

¹⁰ SECOND VATICAN ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, *Message to Young Men and Women* (8 December 1965): AAS 58 (1966) 50.

¹¹ SECOND VATICAN ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, *Message to Young Men and Women* (8 December 1965): AAS 58 (1966), 53.

¹² *Christus Vivit*, 44.

¹³ *Final Document of the Fifteenth Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops*, 65.

¹⁴ *Final Document of the Fifteenth Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops*, 167.

TODAY'S YOUTH – TOMORROW'S CONSECRATED PERSONS

Dr. George Kannanthanam, CMF

BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON *CHRISTUS VIVIT*

Christus Vivit, apostolic exhortation of Pope Francis is the result of an Extraordinary Synod of Bishops that was conducted in Rome between 3rd of October to 28th of October, 2018. The theme of the Synod was “Youth, faith and vocational discernment”. The Synod was participated by specially invited 250 Cardinals, Archbishops, Bishops and Priests many of whom were the persons in charge for youth ministries in their countries. There were 13 participants from India which was led by Cardinal Gracious from Mumbai and other two Cardinals, George Aleancherry representing the Syro Malabar Church and Cardinal Cleemis, representing the Syro Malankara Church. There were 40 youths from around the world, among them, two were from India. But the youth participants did not have the voting right.

In order to ensure a larger participation of young people around the world, a pre Synodal conference was held in Rome in March 19-24, 2018 which was attended by 300 youth, some of whom were non-Christians and some were even non-believers. This conference was attended virtually by 15,000 people across the world. There was also an online survey among 200,000 people to know their opinions and suggestions. Thus, the Synod was a well participated exercise. You can find some visuals of the Synod in <https://youtu.be/5lVuBPqAawY>

The post synodal document *Christus Vivit* (Christ is Alive) was signed by Pope Francis in Loretto, Italy on 25th March, 2019, on the feast of annunciation and was

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promulgated on the 2nd of April, the death Anniversary of Pope John Paul II, who initiated the World Youth Day.

The age for consideration as youth as accepted by the Synod is 16 years to 29 years. Roughly calculated, this would constitute about two billion people among the 7.7 billion world population.

POSITIVE ASPECTS OF YOUNG PEOPLE

The third chapter of *Christus Vivit* deals the struggles of the young people and the proposals to deal with them in a constructive manner.

YOUTH AS “NOW” OF GOD

The first part of the third chapter deals with the positive aspects of the youth of today. Pope Francis begins the third chapter of the document, with the phrase, “You are the «now» of God” (64). This is very significant variance from the general understanding of youth being the ‘future of the world’ or as ‘the tomorrow’. Young people in many families are more learned, more exposed to the world and very often more earning members in the families. Parents look up to them to learn and are often dependent financially on them. This has changed their position in the family. Similarly, the Church can be enriched by their voice, knowledge and involvement (65). Church does not have to be judgmental in their approach to the young people which can only create distance (66).

Youth is not one particular group or mindset or experience. There are many ways of being young. The world of youth is many. The rural and urban youth, the educated and uneducated youth, the working and non working youth, the poor and the rich youth, the third world and the western youth - each are distinct groups having their own life experience. There are vast differences within the countries as well (68-69).

It is very interesting to note that *Christus Vivit* does not speak of a particular youth — Christian or Catholic. Pope Francis addresses the issues of the youth in general, covering all types, nationalities and religions. Thus, the document is appealing to youth all around the world. It is an inclusive message for all young people, irrespective of their differences. No one is excluded — an aspect we need to inculcate in our youth ministry.

CHALLENGES OF THE YOUNG PEOPLE

A major part of the chapter presents to the world, the challenges faced by the young people today. Numbers starting from 70 till 103 dwells in detail about the various aspects of the world today, that does not allow the young people to live their life in its fullness.

Many young people are suffering and are manipulated (70-74). Youth are living in a world in crisis. Many are condemned to live in war zones and violence. They are exploited by ideologies. Marginalization, addiction, social exclusion and onslaught of HIV and disabilities, to name a few, carves the lives of the young people today.

Many youth lives are so deeply hurt that, they don't believe anyone and they can only confide in God (77). Very often those who come to help, come with an ideological colonisation, like western views on sexuality, marriage, life and social justice (78). Many in the world are out to exploit the image of the youth, where the beauty of the youth is being stolen and sold. Adults want to snatch youth for themselves (79).

Young people are also missing the family traditions in many places, thus depriving them of the roots to hold on. There is also an estrangement of the young and the old. In many places, the youth are deprived of freedom of speech and in some places, freedom to practice their faith and religion (80).

Pope Francis focuses on the desires, hurts and longings of the young people (81-82). While the young people feel and understand, body and sexuality as important elements of life, they feel that the Church is very judgemental of such aspects of life. They are not able to discuss such issues in Church fora. This creates alienation from the Church.

Perceptions about human body are changing due to scientific advancements. It is projected as being open to unlimited modifications, including intervening with the DNA. The risk taking behaviour of the youth adds fuel to these interests, raising many ethical questions.

THREE AREAS OF CONCERN

1. Digital Environment

The first of the three concerns addressed in an elaborate way in the document is digital environment (86-90). Youth are no more using the digital work, it is

living the digitalised culture. It raises questions on whether the digital spaces are just contacts or spaces for real communication. The dark web can be place of manipulation, where addiction, loss of reality and new forms of violence, like cyber bullying, pornography and gambling can cause great harm. Very often fake news and fake economic information can influence even democratic processes like elections. Media trials and prejudice and hate are used extensively for bad intentions for which Church and pastors are not exempted. The fifth continent can also cause digital migration, withdrawn from their families, cultures and regional/religious values.

A document prepared on the eve of the Synod by three hundred young people worldwide pointed out that “online relationships can become inhuman. Digital spaces blind us to the vulnerability of another human being and prevent us from our own self-reflection. Problems like pornography distort a young person’s perception of human sexuality. Technology used in this way creates a delusional parallel reality that ignores human dignity.”

2. Migrants as an epitome of our time (91-94)

Various reasons lead to about 250 million people across the world to migrate every year. Some of them are due to structural issues in society and economy. War, violence and political/religious instability are the causes in many places. More and more of natural disasters contribute to migration. Poverty has been at the root of migration. Migration is also a choice of many young persons seeking better opportunities and future.

Internally displaced persons within the country are also dealing with similar issues. Human trafficking happens in every country. Violence, psychological and physical abuse involving minors, refugees, and women lead to large numbers of people getting separated from places of origin and family roots. Very often there arises a divide between the migrants and the migrated community.

3. Every form of abuse (95-102)

Christus Vivit lashes out against clericalism in a strong way. All forms of abuse, whether it is abuse of power, conscience, financial and sexual are strongly condemned. Church is very much aware of the cry of the victims of abuse. The irresponsible and non-transparent ways of exercise of authority is challenged. Power is to be exercised for service. Document reaffirms the rigorous preventive measures and actions for sanctions, from which there will not be any turning back. Those who

reported such abuses are gratefully remembered. Pope also reminds that majority of the priest are inspiring. Church has its shadows, but the effort is not to hide and to pray for forgiveness.

Christus Vivit accepts that the issues presented are not exhaustive. Each country and group has their own issues to deal with.

TEN PROPOSALS FOR YOUTH AND YOUTH WORKERS

Pope Francis uses the scene of the resurrection of Jesus as the ray of hope for the dark times the youth are going through (104). The proposed solutions to deal with the issue of the young people are presented throughout the document in a scattered manner. I have tried to put them together as ten proposals for easy understanding.

1. “Holy ground - take off your shoes” (67)

Christus Vivit presents the youth in a very divine way, very characteristic of Pope Francis. His words are very touching as he describes the youth: “Each young person’s heart should thus be considered ‘holy ground’, a bearer of seeds of divine life, before which we must ‘take off our shoes’ in order to draw near and enter more deeply into the Mystery.” The Church and those working with the youth are invited to enter deeply into the mystery of the life of the young people. It is sad that while Pope invites us to ‘take off the shoes’ in respect and reverence, many Parish priests and heads of our institutions would ‘take the shoes’ seeing the youth, signifying their animosity and confrontation attitude. Thus, the primary requirement is to change the understanding and view about the young people.

2. Live life differently (84)

Recognising the beauty of the youth, *Christus Vivit*, appreciates the desire in many of them for God. Many display glimpses of an ideal human fraternity. They have a great amount of talents to offer to the world. Youth are invited to live life differently.

3. Be originals and not photocopies (104)

In the onslaught of digital world, *Christus Vivit* proposes young people to ‘Be Yourself’ and not be photocopies. You are more important than your possessions. Youth are called to do something greater and there is need to ‘dare to be more’. Great goal for the youth is holiness which has to be the focus. Pope presents the life of Venerable Carlo Acutis as model for youth. He was born in 1991 and died in

2006. Carlos used his digital interest to document the eucharistic miracles around the world. Died of leukemia, Carlos stands out as a model for youth and was proclaimed venerable in 2018.

4. Church to weep as a mother (75-76)

Pope's concern for young people makes him to request the Church to weep as a Mother for them. He says that "anyone incapable of tears cannot be a Mother". Church and the larger society need to become a caring Mother for the young people. "Try to learn to weep for all those young people less fortunate than yourselves. Weeping is also an expression of mercy and compassion. If tears do not come, ask the Lord to give you the grace to weep for the sufferings of others. Once you can weep, then you will be able to help others from the heart." The world's spirit is trying to anaesthetise young people with messages to deviate from the real issues of life. Pope wishes that the suffering young people be embraced by the Christian Community.

5. Get committed (108)

"Being young is not only about pursuing fleeting pleasures and superficial achievements. If the years of your youth are to serve their purpose in life, they must be a time of generous commitment, whole-hearted dedication, and sacrifices that are difficult but ultimately fruitful." Getting committed to a family, a profession, or a dream of one's own is important to get rooted and find meaning.

6. Move from virtual contact to healthy communication (89-90)

Digital world is an opportunity for dialogue and encounter. There is great scope for using the web for various spiritual, social and developmental aspects. Pastoral initiatives can also be developed around the digital presence. The biggest youth icon presently globally is Greta Thunberg who has been able to take the message of climate change to the global platform using the digital presence.

7. Make your life worthwhile (109)

Pope Francis appeals the youth not to deprive the world of their contribution. They have uniqueness and originality. Certain things can be done by the young people. Jesus wants to make their life worthwhile. If they feel weak, selfish and with bad habits, ask Jesus to renew them. Hope will never fail them.

8. Jesus' church – instrument for healing and peace (83)

Pope Francis is very understanding of the situation of youth, as he says that he is aware of their internal hurts and burden of painful memories. He reminds them that “Jesus is present among these wounds.” He also provides the hope as he says that “Jesus offers friendship and healing companionship.” There may be hurts which they can only share with God (77).

9. Stand beside the church (101)

Pope Francis admits the fact that Church had its shadows from the beginning which it has not kept hidden — abuse of power, money and physical abuses. The Church has been praying for forgiveness of any such abuses. Pope earnestly requests the young people not to abandon the Church at such moments, rather to stand beside her. She can be strengthened to begin anew with the help of the youth. Youth are encouraged to remind and correct anyone, if they see them at risk. Pope has great hope that the youth can liberate the Church from clericalism.

10. Strength in unity (110)

Christus Vivit ends with a call for unity among the young people. There is great power in unity. Isolation will sap our strength and such persons will be exposed to the worst. There can be various unified activities and initiatives that could bring meaning to their lives and also great changes in the society.

Conclusion

Christus Vivit is a path breaking message from Pope Francis to youth all over the world. It is message of appreciation and encouragement, a message of hope and courage. Representing the Church, Pope lays out a plan of action that can work as a guideline for the youth of today. Opportunities have to be created for study of this document at every level in the Church and strategies adopted to implement the proposal given in it for the youth ministries at global and national level.

POPE FRANCIS' MESSAGE TO THE YOUTH AND ITS RELEVANCE TO THE CONSECRATED PERSONS

Sr. Michael Rita, FSJ

The intended purpose of this article is to share my personal reflections on how we can apply the insights of *Christus Vivit* to make our religious life and commitment relevant in the context of our country. The striking feature of the apostolic exhortation is the emphasis on three fundamental truths of Christian faith: first, God loves you; second: Jesus is Risen; and third Jesus is alive.

The First Truth: God Loves You

It is possible for us to affirm that God loves us in the happiest moments of our lives. However, what would be our impulsive response in moments of hardships? Our Christian experience says that it is possible to affirm God's love even in the most difficult moments because God gave us life and he supports us.

Each of us have a biological father and our experience with our earthly father will differ from person to person. We would have experienced a loving father, dominating father, irresponsible father, lenient father, disciplining father, forgiving father, industrious father, and the list is too long. Despite all the stressful memories on account of our earthly father, we are able to sustain in life because of our heavenly father. Pope Francis claims that we can find security only in the embrace of our heavenly father. He supports his claim with evidence from the prophetic literature.

“Can a mother forget her a nursing child or show no compassion for the child of her womb?” (Is 49:15); “See I have inscribed you in the palm of my hand” (Is 49:16); “I have loved you with an everlasting love” (Jer 31:3).

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These Scripture texts indicate that the memory of God is filled about us and He has a very personal tender compassion towards us.

In a particular passage in the book of Genesis, Jacob fights with God and says, “I will not let you go until you bless me” (32:26). Such is the communion between God and human persons. This particular event enables us to recollect moments in our life when we really wrestled with God, which stands out as a unique God experience.

As we reflect on our personal experience of God we need to ask ourselves this question: In moments of difficulties what am I going to do? As a response to this question, Pope Francis gives us a key word “Hope”, which is a divine gift. It reminds us of God’s promises and keeps us going when the going becomes difficult. In such situations, we can create a psychological disposition by repeating the promises of God: “You are precious in my eyes”; “The Lord is my shepherd”; and “God is my refuge”.

This fundamental truth that God loves us, invites us to keep in touch with God like Jesus who was always in constant conversation with God while choosing his disciples, performing miracles, and accepting God’s will in the garden of Gethsemane. Our constant conversation with God would empower us to understand the mission entrusted to us like Noah who built the Ark, Moses who led the people through the wilderness into the Promised Land and Elijah who fed the widow of Serapath, and Mary who bore Jesus in her womb. Our connection and communication with God would enable us to seek wisdom as a gift from God like David, Esther, and Mary our Mother.

The Second Truth: Christ is Our Saviour

Christ out of love sacrifices himself completely to save us, which is reflected in the letter of St. Paul to the Galatians: “I now live by faith the son of God who loved me and gave himself for me” (2:20). Jesus through his death on the cross, freed us from sin, sorrow, inner emptiness and loneliness. He forgave us seventy times seven.

It would be very comforting to understand that His love is greater than all our problems, frailties and flaws. He embraced the prodigal son and He embraced Peter and He embraces us too. We are valuable in His eyes because we are redeemed by His precious blood.

This second truth invites us to ponder on the mercy and forgiveness of God. Jesus always gives us a second chance. We should feel that forgiveness is a deeply felt need of every community. We must make an effort to forgive unconditionally. We should develop an attitude of mercy to reflect Christ-like forgiveness. A happy person is

always willing to forgive. We need to put the words of Jesus “love your enemies and pray for those who persecute to you” into concrete action.

Pope Francis offers another key word “Embrace” to explain the experience of forgiveness. For example, it is an imbalanced embrace in the parable of Prodigal Son. The father was very enthusiastic about his son’s return, it was celebration for him, but his son was downcast. Hence, we should always remind ourselves that we are part of the loving embrace of God since we are the Children of God. We have been saved by blood of Christ. Our filial relationship with God is so strong that even the devil cannot take away our sonship and daughtership. We are ever safe in the embrace of the father. It is with this attitude that we should go for confession believing that our father is ready to embrace us.

We should remember that the Jesus did not save us with ideas and intellectual programs. Rather, he saved us by his own flesh as a human person. The Son of God worked with his hands, thought with his human mind and loved us with human heart. We should also become more and more sensitive to our feelings and turn towards God, and at the same time be ready to forgive others.

We would be ready to forgive others if we are able to see Jesus in others as we read in the parable of the last judgement presented in the Gospel of Matthew chapter 25. A positive response to the questions enlisted there would mean inheriting heaven. We would be able to develop the attitude of seeing Jesus in others if we are deeply connected with the Eucharist, which encourages us to see Jesus in the Bread as well as in our neighbor. The Eucharist is the celebration of God’s mercy, forgiveness and healing presence.

The Third Truth: Christ is Alive

Jesus promised to be with us always till the end of times (Mt 28:20). This same Jesus is our friend who came to offer us life in abundance (Jn 10:10). All those who believe in the abiding presence of Jesus would be like a tree planted by water sending out its roots by the stream. It shall not fear when heat comes and its leaves shall stay green in the year of drought. It is not anxious and it does not cease to bear fruit (Jer 17:8). The faith in the presence of Jesus enables us to proclaim Jesus as the Messiah like the Samaritan Woman. It also enables us to be empowered with the same spirit of Jesus (61:1). We, like Jesus, would work through the power of the Holy Spirit.

The Good News for all of us today is the three fundamental truths of our Christian Faith:

1. God loves you
2. Christ is our savior
3. Christ is alive

The personal experience of these three fundamental truths enables us to practice seven habits in life.

1. To be active like Jesus doing more and more good
2. To be a risk taker like Mary – the youthful disciple
3. To know more about young biblical personalities and young saints.
4. Ascend to God to descend to the young.
5. To be ready to go an extra mile.
6. To provide more shelter for young.
7. To be prayerful.

Young People with Roots

Young people are like tall trees. They seem to be sign of hope at times in a storm, nevertheless they also become lifeless because of want of deep roots. In order to be firmly grounded, young people should know the history of their family, accept the elders, and learn from their wisdom. Parents and the elders should help young people to grow, flourish and bear fruits.

In the present context of the world, Pope Francis says youth are more vulnerable to violence, abuse and despair. In order to resist and change this situation, we should make our homes a place of warmth and love and a community caring for each other. We should always understand we are responsible for the future generations. In conclusion, let me share with you the love that Pope Francis had for his grandmothers. We too can share the same love with our grand parents.

An Insight from the Life of Pope Francis

He keeps this text in his breviary given to him by his grandmother on his ordination day and he reads it again and again. The text reads:

May these my grandchildren, to whom I have given the best of my heart,
have a long and happy life, but if on some painful day, sickness or the

loss of a loved one fills you with grief, remember that a sigh before the Tabernacle, where the greatest and most august martyr resides, and a gaze at Mary at the foot of the Cross, can make a drop of balm fall on the deepest and most painful wounds.

Let us believe that a better world should have enough space for future generations to grow, flourish and bear fruits. As a religious, let us continue journey:

1. Believing that God loves us and he will never reject us.
2. To strive to that excellence Christ lives in me.
3. To have a spirit of gratitude that I am here because of God's grace.
4. To enjoy the fruits of the Spirit, Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Faithfulness, Gentleness, and Self-control.
5. To be a prayerful person.
6. To be faithful in reaching out to the needy especially the youth thus resounding to the world **God loves me, Christ is our saviour, and Jesus is alive!**

CALL TO CONSECRATED PERSONS FOR TRANSFORMATION IN THE LIGHT OF THE GOSPEL

Dr. Xavier E. Manavath, CMF

Let us reflect on this theme in the light of the broader theme, namely, “Consecrated Persons at the Service of the youth.”¹ So when we talk about the call to consecrated persons for transformation, we are going to focus on the kind of internal transformation we need so that we are better equipped to minister to the youth of today. More precisely, our concern is to reflect on the internal conversion and the kind of preparation we may need so that we are better prepared not only to understand the youth but also to become more resourceful in leading and guiding our young people.

The transformation needed is not just for ourselves as religious. It is a call to both personal and collective transformation needed as a Church. It must be admitted that priests and religious, to a great extent, collectively mirror the face of the Church. For many ordinary Christians, God becomes personally alive and Church becomes meaningful and relevant through the way the priests and the religious minister to and care for them. Sin and salvation, alienation and reconciliation, guilt and forgiveness, judgment and grace, spiritual death and rebirth, despair and hope are not mere ecclesial realities; they are interwoven in the fabric of healing-nurturing and empowering interaction between the priests and the religious in relation to the wider sections of the people of God. We ought to be the living and the visible faces of the loving God who passionately longs for his people and cares for them.

More specifically as consecrated persons, we have been chosen from the world and from our families to proclaim the good news of God to humanity, to liberate those who are victims of various forms of bondages and to lead them to the fullness of life,

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joy and freedom. These tasks are not simply a profession or a work. To proclaim the good news, we need to become the good news; to liberate others from bondages, we need to be free from our own bondages; to lead them to the fullness of life, joy and freedom, our lives should radiate youthfulness, joy and freedom of the spirit. Pope Francis talks about it with full clarity. Being an evangelizer is not so much “about speaking about the truth but living it, embodying it, being transformed in Christ. Being an apostle does not mean carrying a torch in hand, possessing the light, but being that light. The Gospel, more than a lesson, is an example. A message that becomes a life fully lived”.² This is the challenge of transformation that we need to undergo. The exhortation of Jesus comes to enlighten us: “Can a blind man lead a blind man? Will they not both fall into a pit? (Lk 6: 40). This transformation is all about moving into a new vision and living it for the world and in our context, especially for our young people.

1. RE-VISIONING *FUGA MUNDI*, FLIGHT FROM THE WORLD

It is always refreshing to recall the goal of our consecration; it is to grow in conformity with Christ of the Gospel, poor, chaste and obedient and to re-incarnate him contextually, meaningfully and relevantly both in the Church and in the world. Essential to this consecration, there is an aspect of *fuga mundi*. However, this *fuga mundi*, is not to be understood as a denial of the actual world; neither is it a renunciation nor an escape or flight from the world. It is not a distrust of the world. The foundational meaning of *fuga mundi* is to create a prayerful or a *contemplative withdrawal*, a *sacred spacing* so that we are able to discern and renounce everything that is contrary to the Gospel, every attitude that prevents you from loving God and others and every tendency to create a world independent of God. It calls for a rebellion of the heart against every form of idolatry, especially against the three classic idols of power, property and pleasure to which the Satan was alluring Jesus during the temptations in the desert.

Positively speaking, *fuga mundi* is to create a sacred spacing as a going away in order to return in a qualitatively different way of being in the world. It is a prayerful distancing within which you re-discover the world through the eyes of God. Human embodied-ness in the world is an inescapable dimension of human reality. We can never escape this dimension even in the most sublime form of spiritual living. Hence, ultimately *fuga mundi* is a process through which we learn to engage the world positively, creatively, and appreciatively and to restore it for God. The youth looks for people who can teach them how to engage the world in this way that nurtures life in all its forms and that fosters justice, love and integrity

of creation. Moses initially was disengaged from the world of his own people and God called him and brought him into the heart of their suffering and showed him the path of liberation from the slavery in Egypt. He encounters God in the bush that burns and still not consumed in the fire. The burning bush is a symbol of the all-pervading, enlivening and nurturing presence of God even in the most insignificant and mundane aspect of the world that we live in. Assurance was given to Moses that God is present in the political process of the liberation that he was going to lead. We must engage the world with a heart that radiates the joy of the Gospel.

Unfortunately, many religious still operate from the out-dated, worn-out and erroneous assumptions about life and world. We are often taught even today and that too, in the courses conducted on the counsels as though the world is sinful, dangerous and to be negated or avoided. Being set apart is often interpreted as physical and mental separation or isolation from the world. This is a fundamental area where we need conversion so as to become catalysts and models for our young people of the discerning, wise and prudent engagement with the world. Many young people think that we religious are out of touch with the world of the youth and are suspicious of it. They do not want to see in us a Church that is silent and often afraid to speak, obsessively concerned with insignificant issues or a Church that is “always on the defensive which loses her humility . . . and leaves no room for questions, loses her youth and turns into a museum.”³ They want a Church that does more than simply condemn the world. We cannot win over the youth with such a nihilistic, defensive and world-denying vision of spirituality.

2. MOVING BEYOND OUR NARROW ENCLAVES

We just celebrated the extra-ordinary missionary month as called forth by the Holy Father. He reminded us in his missionary letter that we do not exist for ourselves. He wants that the celebration of the extraordinary month should serve as an “incentive to combat the recurring temptation lurking beneath every form of ecclesial introversion, self-referential retreat into comfort zones, pastoral pessimism and sterile nostalgia for the past.”⁴ He calls “ecclesial introversion” a sin. We lose our enthusiasm when we get locked up in ourselves and are no longer able to hear the Lord calling us to take the risk of faith. We often hide behind social acceptability. When we seek a false and worldly form of security, we become lost in the crowd, collectivity and convention. We need a spirit-filled wider horizon that calls us to reform ourselves. In relation to developing a sound pastoral approach to women, Holy Father writes:

A Church that is overly critical and tied to its structures can be invariably critical of efforts to defend the rights of women, and constantly point out the risks and the potential errors of those demands. Instead, a living Church can react by being attentive to the legitimate claims of those women who seek greater justice and equality. A living Church can look back on history and acknowledge a fair share of male authoritarianism, domination, various forms of enslavement, abuse and sexist violence. With this outlook, she can support the call to respect women's rights, and offer convinced support for greater reciprocity between males and females, while not agreeing with everything some feminist groups propose.⁵

A critical and creative look can renew the Church's commitment "against all discrimination and violence on sexual grounds."⁶

We must realize that we have a mission beyond our own particular tasks. We are called to plough and prepare the ground, sow the seeds of God's Kingdom, nurture and allow them to sprout and grow. Our particular tasks must be placed within the context of nurturing the emergence and growth of God's Reign. Even though, I am cutting a stone, I have to have the vision of "building a Cathedral" together with and in collaboration with others who may be experts in different fields and competent in different resources. Young people are naturally attracted by an infinite horizon opening up before them and we must be able to fuel their imagination.

Institutional living with all its securities, comforts and settling down involved, can risk shrinking our horizon and losing that passionate excitement. We must make sure that as we mature, grow older and structure our lives, we should never lose that enthusiasm and openness to an ever-greater reality.

3. LIBERATION FROM OUR OWN BONDAGES AND BLINDERS

To approach the youth with the love of Christ, we need liberation from our own bondages, blinders, pre-judgements and prejudices. As religious we often live a kind of moral imperialism. As priests and religious, we are notorious for our propensity to give answers before questions are asked, and to make choices before they are developmentally and formatively possible. The young people see that our loyalties are often on non-essentials; our energies are spent on trivial concerns that rule our hearts and communities. They see ourselves as people who are caught up in ourselves and our actions and policies often do not reflect those of Christ. The young may often show an impulsive contempt for us and the Church that we represent for understandable reasons: "sexual and financial scandals, a clergy ill-prepared to engage effectively with the sensitivities of the young; lack of care in homily preparation and presentation of the word of God; the passive role assigned to the young within the

Christian community; the Church's difficulty in explaining her doctrine and ethical positions to contemporary society."⁷

Some of us still suffer from our internal wounds which are like volcanoes burning within. Certain hurts that we may have experienced may tempt us to withdraw from others, to turn in on ourselves and nurse feelings of anger and hatred. We should never stop listening to God's call for forgiveness because forgiveness brings freedom to us. It calls for great effort to distinguish the offence from the offender. Holy Father writes:

There are times when all our youthful energy, dreams and enthusiasm can flag because we are tempted to dwell on ourselves and our problems, our hurt feelings and our grievances. Don't let this happen to you! You will grow old before your time. Each age has its beauty, and the years of our youth need to be marked by shared ideals, hopes and dreams, great horizons that we can contemplate together.⁸

The goal of religious formation is to set ourselves free from bondages and from all forms of enslavements so that we are free for God and God alone, a stage wherein we radiate joy and freedom.

4. READINESS TO ENTER THE NEW AREOPAGUS OF THE WORLD

The secular places of our world also form a "Holy Ground," A vast number of our youth live in those places. We must be willing to listen to the cries, groaning, pains, anxieties and fears that lurk beneath the surface. We often complain about the lack of vocations to religious life with the assumption that the young people are not god-fearing and are after money and pleasure. But do we dare to ask ourselves, how do we come across to them? Are we ready to leave our comfort zones and enter into their own world? Do we come across to them as edifying, motivating and inspiring presence? Are we able to speak in their own languages? Are we truly ready to engage, listen and dialogue with them with discerning ears? We need to find ways of keeping ourselves close to the voices and concerns of young people. Holy Father writes: "We need to make more room for the voices of young people to be heard; listening makes possible an exchange of gifts in a context of empathy . . . At the same time, it sets the conditions for a preaching of the Gospel that can touch the heart truly, decisively and fruitfully."⁹

Unfortunately, we are often experts in telling them what to do and how to live but remain poor in listening. For example, we run many hostels for the young. Unfortunately, we run them as though we are housing a group of postulants and novices and appoint some retired members as wardens who may be totally out of

touch with the reality of the young people. We run these hostels mostly as means of income rather than as an apostolate for the youth.

As consecrated men and women, we must know that we have no borders, no limits: Jesus sends us everywhere. Holy Father reminds us: “The Gospel is for everyone, not just for some. It is not only for those who seem closer to us, more receptive, more welcoming. It is for everyone. Do not be afraid to go and bring Christ into every area of life, to the fringes of society, even to those who seem farthest away and most indifferent. The Lord seeks all; he wants everyone to feel the warmth of his mercy and his love”.¹⁰ Jesus wants us to be fearless missionaries wherever we are and in whatever company we find ourselves: in our neighbourhoods, in school or sports or social life, in volunteer service or in the workplace. Wherever we are, we always have an opportunity to share the joy of the Gospel.

5. RESPECT THE UNIQUENESS AND COMPLEMENTARITY OF THE DIFFERENT VOCATIONS AND FORMS OF LIFE

We must realize that all are called to holiness. At the same time, there are also different ways of living it. If equal dignity of all the members of the Church is the work of the Spirit, the same is also true about their diversity. It is the Spirit who establishes the Church as an organic communion in the diversity of vocations, charisms and ministries. So today we talk about different Christian vocations; corresponding to these vocations, there are different Christian forms of life and different ways of doing the one mission of Christ. Hence, we must learn how to respect the uniqueness of each vocation and also their complementarity and interdependence.

As priests, religious and lay, it is good to ask what is the mission proper to each? Knowing the mission proper to each is essential for healthy collaboration. However, it is also equally important that we know the mission proper to the other vocations also. In isolation, there is no grace.

The beauty of the Church is in discovering the uniqueness of each vocation and also the complementarity among all. “For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ” (1 Cor 12:12). “If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole body were hearing, where would the sense of smell be?” (1 Cor 12:17). “Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord . . . To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good” (1 Cor 12:4-5).

One member cannot function for the common good in isolation but only in mutual collaboration. Independent functioning leads to arrogance and destruction. In collaborative mission, let us not try to do what others are called to do. This is a temptation. Fidelity and commitment to one's own and at the same time, collaboration with others is the noble path.

"The various vocations are like so many rays of the one light of Christ, whose radiance brightens the countenance of the Church."¹¹ The lay faithful have as their specific but not exclusive characteristic, the reforming and transforming the secular spheres of the world, the clergy, pastoral ministry; consecrated men and women, special conformity to Christ, chaste, poor and obedient and to re-incarnate that presence contextually, meaningfully and relevantly wherever they are.¹²

It is a mistake to think of lay vocation as a form of service inside the Church, serving as lectors, acolytes, catechists, and so forth. We do not realize that the lay vocation is mainly directed to transforming activity in the secular spheres of life, within the family, the social, professional and political spheres. It is a concrete and faith-based commitment to the building of a new society. Holy Father writes: "It involves living in the midst of society and the world in order to bring the Gospel everywhere, to work for the growth of peace, harmony, justice, human rights and mercy, and thus for the extension of God's kingdom in this world."¹³ This is the path of holiness for lay faithful. Holy Father offers the young the right vision in his exhortation. He writes:

You won't become holy and find fulfilment by copying others. Imitating the Saints does not mean copying their lifestyle and their way of living holiness: "There are some testimonies that may prove helpful and inspiring, but that we are not meant to copy, for that could even lead us astray from the one specific path that the Lord has in mind for us". You have to discover who you are and develop your own way of being holy, whatever others may say or think. Becoming a saint means becoming more fully yourself, becoming what the Lord wished to dream and create, and not a photocopy. Your life ought to be a prophetic stimulus to others and leave a mark on this world, the unique mark that only you can leave. Whereas if you simply copy someone else, you will deprive this earth, and heaven too, of something that no one else can offer.¹⁴

Saint John of the Cross, also wrote in his *Spiritual Canticle* that everyone should draw "in his or her own way" from his spiritual writings,¹⁵ for the one God wishes to manifest his grace "to some in one way and to others in another."¹⁶

Let us not, therefore, engage the youth in projects that isolate them from the mission proper to them. In our engagements with them, respect, allow and accompany them in live out their own mission. The youth do not have to stand under the shadow of our vocation and mission.

6. BECOMING EXPERTS IN BUILDING COMMUNION

As consecrated men and women, we must know the art of building communion wherever we are. The respect for the uniqueness and complementarity of different vocations should lead us to build communion. Disconnection and disengagement are sinful. Our collaboration must be viewed in the context of the one ecclesial communion. Pope Francis has asked the religious to be builders of communion. “Be experts in communion.”¹⁷ We are invited “to make the Church the home and the school of communion.”¹⁸ He has asked us to “make every effort to make the ideal of fraternity pursued by the founders and foundresses expand everywhere, like concentric circles.”¹⁹

We need to begin building communion, first of all, in our own communities. We need to ask ourselves about the way we relate to persons from different cultures, languages, professions or ministries. How can we enable each member to become fully co-responsible along with us? How do we carry along the people among whom we live and work.

At the same time, we also need to move out of a narrow understanding of communion. St. Bernard: “I admire them all. I belong to one of them by observance, but to all of them by charity. We all need one another.” The Good that I do not possess, I receive from others. The Church is a single plurality and a plural unity. All our diversities which manifest the goodness of God’s gifts, will continue to exist in the one house of the Father, which has many rooms. Now there is division of graces; then there will be distinctions of Glory. Unity, both here and there, consists in one and the same charity.

We must strive after growth in communion between different vocations—priests, religious and laity. This involves stepping out more courageously from the confines of our respective communities and to work together, at the local and global levels, on projects involving formation, evangelization, pastoral projects and human promotion? Communion and encounter between different charisms and vocations can open up a path of hope. Such a communion can liberate us from the disease of self-absorption, a feeling of self-sufficiency.

A genuine encounter with God is also an encounter with others. It is, because, as the Holy Father writes:

it takes us out of ourselves, lifts us up and overwhelms us with God's love and beauty. Yet we can also experience ecstasy when we recognize in others their hidden beauty, their dignity and their grandeur as images of God and children of the Father. The Holy Spirit wants to make us come out of ourselves, to embrace others with love and to seek their good. That is why it is always better to live the faith together and to show our love by living in community and sharing with other young people our affection, our time, our faith and our troubles. The Church offers many different possibilities for living our faith in community, for everything is easier when we do it together.²⁰

We are called to true synergy with all other vocations in the Church, beginning with priests and the lay faithful, in order to "spread the spirituality of communion, first of all in their internal life and then in the ecclesial community, and even beyond its boundaries."²¹ In this context, especially of vital importance are the apostolic works of the Religious in the life and mission of the local church and among the wider sections of the people of God. We need to teach the young people to find ways of going beyond small groups and build social friendship, where everyone works for the common good. Social enmity is the breeding ground of many evils.²² It is not easy as it calls for giving up something and the readiness to negotiate for the sake of helping others. Through social friendship, we can have the magnificent experience of setting our differences aside and working together for something greater; we can find points of agreement amid conflict, build bridges and make peace for the benefit of all. Thus, we will experience the miracle of the culture of encounter.

7. KEEPING ALIVE THE YOUTHFULNESS OF THE CHURCH

Youthfulness is "more than simply a period of time; it is a state of mind."²³ Vatican Council also sensed this and stated: "Enriched by a long and living history, and advancing towards human perfection in time and the ultimate destinies of history and of life, the Church is the real youth of the world."²⁴ We, as religious, must be at the forefront of keeping the Church ever youthful. In order to do this, we must make every effort to "free the Church from those who would make her grow old, encase her in the past, hold her back or keep her at standstill."²⁵ At the same time, Holy Father warns us that we do not accept everything that the world offers us to become more adaptable and flexible. We remain youthful when we receive ever anew the strength born of God's word, the daily presence of Christ and the power of his spirit in our lives. We remain youthful when we dare to be

different, point to ideals other than those often projected by the world and witness to the “beauty of generosity, service, purity, perseverance, forgiveness, fidelity to our personal vocation, prayer, the pursuit of justice and the common good, love for the poor and social friendship.”²⁶ We make the Church youthful when she is herself and remains capable of constantly returning to her charismatic source. Our association with the youth can offer the Church the beauty of youth by renewing her ability to “rejoice with new beginnings, to give unreservedly of herself, to be renewed and to set out for ever greater accomplishments.”²⁷

At every moment in life, we can renew our youthfulness. Holy Father talks about his own experience of broadening of horizons and the renewal of youthfulness when he began his ministry as Pope. The same thing can happen to a couple married for many years, or to a monk in his monastery. “There are things we need to let go as the years pass, but growth in maturity can coexist with a fire constantly rekindled, with a heart ever young.”²⁸ We really need to become that Church that stays young and lets herself be challenged and spurred on by the sensitivities of young people. To talk about young people is to talk about promise and talk about joy.

8. READINESS TO ENGAGE THE YOUTH IN PARTNERSHIP

We need to deepen our capacity to engage everyone meaningfully and respectfully. We must learn how to be open, understanding and caring towards the youth, to come out of our own comfortable isolation and to share our lives with them. With the same love that Christ pours out on us, we can love him in turn and share our love with others, drawing them in the community of friendship he established. It is good to share with them the reasons why we chose this way of life, our convictions, dreams and aspirations. In the movie, *Of God's Men*, the monk shares his own story of the love for God with a young girl who shares with him her own experience of falling in love with a young man. Like Jesus with his dejected disciples on the way to Emmaus, we must “draw near and walk with them” (Lk 24:15). “Christianity is not a collection of truths to be believed, rules to be followed, or prohibitions. Seen that way, it puts us off. Christianity is a person who loved me immensely, who demands and claims my love. Christianity is Christ.”²⁹

Committed to Christ, we must be able to bring together all the young people in a single dream, a great dream, with a place for everyone. Holy Father writes: “Seeking the Lord, keeping his word, entrusting our life to him and growing in the virtues: all these things make young hearts strong.”³⁰ We must be willing to share our vocational journeys as you listen to their own. Growing spiritually does not involve losing anything of our spontaneity, boldness, enthusiasm and tenderness.

Becoming perpetually professed does not mean we have to abandon what was best in every stage of life that we may have passed through. According to the Holy Father, “every stage of life is a permanent grace, with its own enduring value.”³¹

The youth needs to be accompanied and encouraged to use their talents and skills creatively, and to take up their responsibilities with commitment and dedication. Our ministries aimed at uplifting the poor can be a forum to engage the youth in partnership as they seek for authentic human concern with social engagement. “Social engagement and direct contact with the poor remain fundamental ways of finding or deepening one’s faith and the discernment of one’s vocation... It was also noted that the young are prepared to enter political life so as to build the common good”³²

In our apostolate, especially the social one, engage the youth in social programmes such as building houses for the homeless, or reclaiming contaminated areas or offering various kinds of assistance to the needy. We must see that this shared energy could be channelled and organized in a more stable way and with clear goals, so as to be even more effective. In our youth ministry on educational campuses, the students can apply their knowledge in an “interdisciplinary way, together with young people of other churches or religions, in order to propose solutions to social problems.”³³ We must be respectful of the talents and resources that the young are able to bring just like the fish and the loaves of bread offered by the young people which can multiply, once offered to Jesus.

All may not be equipped with the charism of working with the youth. But we must know that they hold the key to the future! At least, extend support to those among us who can, in their ministry with the youth, offer a Christian response to the social and political troubles emerging in different parts of the world where we are working. According to the Holy Father, we all must know how to work for the common good, serve the poor, and be protagonists of the revolution of charity and service, which are capable of resisting the “pathologies of consumerism and superficial individualism.”³⁴

Endnotes

¹ The reflections shared in this article are stimulated by the insights offered by Pope Francis in *Christus Vivit, the Post Synodal Apostolic Exhortation*, Rome (25th March, 2019). Here after abbreviated CV.

² <https://www.padrealbertohurtado.cl/escritos-2/>.

³ CV41.

⁴ POPE FRANCIS, *Letter for Extraordinary Missionary Month* (Rome, 2019), 2.

⁵ CV42.

⁶ http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/synod/documents/rc_synod_doc_20181027_doc-final-instrumentum-xvassemblea-giovani_en.html, 150.

⁷ http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/synod/documents/rc_synod_doc_20181027_doc-final-instrumentum-xvassemblea-giovani_en.html, 53.

⁸ CV166.

⁹ CV38.

¹⁰ Homily at Mass, XXVIII World Youth Day in Rio de Janeiro (28th July, 2013): *AAS* 105 (2013), 665.

¹¹ JOHN PAUL II, *Vita Consecrata*, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation on Consecrated Life and its Mission in the Church and in the World (Rome, 1996), 16; hereafter abbreviated as *VC*.

¹² VC31.

¹³ CV168.

¹⁴ CV162.

¹⁵ *Spiritual Canticle*, Red. B, Prologue, 2.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, XIV-XV, 2.

¹⁷ FRANCIS, Apostolic Letter, *To All Consecrated People* (21 November, 2014), 4.

¹⁸ Apostolic Letter *Novo Millennio Ineunte* (6th January 2001), 43 .

¹⁹ Francis. Apostolic Letter, *To All Consecrated People* (21 November, 2014), 5

²⁰ CV164.

²¹ As an African proverb says: “If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.” Let us not allow ourselves to be robbed of fraternity.

²² *Greeting to Young People of the Father Félix Varela Cultural Centre in Havana* (20 September 2015): *L'Osservatore Romano*, 21-22 September 2015, 6.

²³ CV34

²⁴ Second Vatican Council, *Message to Young Men and Women* (8thDecember 1965): *AAS* 58 (1966), 18.

²⁵ CV35.

²⁶ CV36.

²⁷ http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/synod/documents/rc_synod_doc_20181027_doc-final-instrumentum-xvassemblea-giovani_en.html, 8.

²⁸ CV. 160.

²⁹ SAINT OSCAR ROMERO, *Homily* (6th November 1977), in *Su Pensamiento*, I-II, San Salvador, 2000, 312.

³⁰ CV158.

³¹ CV160.

³² http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/synod/documents/rc_synod_doc_20181027_doc-final-instrumentum-xvassemblea-giovani_en.html, 46.

³³ CV172.

³⁴ CV174.

YOUTH MINISTRY – A DARING CALL TO CONSECRATED PERSONS

Dr. Sivy Korothe, SDB

INTRODUCTION

One of the most frequent and unsought advice from well-meaning parishioners to a newly arrived parish priest, and more especially to an assistant parish priest, is: “You will have to do something for the young people here, father.” There seems to be a sense of urgency in their voice. It is certainly a cause of worry not only for the parents and the adults in the parish, but also for bishops, priests, religious and youth leaders. How can we attract the young to the church and keep them with the church?

When Pope Francis convoked the synod of bishops in October 2018 on the theme: “Young People, Faith and Vocation Discernment”, those who were working in the field of youth ministry thought that they would finally have a clear programme of youth ministry offered on a platter from the part of the magisterium. Have their expectation been met? Are they satisfied or are they disillusioned? We shall try to discover.

Let me begin with a few introductory remarks. The Apostolic Exhortation, *Christus Vivit* has been described as the early Easter gift of Pope Francis to the church.¹ The Easter proclamation “Christ is Alive” came to us halfway through the season of Lent 2019.

The Apostolic Exhortation *Christus Vivit* released on 2/4/2019,² the death anniversary of Pope John Paul II, is a rather lengthy document with 299 articles laid out in 9 chapters. Although the entire document contains Francis’ views on youth ministry, for me, the most important chapter is Seven. As Pope Francis himself admits, it is “not a kind of manual for youth ministry or a practical pastoral guide.”³

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Departing from the usual style of “Papal Pronouncements”, Pope Francis seems to address directly the youth from his heart. Unlike other magisterial writings, bombarding of technical theological language is absent in *Christus Vivit*. It is a very personal and reflective document, which is addressed primarily to the young people, but also extended to the entire people of God.

This document is the result of a long preparation. It went through several stages of preparation, in all of which young people were very actively involved. First there was the *Lineamenta* (Preparatory Document), followed by the online questionnaire for all the youth, the International Research Seminar, the Pre-Synod, the *Instrumentum Laboris* (Working Document), the Synod of Bishops in 2018 and the Final Document of the Synod (Proposals).

Our theme is: “Youth Ministry – A Daring Call for the Consecrated Persons!” Taking seriously the distinction between “youth” and “young people” made by the Pope in his Apostolic Exhortation, we are confronted by a basic question. Should we use “Youth Ministry” or “Ministry to Young People?” Pope Francis is of the opinion that *youth* is an abstract term that is good for academic discussions, but in pastoral action, we deal with real *young people* who live his or her own specific life.⁴ Hence it may be more fitting to call it *ministry to the young* than to call it *youth ministry*.

In this presentation, I would stay away from giving a summary of the document, but rather would like to thematically analyse the seventh chapter of the document to pick up some indicators that would aid in reflecting on our theme. I would like to focus on three key topics that are vital in understanding Pope Francis’ vision of ministering to the young. First we shall discuss the challenges or problems affecting the present day ministry to the young. Secondly we shall see the remedies proposed by the Pope in making youth ministry more relevant and effective. And finally, we shall also discuss as to what is expected of us religious as pastoral agents.

A. Challenges in Ministering to the Young in Today’s Context

“Taking care of young people is not an optional task for the Church, but an integral part of her vocation and mission in history.”⁵ We would all agree that the ministry of the church towards the young is not going as well as one would expect. Hence, we find the preoccupation in many as to how to get the young back to the church. Let us first analyse what are those things that challenge us in our genuine desire to minister to the young.

1. The Huge Disconnect between the Young People and the Church.

We need to admit that youth ministry has been affected by the social and cultural changes taking place in the world. And it would not be an exaggeration to say that the church is out of touch with the young. We lack a clear understanding of the needs of the young. The pope says, “Young people frequently fail to find in our usual programmes a response to their concerns, their needs, their problems and issues.”⁶

The Church seems to have a set pattern in addressing the issues of the young. She does not understand the youth of today, their aspirations, their concerns, their needs and their worries. The youth do not find the Church close to them when they need her most. So you have many young people leaving the Church. How to get the church re-connected to the youth is an important challenge to the Church of today.

2. Insufficiency of Traditional Approach to Youth Ministry

We are working with an out-dated approach in youth ministry. We do not pay attention to the fast changing socio-cultural and religious reality of the young.⁷ The Synod had recognised the need to confront an emergency situation in youth ministry, that is, to pass from a youth ministry of entertainment to a youth ministry with a vocational-mind-set.⁸

I want you to reflect on one fundamental question here. Does the church’s youth ministry stress running a good youth group or a youth centre, or do we give importance to the personal transformation of the youth? I feel that we still focus on a programme-centred youth ministry instead of a person-centred youth ministry. We still carry on with programmes that do not touch the lives of the young.

Pope Francis says: “At times, in the attempt to develop a pure and perfect youth ministry, marked by abstract ideas, protected from the world and free of every flaw, we can turn the Gospel into a dull, meaningless and unattractive proposition. Such a youth ministry ends up completely removed from the world of the young people.”⁹

3. Inability to listen to the young

Rossano Sala, one of the secretaries of the Synod of Bishops on Youth 2018, says that “the issue of listening is more radical than one might think: the inability to listen comes from something more serious, that is, from an inability to listen to God and to his Spirit who continuously speak and act in the course of history. It is the result of a “spiritual superficiality” and of a “spiritual chasm” of a Church which talks too much: too arrogant to be able to learn anything from anyone; and proud enough to think that we alone are the sole custodians of truth.”¹⁰

We are not always capable of creating a collaborative and co-responsible atmosphere and we gladly replace it with a verticality now unacceptable to the young generations, which creates a climate of estrangement and discouragement.¹¹ Young people in a top-down and pyramidal church system are no longer there.

Already in the Third Chapter of *CV* we heard the Pope saying that the youth are the “now” of the church. This is an important declaration far as our youth ministry is concerned. The youth are not the future of the church, they are the present.¹² They are the Church of now. Youth are the present of the Church and of the world. Even now they are helping to enrich it.¹³ For this reason, it is necessary to listen to them.

Until now the youth have been “preached at,”¹⁴ as Pope Francis says. Now it is time to listen to the youth. Instead there is a tendency in the church to give pre-packaged answers and readymade solutions, without allowing their real questions to emerge and facing the challenges they pose.¹⁵

The Pope says that the “young people themselves are agents of youth ministry.”¹⁶ They are able to use their insight, ingenuity and knowledge to address the issues and concerns of other young people in their own language if they are left free to develop new approaches with creativity and a certain audacity.¹⁷

4. The Judgemental and the Condemnatory Attitude of the Church

Youth ministry is not directed towards a group of angels or saints, but towards a group of people who constantly make mistakes. The church has often sat on judgement seat as far as the behaviour of the young are concerned. We expect or demand perfection from the young, which is beyond their years.¹⁸ Is it not true that we often label the young as rebellious, undisciplined, disobedient, lacking moral values and as “lost cases”, as an excuse for abandoning or supressing youth ministry?

5. Formation Programmes that do not keep the Fire of Faith Burning

Pope Francis warns youth ministers not to bore the young by loading them with formation meetings on doctrinal and moral issues, the evils of the world, the church and her social teachings.¹⁹ Our favourite topics for youth meetings seem to be chastity, marriage, birth control, abortion, drug abuse and so on that kill the joy of following Jesus, others become downcast and yet others become totally negative.

The Pope does not deny that “any educational project or path of growth for young people must certainly include formation in Christian faith and morality.”²⁰ He is not ruling that out. But these formation programmes must be centred on two

other important goals, namely, the *Kerygma* which is the foundational experience of encounter with God through Jesus' death and resurrection, and the growth in fraternal love, community life and service.²¹ He says that youth ministry should always include occasions for renewing and deepening our personal experiences of the love of God on the one hand and it should incorporate various means that can help the young to grow in fraternity, to help one another, to build community, to be of service to others and to be close to the poor.²²

B. Remedies/Main Course of Action

I would like to look at the proposals of the Exhortation under the following nine heads.

1. The Two Main Courses

Pope Francis outlines two main courses of youth ministry. One is **outreach** and the other is **growth**.²³ The first one, outreach, is the way to attract the youth to an experience of the Lord. For this, the Pope trusts the young people themselves. He asks them to find appealing ways to come together and to organise events, sports and ways to evangelise through social media, text messages, songs, videos and other ways.²⁴ We need to trust in their leadership. "They only have to be encouraged and given the freedom to be enthused about evangelising other young people wherever they are to be found."²⁵ What the Pope insists here is that "each young person can be daring enough to sow the seed of the message on that fertile terrain that is the heart of another young person."²⁶

Here the Pope is insisting on a relational type of youth ministry. In this outreach course, we need to pay attention to "the language of closeness, the language of generous and relational and existential love that touches the heart, impacts life and awakens hope and desire."²⁷ So the young people must be approached with "the grammar of love" as he calls it.

The second course is Growth and it refers to those already inside the Church who had a deep experience of God and an encounter with Jesus but want to deepen this experience through a follow up programme. This formation programme, however, should not be class on doctrine and morality, but should focus on the development of the *kerygma* together with focus on the importance of fraternal love.

2. Synodal Youth Ministry

Youth ministry has to be synodal, that is, capable of shaping a "journey together."²⁸ It is about walking together with the young. It is all involving. Pope

Francis pleads for a pastoral care that is synodal because the synod has clearly highlighted that *synodality* is the key to the evangelization of young people, the very way of transmitting the faith today.

Traditionally, this style of youth ministry has been called as “Team Ministry.” A team ministry for the youth can be defined as a group of diversely gifted people, who complement each other and who feel themselves called by God to be committed to work together for the realization of the Kingdom of God for the youth by bringing fullness of life for all. This involves the willingness of the team members to subordinate individual accomplishments and personal preferences in order to achieve the common good of the youngsters for whom they work.²⁹

Partnering, networking, community collaboration, teamwork, etc. are terms very frequently used in the corporate business world. All these terms advocate involving others in the completion of a task or a job. The simple principle accepted here is that productivity or the result is better when a job is done by a group that shares the same vision and is prepared to share roles. In this cooperative team playing there is “a matrix of relationships that provide the people resources for individual success.”³⁰

Not only as a theory, but even as praxis, youth ministry demands a multi-dimensional approach. Youth are a section of the society that faces the most number and varied forms of situations, which are often challenging and problematic. Even the most talented youth minister will get exhausted after sometime and find oneself outdated and incompetent to meet the demands of his/her enormous ministry. Undoubtedly a successful youth ministry demands that we engage in youth ministry as a team. Involving various persons who are interested in youth ministry and partnering with all individuals and groups that are connected to youth is the right way to carry out this gigantic task of ministering to youth.³¹

A successful youth ministry can never be a one-man job. The synodal youth ministry takes on board every member of the church in accordance with his or her role and vocation within the church through a process of co-responsibility.

3. Popular Youth Ministry

According to me, the greatest contribution of *Christus Vivit* is the notion of “Popular Youth Ministry.” It is a broader and more flexible type of youth ministry that stimulates the natural qualities and charisms that the Holy Spirit has sown in the hearts of the young.³² A Popular Youth Ministry “tries to avoid imposing obstacles, rules, controls and obligatory structures on the young.”³³

Popular youth ministry is opposed to the elitist youth ministry, which is done to a closed group of selected individuals.³⁴ It does not follow the style, schedule and method of the elitist youth ministry. It is mostly directed towards those young people who are un-churched, those on the margins, those who are poor, vulnerable, the frail and the wounded. In short, it is an inclusive ministry, which has a room for all kinds of young people. Pope Francis calls us to be a church with open doors. In this style of youth ministry there is place also for those who are non-believers and those who believe in other religions. Popular youth ministry is thus directed towards all the young people.

Traditionally, the target group of youth ministry in the church are those who frequent the church, those who are actively involved in the various activities of the church and who are living their faith in a rather satisfactory way. The church never thought of reaching out to those who are away from the church or those who live in the periphery of the church.

Pope Francis is calling on the church to go after the lost sheep. Today there are more lost ones than those who are not lost. So, Fr. Gilbert Choondal calls for a reversal of the parable of the lost sheep because, instead of leaving the 99 in search of the one that is lost, today we may have to leave the one who is not lost and go after the 99 that are lost!³⁵

4. Be a Listening Church

We need to create a space where the voices of the young will be heard in the Church. In the *Instrumentum Laboris*, we are urged to listen to and to look at young people in the real circumstances of their lives.³⁶ The concrete situations of the young differ from country to country, from one social group to another, from one cultural group to another. Before we set out to do our ministry, we need to listen to their needs, their aspirations and their concerns.

5. The Style of Accompaniment

The Emmaus model (Luke 24, 13-35) of youth ministry proposed by the Pope in the *Lineamenta*, *Instrumentum Laboris* and in *Christus Vivit* follows the style of accompaniment.

The icon for an approach to youth ministry is offered to us by the Gospel episode of the disciples at Emmaus: Jesus questions them, listens to them patiently, helps them to recognize what they are living, to interpret in the light of Scripture what

they have lived, accepts to stay with them, enters their night. It is they themselves who choose to resume without delay the journey in the opposite direction.³⁷

6. Flexibility

Youth ministry needs to be flexible, and it is necessary to invite “young people to events or occasions that provide an opportunity not only for learning, but also for conversing, celebrating, singing, listening to real stories and experiencing a shared encounter with the living God.”³⁸ Rigidity is a block to the active participation of youth in the activities of the church.

7. Reaching out to Youth in Various Settings

Christian communities, which act as families for those who are uprooted from their own homes, are the primary setting of youth ministry. Catholic institutions which welcome the young with an open heart, oratories³⁹ and youth centres which offer relaxation, opportunities for growing in friendship, where they can share music, sports, games, as well as moments of reflection and prayer are other ideal settings for the young.⁴⁰

Groups and Movements are yet other suitable settings for youth ministry. They provide opportunity to strengthen social and relational skills. Group experience is also a platform for sharing one’s faith and for mutually witnessing to one’s faith.⁴¹

Educational institutions have a very significant role in youth ministry. The Pope notes with regret that some Catholic schools are structured only for the sake of self-preservation.⁴² They do not prepare the young for the real world, but only for an imaginary world. He calls such schools as “bunkers” which are totally disconnected from the actual world. Catholic schools must at the same time cater to the cultural as well as the spiritual formation of the young.

Pope Francis calls for a better utilisation of moments of group prayer and fresh, authentic and joyful liturgy. Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, the great moments of the liturgical year like the Holy Week, Pentecost and Christmas must also be meaningfully celebrated with the youth.⁴³

8. Youth as Protagonists than Objects of Youth Ministry

The young people themselves “are agents of youth ministry. Certainly, they need to be helped and guided, but at the same time left free to develop new approaches, with creativity and a certain audacity.”⁴⁴ We need to help young people to “use their insight, ingenuity and knowledge to address the issues and concerns of other young

people in their own language.”⁴⁵ We need to stop looking at the young as the objects of youth ministry and consider them as partners.

9. Young People are always Missionaries

Pope Francis wants to entrust to the youth the task of evangelisation. A young person does not need to make a long journey to be a missionary. Every event in their life can be made missionary moments when they share their faith through their lives with a friend or a companion.⁴⁶ The young can fill with God every field of their activity.⁴⁷

C. The Role of Consecrated Persons in the Ministry of the Church for the Young

1. Welcome the Young

Pope Francis calls on church communities to create suitable environments, or places the young people can make their own.⁴⁸ These must be places where they can come and go freely, feel welcomed and meet other young people in both their joys and sorrows.⁴⁹ Many young people today live in a world where they are not welcome and wanted. They experience a real sense of being orphaned. We need to offer them experiences of openness, love, affirmation and growth.⁵⁰ By creating an attractive and fraternal environment where they can live with a sense of purpose, we can help them dream dreams.

In short, what the Holy Father is asking us to do is to create ‘homes’ for the young where they will feel welcomed. To create a “home” is to create a “family.”⁵¹ The relationship in a family is not utilitarian in nature. It does not create some bonds for practical purpose. Rather it creates more meaning and purpose to our lives. Let us become youth friendly people.

2. Accompany the Young

Be present to the young in their growth journey and in their faith journey. The family is the first place of accompaniment.⁵² In the same way the community has an important role in the accompaniment of the young people. The Pope says: “it (community) should feel collectively responsible for accepting, motivating, encouraging and challenging them. All should regard young people with understanding, appreciation and affection.”⁵³

“Young people need to have their freedom respected, yet they also need to be accompanied.”⁵⁴ We need to enable the young to become gradually responsible for

their lives. The *Instrumentum Laboris* speaks of the various types of accompaniment required by the young.⁵⁵

3. Qualify Academically

Pope says that at the Synod many pointed out to the shortage of qualified people devoted to accompaniment.⁵⁶ There is a need to train consecrated persons and lay people to accompany the young.⁵⁷ We also need good, trained mentors, spiritual guides and councillors.⁵⁸

4. Reach Out to all the Youth, Particularly to Those Who are on the Periphery.

We need to set an example of inclusive ministry. Limiting our youth ministry to a particular group, linguistic or ritual group, is certainly not the new type of ministry recommended by the Pope. Youth ministry is also not an office work, but an on the field work.

5. Take *Christus Vivit* to All the Youth

Pope Francis expects all of us to take *Christus Vivit* to the youth all over the world. The three great messages to the young, namely, God loves, Christ saves and He is alive must reach the young through the work of every priest, religious and youth animators.

6. Give them God experience

Give the young an experience of God. They long to get to know more and to draw closer to the person of Jesus. So my final recommendation is this: Stay close to God and stay close to the youth.

Conclusion

Christus Vivit is also not the end of the synodal process. It gives a vision and draws all to rally together for the cause of the young. The Pope has not given us any magical formula on how to reach the young and to minister to the young. As Gallagher said, “Pope Francis has not changed the course of youth ministry, but he simply has helped to focus the tone of what is said to the youth.”⁵⁹ Beware of blaming young people for their distance from the Church; instead, proceed towards an institutional and personal conversion, which concerns the way we live and work together. The Pope expects all those engaged in the ministry to the young to meet the young in their milieu with an open heart.

Endnotes

- ¹ GERARD GALLAGHER, “*Christus Vivit*,” *Furrow* 70 (2019) 6.
- ² The Apostolic Exhortation, *Christus Vivit* was published on March 25, 2019 at Loreto.
- ³ *Christus Vivit*, 203.
- ⁴ *Christus Vivit*, 71.
- ⁵ *Instrumentum Laboris*, Synod of Bishops 2018, 1.
- ⁶ *Christus Vivit*, 202.
- ⁷ *Christus Vivit*, 202.
- ⁸ Final Document of The Synod of Bishops on Youth, 2018, 77-90.
- ⁹ *Christus Vivit*, 232.
- ¹⁰ ROSSANO SALA, “Prospects of Renewal: Educative-pastoral Paths Opened by the Synod,” *Quarterly Recollection given to the Salesian Community at Malta*, March 2019, 3.
- ¹¹ See “clericalism” mentioned in the *Instrumentum Laboris*, 199, that has made the young think that the church belongs to the ordained ministers.
- ¹² *Christus Vivit*, 64
- ¹³ *Christus Vivit*, 64.
- ¹⁴ *Christus Vivit*, 211.
- ¹⁵ *Christus Vivit* 65, Final Document 8.
- ¹⁶ *Christus Vivit*, 203.
- ¹⁷ *Christus Vivit*, 203.
- ¹⁸ *Christus Vivit*, 243.
- ¹⁹ *Christus Vivit*, 212.
- ²⁰ *Christus Vivit*, 213.
- ²¹ *Christus Vivit*, 213.
- ²² *Christus Vivit*, 215.
- ²³ *Christus Vivit*, 209.
- ²⁴ *Christus Vivit*, 210.
- ²⁵ *Christus Vivit*, 210.
- ²⁶ *Christus Vivit*, 210.
- ²⁷ *Christus Vivit*, 211.
- ²⁸ *Christus Vivit*, 206.
- ²⁹ Adapter from the Definition of *Team Ministry* Given by JUSTINE DENNISON, *Team Ministry: A Blue Print For Christian Leadership*, Secunderabad 2004, 32.
- ³⁰ CALVIN MILLER, *The Empowered Leader: 10 Keys to Servant Leadership*, Nashville 19995, 46.
- ³¹ SIVYKOROTH, “Youth Ministry As a Team Ministry,” *Kristu Jyoti* 27/1 (2011) 45.
- ³² *Christus Vivit*, 230.

³³ *Christus Vivit*, 230.

³⁴ *Christus Vivit*, 231.

³⁵ GILBERT CHOONDAL, “Alive Christ, Alive Youth, Alive Church: Francis’ Recipe for Youth,” *The New Leader* 132/9 (2019) 13.

³⁶ *Instrumentum Laboris*, 231-233.

³⁷ *Christus Vivit*, 237.

³⁸ *Christus Vivit*, 204.

³⁹ The term “oratory” as a Salesian dynamic is characterised by four pillars: a house that welcomes, a parish that evangelises, a school that prepares for life and a playground where friends could meet and enjoy themselves.

⁴⁰ *Christus Vivit*, 218.

⁴¹ *Christus Vivit*, 219.

⁴² *Christus Vivit*, 221.

⁴³ *Christus Vivit*, 224.

⁴⁴ *Christus Vivit*, 203.

⁴⁵ *Christus Vivit*, 203.

⁴⁶ *Christus Vivit*, 239.

⁴⁷ *Christus Vivit*, 241.

⁴⁸ *Christus Vivit*, 216.

⁴⁹ *Christus Vivit*, 218.

⁵⁰ *Christus Vivit*, 216.

⁵¹ *Christus Vivit*, 217.

⁵² *Christus Vivit*, 242.

⁵³ *Christus Vivit*, 243.

⁵⁴ *Christus Vivit*, 242.

⁵⁵ *Instrumentum Laboris*, Synod of Bishops on Youth, Part 2, Chapter III.

⁵⁶ Final Document of the Synod on Youth, N. 9.

⁵⁷ *Christus Vivit*, 244.

⁵⁸ *Christus Vivit*, 246.

⁵⁹ GALLAGHER, 345-346.

CONSECRATED PERSONS FOR THE SERVICE OF YOUTH FOR DISCERNMENT

Dr. Smitha Gabriel, ASI

INTRODUCTION

Discernment becomes necessary in daily living because one has to choose between different voices in the world: some are the voice of God, others of the evil spirit, others of the world, and others of the self. Guillet describes the situation thus: Man is plunged into a three-fold darkness, God commands without being seen; Satan conceals himself, suggests more than he affirms, and proposes more than he demands. Finally, there is the darkness in man himself who is incapable of seeing his own heart clearly, incapable of grasping completely the seriousness of his actions and the results deriving from them (Ex 32: 21; 2 Sam 12:7).¹ Pope Francis speaks about the culture of Zapping where discernment becomes all the more difficult:

I mentioned there that all of us, but “especially the young, are immersed in a culture of Zapping. We can navigate simultaneously on two or more screens and interact at the same time with two or three virtual scenarios. Without the wisdom of discernment, we can easily become prey to every passing trend”. Indeed, “this is all the more important when some novelty presents itself in our lives. Then we have to decide whether it is new wine brought by God or an illusion created by the spirit of this world or the spirit of the devil”.²

Discernment makes sense only when it is situated in the context of prayer.³ It needs certain amount of maturity which is identified by its fruitfulness. “Truly, anyone who is still living on milk cannot digest the doctrine of righteousness because he is still a baby. But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their faculties trained by practice to distinguish good from evil.” (Heb 5: 11-14). “By their fruit you shall know them” (Mt 7:16) is the general principle of discernment in the Gospel. In other words, the ultimate test of an authentic movement of the Holy

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Spirit within a person or a community is its enduring fruitfulness. This implies that “the test of authenticity of any approach to discernment (individual or community) is its effectiveness in guiding to union with God and loving service to humankind.”⁴ Paul defined the spiritual person as one who “is able to judge the value of everything but his own value is not to be judged by others” (1 Cor 2:15).

Discernment in OT

The people of Israel used divination practices in order to discover a right course of action (Deut 18:14; Ezek 13:4-7; 22:28). But often these practices were condemned or criticized. The casting of sacred lots called Urim and Thummim, the Ark, or Ephod, (1 Sam 14; 1 Sam 30:7-8; and Num 27:21) was used by the priests of Israel, probably employing a question and answer format. The work of divination was not exclusively the realm of the Levitical priesthood, although they had access to the sacred sites and would be often consulted for their oracles derived from the officially sanctioned use of the Urim and Thummim. Another group of seers were the prophets, who grew in importance from the eighth to sixth centuries before the Common Era. Some would be in prophetic guilds or bands (1 Sam 10:5; 19:20) and others, like Amos, disclaimed connections to guilds but felt the irresistible movement of God to prophecy (Amos 3:8). It was not just the priest with cultic tools for discernment or the prophet with ecstatic consciousness coupled with acute intuitive and interpretive powers that provided God’s direction for Israel. These seers and others of the community — the teachers and elders and rulers — minister among a whole people of God who have been met by God coming to them in various ways.

In the Hebrew Scriptures we see the formation over time of a people being shaped by their interaction with the God who desires to lead them. Discernment is as much a communal responsibility as it is a personal undertaking.

Discernment in NT

The gospels present people who desired to know and be shaped by God’s purposes. In the infancy narratives we read of Mary’s encounter with the angel and ‘yes’ to God’s purpose in the birth of Jesus. Elizabeth’s inner knowing of Mary’s blessedness at the visitation is an instance of discernment. We learn of magi who follow the sign in the heavens, the holy star, to the site of the new King — and heed the angelic warning against Herod. We read of Joseph’s openness to dream revelations about the nature of Mary’s pregnancy and ways of protecting the divine child from Herod. Old Simeon, the priest and Anna the prophetess revealed the uniqueness of

the infant Jesus. John the Baptist picked up the mantle of prophetic tradition and ascetic discipline. He was empowered by the Spirit of God to challenge the system of privilege and power in its unethical and immoral conduct, called for repentance and righteous living, and proclaimed Jesus as the long-awaited messiah.

Jesus lived in complete unity with God, and his life is the exemplar for spiritual discernment:

Jesus discerned the heart of God. He was named God's beloved son, and his baptism provided a foundation from which to discern the spirits. When he was driven into the wilderness to be tempted, he saw through illusions of power, fame, and possessions and chose servant hood, humility, and poverty. Seeing clearly the kingdom of God, Jesus told stories that cut to the heart of human self-deception, illusion, and desire. Jesus was a sage, embodying the heritage of the wisdom tradition. His passion and faithfulness presented a criterion for discernment and offered good news for the poor and sinful.⁵

Jesus drew a band of men, women, and children to himself and taught them by word and works to seek and know what is involved in the reign of God. He shaped people into a community that desired to know and do the will of God.

The disciples, in their shaping as apostles of the good news of Jesus Christ, gradually discerned the identity of Jesus as the Christ of God and that through him the will of God is revealed. In the Acts of the Apostles, we begin to see spiritual discernment in relation to the formation, empowerment, and mission of the early Church. The experience of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the 120 men and women gathered in the upper room in the house in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost points to the beginning of the fulfilment of the hopes of Joel's prophetic hopes five centuries earlier (Acts 2). On four separate occasions, the church in Jerusalem sought to discern God's will: the enrolling of Matthias as an apostle (1:12-26); the selection of the seven for a special ministry of service (6:1-6); Peter's defence of the ministry to the Gentiles (11:1-18); and the council of Jerusalem's decisions about admission of Gentiles into the Church and mission efforts to the Gentiles (15:1-29).⁶

The Pauline epistles give further glimpses into discernment elements in the newly developing churches. To the Roman Christian community, Paul used the language of self-offering as a prelude to a transformation that could renew their minds and give them the ability to discern the will of God: "I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed

to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God — what is good and acceptable and perfect” (Rom 12:1-2).

Paul urgently contrasted a state of consciousness, values, and expectations — a radically new worldview and way of life — reflective of those living within the realized eschatology brought in by the Christ event and gift of the Holy Spirit in baptism, with the state of those who live according to the old worldview. In his first letter to the Corinthians, he contrasted that old “spirit of the world” with the new “Spirit that is from God” in the context of discernment and the radical communal claim that “we have the mind of Christ.” Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit that is from God, so that we may understand the gifts bestowed on us by God. And we speak of these things in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual things to those who are spiritual. Those who are unspiritual do not receive the gifts of God’s Spirit, for they are foolishness to them, and they are unable to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. Those who are spiritual discern all things, and they are themselves subject to no one else’s scrutiny. “For who has known the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?” But we have the mind of Christ.

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Paul catalogued various “gifts of the Spirit” in his letters as representative of the variety of ways God empowers the baptized for the building of the Church and for the common good. Among the gifts are several that relate to aspects of spiritual discernment: prophecy, discernment of spirits, wisdom, and knowledge.⁷ All of these particular gifts provide the Church with directions or guidance received from the exercise of an intuitive encounter with the Spirit of God.

The Desert Elders

From the fourth to sixth centuries, following the Christianizing of the empire by the actions of Constantine, an ascetical movement began that laid the foundation for

monasticism. Christian men and women moved into the solitude of the harsh desert wilderness outside such major centers as Alexandria in Egypt. The desert became the harsh testing ground for a deep and authentic Christian life focused on purity of heart and the desire to see God. Where the earlier Christians faced persecutions from a harsh human empire that would test their capacity for faithfulness and martyrdom, the desert took Christians to the habitat of the demons where they, like Jesus who was tempted in the wilderness, would do inner spiritual battle and discover God's sufficient and victorious grace. This contest in the desert required introspection and an awareness of the roots of consciousness as well as spiritual tools for discerning the spiritual influences on developing thoughts and prayer. Some of the solitaries that moved into the desert became particularly known for their holiness, and other monks clustered their huts near these *Abbas* and *Ammas*, seeking spiritual counsel and occasional community worship. St. Athanasius (c. 295-373) wrote *The Life of Antony* in honour of one of the early hermits and great saints of the desert whom Athanasius encountered in his own lifetime. In his struggle for holiness Antony (d. 356) spent a lifetime battling the demonic forces within and around him and drawing upon the grace of God through Christ to strengthen him and give him the victories. There are great differences among demons, Antony taught, but such distinctions are most clearly understood by the gift of the discernment of spirits:

Therefore much prayer and asceticism is needed so that one who receives through the Spirit the gift of discrimination of spirits might be able to recognize their traits — for example, which of them are less wicked, and which of them are more; and in what kind of pursuit each of them exerts himself, and how each of them is overturned and expelled.⁸

The desert tradition of the *Abbas* and *Ammas* taught that thoughts arise from three possible sources: God, human memory, or demonic influence. Discernment and right action begin by following each thought back to its source and acting accordingly.

Benedictine Spiritual Tradition

St. Benedict of Nursia (c. 480-550) drew up his monastic Rule for the monks of Monte Cassino, based on several earlier sources. In his Rule, Benedict offers a lovingly and economically articulated way, steeped in Holy Scripture, of forming a community intended as “a school for the Lord's service”.⁹ Chapter 3 of the Rule “Summoning the Brothers for Counsel” gives directions on the way the monastery should make major decisions:

As often as anything important is to be done in the monastery, the abbot shall call the whole community together and himself explain what the business is; and after hearing the advice of the brothers, let him ponder it and follow what he judges the wiser course. The reason why we have said all should be called for counsel is that the Lord often reveals what is better to the younger. The brothers, for their part, are to express their opinions with all humility, and not presume to defend their own views obstinately. The decision is rather the abbot's to make, so that when he has determined what is more prudent, all may obey. Nevertheless, just as it is proper for disciples to obey their master, so it is becoming for the master on his part to settle everything with foresight and fairness.¹⁰

This chapter in the Rule is the heart of the Benedictine community's discernment process. Benedictine decision-making requires a careful and sensitive interaction between the abbot or prioress and the community. Comments Sr. Joan Chittister on RB 3:

In the monastic community, this common search for truth is pitched at a delicate balance. The abbot and prioress are clearly not dictators, but the community is not a voting bloc either. They are each to speak their truth, to share the perspective from which they see a situation, to raise their questions and to open their hearts, with honesty and with trust. The prioress and abbot are to listen carefully for what they could not find in their own souls and to make a decision only when they can come to peace with it, weighing both the community's concerns and the heart they have for carrying the decision through. "Foresight and fairness" are essentials for leaders who lead out of a sense of Benedictine spirituality.¹¹

The Benedictine values of humility, balance, simplicity, moderation, community, work and prayer, and lives shaped by *Lectio Divina*; and vows of stability, obedience, and ongoing conversion provide the context for discernment.

Ignatian Spiritual Tradition

Ignatius of Loyola (1491-1556), founder of the Society of Jesus, wrote the Spiritual Exercises beginning with his stay in Manresa in 1522-1523. During an extensive period of recovery from a leg wound received in a military siege, Ignatius focused on the life of Christ and the lives of the saints, and underwent a conversion, desiring to be a soldier of Christ. The Spiritual Exercises, which were revised and enlarged upon throughout his life, reflect Ignatius' desire for deepened commitment to Christ and discernment of the vocational path that Christ calls forth in a person. The Spiritual Exercises are designed classically for a four-week directed retreat making use of scripture, imagination, affect, and meditation. The Spiritual Exercises

also include the important “Rules for the Discernment of Spirits”, a collection of guidelines for discernment that focus on the affective movements toward God or away from God, influenced by good or evil spirits.¹² The Exercises give particular guidance on making an ‘election’ or choice of a state or way of life.

The Deliberations of 1539 and the subsequent formation of the Society of Jesus represented an important attempt to apply spiritual discernment to a communal situation. Ten companions, including Ignatius, had taken vows of poverty and chastity and sought a sense of common mission and service. However, their individual callings to mission were taking them to diverse places. The question began to arise of making a choice between two goods: should the association of companions be dissolved and the companions be freed to follow individual calls to mission and ministry, or should the companions form a fixed society that would unite them even if they went to separate places? If the latter, should they take a vow of obedience in addition to their previous vows of poverty and chastity?¹³

The companions agreed to devote the weeks of the Lent and Easter seasons to deliberations on their choice of way of life. A fixed point for discussion and decision would be chosen for the evening. During the day, without interrupting their work, they would seek to discern the point by prayer, meditation, taking it to God at Mass, and formulating the reasons for and against in preparation for discussion at the evening sessions. When the point was sufficiently considered, the solution should be adopted that was unanimously approved.

The Deliberations established some principles for group discernment. First, the decisions were made in a context of seeking to know God’s will in the matter. Second, the major discernment was a choice between two good paths that had equal validity. Third, the group chose to allow a lengthy period for discernment to be made. Fourth, the members of the group were free to do their own searching and praying and then re-form as a group to share their findings. Fifth, the deliberations used a pattern of discernment that was shaped by daily Christian prayer, meditation, and sacramental worship, and took place amid the normal activities of life — yet with a special focus of intention. Sixth, the group sought unanimity. When a unanimous vote could not be attained on a later question for discernment, the group still held for a pattern that provided a period of time of waiting before taking a final vote.

Discerning Love, Integration, and Simplification

Ignatius makes two astounding claims in the exercises: one can actually seek and find God’s specific will for oneself; and, God will “communicate Himself to the

devout soul” and “deal directly with the creature, and the creature directly with his Creator and Lord.”¹⁴

Undoubtedly in sincerity, which is coherent with myself, is an essential condition for becoming true and confirming the truth. There needs to be a movement from good conscience to dialogue with the Lord. Freedom is the only thing at my disposal, the only thing that is mine. I am conditioned by my sex, my family, my language everything is already arranged without consulting me. Freedom is the possibility of wanting and choosing what shall I still become, co-operating with my freedom.¹⁵

As Ignatius says, our only end is the glory of God and our own salvation; everything else on the face of the earth is but a means to this end. It is an instinctive sensitivity to find what pleases God in concrete situations; integration, a simplification, a centring of our lives on the ‘one thing necessary.’ This does not mean that there are no problems, doubts, and dark moments. As long as we live by faith and are not confirmed in grace, the evil spirit is always probing and testing and calling into question the centring of our lives. However, “the habit of discerning love means integration, and integration means simplification.”¹⁶

Growth in Discernment in Salesian Tradition

The most concise description of the process of discernment of the will of God is given by the *Treatise on the Love of God*, in the section titled *A Short Method to Know God's Will*, which identifies six steps in the process of seeking to discover God's will.

First, the Christian must begin with an attitude of humility rooted in the awareness that it is God who reveals his will to man and not man who deduces God's will by human effort alone. Second, the believer must seek God's will within a context of prayer, prayer for enlightenment from the Holy Spirit. Third, he must be pre-disposed to the implementation of God's will whatever it may be. Fourth, he should undertake his discernment communally by consulting the spiritual director or other trusted spiritual persons. Fifth, he must make a decision about the course of action that God seems to be suggesting. Avoid procrastination or excessive deliberation. Sixth, the Christian should devoutly, peacefully, and firmly live out the decision he made, without worrying about the accuracy of the discernment. Normally such a decision should not be changed or reversed.¹⁷ In this way Christian discernment is more lived than elucidated; more exercised than expressed merely in words.¹⁸

Writing to the Visitation Sisters, Francis de Sales said, “I have a supreme dread of natural prudence in the discernment of the things of grace; if the prudence of the serpent is not tempered by the simplicity of the dove of the Holy Spirit, it is

altogether venomous”.¹⁹ Francis de Sales is careful to stress that human inspirations may not express the signified will of God and therefore it is to be discerned. In this regard, Francis insists on the importance of a spiritual guide in discernment.

In the words of Teresa of Avila, “all things pass away. God alone never changes.”²⁰ Teresa and Ignatius are echoing Paul, when he said that “we know all things work together unto good for those who love God.”²¹ But the context of Paul’s triumphant affirmation is his agonized discussion in Romans²² of the ‘two laws’ which he finds at war within himself. This peace, centeredness and integrity in the midst of inner and outer strife, refer to a difficult idea. Francis de Sales, in the *Treatise on the Love of God*, distinguishes between the deceiving spirit that makes us stay in beginnings and the divine spirit which makes us regard beginnings only in order to attain an end.²³

The Spiritual Discernment Cycle

While making a spiritual discernment the steps on that journey are not always sequentially followed. There can be movement back and forth between locations in the cycle, with an ultimate goal of making discernment and testing the results. Reaching discernment may result in the emergence of new issues or invitations from God for new discernment. This journey with God is lifelong! Located in the centre of the chart and permeating the whole of discernment work is the prayerful dimension of living. There is a contemplative dimension to discernment where receptivity to God’s leading is valued and sought. As Pope Francis has explained this journey of Discernment in the document *Christus Vivit*, it involves different steps:

1. *Listening for Emerging Issues and Invitations*

Spiritual discernment is a conscious action and requires a stance of active listening in life, an awareness that the issues and experiences that catch our attention may include hidden within them an invitation from God for our faithful and deliberate response. Concrete life situations are the context for our discovery of God’s desires and directions for our life and the life of our communities. Pope Francis says when we are called upon to help others discern their path in life, what is uppermost is the ability to listen. Listening calls for three distinct and complementary kinds of sensitivity:

- i) The first kind of sensitivity is directed to the individual.
- ii) The second kind of sensitivity is marked by discernment.

- iii) The third kind of sensitivity is the ability to perceive what is driving the other person.

In this way, discernment becomes a genuine means of spiritual combat, helping us to follow the Lord more faithfully.²⁴

2. Framing Questions

The kind of questions we ask give powerful shape and direction to our inquiry and set limits on the scope of our discovery. In order for spiritual discernment to occur we need to frame our inquiry and structure our path of discovery in a way that makes the search for God's direction central. So the kind of questions we ask makes a big difference!

The pope also lists the right questions to ask: Do I know myself, quite apart from my illusions and emotions? Do I know what brings joy or sorrow to my heart? What are my strengths and weaknesses? These questions immediately give rise to others: How can I serve people better and prove most helpful to our world and to the Church? What is my real place in this world? What can I offer to society?²⁵ But the challenge is to centre these questions on others because what is received—gifts, qualities, charisms—are not for one self but for others.

3. Exploring Possibilities and art of Accompaniment

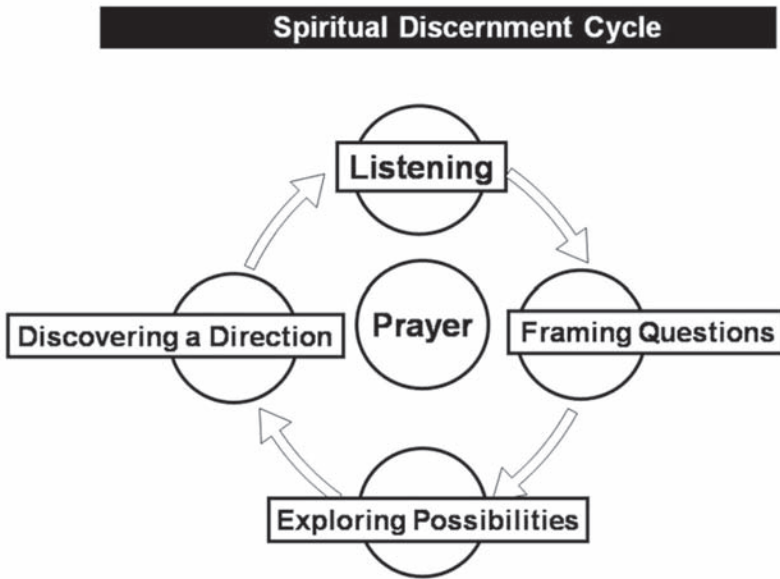
This phase of a deliberation is probably quite familiar to anyone who knows creative problem-solving techniques. It is a time for entertaining many possibilities, for brainstorming, for being open to the creative and new inspiration. Anyone called to be a parent, pastor or guide to young people must have the farsightedness to appreciate the little flame that continues to burn, the fragile reed that is shaken but not broken (cf. Is 42:3). The ability to discern pathways where others only see walls, to recognize potential where others see only peril. That is how God the Father see things; he knows how to cherish and nurture the seeds of goodness sown in the hearts of the young. Each young person's heart should thus be considered "holy ground", a bearer of seeds of divine life, before which we must "take off our shoes" in order to draw near and enter more deeply into the Mystery.²⁶

When we listen to others in this way, at a certain moment we ourselves have to disappear in order to let the other person follow the path he or she has discovered. We have to vanish as the Lord did from the sight of his disciples in Emmaus, leaving them alone with burning hearts and an irresistible desire to set out immediately (Lk 24:31-33). When they returned to the community, those disciples heard the

good news that the Lord was indeed risen (Lk 24:34). Because “time is greater than space”, we need to encourage and accompany processes, without imposing our own roadmaps. For those processes have to do with persons who remain always unique and free.²⁷

4. Discovering a Direction

Eventually, there may be a sense of clarity or a deeper sense of peace around a particular option. Things may seem to converge and a direction has a special sense of rightness, of blessing about it. Sometimes it seems perfectly clear to everyone that this choice is the right one, that God has revealed this direction to us.



Conclusion

There are principles for spiritual discernment that can be drawn from these historical landmarks. In Ignatian tradition, seeking consensus is an important discernment principle in their meetings. As in the Benedictine tradition, careful listening to all members affected by a situation is important in arriving at decisions. External attention to the deeds of others should be accompanied by silent prayerful attention to the possible sources of inner thoughts, as in the Desert Elders tradition — while seeking God above all else. Many of these traditions place spiritual discernment in the context of a spiritually disciplined life of prayer, scripture, and

sacramental worship. The Ignatian tradition places importance on the meditative use of imagination with scripture, and on paying attention to the discerner's affective state. In the other traditions spiritual directors help the individual in discernment work.

The discernment in the context of prayer, humility, in good conscience along with self- realization under the guidance of a spiritual guide and supporting community, makes life simple as doing the one thing that is necessary that is 'everything for the greater glory of God.' Pope Francis says, "The desire to know our personal vocation thus takes on a supreme intensity, a different quality and higher level, one that better respects the dignity of our person and our life. In the end, good discernment is a path of freedom that brings to full fruit what is unique in each person, something so personal that only God knows it. Others cannot fully understand or predict from the outside how it will develop."²⁸

Endnotes

¹ J. GUILLET, *et al.*, *Discernment of Spirits*, Minnesota 1970, 21-23.

² *Christus Vivit*, 279.

³ Francis de Sales explains that prayer opens our understanding to God's brightness and light and exposes our will to the warmth of his love. It is a spring of blessings and its waters quench the thirst of the passions of our heart, wash away our imperfections, and make the plants of our good desires grow green and bear flowers. He recommends mental prayer based on the life and sufferings of Our Lord. By looking at him often in meditation, your whole being will be filled with him. You will learn his attitudes and model your actions on his. Like children learn to speak by constantly listening to their mothers and chattering to them so we remaining close to the Saviour in meditation and observing his words, his actions, and his loving desires, shall learn with the help of his grace to speak, act and will like him. Cf. FRANCIS DE SALES, *Introduction to the Devout Life*, A. Mookenthottam, A. Nazareth and A. Kolencherry (trans. & ed.), Bangalore 2005, 85-86.

⁴ MANALEL, D., *Spiritual Direction a Methodology*, Bangalore 2005, 149.

⁵ MORRIS, D.E. – OLSEN, C.M., *Discerning God's Will Together: A Spiritual Practice for the Church*, Nashville 1997, 24-25.

⁶ MORRIS, D.E. – OLSEN, C.M., *Discerning God's Will Together: A Spiritual Practice for the Church*, Nashville 1997, 24-25.

⁷ The gift of prophecy is listed in all four major catalogues of spiritual gifts: Romans 12:6-8; 1 Cor 12:4- 11; 1 Cor. 12:28; and Ephesians 4:11. Discernment of spirits, wisdom, and knowledge are mentioned as gifts in 1 Cor 12:4-11.

⁸ ATHANASIUS, *Athanasius--The Life of Antony and the Letter to Marcellinus*, translated with introduction by Robert C. Gregg, *The Classics of Western Spirituality*, Mahwah 1980, 47-48.

⁹ ST. BENEDICT OF NURSIA, *RB 1980: The Rule of St. Benedict* in English, ed. Timothy Fry, Collegeville 1981, RB Prologue 45.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, RB 3.1-6.

¹¹ CHITTISTER, J., *The Rule of St. Benedict: Insight for the Ages*, New York 1997, 48-49.

¹² FLEMING, D. L., *The Spiritual Exercises: A Literal Translation and A Contemporary Reading*, St. Louis 1978, 207-215.

¹³ SCHURHAMMER, G., *Francis Xavier: His Life, His Times*, trans. M. Joseph Costelloe, vol.1, Europe 1506-1541, Rome, Jesuit Historical Institute, 1973, 454 ff. for a complete description of the events related to the Deliberations.

¹⁴ Cf. EGAN, H. D., "Ignatian Spirituality", *The New Dictionary of Catholic Spirituality*, 523. Cf. THOTTUNGAL, G., *Aspects of Spirituality*, Ahmadabad 2004, 138. He understood it well that once he grasped the truth he acted with a self-assurance in the teeth of papal opposition, a man who vowed special loyalty to the pope.

¹⁵ GREEN, T. H., *Weeds among the Wheat*, Notre Dame 1984, 169.

¹⁶ GREEN, *Weeds among the Wheat*, 168.

¹⁷ MANALEL, *Spiritual Direction a Methodology*, 152.

¹⁸ Cf. SWEENEY, R.J., "Discernment in the Spiritual Direction of St. Francis de Sales," *Review for Religious* 39/1 (1980) 127.

¹⁹ Cf. SWEENEY, "Discernment in the Spiritual Direction of St. Francis de Sales," 130.

²⁰ GREEN, *Weeds among the Wheat*, 169.

²¹ GREEN, *Weeds among the Wheat*, 168.

²² Cf. Rom 7.

²³ Cf. FRANCIS DE SALES, *Treatise on the Love of God*, II, 85.

²⁴ *Christus Vivit*, 292-295.

²⁵ *Christus Vivit*, 285.

²⁶ *Christus Vivit*, 67.

²⁷ *Christus Vivit*, 296-297.

²⁸ *Christus Vivit*, 295.

ICL: INSTITUTE OF CONSECRATED LIFE – SANYASA

VISION

- A Claretian undertaking with the scope of re-visioning Consecrated Life in dialogue with its past, universal ecclesial heritage and contemporary relevance within the Asian and particularly, Indian context.
- The particular vision is to empower the Consecrated Persons to harmoniously integrate their call within the demands of Consecrated Life, and thereby to endow them with greater theological, biblical and anthropological learning to face the challenges of the secular and modern society so that they could become the leaven, light and salt, contributing effectively to the life and mission of the Church.

GOALS

- Renewal of religious commitment in dialogue with the rich religious and cultural heritage of India.
- Training of formation personnel in theology and formation of Consecrated Life.
- Fostering the uniqueness and complementarity of the different Christian vocations and the corresponding forms of Christian Life.
- Preparation for different stages of formation in Consecrated Life especially in view of perpetual commitment.
- Deepening of consecration and commitment to communion and mission.

SALIENT FEATURES

- A unique institute in Indian Church offering specialization in the theology and formation of Consecrated Life.
- Possibility for both ecclesiastical and civil degrees.
- Residential and non-residential options.
- Special accompaniment and programs for the juniors.
- Audit Program: Possibilities to participate selected courses.
- Open also for the diocesan priests and lay people.
- A collaborative effort with the Claretian Institutes of Consecrated Life in Rome, Madrid, Manila and Abuja.
- Renewal of religious commitment in dialogue with the rich religious and cultural heritage of India.
- Training of formation personnel in theology and formation of Consecrated Life.
- Fostering the uniqueness and complementarity of the different Christian vocations and the corresponding forms of Christian Life.
- Preparation for different stages of formation in Consecrated Life especially in view of perpetual commitment.
- Deepening of consecration and commitment to communion and mission.

DEGREES AND COURSES OFFERED

Biennial Programs (Begins 16th June, 2020)

- M.Th. (Licentiate) in Theology of Religious Life (Pontifical Lateran University, Rome): Two years
- M.A. (Masters) in Theology of Consecrated Life (Christ {Deemed to be} University, Bangalore): Two years

Annual Programs (Begins 16th June, 2020)

- Diploma in Theology of Consecrated Life: Nine months
- Diploma in Biblical Theology: Nine months
- Intensive Course on the Bible: 6th April to 30th May, 2020
- Intensive Course in Theology of Consecrated Life: One month from 30th April to 30th May, 2020
- Formative Spiritual Guidance – Theory and Practicum: April 14th to 26th, 2020

Other Programs at Sanyasa

- Annual Seminar on Consecrated Life: Nov. 7th and 8th, 2020.
- Online diploma on Theology of Consecrated Life and Safe-guarding Minors
- Special class for the juniors: Saturday 09.00 am to 10.30 am
- Free to choose any course on weekly basis (Rs. 500 per week with lunch; Rs. 1,500 with accommodation per week; Concession available for groups and candidates)

CLASS TIMING

- Post Graduation: 09.00 – 12.30
- Diploma in Biblical Theology: 09.00 – 12.30
- Diploma in Consecrated Life: 09.00 – 12.30; 14.30 – 15.30

ADMISSION / ENROLMENT / FEES

For the details of admission requirements, enrolment, fees, etc., please contact by sending

email to sanyasac@gmail.com or

SMS / calling 09964161332 (Office)

08310857049 (Director).

For online registration log on to

www.sanyasa.com



ICL: INSTITUTE OF CONSECRATED LIFE SANYASA

Incorporated to Pontifical Lateran University
and Christ {Deemed to be} University

Offers

Licentiate from Pontifical Lateran University, Rome
Masters from Christ {Deemed to be} University, Bengaluru
Diploma in Theology of Consecrated Life

Diploma in Biblical Theology

Online Diploma in Theology of Consecrated Life

Online Diploma on Safeguarding Minors in Collaboration with
CCP, Gregorian University, Rome

Four Summer Courses in April and May

ICL: Institute of Consecrated Life – Sanyasa

Carmelaram Post; Bengaluru – 560 035

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ICL ACADEMIC PROGRAMME JUNE 2020 TO MARCH 2021

No.	Date	POST GRADUATION	DIPLOMA IN CONSECRATED LIFE	DIPLOMA IN BIBLICAL THEOLOGY
1	17.6 - 19.6.20	Group Dynamics and Personal Growth	Group Dynamics and Personal Growth	Group Dynamics and Personal Growth
2	20.06 – 27.06	Jesus Awareness Retreat	Jesus Awareness Retreat	Jesus Awareness Retreat
3	29.06 – 03.07	Research Methodology	Research Methodology	Introduction to the Scripture
4	06.07 – 10.07	Biblical Foundation for Consecrated Life – I	Group Therapy	Introduction to the Scripture
5	13.07 – 17.07	Re-visioning Consecrated Life from History – I	Biblical Foundation for Consecrated Life	Biblical Foundation for Consecrated Life
6	20.07 – 25.07	Spirituality of Consecrated Life	Spirituality of Consecrated Life	General Introduction to the Pentateuch
7	27.07 – 01.08	Spirituality of Consecrated Life	Safeguarding Minors	Safeguarding Minors
8	03.08 – 07.08	Spirituality of Consecrated Life	Leadership in Consecrated Life	General Study of the First Five Books
9	10.08 – 14.08	Re-visioning Consecrated Life from History – II	Theology of Body	Study of the Pentateuch
10	17.08 – 21.08	Re-visioning Consecrated Life from History – III	Charism – The Gift of the Holy Spirit	Introduction to the Historical Books*
11	24.08 – 28.08	Biblical Foundation for Consecrated Life – II	Re-visioning Consecrated Life from History	Study of the Historical Books*
12	31.08 – 04.09	Biblical Foundation for Consecrated Life – III	Growing in Affective Maturity	Women in the Bible
13	07.09 – 11.09	Education on Human Rights*	Education on Human Rights	Study of the Classical Prophets*
14	14.09 – 18.09	Community Animation	Christological Foundation of Consecrated Life	Study of the Classical Prophets*
15	21.09 – 25.09	Theology of Community Life	Theology of Feminism	Introduction to the Wisdom Literature
16	28.09 – 30.10	Theology of Community Life	Gospel Discipleship	Gospel Discipleship
16	01.10 – 02.10	Free		
17	05.10 – 09.10	Sociological Aspects of Consecrated Life*	Canonical Aspects of Consecrated Life	Study of the Wisdom Books
18	12.10 – 16.10	Exam	Marriage and Family Apostolate	General Introduction to the New Testament
19	19.10 – 23.10		Faith Formation in a Creative Way	Study of the Synoptic Gospels
20	26.10 – 30.10	Evangelical Counsels	Biblical and Theological Aspects of Vocation	Biblical and Theological Aspects of Vocation
21	02.11 – 05.11	Evangelical Counsels	Relevance of Liturgy in Consecrated Life	Study of the Acts of the Apostles
22	07.11 – 08.11	Seminar	Seminar	Seminar
23	09.11 – 13.11	Evangelical Counsels	Consecrated Life in the Church Documents	Introduction to the Pauline Corpus
24	16.11 – 20.11	Theological Notion of Vocation	Evangelical Counsels	Parables of Jesus in the Synoptic Gospels
25	23.11 – 27.11	Biblical Notion of Vocation	Healing the Inner Child	Miracles of Jesus in the Gospels
26	30.11 – 04.12	Theology of Consecration	Psycho-spiritual Integration	Study of Pauline Letters
27	07.12 – 11.12	Ashram Experience	<i>Koinonia</i> – Vital for Religious Life	Johannine Corpus and the Gospel of John
28	14.12 – 18.12	Anthropological and Psychological Aspects of CL	Consecration for Mission	Study of the Gospel and Letters of John
29	5.1.21 – 9.1.21	Anthropological and Psychological Aspects of CL	Counselling and Spiritual Direction	Reflections on the Letter to the Hebrews
30	11.01 – 15.01	Anthropological and Psychological Aspects of CL	Mary – A Model for Consecrated Persons	Mary – A Model for Consecrated Persons
31	18.01 – 22.01	Pneumatology and Charism	Pneumatology and Charism	Study of the Book of Revelation
32	25.01 – 29.01	Pneumatology and Charism	Theology of Consecration	Study of Non-Johannine Catholic Epistles
33	01.02 – 05.02	Pneumatology and Charism	Stages of Formation	Formation for Biblical Apostolate
34	08.02 – 12.02	Relevance of Mass Media for Consecrated Life	Psalms – Prayer of Israel and the Church	Psalms – Prayer of Israel and the Church
35	15.02 – 19.02	Pauline Theology	Eucharist – Indispensable for Consecrated Persons	Pauline Theology
36	22.02 – 26.02	Formative Reading of the Spiritual Classics	Formative Reading of Spiritual Classics	Formative Reading of Spiritual Classics
37	01.03 – 05.03	Thesis and Exam Preparation	Ecological Foundation for Consecrated Life	Aspects of OT and NT Thoughts
38	08.03 – 12.03		Biblical Prophecy	Johannine Theology
39	15.03 – 19.03	Exam	Evangelization and Dialogue	Jesus of History
40	20.03 – 24.03	Retreat	Retreat	Retreat

* Indicates additional afternoon classes from 14.30 – 15.30 besides regular morning classes from 09.00 – 12.30

ICL: Institute of Consecrated Life – Sanyasa is a collaborative effort with the Claretian Institutes of Consecrated Life in Rome, Madrid, Manila and Abuja. It is committed to the renewal and revisioning of Consecrated Life in India. It offers courses to respond to the needs for ongoing formation of the Consecrated Persons.

SUMMER PROGRAMS

- I. Three-weeks Bible Program on the Old Testament
(6th to 29th April, 2020)

This is an intensive course on the Old Testament briefly introducing Pentateuch, Historical books, Wisdom Literature and Prophetic books. A few books will be dealt in detail with special focus on their implications for Consecrated Life and Mission.

(Rs. 8,000 for single room accommodation and Rs. 6,500 for double room accommodation including tuition fee)

- II. Two-weeks Program on Formative Spiritual Guidance
(14th to 26th April, 2020)

This is a short course aims at equipping Consecrated Persons in basic spiritual guidance with theories and practicum.

(Rs. 4,800 for single room accommodation and Rs. 4,000 for double room accommodation including tuition fee)

- III. One-month Bible Program on the New Testament
(30th April to 30th May, 2020)

This is an intensive course on the New Testament introducing the art of reading the Gospels, Acts of the Apostles, Letters and the book of Revelation in a meaningful and practical way. A few books will be studied in detail with special focus on the implications of the Word of God on the life and mission of the Consecrated Persons.

(Rs. 12,000 for single room accommodation and Rs. 10,000 for double room accommodation including tuition fee)

- IV. One-month Intensive Course on Consecrated Life
(30th April to 30th May, 2020)

This is a condensed form of one-year diploma on the theology of Consecrated Life. This is a good alternative for those who cannot spare a year for renewal programs. The course aims at a greater understanding and deeper appreciation of Consecrated Life bringing forth challenges and inviting personal responses. It would be specially enriching for those preparing for final profession.

(Rs. 12,000 for single room accommodation and Rs. 10,000 for double room accommodation including tuition fee)

KINDLY CONTACT

email to sanyasac@gmail.com or SMS / call to 09964161332 (Office)
08310857049 (Director)
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Summer Programs – 2020

- I. Three-weeks Bible Program on the Old Testament
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DATE	BIBLE COURSE – THE OLD TESTAMENT	DATE	FORMATIVE SPIRITUAL GUIDANCE By Fr. Xavier Manavath, CMF	ACTIVITIES
April 6	Introductory Session at 20.15	April		Arrival before 18.00
7 – 11	Pentateuch (Fr. George Panthalanickal, CMF) (Introduction; Four Traditions; Introduction to the Five Books; Study of the First Five Books; Implications for Consecrated Life)			Good Friday
12	Easter Sunday – Free			
13–18	Historical Books (Fr. Arul Jesu Robin, CMF) (Introduction to the Historical Books; Detailed Study of Sixteen Historical Books; Implications for Life and Mission of Consecrated Persons)	14–26	Introductory Session at 20.15	Arrival before 18.00 on 14 th
19	Sunday – Free		Different Approaches to Spiritual Guidance; Need and Relevance of Formative Spiritual Guidance; A Guidance: A Foundational Understanding; Conceptual Clarification; Basic Assumptions; Person of Director; Function of Director; Dynamics of Formational Event; Elements and Stages in Guidance Process; Jesus: Model of a Spiritual Guide; Methodology: Input Sessions, Journaling, Sharing in Pairs and Triads, One to One Guidance, Supervised Guidance, Actual Guidance Sessions, Group Exercises Sharing and Evaluation, Discussion on Issues	Common Recreation on 18 th April at 20.15
20–25	Classical Prophets (Fr. Arul Jesu Robin, CMF) (Introduction to Israelite Prophecy; Study of Major Prophets; Study of Minor Prophets; Implications for Consecrated Persons)			Those doing Formative Spiritual Course are free to leave after lunch on 26 th April.
26	Sunday – Free			
27 – 29	Wisdom Literature (Fr. George Panthalanickal, CMF) (Introduction to Israelite Wisdom Literature and Wisdom Books; Study of Psalms; Implications for Consecrated Life)			Those doing only OT can leave on 29 th April after lunch.
April 30	BIBLE COURSE – THE NEW TESTAMENT		THEOLOGY OF CONSECRATED LIFE	
1 – 2	Introductory Session 20.15	April 30	Introductory Session 20.15	Arrival before 18.00
May	Synoptic Gospels (Fr. Arul Jesu Robin, CMF) (Introduction to Synoptic Gospels; Synoptic Problem)	1 – 4 May	Biblical Spirituality of Consecrated Life – Fr. George Panthalanickal, CMF	
3	Sunday – Free		Sunday – Free	
4 – 7	(Study of the Synoptic Gospels; Implications for Consecrated Life)		Re-visioning CL from History – Fr. Xavier Manavath, CMF	
8 – 9	Acts of the Apostles (Fr. Michael Plamparambil, CMF) (Introduction; detailed Study of Acts & Implications for CL)		Christological Dimension of Consecrated Life – Fr. S. Devadoss, CMF	
10	Sunday – Free		Sunday – Free	Recreation at 20.15
11 – 16	Johannine Corpus (Fr. George Panthalanickal, CMF) (Introduction to Johannine Corpus; Study of John, Johannine Letters; Study of the Book of Revelation; Implications for CL)	11 – 12	Theology of Vocation – Arul Jesu Robin, CMF	
17	Sunday	13 – 15	Evangelical Counsels – Fr. Xavier Manavath, CMF	
18 – 23	Johannine Corpus (Fr. George Panthalanickal, CMF) (Introduction to Johannine Corpus; Study of John, Johannine Letters; Study of the Book of Revelation; Implications for CL)	16	Growing in Affective Maturity – Fr. Arul Jesu Robin, CMF	Picnic Bangalore
24	Monthly Recollection	18 – 20	Psycho-Spiritual Integration – Fr. Bhyju, CMF	
25 – 27	Letter to the Hebrews (Fr. S. Devadoss, CMF) (Introduction; Textual and Thematic Study, Implications)	21 – 22	Theology of Community – Sr. Valsamma George, MSI	
28 – 30	Catholic Epistles (Fr. George Panthalanickal, CMF) (Introduction to Catholic Epistles; Study of Letters of James, Peter and Jude and Implications for Life and Mission of CP)	23	Theology of Charism – Fr. Jesudoss, CMF	
		24	Monthly Recollection	
		25	Theology of Charism – Fr. Jesudoss, CMF	
		26 – 27	Missions of Compassion – Fr. Michael Plamparambil, CMF	
		28 – 29	Canonical Aspects of CL – Rev. Fr. Jacob Arakkal, CMF	Free to leave after lunch on 30 th May
		30	Canonical Aspects of CL, Evaluation, Mass	

SANYASA: JOURNAL OF CONSECRATED LIFE

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Sanyasa: Journal of Consecrated Life is a biannual publication of scholarly reflections committed to the Re-visioning and Renewal of Consecrated Life.

It welcomes the contributors with openness to express their views freely and responsibly.

Views expressed by the contributors are their own and do not necessarily manifest the view of the Editor and the Editorial Board.

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Biennial Programs:

1. LICENTIATE IN THEOLOGY OF CONSECRATED LIFE
(June 16, 2020 - March 2022: Offered by Pontifical Lateran University, Rome)
2. MASTERS IN THEOLOGY OF CONSECRATED LIFE
(June 16, 2020 - March 2022: Offered by Christ {Deemed to be University}
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Annual Program:

1. ONE YEAR DIPLOMA IN THEOLOGY OF CONSECRATED LIFE
(June 16, 2020 - March 2021)
2. ONE YEAR DIPLOMA ON THE WORD OF GOD
(June 16, 2020 - March 2021)

Summer Programs:

1. THREE-WEEKS BIBLE PROGRAM ON THE OLD TESTAMENT
(April 06-30, 2020)
2. TWO-WEEKS PROGRAM ON FORMATIVE SPIRITUAL GUIDANCE
(April 14-26, 2020)
3. ONE-MONTH BIBLE PROGRAM ON THE NEW TESTAMENT
(April 30 - May 30, 2020)
4. ONE-MONTH INTENSIVE COURSE ON CONSECRATED LIFE
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