

Baptist, the authentic missionary is always ready to decrease, so that the shared mission will increase. The authentic missionary takes care so that in the mission will appear all its beautiful characteristics: creation, redemption, Spirit, apocalyptic.

Thanks for your attention. And I pray to the Spirit that in the same way that She invaded Mary, Joseph, Elizabeth, Jesus and our Founders and Foundresses, She will also invade our lives and transform them in living expression of her Mission.

MISSION:

THE KEY TO UNDERSTAND

CONSECRATED LIFE TODAY

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going on in the formation house is independent from the mission. The future has to transform the present and give energy to overcome any challenge. A person in the initial formation is not a person with problems, with a deficient psychology, rather is a missionary aware that he or she has to struggle to be ready for the mission he has to carry out one day and that he or she is not alone. He or she always counts with the help of the Holy Spirit. However he has to be formed for this mission, always opened to the guidance of this great interior Formator.

- *Theology*: finally I would like to say that the theology of religious life and of all the forms of religious life, contemplative and apostolic, should start from the mission as the source of its reason of being. This has being the project I have been working for several years already. I have being writing a theology of religious life, of the vows, of the community, from this perspective of mission. This project will be in your hands in a short time, with the cooperation of ICLA. I hope that the future formation of our young religious will be shaped along this path. And I do believe that the younger generations of theologians should continue developing the theology of religious life from this perspective of mission.

CONCLUSION

The Spirit who has moved the Prophets, the Apostles, and the great Missionaries, has not been extinguished. It continues present among us. The only thing that this Spirit needs is persons who are docile, available and ready to be moved and energized by her. The Spirit is calling us to collaborate in her Mission.

The Spirit is discreet and humble. She always acts in a gentle and subtle way, however she wants to manifest herself and act through us, graced by her charisms. When a Congregation, a community, a person, surrenders to the Spirit and allows to be touched by her, everything blooms and flourishes. The face of the Church becomes rejuvenated and creative and the world feels the passing of God.

An authentic missionary is never self-sufficient. He is aware that he is just a mediator, connecting with all the perspectives of the mission. More than to appear as the only missionary, he helps everybody to be aware that they are also missionaries of the Reign of God. As John the

one forming and shaping the future missionaries is the Spirit and the one who inspires this missionary life with his Word is the Son.

- *Government and authority*: the most important characteristic of a religious superior is to be possessed by the missionary passion of God for the world. We do not need managers of institutions and enterprises but authentic prophets who feel the passion of God for his people. A religious service of authority touched with this missionary spirit will be able to enkindle with fire and enthusiasm all the members of the community. This servant leadership will be compassionate and understanding with the weak but will be, at the same time, aware that the best medicine is to touch the hearts of the religious with a burning missionary spirit. The service of authority in the religious community must build consciousness and awareness that we are co-partners with Jesus in his dream about the future of the world. As Evangelii Nuntiandi said, the religious resources and institutions in which we cannot perceive strong missionary inspiration have no reason of being (cf. EN 14-15). A service of authority from this perspective of mission is not afraid, it takes risks in searching and finding new paths of mission. When mission is not animating the service of authority this service becomes a service to death.
- *Formation*: Gabriel of our Lady of Sorrows, a Passionist novice and junior, died when he was twenty four years of age. He was gifted in many ways: affectionate, intelligent, artist. But above all, he had a great missionary spirit. He was a leader of the youth in one of the Schools of De Lasalle Brothers, and in the Ateneo of the Jesuits. He entered the novitiate when he was eighteen. He used to speak about “the great joy and pleasure he was feeling inside the walls of the novitiate”. When he was doing any kind of activity: studying, praying, physical exercise, he was thinking that hundred of persons around him were telling: “Gabriel, one day you will be our missionary, our evangelizer, our priest. Prepare yourself well, acquire a strong spirituality, a great passion for Jesus and Mary. Take seriously your formation. We need you”. In that way, he never felt his formation as being isolated, rather as a beautiful preparation for a fantastic mission. I read the life of Saint Gabriel when I was a novice and I was impressed by his story. I tried to imitate him. I never knew that among the persons requesting me to prepare myself well, were all of you here present today. I believe that this example is enough to understand that nothing

We find ourselves a little lost when in our general and provincial chapters make the evaluation and balance of the previous years and try to plan out for the future. Likewise, we find ourselves a little lost when we religious come together for congresses, meetings courses of on-going formation. At times it gives the impression that we allow ourselves to be carried out by the tide of the moment. Other times, we give the impression of being more worried by our internal problems than by the external ones, which usually are the ones challenging our mission.

It is interesting to observe how in our chapters we are so worried by our problems of internal functioning: authority, assignments, communitarian projects, individualism, lack of prayer life, poverty or chastity. And it is right! They are real problems which we cannot undervalue. However, these problems become worst and more serious, when the missionary spirit is weak and we have lost the missionary sense in our lives.

What takes place in our practical life, it also happens in the theological field. A theology which does not start from the mission (and is at the service of the mission) is a theology without direction, without goal, without passion, without feelings, which does not respond to the great questions of our world today.

Without a strong missionary awareness, the Church and the Consecrated Life within the Church, have no meaning, no reason of being.

I. IS THE “MISSION” A KEY CATEGORY?

Mission is the key to understand the Church and everything happening within her, as the Consecrated Life. Without the mission, as the basic and architectonic principle, everything could collapse. When the mission is the central and structuring principle, everything functions, develops and unfolds.

When the mission does not exercise this central and key function, other realities appear which try to take its place: as the spirituality, the community life, the new trends, the personal activities understood as “work”.

- *Spirituality*: It could appear that spirituality is the central focus of Christian life and consecrated life; It could appear that prayer, contemplation, life in Christ are axis and core of Christian existence. And, certainly, it is. But when the spirituality tries to conceal the lack of missionary passion, it is good for nothing; it is not true spirituality, but a fake way of escaping the reality. It is not anymore a Christian experience, rather a pseudo-Christian, disincarnated and pietistic experience.
- *Community life* and the interpersonal relationships among the members of the community or group: in many institutes this is the central concern; in the experience of many religious this is a serious question they are worried about: where are they assigned, with whom do they need to share their life, what kind of relationships should they maintain with the superiors, etc. The most important preoccupations which take most of the time of many members of our religious institutes are internal questions, not the great challenges of our world today to our charismatic reality as followers of Jesus Christ. Those who develop their lives from these premises or questions, remain childish, irresponsible, only worried about their self-conservation.
- *The new trends*: When the mission is not the basic principle of our religious lives, then, we tend to go fishing for the theme or topic of the moment, the snobbism of the moment. We become absorbed by questions as the modernity, the new age spirituality, globalization, the sustained development, Marxism.... But all these questions are not seriously confronted from the perspective of mission, rather as an intellectual curiosity, without practical results or missionary implications. These reflections usually exert a

horizon the expansion of the communion, of that communion which originates from the Abba and from the Son. The proclamation has as its main objective to create communion. Where there is not that passion which comes from the missionary communion with God, how can we have a community truly inhabited by the Trinity? For this reason, the community is nourished by the experience of the Word of Life. When this experience takes place, there is a burning need to transmit and communicate it. When this experience exists the communion is expanded. No community is an end in itself rather it has to be in permanent process of unfolding expansion.

- *The signs of the times and the cries of the Spirit*: a person and a community feeling the concern and passion for the mission, become apocalyptic sentinels. They are always alert and sensitive to the will of God which is revealed in the historical events. They have a much stronger force than the one of the institutions, the customs and the traditions. The authentic missionary is always ready to change, to serve in a new place, there where the *missio Dei* becomes urgent and in need of collaborators. To be able to do that, it is necessary not to place ourselves outside the problems of the society, but to insert ourselves within them. The attentive and diligent study and discernment of everything happening around us is the powerful force able to take us out of our ordinary customs, making us available for the mission that is gradually becoming more and more urgent (EN, 14).
- *When we answer to the signs of the times and to the cries of the Spirit, no activity is private or individualistic*: there are moments in which in order to obey to the Spirit it is necessary to disobey to that which deviate us from our authentic missionary vocation. It should not be any longer tolerated in the religious life that persons will be just committed to work, but a work without missionary spirit, a work without the awareness of being collaborating in the mission of God. Many times, what we perceived is just the resignation and the obedience to the work entrusted, but not that creative capacity we are able to perceive in those feeling themselves sent by God to do something for the revelation and realization of the Reign of God.

When mission is at the heart of consecrated life, its government or service of authority, formation and theology have the same ample horizons than those of God himself: the one governing is the Father, the

of God and that the Reign of God is not the result of our human efforts but a gift.

3. When mission is at the heart of Consecrated Life everything blooms

When mission is placed at the heart of consecrated life it affects profoundly the spirituality, the communitarian life and even the structures..

- *Spirituality*: the awareness of mission generates spirituality. The one feeling the call to share the “missio Dei” is aware that this is the greatest grace that the human being can receive: to be a child of God, sent by God to the world to proclaim and transmit his love, his compassion, his energy. Without me, you can do nothing, said Jesus. The communion with Jesus, Missionary of the Abba, is essential to the missionary. In such a way that, in the missionary, Jesus would be recognized. On the other hand, mission is life in the Spirit and participation in the mission of the Spirit. The missionary is a person inhabited by the Trinity. “We will come to him and indwell in him”. Everything emerging from this vital experience is pure spirituality. The missionary, the same as the prophets, feels in himself the passion of God for his people, the compassion of God for them. The word of God is as a burning fire in his heart. This is the authentic spirituality! This is the root of all the activities and initiatives of the missionary! From the spirit to the body, from the reason and intelligence to the fantasy, everything in the missionary becomes a sacrament and a instrument of the action of the Word and of the Spirit of God. When Elizabeth received the visit of Mary she was filled with the Holy Spirit and cried out with loud voice her praises to Mary and revealed what was taken place in her. She became an evangelizing woman. This is similar to what happened in every missionary when he or she receives the vocation for the mission which comes from God.
- *Community life*: one of the most important objectives of the mission is to create communion: “What we have seen and heard, what our hands have touched about the word of life, this is what we announce to you so that you will be in communion with us. And our communion is with the Father and the Son”. There is a model of community which emerges from the mission, and it is missionary by birth. A missionary community is the one which has as its

superficial influence, because after then, we are in the search for the next new trend, leaving behind the previous ones. The problems of the society are contemplated from outside, not from within, in order to transform them, as the *Evangelii Nuntiandi* of Pope Paul VI demanded (E.N. n. 14)

- *The personal and private activities, the individualism*: The lack of authentic missionary spirit brings the persons to concentrate in their private interests. A way of camouflage of our apostolic and missionary spirit, paradoxically, is to concentrate in the work, “my work”. There are workaholic persons; however, it is not a real passion for the mission. It is what in other times was called the “heresy of the action”. What they are searching for is not the service to the others, rather the self-realization. All these have nothing to do with the realization of the Kingdom.

Without missionary perspective the service of authority, the formation and even the theology have very narrow horizons.

- *Government and authority in religious communities*: a government dedicated more to the immediate than to what truly generates the future, slowly kills the prophetic sensitivity. It does not take care of the urgent needs of the Church and society. The government becomes close in the internal problems and without horizons. Only eventually deals with real questions of missionary projection; most of the times they worry about maintaining a system which does not have the mission at the center of its concern. It does not facilitate the discernment of the community, being always alert and sensitive to the signs of the times or where and how the Spirit is leading humanity towards the future of God.
- *Formation*: Frequently the mission is not the principle articulating the whole process of formation. It is usually thought that, before any personal implication in the mission, each candidate in the period of initial formation has to solve his personal problems, his own conflicts... To a certain extent that is truth; but to try to solve the personal conflicts outside the mission and the vocation to mission is to deprive ourselves of the best resource to solve them. In the measure in which the vocational-missionary spirit does not work, the formation process goes crazy, becomes a narcissistic formation, too sensitive to the individual horizon.

- *Theology*: The theological reflection, deprived of the missionary perspective, usually suffers from the same defect. The mission is relegated to the last chapter. It is usually said that “being” is ahead or before “acting” or “doing”. This theology presupposes that mission is just acting and doing. For that reason, the subjects considered essential in religious life, as consecration, vows, community, are the first ones dealt with. This is usually called “identity”. Later on comes the projection of the identity in the apostolic activity. Neither, in this case, the mission is the articulating principle of the theology of the religious or consecrated life.

II. WHAT IS MISSION?

The word mission, that we use so many times, comes from the Latin term “mitto” and from the participle “missum”. Its meaning is “to send” or “to be sent”. Proper to the mission is “to be sent”. Obviously, this “being sent” responds to a commission, to a task assigned to a person so that he would carry it out. Like, when a government sends soldiers to make a certain task of peace or war, it is said that they are going to accomplish a “military mission”; when the authorities of a university are the ones assigning a task to someone, we speak of a scientific or cultural mission... When a religious institution is the one sending, we speak about a “religious mission”.

1. “Missio Dei”, Above all!

The most surprising of all this, it is that the mission and its more diaphanous, more sublime and transparent concept is found in the divine being itself. More than fifty years ago our Protestant brothers coined the expression “Missio Dei” as a theological category of great importance. With this category they wanted to talk about the mission of God himself. They wanted to say that our God is Mission.

Since the Trinitarian Mystery of God has been revealed to us, we know that the category of mission is absolutely essential to understand God. Jesus, as Son of God, is aware of being “Sent” by the Abbá. God the Father is the one sending his Son to the World. The Father sends also the Spirit, which makes herself present in the world in different occasions and in a variety of forms. Both, in the Old and in the New Testament, the Holy

- That the charismatic mission of an Institute does not have to respond to the particular vision of a certain superior, rather to the serious discernment of the community about what the Spirit wants. The mission is discerned in the contemplation of our world, of the reality and by listening to the cries of the Spirit. It could happen, that a Congregation is implementing a mission which does not correspond to the cries of the Spirit. Perhaps, that congregation is answering to certain urgencies of the society in which is located and of the time in which is living, however, is not carrying out the charismatic mission to which the Spirit of God is leading. It is necessary a lot of self denial and a great capacity to discern the concerns of God. Only by listening to the Gospel and allowing this Word to illumine the reality, we are able to arrive to the right discernment.
- That “the charismatic” mission cannot put aside its apocalyptic traits. Consecrated life along its history has always been sensitive to the great needs of humanity, specially the poor, the helpless, the innocent, the victims of violence. There are many children of God totally defenseless. Consecrated life must feel herself guided by the Spirit to be the Good Samaritan coming to the rescue of all those who are in need. In situations where there is oppression and abuse of human rights, the consecrated life discovers its apocalyptic trait. In this situation, consecrated life is called to bring consolation and hope, proclaiming the passing away of the oppressors and the imminence of their judgment, together with the fullness of salvation for all the children of God who are oppressed. The missionary prayer of consecrated life should be also characterized by this apocalyptic trait: in their prayer it is expressed the passionate desire for the coming of the Lord, the coming of the Reign of God.
- It is very normal that consecrated life will discover a special link with all the human groups committed to the liberating and redemptive mission, and that this connection will not be so strong with those engaged in the “missio creationis”.
- The most important characteristic of the role of the consecrated life in the Mission is to exercise the function of sign and parable of the Reign of God. Religious Life is not a charismatic gift of the Spirit to solve the problems of the local Churches or societies, rather, its specific vocation is to manifest the utopia of the Reign

To evangelize, then, is to announce to the world the meaning of everything we are, we live and we do. It is not indifferent to know or not to know the revelation. Only those who know this revelation are able to live with dignity and they have the most sublime motivation to overcome any kind of difficulties. To evangelize, then, is the first duty of the Church. To evangelize is to announce to everybody the good news which affect them.

Because of this, there is in the “the Christian” mission a level of awareness and revelation which is particularly important.

We should not speak the way we usually do. Many religious are accustomed to say: “this is my work!”, “this is my task!”, “this is my assignment!” This is not correct! We are missionaries of God in the works we carry out. We are aware that we are collaborators and co-partners in his project, that this is the purpose of our vocation and that we are answering to this call.

The project of God cannot be indefinitely protracted. Mary went to visit her cousin in a hurry. The messengers of Jesus were sent with the instruction of going straight to the mission given, without losing time in their way.

Christian mission is impatient and passionate. It knows how to interpret the past, the present and the future. But for this it is necessary a deep contemplation of God and of his mystery which gradually is unfolding for us the meaning of mission. It is to the community in prayer and contemplation that the meaning and project of God in human history is manifested.

2. The “charismatic” characteristic: charism for the world and the Church

Each religious community shares in the mission of the world and of the Church in a very peculiar way. The Holy Spirit acts through a congregation and its communities in an amazing way.

It is so important that the institutes of consecrated life will be not so eager in programming their “own” mission, but rather eager to discover where the Spirit is leading them in order to be authentic instrument of the Spirit for the mission. When an institute is aware of being placed and inserted in the mission of the Spirit, then, this institute understands several things:

Spirit is sent: she inspires the Prophets and impels them to carry out the project of God; the Spirit acts in the Creation of the world, in the virginal Generation of Jesus. Jesus and the Father sent the Spirit after the Resurrection so that She will indwell in the world and in the hearts of the faithful. It is clear that the mission is part of the divine being. The Abba is the one sending, the Son and the Spirit are the Ones sent. For this reason the theological reflection speaks of the ‘divine Missions’ as one of the fundamental aspects of the Holy Trinity. Mission emerges from the very Womb of God the Father. Mission is expressed in his Son, who incarnated in the Virgin Mary through the Holy Spirit; He is the One Send (o apóstolos). The Father sends his Son. The Father and the Son send the Spirit. To be sent is an existential condition of the Son and the Spirit.

2. “Missio creationis”

All the actions of God “ad extra” are, then, missionary actions. The Creation is the first missionary act of God. The Creator Abba acts through his Logos, the Word and through his Holy Ruah, the Spirit. The Creation is realized in Christ Jesus and through the force of the Spirit.

To the human person, created in God's image and likeness, God bestows a missionary being. If the human person is adequately contemplated, we discover that its existence is pure grace. It is not a necessary being, but a contingent one. It has been sent to existence from someone and for something. To discover the meaning of life, of human existence, is a basic condition in order to have an authentic existence. For that reason, we have to admire the task of the philosophers, always searching for meaning, for the cause of all the causes. Our revelation, the Genesis, manifests how the human being has been created to carry out a mission. The words of the author of the first chapter of the Genesis say that the human being was created “to the image and likeness of God”. He also affirms that human being, male and female, have to live together and become only one being. Finally, it is affirmed that they were introduced into the Garden to care for it. From that moment, the human being started to carry out an impressive mission: to be steward of the earth, to care for it, to organize it. God created them co-creators and, for that reason, the creative capacity of the human being is impressive and inexhaustible.

Here we have the first and most fundamental mission of human being. This mission is expressed in three levels: the family or generation, the relationship with the material world and its resources or production,

economy and work, and the relation and organization of the human beings in society or politics.

Humanity finds itself in a permanent state of mission, starting from the “missio creationis”. It is necessary to emphasize the dignity of this mission. We could call it as the “secular mission”. Though it does not appear, this mission proceeds from the Creator and the human beings, more or less aware of it, are carrying it out in his Name. Creative persons, those generating new life, become similar to God Creator, similar to God Father and Mother, similar to God artist and artisan. The family and the couple, the work and the economy, politics and social organization, art and craftsmanship, the religious and the cultural world... everything belongs to the task that human being have received from the Creator.

The mission received from God it was subjected to the destructive power of sin. From that moment, the human being renounced to his divine partnership and wanted to become autonomous, to give to himself his own task and mission. He renounced to be the servant of his Creator in order to become the owner of the world which he had received as a gift. It is precisely here where the human being renounces to be sent and searches only to carry out his own will. From that moment, started a new history of anti-Genesis, of destruction and demolition of everything created by God.

3. “Missio Redemptionis”

The coming of the Son of God to the world is related to his missionary project; to restore the mission of the human being in the proper way; to restore the flow of the energy of the Creator transmitted to his creatures. The Son initiated his paradigmatic mission by transforming himself in an obedient being: “Father, here am I, I have come to do your will”. Jesus knew that the mission cannot be carry out dissociated from God the Father and Creator; Jesus knew that without contemplating the face of God and being in communion with his will, the mission loses its reason of being and becomes anti-Mission, sterile self sufficiency.

The only preoccupation or task of Jesus was to make present the Kingdom of the Abba, the Reign of God, and to re-establish the broken Covenant between God and us. Only in Covenant with God we can fulfill the mission and only in Covenant with him we can say that the Kingdom of God arrives among us. The mission of Jesus, then, it was not to invalidate the original project of creation, neither to condemn human beings because of generation, production or politics, on the contrary, Jesus came to restore

III. MISSION, THE KEY TO UNDERSTAND CONSECRATED LIFE “TODAY”

1. The “Christian” characteristic of Mission: “What we have heard and seen “

One of the most important characteristics of the mission of the Church and of the Consecrated Life is that we not only share the mission with all human beings, but we have been given the gift of revelation. We have being revealed the theological dimension of mission. We are totally aware that our mission is not ours, but is the expression of the “missio Dei”, of the “missio creatoris” of the “missio redemptoris et consumatoris”. To us, it has been revealed that everything has been created in Jesus Christ and that the Spirit of God fills the earth.

We have an example of this in the final Judgment, as it is presented in the Gospel of Matthew. In this Gospel, it is said that, when God will come to judge all human peoples, he will say: I was hungry and you gave me food... thirsty and you gave me a drink....”. The surprised human beings will ask him: When did we see you hungry and gave you food, thirsty and gave you a drink? And he will answer: when and whatever you did to the least of my brethren you did it to me”. At that time, human beings will understand the meaning of their service. Without knowing it, without being aware of it, they took care and gave their service to the Lord himself. This revelation has being granted to us right now. Now we have discovered that every thing we do comes from God and goes to God. We are aware that we hold in our hands the work of God, the mission of God. Jesus, in the fourth Gospel is very much aware about this work. In the same way, the Christian person becomes a missionary from this conviction: that he or she is sent by God in order to carry out the work of God.

The motivations behind our actions are of great importance. We know for example that a mother has strong motivations to care for her child even by risking her own life; we know that a person in passionate love for another one is ready to take any risk in favor of the loved one. When we know the reason why we do certain things, we do them better. For this reason, it is so important the revelation of God, showing us the great value of our actions, and manifesting us that through these actions God himself carries out his Mission.

6. Mission understood as integral mission

When mission is understood in a holistic and integral way, we clearly understand that neither the Church, nor any other group within her, has the monopoly of mission. Mission has to be shared. And it has to be shared with every human being.

- The “*missio creationis*” is carried out by all human beings forming families, working, committed to the development of society and the world. It is a prophecy of incarnation, of proclamation of the goodness of everything created.
- The “*missio redemptoris*” is carried out and expressed by all those persons committed to the liberation of the human being from any kind of oppression in the political, psychological, spiritual or biological realm. It is the mission of those who struggle against corruption, injustice, in favor of the sacredness of creation, justice and peace. The salvific mission of the Church is also inserted here and it is expressed in the celebration of the sacraments, in the proclamation of the word, in the missionary activity. It is a prophecy of denunciation, of “*fuga mundi*”, of rejection of evil and of proclamation of the salvation that comes to those who accept and carry out the will of the Father
- The “*missio Spiritus Sancti*” is incarnated in each one of the charismatic tasks which the different groups and persons carry out in the world and in the Church. In them it is manifested the creativity of the Spirit and how she carries out all realities towards fulfillment in the Kingdom of God. Especially sensitive to this kind of mission are the religious communities which are able to discover day after day the new missionary challenges and when they are ready to answer to them.

The “*mission apocalypticum*” is carried out by those who are apocalyptic sentinels, by those who, in the middle of the gloomiest and threatening situations of our world, are able to proclaim God’s consolation and are able to discover the coming of the new Heaven and the new Earth. They exercise the prophecy of endurance. They decisively oppose the Beast and its associates. They are totally in favor of the New Jerusalem. They are prophets of hope.

the original project of God. “At the beginning it was not like that”, he said in relation to marriage, however he could say the same thing in relation to many other realities that have remained without orientation and goal. Jesus dedicated a great deal of his life to carry out the “*missio Creatoris*”: “and he came down to Nazareth and was obedient to them: and he was growing in grace and wisdom on the eyes of God and People”.

This first stage of the Mission of Jesus of Nazareth is rather mysterious. Jesus acted as any other man. He, as the other people, expends his time working. He acted in that way until he reached the age of thirty. At that moment, he had an apocalyptic revelation and he discovered a new meaning for his life and his mission.

After his Baptism at the Jordan, Jesus initiated a new stage in his mission: we could call this stage prophetic or liminal. Jesus concentrated all his energies and skills in the proclamation of the Reign of God.

The mission of Jesus cannot be reduced to a mere ecclesial mission. Jesus was always moved from the perspective of the Kingdom of God. His mission had several aspects: the proclamation of the Kingdom, the signs of the Kingdom (miracles, exorcisms, care for every person), The passion and death:

- *Proclamation*: Jesus appears, above all, as the one who, at a certain moment of his life, became the messenger of the Kingdom of God, or better, the Messenger of the Project of God, his Abba, about the world. He spoke about the Abba, he revealed his person, his project, his will. Jesus himself was the presence and the action of God, though limited, because of his human condition, but, at the same time, contextualized by his human reality.
- *The will of the Father* that Jesus proclaimed was a World totally different from the one we are living in. It was a world without sin, with human relations based on love, on solidarity and mutual respect. Because of this, his proclamation of the Kingdom contained a strong denunciation of injustices, corruption, perversion which had taken place in fundamental dimensions of human beings, as sexuality, ownership and power.
- *Jesus did not exercise his mission in a liturgical, celebrative or priestly (sacerdotal) sphere*. He celebrated the Reign of God and his coming in the ordinary life, in his work as a carpenter of Nazareth, in the first stage of his life, and as an apocalyptic prophet

in the prophetic and liminal stage of his life. He culminated his human existence by offering his life upon the mountain of Calvary in the altar of the Cross. This was his last act of mission. His mission was identified with his passion. Passion, not only action, is another expression of the mission.

- *Jesus shared his mission with his disciples.* From the very beginning, he took the initiative of gathering around him a community of men and women disciples. Jesus wanted to share with them his own mission. He trusted each one of them. He sent them “two by two” to proclaim the Gospel of the Kingdom of God and to act against the diabolical forces that prevent the presence of God in our world.

4. “Missio Spiritus Sancti”

Jesus promised that he will send the Holy Spirit. The Spirit was sent by the Abba and the Son after the resurrection of Jesus from the death. The Spirit is the missionary of the Father and of the Son. She teaches everything; is the interior Master, the one who makes possible all the words of God. She is the Achiever. The Spirit always acts in an invisible way. All the charisms, so abundantly poured out upon us, are her manifestations, her epiphany. She acts through this amazing variety of charisms and charismatic persons; she acts through all the persons graced with her inspiration and gifts.

Many people have discovered that we are now living in the time of the Spirit. That means that we are now living in the time of the mission of the Spirit. She is the main protagonist of the mission and those who allow themselves to be carry out, moved, and energized by the Spirit, are the authentic copartners of the mission of God.

The mission of the Spirit takes place in the whole world. All human beings could be transformed into mediators of the missionary action of the Spirit. For this reason we speak about the signs of the Spirit in times and places. For this reason we speak of the urgent needs of the Church and humanity that we should call “the cries of the Spirit”. In a very special way the action of the Spirit is manifested in the Church. The Church is the epiphany of the action of the Spirit in the world. Through the Church, through its Sacraments, the Word, the works of charity and evangelization, the Spirit acts and pushes human history in a visible way towards the future of God.

5. “Missio apocalyptica”

The last trait of mission that I would like to emphasize is a characteristic which appears when the mission confronts danger, the opposition of the enemies of the Reign of God.

In its last stage, the mission of Jesus became an apocalyptic mission. The same happened to the Mission of the Church in the New Testament. When the Church suffered persecutions, especially under the Roman Empire, the Church discovered with a clear vision, the apocalyptic dimension of her Mission.

Mission reveals its apocalyptic traits when we find ourselves in situations in which apparently the enemies of the Reign of God are victorious. The apocalyptic mission has the following traits:

- The apocalyptic dimension injects in the mission a disturbing eschatological urgency. The missionary, contaminated by this apocalyptic urgency feels that the missionary action cannot be postponed. He does not count with an indefinite flow of years in our world, but with a short time in which the mission has to be carried out. For this reason, the apocalyptic missionary is aware that the time has been shortened, limited.
- The apocalyptic dimension of mission announces the imminence of the coming of the Reign of God. It manifests a total trust and confidence in the power of God and in the unfolding of the Reign of God at the right time.
- The apocalyptic dimension of mission is a prophecy in times of great tribulation; this apocalyptic prophecy brings consolation for all those who are suffering and, at the same time, is a prophecy of curse for the enemies of God; to the enemies, it is announced that they will be exiled and destroyed, because they allowed themselves to be led by evil spirits and placed themselves at their service. It is also announced to them that their end will be the final destruction.
- The apocalyptic dimension of mission does not stress confidence in human power rather it emphasizes the liberating action of God, as the one that will prevail in history.
- The apocalyptic dimension of mission is exercised by a community which prays and intercedes for the world; a community dissociated from the Beast and its glamour, but above all, by a passionate love for the Lord Jesus.