

**Spiritual Advancements in the Educational Perspective of Pastoral  
Community Development with Reference to  
Vincent de Paul and Thomas Aquinas**

**Inaugural-Dissertation  
zur Erlangung der theologischen Doktorwürde  
an der Katholisch-Theologischen Fakultät  
der Westfälischen Wilhelms-Universität  
Münster in Westfalen**

**vorgelegt**

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**2022**

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**Datum der Defensio:** 27.06.2022

**Tag der (feierl.) Promotion:** 15.07.2022

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# **Spiritual Advancements in the Educational Perspective of Pastoral Community Development with Reference to Vincent de Paul and Thomas Aquinas**

## **General Introduction**

The desire of Catholics to live faithfully the vocation to the Christian life in the world necessitates nourishment through pastoral care which in turn enriches and strengthens various elements of Christian spirituality significant to their daily life. The idea of spiritual development calls for the varied efforts of the pastoral team. Indeed, to perceive pastoral ministry from the perspective of God's salvific plan and God's readiness for reconciliation is a great challenge. Efforts at spiritual education can lead to a greater understanding of the manner in which Jesus is working with individuals and how these individuals can become God's instruments. As a result, people become more committed to the larger society and at the same time develop their spirituality. Therefore, my research on the educational perspective of the pastoral community suggests an emphasis on the spiritual function of many activities which are related to the teaching and learning process of the basic elements of the Christian life. This process promotes personal and social development, thereby fostering positive spiritual theological attitudes for a virtuous life. The intended effect of spiritual education in a pastoral context is to deepen the relationship between the pastoral team and the members of a parish so that all are able to carry out their pastoral duties and obligations.

## **Methodology**

Saint Vincent de Paul and Saint Thomas Aquinas were two great spiritual leaders of their time. I have come to understand the difficulty of applying their thoughts to the situations that prevail in the twenty-first century. My simple effort of spiritual interpretation in a pastoral circle method of these two great saints in the history of Catholic Church, attempts to bring out a dynamic practical theological understanding of pastoral ministry and a practical reflection founded on theoretical knowledge and practicing those knowledges, which could help both laity and clergy in their faith formation and their spiritual advancement. Acknowledging my limitation in interpreting their era and applying that interpretation to the present situation, reinforces my effort to give more emphasis to the educational perspective of spiritual advancement in the pastoral situation to strengthen the laity in their faith formation. For this purpose, I will focus more on the question of faith as well as on an approach to the search for

truth and finally, on acts of charity. In other words, this research emphasizes on the need to understand the importance of faith formation and the value of a life of prayer in a parish setting.

Bryan Thomas Froehle explains in one of his articles published in *ResearchGate* in September 2014, that the *Circle Method can be traced to the hermeneutic circle (Segundo 1972) and pastoral circle (Holland and Henriot 1981; Wijzen, Henriot, and Holland 2005; Wijzen 2005), among many other sources*. In fact, since many decades this format is widely used, and this method goes back to the basic way of understanding which can be even traced as a lively method in the continent of Africa, where the people sit in a form of circle to discuss a subject before, they make their decision. This form is obviously used all over the world, although people may not be aware of it, because they may be sitting no longer in the form of a circle, and due to the microphone or loudspeaker facilities, this sitting method may not be a necessity. Consequently, many variations of this ancient approach exist in the world. The pastoral circle is a dynamic transformative quality, which appreciates consultation, collective effort, and the intradisciplinary elements of the church. The pastoral circle method suggests a dynamic practical approach of theology and reflection founded on theoretical knowledge, and practical reflection begins and ends in a plan of action. The pastoral circle method emphasizes pastoral education, because organized meetings and conversation nourish the learning of all the participants. Normally each circle will have a leader, therefore this method recognizes the importance of development of leadership qualities and the need for a process of attaining knowledge. The pastoral circle method highlights the importance of contemplative spiritualities. For instance, when a person speaks on a practical theological approach to spirituality, all others are listening and meditating on the subject matter. This is a form of active contemplation, and many modernized variants of this can be found in liturgical services and in many pastoral activities. Within the parish there are different circles of activities, which are known to most of the members of the parish community. Hence a circle method which recognizes leadership, scholarship, prayer, contemplation, and action, from an educational perspective, is easily understandable to the people. The spirit of sharing in a circle from the context of Christian discipleship and prayer meetings was very much at the heart from the beginning of the Church, when the faithful gathered together, prayed, broke the bread, and thanked the Lord, and the whole liturgical service was a movement within a circle. Interestingly, a circle has neither a beginning nor an end, just like God who is the Alpha and the omega, God has no beginning and end. The circle method opens the eye of the pastoral leader to the involvement of the people of the community because a circle becomes active when people step into the circle and engage themselves. Each pastoral movement inevitably contains the elements of other movements,

therefore the characteristics of teamwork in a practical theology can be better understood through practical wisdom derived from the conviction and insights of the circle method.<sup>1</sup>

My research method follows a scheme of correlation in its mutual and critical reflection on the *Summa Theologiae* and the life and works of St. Vincent de Paul. This research uses also the pastoral circle method with a focus on the formation of human spiritual action in order to express the dynamic way of interpreting theological reflection and its inter-relationship with acts of faith and acts of charity within the pastoral community. My humble objective to juxtapose a practical perspective with the findings of the *Summa Theologiae*, life and works of St. Vincent de Paul, and selected Biblical references, is an attempt of creative imagination, a fragmentary pastoral situation based creative thinking, to *kerymatize* and to strengthen the intimate spiritual communion and participative sharing of a pastoral community, the pastoral *koinonia* of the faithful and their regular engagement in the world. In the broader context, my research involves reflection on pastoral leadership, and the need to renew, reform and strengthen Christian spiritual practice from the perspective of individual, pastoral and social action in a pastoral community.

The primary resources for this research are: the English edition of the publication, *Vincent de Paul, Correspondence, Conferences, Documents* (15 volumes), the *Constitution and Statutes of the Congregation of the Mission*, the *Revised Statutes of the Congregation of the Mission*, the *Common Rules of the Congregation of the Mission*, *The Common Rules of the Daughters of Charity*, and the English edition of the *Summa Theologiae* (five volumes translated by Fathers of the English Dominican Province). Secondary resources include many Vincentian authors who have developed the relevance of Vincentian spirituality to the present era and many theologians and philosophers whose studies are relevant to my research on the *Summa Theologiae*. This research on the “spiritual advancements in the educational perspective of the pastoral community’s development with reference to Vincent de Paul and Thomas Aquinas” is a practical, theological and pedagogical method of interpreting Thomas Aquinas and Vincent de Paul in view of the necessity of reading the signs of the time and the importance of pastoral innovations in spiritual education in order to strengthen the spiritual development of individuals in their pastoral and social life. This research is a reinterpretation of Thomas Aquinas and Vincent de Paul that lead to new possibilities for spiritual development. To support my thesis, I will also refer to other related theological works and church documents.

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<sup>1</sup> Froehle, Bryan Thomas. “The Circle Method”. In ResearchGate, September 2014.

## **Relevance and Contextuality**

As this research intensified, it raised many questions, and therefore, I would like to address a few questions, such as: What is God asking of Christian men and women and the members of Christian movements today? How are Christians preparing themselves to respond to God's revelation? How are Christians sharing their spiritual experience with the larger community? What is the significance of creating a learning community? What is the importance of spiritual education/formation? What are the methods utilized in forming the laity? What is the way to change the method of parochial ministries? How to evaluate and improve ministry in the light of stated pastoral/theological goals? Why empower pastoral participation based on theological goals? I attempt to answer these and many other questions.

In my dissertation I would like to bring to the forefront four primary principles. I will attempt to explain and address these principles throughout this dissertation in order to stress the importance of the relationship between these same principles. I would like to affirm in this dissertation, first, that without spiritual education one cannot evangelize others; second, the call to participate in the various ministries of evangelization is extended to men and women who are obliged to respond; third, the need to accept the fact that spiritual cognition constantly discovers and adopts new methods as instruments of evangelization in a changing society; and fourth, reconciliation transforms an individual and imbues them with love and hope. These principles of my inquiry are explained in my dissertation "Spiritual Advancements in the Educational Perspective of Pastoral Community Development with Reference to Vincent de Paul and Thomas Aquinas". This introduction is an attempt to provide, in a general manner, the concept of dissertation rather than offer any particular explanation of four basic principles of my concern. I utilize the thoughts and examples of Vincent de Paul and Thomas Aquinas in order to strengthen my argument with regard to these four principles.

Seventeen years of priestly ministry in pastoral, educational and social development fields enable me to understand evangelization in three dimensions: as a pastoral experience that results from participation in various activities with other members of the community, as a pastoral expression of concern revealed in spiritual, moral and social educational ministries, and as pastoral creative thinking based on the signs of the times as experienced in the local situation. This pastoral experience necessitates learning the pastoral situation because fundamentally evangelization often depends on personal initiative. Pastoral ministry is an activity that utilizes words and deeds and has two facets. First, as an activity based on reflection on the signs of the

time and dialogue within the community; second, as an activity that evolves from an appeal to transform a situation from the perspective of the theological teaching of the universal church. This pastoral comprehension necessarily respects and takes into consideration the understanding of the particular and universal teachings of the church. There can always be unexpected conflicts between a particular situation and universal objectives and that is why a proper pastoral comprehension is a trait of evangelization. Above all it is very important to understand that I have to be spiritually educated before I can evangelize others.

I understand pastoral ministry as systematically and practically grounded on the process of evangelization which involves educating people with regard to the content of the basic elements of faith and of assisting people to satisfy their spiritual needs, which is a special element to integral evangelization and integral development of the human person which encompasses physical, psychological, social, political, economic and cultural aspects. The apostolic exhortation of Pope Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (“Evangelization in the modern world”) contains a fundamental ecclesiological principle: *Evangelizing is in fact the grace and vocation proper to the Church, her deepest identity; the Church exists in order to evangelize.*<sup>2</sup> Evangelization is the universal ministry of the entire Church and as such, it is a call to all the members of the Church to become involved in the process of evangelization and participate in the planning of parochial activity. Participation in evangelization cannot be considered as just one more added responsibility among many other duties of the faithful. Rather such participation is a fundamental responsibility and the reason for the existence of the Church.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church defines a parish as a definite community of the Christian faithful established on a stable basis within a specific jurisdictional land area of a diocese. The pastoral care of the people of the parish is entrusted to a pastor who serves as leader and teacher and who is appointed by the diocesan Bishop. It is a place where all the faithful can be gathered together for the Sunday liturgical celebration of the Eucharist, for hearing and learning Christ’s saving doctrine, and a place to gather for other occasions to thank and praise the Lord through an ordinary or systematic spiritual expression the liturgical method, and to practice the charity of the Lord in good works and human love.<sup>3</sup>

In my research the contextuality of pastoral activity is indeed above the restriction of a particular country. I understand the contextuality of the research is applied to the pastoral

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<sup>2</sup> Pope Paul VI. *Evangelii Nuntiandi*. No. 14.

<sup>3</sup> *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. sec. 2179.

engagement regarding instruction of faith among members of a community through pastoral leadership, whereby encounter of spiritual experience is made possible among *menschen*. Is it necessary to be instructed in the faith in order to attain the goal of spiritual development? One might argue in such a way as to conclude this is not necessary. After all, there are so many books available in the market and there is much information about faith on the internet and so if people are interested, they will find a way to grow in the faith. I would say this type of approach is wrong. Naturally, God can do wonders and shed his grace upon individuals so as to enlighten them in their spiritual advancement. However, I would say that everybody has the responsibility to know the Lord God. Therefore, faith has to be treated not only theoretically but also practically, in order to know what faith is and to understand the person in whom we believe.

The Latin word *educatus*, a nominative masculine singular word, is fundamentally the etymological root word of education. The system of spiritual education could be cogitated by understanding two Latin terms namely *educare* and *educere*. The Latin verb *educare*, an active infinitive present form, explains the scope of education, namely, forming, moulding and nourishing an individual mentally and physically, whereas *educate* the Latin verb, an imperative present, explains the role of the teacher in forming pupils. The Latin verb *educere*, an active infinitive present form, explains the depth of the meaning of education in relation to leading and to drawing out the capacity of mind, because *educere* is a combination of *e* + *ducere* meaning, out + lead, draw and denotes to lead forth; whereas the role of the teacher could be cogitated in comprehending the Latin verb *educturum esse*, an active infinitive future form, because *esse* means to be, which then denotes to bring forth something which exists. Hence in a pastoral context, the development of spiritual attitude is a process to bring forth people to a deeper advanced realization of the presence of God. Spiritual education is not only about the acquisition of knowledge about God, but it is about developing people's inherent spiritual ability through teaching them to develop spiritual attitudes through stable learned habits. When spiritual formation helps people to probe their mind regarding the relationship of body, soul, and God.

Spiritual education and ongoing formation enable people to reflect on theological concepts and to experience the meaning of those concepts as they attempt to practice those ideas in their daily life. People are not passive stones but rather they possess an active mind which enables them to continue the process of developing themselves. Discovering the meaning of the virtues and living those virtues through consistent habits will lead to greater spiritual depth.

Spiritual formation is a practical method of empowering people to continue their process of spiritual growth and development. The parish involves itself in many different areas of formation and education which help men and women to know, love and worship the Lord. All educational institutions constantly renew their syllabus so as to adapt themselves to the current needs and expectations of the people who are enrolled in those educational institutions. In the same way, the parish, as an institution at the service of people and concerned about the spiritual and communitarian development of people, needs to renew the manner in which it plans its work and also needs to reorient its spirituality so that said spirituality comes alive in all activities of the parish.

Thomas Aquinas speaks about the process of teaching and learning with the aim of changing and transforming individuals in *De Veritate*, the *Summa Theologiae*, *Summa Contra Gentiles*, and *Sentences*. I will focus on the *Summa Theologiae* intending to understand and interpret his concept of education as a dimension of the goal to attain wisdom and truth as well as to understand the meaning of faith and love. An interpretation of Aquinas in the context of parochial activities with a view toward forming the members of a parish so that they might attain greater truth and wisdom through an increase of faith and love is a relatively novel idea that I will attempt to develop in this dissertation.

Etienne Gilson is one of the significant people who was involved in the revival of medieval studies in the twentieth century. Gilson introduced courses on Thomas Aquinas into the French university system through his book *Le thomisme*, which represent Gilson's self-education as a Thomist.<sup>4</sup> Gilson frequently used the phrase "Christian philosophy" in order to distinguish medieval philosophy from classical philosophy and modern philosophy which began with Descartes. Maurice de Wulff viewed medieval philosophy as a single unit of Scholasticism, but the studies of Gilson developed a contrary position because he saw that there were many strains of philosophical thought (Albert, Thomas, Bonaventure, Scotus and Ockham all had a philosophy which differed widely from one another).<sup>5</sup> Pope Leo XIII declared Thomism to be the official philosophy of the Roman Catholic Church. The *Summa theologiae* enlightens us with regard to the relationship between faith and reason, between revelation and philosophy.

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<sup>4</sup> McNerny, Ralph. *Praeambula fidei. Thomism and the God of the Philosophers*. Catholic University of America Press, Washington D.C, 2006, p 126.

<sup>5</sup> McNerny, Ralph. *Praeambula fidei. Op.cit.*, p 127.

A question that is posed in opposition to Thomas Aquinas's philosophy is one that attempts to relate Thomas to Aristotle and as a result the question arises: why should one read Thomas Aquinas when Aristotle was already there? There are, however, considerable differences between Aquinas and Aristotle. Conclusion of the philosopher is always of the rationally demonstrated, whatever appeal the philosopher make to faith, but the conclusion of the theologian is always from the revealed, whatever appeal the theologian make to reason. Aquinas undertake demonstration of the revealed truth, God's existence, and Christian philosophy intelligibly explains meaning of faith with reason.<sup>6</sup> The *Summa theologiae* presumes that the reader has some knowledge of philosophy. Aquinas took up the task of explaining *sacra doctrina* and *Sacred Scripture* through the use of a philosophical method, and his philosophical arguments provide a framework which affirms that even non-believers, independent of Scripture, but as human beings (*menschen*), are naturally capable of knowing God through the study of theology.

The theology of Thomas Aquinas can be divided into two areas: natural theology and dogmatic theology. His natural theology deals with God in the context of themes such first cause and prime mover, while his dogmatic theology (which was quiet alien to ancient philosophy) treats matters accessible through revelation, (and his position is grounded on Christian writers like Augustine, Gregory the Great, Dionysius, Jerome, Damascene, John Chrysostom, Ambrose, Isidore, Origen, Basil, Gregory of Nyssa, Athanasius, and Cyril). His theology establishes a philosophical bond between the nature of Trinity, Jesus Christ, and the goal of human life. His ethics, which is an act of both the intellect and will, could be understood today as a way of avoiding utilitarianism or Kantian deontology. Thomas Aquinas, who studied at the University of Naples where the influence of Arabian literature and culture was dominant during the 13<sup>th</sup> Century, was also indebted to the works of Islamic philosophers such as Al-Ghazali. In his Dogmatic theology the *Doctor Angelicus* believed that faith and reason are compatible, and that language about God has to be understood analogically. He argued although divinely revealed truth is not contrary to natural reason, nevertheless, natural reason alone is not sufficient to discover divine revelation.

The meaning of the name Jesus in Hebrew is God saves us. An appreciation of this meaning of the name Jesus helps us to understand both his identity and his mission. In the history of salvation, as described in Scripture, God is not satisfied with just releasing Israel

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<sup>6</sup> McInerny, Ralph. *Praeambula fidei*. *Op.cit.*, p 96.

from bondage (Deut 5:6) in Egypt. God had further redemptive plans to save them from their sin. Because sin is always a wilful act against God, an offence against God which destroys the relationship between the human person and God, therefore, only God can forgive sin (Ps 51:4.12) and thereby save human beings and restore them to a state of grace. Since God alone can forgive sins, it is God who, in Jesus, his eternal Son, created human beings, and only he can save his people from their sins (Mt 1: 21;2:7). In Jesus, God recapitulates all of this history of salvation on behalf of his people (Mt 1:21; 2:7).<sup>7</sup>

Vincent de Paul was being formed in the French school of spirituality and with the guidance of Pierre de Bérulle, he learned to focus his life on Jesus Christ and became reconciled with himself and with God. As a result, he connected his service at the altar of God to service among the poor and abandoned people. In this way he further developed his spirituality, that is, Vincent made the invisible presence of God in the liturgy, visible through social actions that transformed society. The desire to search for the lost sheep together with his willingness to take up new burdens on behalf of those men and women abandoned and excluded, strengthened him to look beyond the French School of spirituality, and developed a school of spirituality which prioritized the poor men and women who were dying of hunger, of material hunger as well as of hunger for the Word of God. The beginning of the 17th century was a time of religious prosperity in France. The negative concept of the Counter-Reformation and the sting of a vibrant Protestantism that had invaded all layers of society (and which was approved by the Edict of Nantes in 1598), still simulates it, all of these events seemed to encourage the development of the various school of spirituality.

A new religious life, however, never springs forth from some negative opposition alone. In this case, there was an acknowledgement of Catholic humanism. It came from medieval roots and had been set out in a new, valid form at the great reform Council of Trent (1548-1563). It gave a positive perspective to life: men and women are not completely broken by original sin, but healed by God's grace, if they strive to remain in a state of grace. Through self-discipline, renunciation and the practice of asceticism, people are able to attain salvation, if they avail themselves of the help of grace that is offered to them. The Jesuits, in their colleges and universities, proclaimed this new catholic understanding of life. Francis de Sales, the Bishop of Geneva, referred to pious humanism as the spirituality of the laity. The central doctrine of this Christian humanism is not the fall of human being due to sin, but salvation. Religious perfection is no longer the prerogative of monks and clergy, but even men and women living in the midst

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<sup>7</sup> *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. 430-432

of the world, even the poorest person can rise to religious perfection. Cardinal de Berulle continued this line of thought by encouraging the penitent sinner to take on a new commitment, that is, to follow Jesus and to imitate Jesus in the practice of patience, humility, and obedience. Berulle founded a French school of spirituality with a number of other outstanding members of the clergy.

Where pious humanism has nothing to do with piety, which lost its substance and became the religion of the well-mannered civilized people, there was also a contradiction on the Catholic side. In the struggle with Calvinism, Augustin the great church father of the 15th century was rediscovered. Individual theologians such as Jansenius, Bishop of Ypres, now presented their doctrine of the depravity of human nature which could only be tamed by heroic self-conquest with the help of grace. Jansenism, a Catholic variant of Calvinism, invaded French society, especially the bourgeoisie, around the middle of the century, and attempted to enforce its strict moral and religious standards. Blaise Pascal and Jean Racine were infected by this movement and when many people joined the Jansenist monasteries of port royal, there was fear of a violent movement.

Vincent de Paul stood between these two factions. Theologically he was closer to pious humanism than to Jansenism. He appreciated, however, the commitment and spiritual zeal of the Jansenists. In court, he testified in favor of his imprisoned friend, the abbot of Saint Cyran. Jansenism found little favor among the people. Vincent's own endeavor aimed at bringing the demands of Christian faith to the people who were seeking spiritual nourishment. At this time there were ten thousand priests in Paris. But in the countryside, people were drowning in ignorance of Jesus Christ (the poor people in the rural areas had, for the most part, been abandoned). Vincent, who was born in the rural countryside, was moved by the plight of these people. He began to instruct the people at the countryside and established various missions. Many men and women joined him to serve the poor. Thus, a new spiritual movement began.<sup>8</sup>

Vincent left us no treatises or books, just the small volume of rules, many letters, and a brief summary of spiritual conferences.<sup>9</sup> He was content to open up new paths and to invite likeminded people to continue the works he founded. He opened the gates of the church, taught the clergy to work together with the laity, and was the first to have women minister outside the walls of Closter. He followed the example of Jesus Christ, and placed himself at the service of

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<sup>8</sup> Victor Conzemius. *Vincent de Paul. Großstrategie der Brüderlichkeit*. Freiburg: Imba Verlag, 1979, 15-16.

<sup>9</sup> Pierre Defrennes. *la vocation de Saint Vincent de Paul. e'tude de psychologie surnaturelle*, In, *Revue dáscetique et de mystique*; 1932, 13.

the poor, who were his lords and masters<sup>10</sup>. He taught people that true charity is not only about distributing alms, but also helping the disenfranchised and disadvantaged to find their dignity and independence. He believed in the value of action, and he gladly used the phrase, "Totum opus nostrum in operation consist" (all our work consists in action), adding that perfection does not consist in rapture, but in doing God's will.<sup>11</sup> Vincent was first and foremost a man of God, deeply imbued with the gospel spirit. Before acting, he recommended praying and meditating to know the will of God. This conviction was expressed in words, such as, do not rush ahead of the Providence of God. Above all, this man of action was a man of prayer who had developed a deep spirituality: one needs an inner life, one must strive for it because if one fails in this regard, one has failed in everything.<sup>12</sup>

Inspired by the Gospel passage Luke 4:18, the life and work of Vincent de Paul (24th April 1581- 27th September 1660), founder of the Congregation of the Mission<sup>13</sup> and the Company of the Daughters of Charity, had a profound impact on humankind and especially on the Church. Vincent provides a new religious spiritual dimension to the manner in which the message of Jesus Christ was lived, namely, compassionate, generous and humble service on behalf of the poor. Vincent de Paul discovered the truth through serving people with faith and charity and through preaching the word of God, through establishing a relationship with God and with the larger community, and through advocating new methods of formation in order to provide people with a mystical experience of God through prayer and meditation,

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<sup>10</sup> *Saint Vincent IX*, 119.

<sup>11</sup> *Saint Vincent XI*, 33.

<sup>12</sup> Bernard Pujo. *Pionier der Moderne. Das abenteuerliche Leben des Vincent de Paul*. Freiburg: Verlag Herder, 376-377, 2008.

<sup>13</sup> Congregation of the Mission has four acknowledged nicknames: Vincentians, Lazaristes, Missionaries and Paules. As Vincent de Paul was very popular among the ruling class and among the poor peasants, after the death of Vincent de Paul, the fathers who were dedicated to this way of life and followed Vincent de Paul were called as Vincentians; this nickname is commonly heard in the English-speaking countries; an equivalent translation of this nickname in other languages like the German *Vinzentiner* is common. The nickname Lazaristes is derived from the mother house in Paris, namely Saint Lazare. The people called the members who lived in this house and who were sent forth for many missions from this house as Lazaristes, meaning members belonging to the house Saint Lazare in Paris. As members of the congregation of the Mission involved mainly in mission works, they were called in Poland as missionaries (misjonarze). The Journey of Apostle Paul in his mission preaching stood particularly different from all other apostles, and he preached the gospel to the gentles and named him the apostle to the gentles (Ephesians 3:1). The members of the Congregation of the Mission from Spain travelled wide and preached the gospel among the native people of different nations (for example, to the native people of Orissa in India), and therefore in Spain people fondly called them as Paules.

Vincent de Paul and five other priests began their successful mission to the common people on the estates of Gondi family. Approximately in 1624 this little company of six priests with the leadership of Vincent de Paul acquired a permanent settlement in the Collège des Bons Enfants in Paris. The Congregation began in 1625. Archiepiscopal recognition was obtained in 1626. By a papal bull on January 12, 1633, Pope Urban VIII constituted the society as the Congregation of the Mission, with Vincent de Paul as its head. Thereafter the canons regular of St. Victor handed over to the congregation of the Mission the priory of St. Lazarus in Paris, hence the name of Lazarites or Lazarists came to the Congregation of the Mission.

acknowledging the power of the act of charity as a weapon against temptations against faith, and identifying himself with the needy. All of this emerged from his conviction of the witness value of believers in Jesus Christ.

Aquinas's analysis involved reviewing the acquired information at the end of the inquiry process ... learning by looking back and reviewing in simple Dominican pastoral language. His analysis utilized several methods in order to gain knowledge (including induction, demonstration, epistemology, and the indemonstrable). Induction is the process of moving from the particular to the general. Demonstration analytics moves from ideas to a more concrete methodology of gaining and increasing knowledge, which allows researchers to study and share an experience that can be repeated so as to verify the veracity of the information. The method or means of Epistemology refers to strategies that are used to explore the manner in which knowledge works to formulate complete thoughts, ideas, and laws. Generally, the Greek word *episteme* is translated as knowledge. What Aristotle attempted to achieve in his analytics is closer to our understanding of the word "science". Knowledge is often viewed perceived as the collection of information, while science includes methods, means, and strategies for collecting, explaining or parsing, and linking information in order to attain deeper knowledge. The immediate premise of the indemonstrable method is based on the objection of all scientific knowledge being demonstrative and demonstrable. Aquinas uses this analytical method in his philosophical and theological explanations, and he was mindful of those who were being initiated into the Christian faith.<sup>14</sup>

While Catholics deepen their faith, they also increase their understanding of the responsibility of sharing their faith with others. It is a special universal call to all those who have received baptism: behold the Lamb of God. We hear this invitation to look at Jesus Christ in every Eucharistic celebration before the reception of Communion. In the first chapter of John's Gospel, John the Baptist refers to Jesus as the Lamb of God, and thus to Jesus, the Crucified One. The Christmas message also points to the wood of the cross through the symbolism of wooden crib. The invitation on Good Friday: behold the wood of the cross, invites us to look at Jesus Christ not only with our physical eyes, but to look deeper at him with our spiritual eyes, with our hearts. When we are invited to behold the Lamb of God before Communion, our bodily eyes see a piece of bread and a cup of wine. Our faith looks deeper and does not see a lamb or a piece of bread or a cup of wine but sees the love of God incarnated ...

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<sup>14</sup> Mark F Johnson. Chapter 9; *Aquinas's Summa Theologiae as Pedagogy*; In, *Medieval Education*; Begley B Ronald and Koterski W Joseph S.J. (eds); 135-140; New York: Fordham University Press, 2005.

a love that is shared with us and that transforms us. As we continue to shift our gaze from the darkness to the light, as we move from contemplating the crucified Jesus to reflected upon the exalted Lord, we come to an ever deeper understanding of the infinite mystery of the name of Jesus. All of this presents us with an opportunity for education and evangelization for ourselves and for others.

### **Principles of Inquiry**

This dissertation consists of two parts. The first part explores themes relevant to parish ministry from the perspective of the life and works of Vincent de Paul, and applies them to parochial activities in order to create an enthusiasm for the development of the spiritual life of the faithful from educational perspective that was envisaged by Vincent de Paul. The second part examines the *Summa Theologiae* in view of parish ministries and investigates new and reasonable methods founded on virtue and reason, faith and love. The second part attempts to interpret the modern possibilities of a Vincentian-Thomistic Christian pastoral education keeping in mind a broad understanding of evangelisation. Thus, we become involved in an attempt to explore new meaning and a method of functioning of parish life and activities in accord with the divine law and the teachings of Catholic Church for the spiritual development of the pastoral community.

The Church has confronted many challenges throughout her history of 2000 years. There are two major present challenges that Catholic faith confronts as it engages in the process of evangelization in the third millennium: the first one is that the Church needs to confront the tendency to view Christian revelation as one of the common human experiences that is the same in any other religion; the second is that the Church must proclaim theological and philosophical concepts in order to confront the false theology that conceives God as just another cause within the created world. Recognizing the truth of the presence of God, the necessity of faith in God, and the practice of virtue, especially charity, will help us to surmount these obstacles. I would like to depend on the interpretation of *Summa Theologiae* as one of the best means to strengthen my views of parochial education which I believe can help one to transcend the cultural vicissitudes with the force of reason and lead to a better understanding of Christian life.

The interpretation and teaching of revelation based on criteria intrinsic to the New and Old Testaments is the basic method of the educational approach in the search for truth. The relevance of this educational approach is justifiable when viewed within the context of a plurality of opinions and options and a common tendency for a correlational comparative

method of theological interpretation based on extrinsic criteria that are experienced in the present situation. Without a proper intrinsic understanding of the Catholic religion, adventuring into a pluralistic approach does not create a healthy understanding of the Christian faith and revelation. It is not enough for preachers of word of God to have developed their own understanding of the faith as they engage in a search for truth. These preachers also need to understand the situation of the community before entering upon any method of education for the pastoral community. People are very often caught up in the daily struggles of life as they attempt to provide for their loved ones and they may not have sufficient time to read books and develop an analytical approach in order to understand the faith. Frequent correct interpretation of the basics of religion is a necessity in any educational approach that is involved in the search for truth ... a search that will provide a foundation to knowledge that can be gradually developed into search for truth.

## **Part I**

### **Evangelization and Christian Education in Vincent de Paul**

#### **Introduction**

Generally, many people associate the concept of evangelization with the proclamation of the word of God to those people who know very little about Jesus Christ. This understanding includes teaching the salvific message in the areas of diaspora, based on the command of Jesus to share the Gospel with others (Mk 4:35), a mandate given by Jesus Christ before ascending to the heaven (Mk 16:15). There is, however, another dimension of evangelization, which many people who engage in the proclamation of word of God often forget, namely, internal evangelization, which means the preacher of the word of God needs to be spiritually oriented, must first be evangelized before evangelizing others in order to establish a solid convincing spiritual foundation and fidelity to the Gospel values. With no dichotomy, these two dimensions are complementary with regard to the scope of parochial activities and leadership. This is how the idea of Vincent de Paul becomes relevant to today's parochial mission project of Christian education and evangelization.

The way the word “education” is used in the explanation of spiritual advancement needs some clarification to understand the nuance of its implication in the internal spiritual development of an individual. The process of spiritual advancement is a kind of inner evolution to know, to love and worship God, which happens through development of spiritual qualities. It is necessary that a person acquire a certain degree of knowledge, and conventionally, learning and acquiring knowledge is associated with the term education, because generally, this concept implies studying in schools, colleges, and universities. I would like to distinguish education from formation, referring the entire process of spiritual education to formation, which means a process which changes a person’s habits, a process which forms the person. Vincent de Paul reflected on his experience, which led him to constructive cogitation, critical reflection, silent prayer, and further action. Constructive cogitation involves meditation and determination, critical reflection involves comparative study and analyse, silent prayer is part of contemplation, and action is an expression of love of God and neighbour. These four circles, namely, cogitation, critical reflection, silent prayer, and action, became elements in a habitual internal process, which simultaneously lead to formation and development of spiritual qualities. Thus, the whole self is engaged in this endeavour, which is quite distinct and more profound than the academic pursuit of knowledge. This spiritual formation, which I explain from an educational perspective, is more than the acquisition of knowledge. In other words, it could be said that someone possesses knowledge of God and yet that individual would not necessarily have to believe in God.

The spiritual formation of Vincent de Paul emerged in association with many people who influenced his life. We can say that the early development of his spirituality was received from his home and from his home parish where there was chapel dedicated to *Our Lady of Buglose* which attracted a large number of faithful who offered prayers and homage to the Blessed Virgin Mary.<sup>15</sup> Vincent’s action alone cannot define, *per se*, his spiritual life. His knowledge, gained through various interactions with people, went beyond himself because of cogitation, critical reflection, silent prayer, and focus on his activity. Vincent de Paul had a

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<sup>15</sup> Abelly, Louis. *The Life of the Venerable Servant of God Vincent de Paul: Founder and First Superior General of the Congregation of the Mission*, 3 volumes, edited by John E. Rybolt, CM, translated by William Quinn, FSC, notes by Edward R. Udovic, CM and John E. Rybolt, CM, introduction by Stafford Poole, CM, New City Press, New Rochelle, New York, 1993. Volume I, p. 35. Louis Abelly (1603–1691) was a parish priest in Paris, he was Vicar-General of Bayonne and in 1664 he was ordained Bishop of Rodez. In 1666 Louis Abelly attached himself to the house of St. Lazare to become a Lazarist. Abelly who knew Vincent de Paul personally wrote the first biography of Vincent de Paul in 1664, just four years after the death. No other major biography was published until 1748, eighty-four years later. This second biography was written by Pierre Collet, a theologian and a member of the Congregation of the Mission. See: Andía, Jaime Corera. “Brother Mathieu Re(g)nard, A Missionary who Worked Wonders”, in *Vincentina*, (April-June 2011, N°2), p 141.

global vision of ministry in an era when most people died within ten miles of their birthplace.<sup>16</sup> Vincent de Paul has inspired individuals to seek pragmatic means to find solutions to ease the pain of poverty and to advance the laity and clergy in spiritual well-being. To this end he approached all those who could contribute, their time, service and wealth, and invited them to join this mission of helping people and educating them. This educational approach became a living witness to the Gospel of Christ as it was done by a community of people who were committed to the values of Christian life. Thus, this mission was directed towards deeper communion of all members of the community.<sup>17</sup> If people could know a tree by its fruits and charity by its good works, then we can say with assurance that God blessed Vincent de Paul with special graces that enabled him to engage in an incredible ministry. He was filled with the spirit of charity through which he glorified God and proclaimed God's love to poor people.<sup>18</sup>

### **Theological Identity of Vincent de Paul in this Research.**

Vincent de Paul referred often to many biblical passages of both from the Old Testament and the New Testament. He quoted the Gospel of Saint Mathew more frequently than any other book. If we could summarize his theological identity in one sentence of the holy Bible, it would be Luke 4:18: *The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free.* This was the biblical, theological focal point on which he built his spirituality and which also oriented and motivated others to join in his efforts of evangelization. Vincent de Paul was motivated by the spiritual reality of the rural people of France in the first decades of 17th century. Vincent was one of those individuals who became identified with the Church's initiative to improve the spiritual life of the poor country people in the post-reformation period.<sup>19</sup> Due to lack of priest among the rural poor, they did not have regular celebration of sacraments. They lacked someone to guide and care for them with regard to their spiritual and physical well-being. Vincent de Paul envisaged a new form of life for the Congregation of the Mission and for the Daughters of Charity, which became two permanent institutions in the Church. Until his death on September 27<sup>th</sup>, 1660, Vincent de Paul worked productively with countless laymen and laywomen as well as ecclesiastics, who collaborated

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<sup>16</sup> Maloney, Robert P. *A New Century Dawns*. Society of Vincent de Paul, National Council of the United States, USA, 2017, p 98.

<sup>17</sup> Gay, CM., Gregory. "Vincentian Higher Education and Poverty Reduction" in *Vincentian Heritage*. 2008 (Volume 28, #2), p. 353.

<sup>18</sup> Abelly, Louis. *Op.cit.*, I:127.

<sup>19</sup> Forrestal Alison. *Vincent de Paul, the Lazarist Mission, and French Catholic Reform*. Oxford University Press, Great Clarendon Street, Oxford, UK, 2017, P 1.

with him in his efforts to reform the life of the Church.<sup>20</sup> The theological identity of both Congregations formulates their spiritual identity from the perspective of the missionary Christ, which describe also the theological standpoint of the research, the spiritual advancement in the educational perspective of pastoral community development. The research on Vincent de Paul, the founding superior general of the Congregation of the Mission, commonly known as the Lazarists or Vincentians,<sup>21</sup> and his principles of spirituality development, the knowledge and interpretation are concisely expressed in the theological identity.

- a) *The purpose of the Congregation of the Mission is to follow Christ evangelizing the poor.*<sup>22</sup>
- b) *The Congregation of the Mission from the time of its Founder, and under his inspiration, sees itself called by God to carry out the work of evangelizing the poor. In its own way, it can, with the whole Church, state of itself that evangelizing is to be considered its own grace and vocation, and expresses its deepest identity (cf. EN, 14). Furthermore, the members, individually and collectively, can rightly make use of the words of Jesus: "I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God for which I have been sent" (Lk 4:43).*<sup>23</sup>
- c) *The love of Christ, who had pity on the crowd (Mk 8:2), is the source of all our apostolic activity, and urges us, in the words of St. Vincent, to make the Gospel really effective.*<sup>24</sup>
- d) *The Daughters of Charity form a Company recognized by the Church under the name of Company of the Daughters of Charity of Saint Vincent de Paul, Servants of the Poor. The Company participates in the Church's universal mission of salvation, according to the charism of its Founders, Saint Vincent de Paul and Saint Louise de Marillac.*<sup>25</sup>
- e) *Christ is the Rule of the Daughters of Charity. They endeavour to follow Him as Scripture reveals Him to them and as their Founders perceived Him: Adorer of the Father, Servant of His Loving Plan, Evangelizer of those who are poor. To follow Him and carry on His mission, the Daughters of Charity choose to live totally and radically the evangelical counsels of chastity, poverty, and obedience, making them available for the purpose of their Company.*<sup>26</sup>

Vincentian spiritual identity is conformity to Christ: the intention of the Company is to imitate Jesus Christ to the extent that poor and insignificant people are integral part of the mission, and the Company aspires to take Jesus Christ as a model in order to do serve and lead people in the way Jesus did.<sup>27</sup> The characteristics to be kept in mind in the work of Vincentian evangelization are:

1° *clear and expressed preference for the apostolate among the poor, since their evangelization is the sign that the kingdom of God is present on earth (Mt 11:5);* 2° *attention to the realities of present day societies, especially to the factors that cause an unequal distribution of the world's goods, so that we can better carry out prophetic task of evangelization;* 3° *some sharing in the condition of the poor, so that not only will we attend to their evangelization, but that we ourselves may be evangelized by them;* 4° *genuine community spirit in all our apostolic works, so that we may be supported by one another in our common vocation;* 5° *readiness to go to any*

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<sup>20</sup> Forrestal, Alison, *Op.cit.*, p. 2.

<sup>21</sup> Forrestal, Alison, *Op.cit.*, p. 2.

<sup>22</sup> *Constitution and Statutes of the Congregation of the Mission*. Part 1. Art. 1

<sup>23</sup> *Constitution and Statutes of the Congregation of the Mission*. Part 1. Art. 10.

<sup>24</sup> *Constitution and Statutes of the Congregation of the Mission*. Part 1. Art. 11.

<sup>25</sup> *Constitution and Statutes of the Daughters of Charity*, # 1.

<sup>26</sup> *Constitution and Statutes of the Daughters of Charity*, #8.

<sup>27</sup> Mezzadri, Luigi. "Identity and a Sense of Vincentian Belonging", in *Vincentiana* (April-June, 2017, #2), p 209.

*part of the world, according to the example of the first missionaries of the Congregation; 6° striving to live in a state of continuous conversion both on the part of each individual member and on the part of the whole Congregation, according to the mind of St. Paul, who counsels us: do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind (Rm 12:2).<sup>28</sup>*

We can say that Vincent's Christocentric spirituality focused on "the Missionary Christ". For Vincent de Paul, Jesus Christ is first and foremost the evangelizer of the poor. He is the missionary who comes from God, the Father and returns to him after resurrection, emptying himself, through his suffering and death, in order to free people from the bondage of sin. The missionary Christ draws the people of God together (male and female, rich and poor) and empowers them in shouldering his mission. The virtues that Vincent de Paul emphasized in order that people might clothe themselves in the missionary characteristics of Christ are simplicity, humility, meekness, mortification, and zeal for souls.<sup>29</sup> Vincent often explained that Christ was the model for all ministry, and he encouraged his followers to seek the will of the Father and to trust in God's providence. Vincent de Paul spent hours in prayer, and he made a rule for the community that stated that each day, all the missionaries should meditate for one hour. By engaging in this practice Vincent was convinced that individuals would learn how to seek the will of God and how to live, trusting the providence of God.

### **Short History of Vincent de Paul**

Many French historians urge that the religious change in the wake of the council of Trent held in north Italy (1545–49, 1551–52 and 1562–63) should be examined from an angle that is greater than that of the institutional and clerical to deepen the research into the rich diversity of religious experience amongst those commonly categorized as the *dévots*. The influence of this *dévots* among the Catholic population of France grew day by day in the late 16<sup>th</sup> century and they grew steadily in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, they included men and women lay members, consecrated women, and clergy. Their common aim was to shape society according to Catholic precepts of devotion and morality. Two famous individuals of *dévots* were Bérulle and a Capuchin monk, Benet of Canfield, the author of the book, *the Rule of Perfection* that was first published in 1609.<sup>30</sup> Vincent often consulted Father Pierre de Bérulle, who was superior general of the Congregation of the Priests of the Oratory and later became cardinal.<sup>31</sup> *Dévots* functioned as an intermediary power between the ruling class and the people. They opposed protestants. In fact, they remained active until the French revolution. Alison Forrestal writes that studies of

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<sup>28</sup> *Constitution and Statutes of the Congregation of the Mission*. Part 1. Art. 12.

<sup>29</sup> Maloney P. Robert, *The Way of Vincent de Paul. A Contemporary Spirituality in the Service of the Poor*. New City Press, NY, 1992, p 22- 35.

<sup>30</sup> Forrestal, Alison, *Op.cit.*, p. 9.

<sup>31</sup> Abelly Louis, *Op.cit.*, I, p 50.

Catholic reform outside France indicate that the features of religious activities were often the results of active alliance between those outside the upper ranks of the church hierarchy. Louis Châtellier's study of Catholic revivalism had included *the Europe of the Devout*, and he included in his study eastern France, Germany, and Italy. Louis Châtellier identified particular social movements of urban and aristocratic lay elites who banded together into devotional Marian sodalities with the encouragement from the members of the Society of Jesus during the period of Catholic Reformation.<sup>32</sup> *Dévots* had opposed the ruling policy of Cardinal Richelieu,<sup>33</sup> who supported an absolute monarchy and sought an alliance with Protestant powers against the Habsburg<sup>34</sup>, Austria and Spain. When *the Day of Dupes* (November 10th, 1630) established Richelieu as prime minister, we see the beginnings of the political failure of *Dévots*. However, they would remain influential until the time of the French Revolution through the *Society of the Holy Sacrament* and through the fervent Catholic regent *Anne of Austria*. Cardinal Richelieu and Vincent had good relationship. In 1638, Cardinal Richelieu, as a memorial of his piety and as a sign of his esteem for Vincent and his institute, founded a house of the Congregation of the Mission in the city of Richelieu. This foundation had the obligation of conducting missions, preaching not only in the diocese of *Poitiers* in which the city of Richelieu is located but also in Lucon, where Cardinal Richelieu formerly was bishop.<sup>35</sup>

Before Vincent de Paul came to Paris in 1608, there was a spiritual setting through *Dévots*. Vincent de Paul was influenced by the *Dévots*, and the *French School of Spirituality*. We refer to this school even though some of its “notable pupils” like Vincent de Paul, Jean Eudes, Louis-Marie Grignon de Montfort, Charles de Condren, and Jean-Jacques Olier, did not develop the thoughts of Bérulle, but rather developed their own spiritual movements. The political influence of *Dévots* helped Vincent to gain accessibility to the ruling class.

Vincent de Paul was born on April 24, 1581 to his parents, Jean (also known as William) de Paul and Bertrande de Moras, at Ranquine, a hamlet near the village of Pouy, which is a few kilometres from Dax in Gascony in the south west of France. This region of France was called

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<sup>32</sup> Forrestal, Alison, *Op.cit.*, p. 6.

<sup>33</sup> Cardinal Richelieu was bishop of Lucon from 1607 to 1624, he was named cardinal in 1622, he resigned his diocesan office to give himself entirely to affairs of state. He died December 4, 1642, at the age fifty-eight.

<sup>34</sup> The Habsburgs dynasty included, at various times, the Holy Roman Empire, the Spanish Empire and the Austro-Hungarian Empire from the Diet of Augsburg in the High Middle Ages until the dissolution of the monarchy following the World War I in the late modern period. This dynasty had also ruled the Low Countries (1482-1794), Spain (1504–1700) and the Holy Roman Empire (1438–1806). As the Habsburg expanded towards western Europe, border friction began with the Kingdom of France. Subsequently rivalry between the two powers became the root cause for several conflicts, which include the Italian Wars (1494–1559) and the Thirty Years' War (1618–1648).

<sup>35</sup> Abelly Louis, *Op.cit.*, I, p 230.

*the Landes* (Marshlands). Vincent spent his youth together with his five siblings (three brothers and two sisters) Jean, Bernard, Dominic (Gayon), Mary, and Mary Claudine at Ranquine, helping with the farm work of his parents. Vincent was the third child of his parents. Pouy was near to the boarder of Spain, therefore most probably, Jean de Paul and Bertrande de Moras was influenced by Spanish traditions. At present, the village of Pouy is known as the town of St Vincent de Paul. In the modern administrative divisions of France, the locality of Ranquine, the town of St Vincent de Paul (old name: Pouy) and the city of Dax, are all to be found in the *département des Landes* (No: 40) in the Aquitaine Region of the southwest of France. Vincent left his birthplace between 1593-1595 to attend school in Dax, as per the practice at that time (it was usual for the family to educate at least one son, so that he could become a priest)<sup>36</sup>. Thus in 1596 he received tonsure and minor orders. In 1597, he began his studies in the Faculty of Theology at the University of Toulouse. At the age of nineteen, Vincent was ordained on September 23, 1600, that was in fact against the regulations set by the council of Trent, which stated that the candidates for ordination should have a minimum of 25 years of age.<sup>37</sup> His appointment at *Tilh* as parish priest was appealed in the court of Rome. In October 1604 he attained Bachelor of Theology degree from the university of Toulouse<sup>38</sup> and later Licentiate in Canon Law from the University of Paris. Before he came to Paris, his movements between 1605 and 1607 are not precisely known. In 1608 Vincent de Paul reached in Paris. He was unknown young priest but had contact with his spiritual director Bérulle. Vincent was like many other ecclesiastics who were drawn to Paris for ministry and for seeking some benefice.<sup>39</sup>

In 1608 before reaching Paris, Vincent was in Rome, which he himself confirmed in one of his letters that he wrote to Francois du Coudray who was in Rome, dated July 20, 1631; he wrote: thirty years ago, when I was in Rome. He wrote to Francois du Coudray, that he was pleased to find himself in the city, the centre of Christianity, the home of the head of church, burial place of saint Peter and Paul, and so many other martyrs and saintly persons who shed their blood and spent their lives for Jesus Christ. He felt privileged to walk where so many great saints had trod before him. During his stay in Rome, the vice legate, who arranged Vincent's stay in Rome, discovered more and more excellent qualities of spirit in Vincent, and he had introduced Vincent to several highly placed persons, from whose favour he could in the future

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<sup>36</sup> Forrestal, Alison, *Op.cit.*, p. 21.

<sup>37</sup> The Council of Trent, Sess. xxiii, chap. 12 had fixed the age 25 for the Priesthood. The council instructs in Sess. xxiii, chap. 12: no one shall be promoted to the sub-diaconate before the 22, to the diaconate before the 23, and to the priesthood before the 25 year of his age.

<sup>38</sup> Abelly Louis, *Op.cit.*, I, p 40.

<sup>39</sup> Forrestal, Alison, *Op.cit.*, p. 19-20.

receive considerable worldly advancement. He also gave Vincent the opportunity, when he returned to Paris, to see King Henry IV on a secret matter which had been confided to him. Vincent's first lodgings in Paris were in the faubourg Saint Germain, where he met some of the chief officers of the late Queen Marguerite. Among these was Monsieur Du Fresne, secretary of her Majesty, with whom he formed a close friendship because of the virtue and good qualities Monsieur Vincent saw in him. Vincent gained the notice of the de Gondi house, where Monsieur Du Fresne became secretary. He later became steward of Philippe Emmanuel de Gondi, count of Joigny and general of the galleys of France. Monsieur Du Fresne said of Vincent, that Vincent was humble, charitable, and prudent, doing good for everyone. He was not troubling anyone, cautious in his words, ready to listen to others. He often visited the sick poor in the charity hospital, serving them and speaking with them. In 1609 while still living in *Saint Germain*, Vincent was accused of theft by a Judge of the town of Sore in the district of Bordeaux, with whom he had shared a room. Vincent was innocent, which was later proved. The judge insulted Vincent before everyone and demanded restitution for his loss. The judge informed Father Pierre de Berulle (1575-1629) and his company, because he knew that Vincent was in the habit of consulting, him who was then superior general of the Congregation of the Priests of the Oratory and later became a cardinal. Bérulle knew that Vincent de Paul was innocent, and he supported Vincent.<sup>40</sup> About two years later, Father de Berulle insisted Vincent to accept the care of the parish in Clichy and begin his active work in the Lord's vineyard. From the time of 1618, Vincent began to distance himself from Pierre de Bérulle and at the same time established a closer relationship with his new spiritual teacher, Andre Duval, a professor at the Sorbonne.<sup>41</sup> Vincent de Paul commend his spirit into the hands of God in Paris on September 27, 1660. On 13th August 1729 Vincent de Paul was declared blessed, by Pope Benedict XIII; he was canonized on 16th June 1737 by Pope Clement XII. At least for some years, due the shortage of financial resources, shortly after the death of Vincent de Paul, the Congregation of the Mission was focussing on the two classical ministries: of the formation of priests in the seminaries and the ministry of the word of God, while, assisting the poor was the competence of the Company of Daughters of Charity.<sup>42</sup>

Pope Francis said, this "little mustard seed" sown in 1617 developed into the Congregation of the Mission and the Company of the Daughters of Charity, branched out into

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<sup>40</sup> Abelly Louis, *Op.cit.*, I, p 48-50.

<sup>41</sup> Gutiérrez, Rolando. "Two Genes of the Four-Hundred-Year-Old Charism", in *Vincentiana* (July-September 2017, #3), p 352.

<sup>42</sup> Mezzadri, Luigi. "Identity and a Sense of Vincentian Belonging", *Op.cit.*, p 211.

other institutes and associations and became a great tree (Mk 4:31-32).<sup>43</sup> Charity works done by the Congregation of the Mission has received many laurels and recognition. The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), at its Coordination and Management meeting of April 2017, adopted the recommendation of the Committee on Nongovernmental Organizations (NGOs) to grant special consultative status to the Congregation of the Mission. This consultative status enables the Congregation of the Mission to engage actively with ECOSOC and its subsidiary bodies, as well as with the United Nations Secretariat.<sup>44</sup>

## Part 1 Chapter 1

### 1.1.1 Formation of Parochial Leadership

Madame de Gondy<sup>45</sup> regarded Vincent as a second guardian angel who each day drew down new graces upon her family by his zeal for souls and prudent conduct. Her ambition was to advance unceasingly along the way of perfection, and Vincent in turn as a wise director helped her with all the means at his disposal to fulfil this earnest wish for spiritual development. Both of them, animated by the same Gospel spirit, devoted themselves to various charitable works.<sup>46</sup> Once Madame de Gondy was visiting the lands owned by her family in 1617, and was accompanied by Vincent de Paul as she visited two villages, Gannes and Folleville in the Diocese of Amiens. A dying man in Gannes out of remorse wished to see Vincent to speak with him about the ailment of his heart. Vincent went to him, listened to him patiently ... he prayed for him and consoled him. This sick man died three years later<sup>47</sup> happily because he could speak to someone about the thoughts that troubled his heart. This man was able to engage in a spiritual discourse with a priest who explained about the merciful love of God that is made manifest in the sacrament of confession. The change of attitude of this sick man, who was well known in the village Gannes gave Madame de Gondy much surprise and enthusiasm. Consequently, she

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<sup>43</sup> Fernández, Alvaro Mauricio. "Letter of the Holy Father Francis to the Vincentian Family for the Feast of Saint Vincent de Paul/ 400th Prayer", in *Vincentiana* (July-September 2017, #3), p 298.

<sup>44</sup> Campuzano, Guillermo. "The Congregation of the Mission Granted ECOSOC (Economic and Social Council of the UN) Status at the United Nations", in *Vincentiana* (April-June, 2017, #2), p 191.

<sup>45</sup> Pierre de Bérulle, who became cardinal, was the founder of the Congregation of the French Oratory in 1611 in Paris on the model of the one founded in 1556 by Philip Neri at Rome. (However, both of them had structural difference: in the Italian Oratory, the houses were independent of one another, but Pierre de Bérulle placed the government of all the houses in the hands of the superior general.) Pierre de Bérulle suggested approximately in the year 1613 to Emmanuel de Gondy, that Vincent could take the position of tutor to the children of Emmanuel de Gondy, count of Joigny and general of the galleys of France, and of his wife, Dame Françoise Marguerite de Silly who is known as Madam de Gondy (1580-1625). Vincent spent twelve years in this household. He settled disputes and dissensions, promoted union and concord among the house servants, visited them in their rooms when they fell sick. When the major feasts of the Church approached, he gathered the domestic servants for religious instruction, regarding the reception of the sacraments. (Abelly, Louis. *Op.cit.*, I:59).

<sup>46</sup> Abelly, Louis. *Op.cit.*, I:59.

<sup>47</sup> Abelly, Louis. *Op.cit.*, I:60.

together with Vincent organized a popular mission retreat in Folleville, and the power of God worked through their initiative. Vincent filled with the grace of God preached the word of God convincingly in the simple language of the peasants. A great number of people came forward to attend the popular mission and to make their confessions, that Vincent had to call for more priests to help him. This experience at Gannes and at Folleville is related to the origin of the Congregation of the Mission, because Vincent found the necessity of motivating and training priests who were willing to listen to the sorrows of the people and to render spiritual guidance in the love of God. Vincent frequently involved many resource persons for explaining complex questions of unfamiliar issues, and made use of the available special competence of the laity, in order to form the clergy and strengthen the pastoral leadership.<sup>48</sup>

Vincent understood that people are the focus of parish activity, not the institutional structure. For him the created structure was an accidental means of serving the people, which is why he told his followers, the members of the Congregation of the Mission, that they are the servants of the poor people, and not their masters.<sup>49</sup> In other words, the structure has no meaning and relevance if it does not serve the faithful, the children of God, for whom the structure has been created. Safeguarding the structure for its own sake was the great hurdle of his times, something which Vincent found difficult to understand. He discovered the need to motivating priests to work on behalf of the poor country people<sup>50</sup>, and the need to educate them with regard to providing people the expected spiritual care ... a ministry for which they themselves were set apart to do with the grace of God.<sup>51</sup> To this end he began the spiritual formation<sup>52</sup> and education of the clergy<sup>53</sup> for their spiritual advancement. He was convinced that the parochial

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<sup>48</sup> Kelly, John, Margaret. "Decision Making: Councils of the Daughters of Charity (1646-1659)", in *Vincentian Heritage*, (Volume 16, # 1, 1995) p 80.

<sup>49</sup> Vincent de Paul, *Correspondence, Conference, Documents*, translators: Helen Marie Law, DC (Vol. 1), Marie Poole, DC (Vol. 1-14), James King, CM (Vol. 1-2), Francis Germovnik, CM (Vol. 1-8, 13a-13b [Latin]), Esther Cavanagh, DC (Vol. 2), Ann Mary Dougherty, DC (Vol. 12); Evelyne Franc, DC (Vol. 13a-13b), Thomas Davitt, CM (Vol. 13a-13b [Latin]), Glennon E. Figge, CM (Vol. 13a-13b [Latin]), John G. Nugent, CM (Vol. 13a-13b [Latin]), Andrew Spellman, CM (Vol. 13a-13b [Latin]); edited: Jacqueline Kilar, DC (Vol. 1-2), Marie Poole, DC (Vol. 2-13b), Julia Denton, DC [editor-in-chief] (Vol. 3-10, 13a-13b), Paule Freeburg, DC (Vol. 3), Mirian Hamway, DC (Vol. 3), Elinor Hartman, DC (Vol. 4-10, 13a-13b), Ellen Van Zandt, DC (Vol. 9-13b), Ann Mary Dougherty (Vol. 11-12 and 14); annotated: John W. Carven, CM (Vol. 1-13b); New City Press, Brooklyn and Hyde Park, 1985-2014, volume XI, p. 349 (Conference, *Love for the Poor*: January 1657). Future references to this work will use the initials [CCD] followed by the volume number, followed by the page number, followed by title of conference or person to whom a letter was addressed.

<sup>50</sup> Forrestal, Alison. *Vincent de Paul, the Lazarist Mission, and French Catholic Reform*. Oxford University Press, Great Clarendon Street, Oxford, UK, 2017, P 51.

<sup>51</sup> Constitution and Statutes of the Congregation of the Mission, #1-3.

<sup>52</sup> Arce, Fenelón Castillo. "The Collaboration of the Congregation of the Mission in the Formation of the Clergy," in *Vincentiana* (April-June, 2016, # 2), p 81.

<sup>53</sup> "To work for the salvation of poor country people is the main purpose of our vocation, and all the rest is only accessory to it; for we would never have worked in ministry for the ordinands and in seminaries for the clergy if

leadership is for spiritual guidance and should be focused on preaching the love of God and reaching out to serve men and women in need.<sup>54</sup> Vincent esteemed the following elements as vital characteristics for who are engaged in pastoral leadership.

### 1.1.1.1 To Be Committed to Evangelization

All those who are involved in pastoral leadership shoulder the responsibility of evangelizing the people. The power of the Holy Spirit strengthens this conviction of leaders and gives them sufficient grace to inspire the faithful people God. When a leader is spirited, that person is usually moved by an interior impulse which encourages, motivates, nourishes and gives meaning to oneself and his/her communal activity. Spirit filled leadership in pastoral work is not the same as a set of tasks dutifully carried out despite one's own personal inclinations and wishes. The spirited person longs to find the right words to create enthusiasm for a new energetic action of pastoral ministry full of fervour, joy, generosity, courage, boundless love and attraction. No words of encouragement and support will be enough unless the fire of the Holy Spirit burns in the hearts of pastoral leaders.<sup>55</sup> This means that pastoral leaders can carry out effectively any of their pastoral work only when they are open to the working of the Holy Spirit. Those leaders who are fearlessly open to the working of the Holy Spirit will go forth to the people and become heralds of God's wondrous deeds, capable of speaking to each person in his or her own language. The Holy Spirit also gives ministers the courage to proclaim the Gospel with boldness in every time and place, even when it meets with opposition<sup>56</sup>. Then the leaders of pastoral work become evangelizers who pray and work<sup>57</sup>. Without prayer, all their activity risks being fruitless and their message empty. Therefore, they need to be a group of people who proclaim the gospel message not only through words but also by their own life<sup>58</sup> which is transfigured by the conviction of God's presence.<sup>59</sup> Vincent was concerned and worried about the pastoral situation of Europe and different parts of the world to which he sent the

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we hadn't judged that this was necessary to maintain the people and preserve the fruits of missions given by good priests." (CCD: XI:121[Conference, *Repetition of Prayer*, October 25, 1643]).

<sup>54</sup> Alfonso, Honorio López. "Confronting the challenge of Catholics who leave the Church", in *Vincentiana*, (May/June, 1998, #3).

<sup>55</sup> *Evangelii Gaudium*, #261.

<sup>56</sup> *Evangelii Gaudium*, #259.

<sup>57</sup> *Evangelii Gaudium*, #262.

<sup>58</sup> Arce, Fenelón Castillo. "The Collaboration of the Congregation of the Mission in the Formation of the Clergy," *Op.cit.*, p 82; "That fact explains the words that he spoke later in the same conference: We can say that coming to evangelize the poor doesn't simply mean to teach them the Mysteries necessary for their salvation, but also to do what was foretold and prefigured by the prophets to make the gospel effective (CCD: XII:75). Vincent understood those words, to make the gospel effective, not in the way that we understand them, that is, not as some form of social promotion on behalf of the poor but rather as a demand to correct the faults that were so prevalent among the clergy."

<sup>59</sup> *Evangelii Gaudium*, #259.

missionaries. He often prayed to God to send workers into the vineyard of the Lord, as true Apostles who would continue the mission of Jesus Christ.<sup>60</sup>

During the homily for the Canonisation of St John Gabriel Perboyre, a member of the Congregation of the Mission, pope John Paul II said: *it is the Cross of Christ that he found along the roads where he was sent. Through daily imitation of his Lord, in humility and gentleness, he fully identified with him.*<sup>61</sup> At times Vincent wrote with great emotion about his esteem for those missionaries sent to the apostolic ministry in Madagascar and Barbary. Those missionaries would receive the last sacrament before going to the missions. Most of them never came back home. They died of different sicknesses and assiduous work. Vincent was emotional at times remembering their suffering.<sup>62</sup>

Vocation to the missionary life is a call to set people's heart on fire and inflame them with love of God. They are privileged to carry out the same task that Jesus did. They are sent not only to love God but also to make him loved by extending the Church and by preaching and living the word of God. For Vincent, missionaries are individuals who live the values of Gospel and go out, not just to one parish, not just to one diocese, but all over the world<sup>63</sup> ... they belong to the universal Church. When speaking to his confreres, Vincent referred to the authority of Andre Duval<sup>64</sup> in order to highlight the importance of priests as tireless workers. Andre Duval,

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<sup>60</sup> *Alas! The Church has enough solitaires by His mercy and too many useless ones, and even more who tear her apart. Her great need is evangelical men who work to purge, enlighten, and unite her to her Divine Spouse ... to go and proclaim Jesus Christ to the poor people, and work at training priests; let us labour at that with all our might, confident that Our Lord, who has called us to His manner of life, will give us a greater share in His Spirit and, in the end, in His glory.* CCD: III:204-205 (Letter: *To Claude Dufour, Superior in Saintes*, June 15, 1647). *We have just sent three priests and three Daughters of Charity to Narbonne, two hundred leagues from here; ... The harvest is abundant; we must pray that God will raise up apostolic men to gather it in.* CCD: VIII:145 (Letter: *To Guillaume Desdames*, September 12, 1659).

<sup>61</sup> Pope John Paul II. *Homily for the Canonisation of St John Gabriel Perboyre*. Trans. Brindley, Stanislaus, in *Vincentiana*, (November/December, 1997, #6).

<sup>62</sup> *What have our Missionaries in Barbary and Madagascar undertaken? What have they carried out? What have they accomplished? What have they suffered? ... In Madagascar the Missionaries preach, hear confessions, and teach catechism constantly from four in the morning until ten, and from two in the afternoon until nightfall; the rest of the time is spent praying the Office and visiting the sick. Those men are workers, they're true Missionaries! May God in His goodness be pleased to give us the spirit that animates them, a big heart, vast and ample!* CCD: XI:191-193 (Conference: *Repetition of Prayer*, July 24, 1655).

<sup>63</sup> CCD: XII:215 (Conference: *Charity*, May 30, 1659).

<sup>64</sup> Andre Duval, a Priest, a lecturer and Professor in theology at the Sorbonne, born on 15 January 1564 as the son of Nicolle d'Eaubonne and Robert Duval, was a champion of the catholic reform. He made a significant impact on the reform of a number of religious orders and institutions in France. He contributed to the establishment of the reformed Benedictines, and was involved in the reform of the orders of Saint Augustine, of Saint Benedict and of Citeaux. He was a member of Extraordinary Council to the Bernardines in Paris. He was appointed one of the judges in the troubles among the religious of the Third Order of Saint Francis. He opposed the expulsion of the Jesuits from France. He also contributed to the foundation and governance of the Reformed Carmelites in France; he was one of the first to whom Madame Acarie communicated her ideas on bringing the order to France; along with Pierre de Berulle and Jacques Gallement, he was one of the three first superiors of the Order. In 1604, he founded a convent of the same Carmelites at Pointoise. Out of his own resources he purchased the house where the Carmelites in Pointoise were to live. And he founded like establishments in Rouen, Gisors, Amiens, Dijon,

a great theologian of the Church, used to say that a priest must have more work than he can do because as soon as idleness and sloth get hold of a priest, every vice rushes in from all side.<sup>65</sup> The same could be said not only about the priest, but about all those who are involved in the pastoral mission. Thus, Vincent prayed: *O Saviour! O my good Saviour, may it please Your Divine Goodness to keep the Mission free of that spirit of laziness and of seeking its own comforts, and give it an ardent zeal for Your glory, which will make it accept everything joyfully and never refuse an opportunity to serve You.*<sup>66</sup> Vincent engaged in many activities. For instance, the direction of the Congregation of Mission Priests was not the only charge laid upon Vincent during the time of his residence in the Comte de Joigny's house, he was chosen by the saintly Bishop of Geneva, Francis de Sales, to be confessor and spiritual guide to the Convent of the Visitation, established by Madame de Chantal in Paris, and about the same time, he was appointed by the king, Louis XIII, chaplain-general of convicts and galley slaves.<sup>67</sup>

### 1.1.1.2 To Be in a Continual State of Renewal.

*It is true that actual experience prepares one for service more adequately than vicarious experience.*<sup>68</sup> Necessity of a continual state of renewal is applied to both the ministers of the church and the laity. Spirituality of a person is not naturally self-evident, rather continuous human effort is necessary to advance in spiritual development. Vincent cautions that spirituality has two obvious spheres of development: first, growing in spirituality within oneself, and second helping others to grow in spirituality. Vincent de Paul illustrated the necessity of continual state of renewal from the example of Jesus's earthly life; although Jesus was not in

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Beaune, and Chalon-Saone. He worked to re-establish proper observance in the abbeys of Montmartre and de Montivilliers, where relaxation had taken place during the civil wars, and he assisted in the setting up of the Ursulines of Pontoise. He was appointed one of the three directors and administrators of the Hospital de la Misericorde in Paris. As a theologian in the Sorbonne, Duval was further able to dedicate his talents and prestige to the Catholic Restoration in France by concentrating upon restoring the University of Paris to its role as the intellectual stronghold of Catholicism. A dedicated disciple of Saint Thomas Aquinas, Duval was concerned that only re-dedication to authentic Thomism could offer the foundation requisite for the refutation of heresy and the revival of Catholicism. Duval was somewhat modest as to his own appearance. He refused, but his portrait was drawn without his knowledge. Michael Angelo sketched the portrait of Andre Duval without Duval's knowledge, and made two copies of the sketch. It was one of these copies that Vincent de Paul displayed at Saint-Lazare (the mother house of the Congregation of the Mission). When Duval, visiting Saint-Lazare, saw it there, he was overcome with confusion, so much so that he compelled Vincent to remove it from sight. Vincent did it, until after the death of Duval, when the picture was again displayed, along with those of others known for their virtue and piety. (Williams, Tim. "Many Strokes of the Lash: André Duval" in *Vincentian Heritage Journal*. 2008 [Volume 28, #1] p. 21).

<sup>65</sup> Delgado Juan Corpus. *The Contributions of the Vincentian Charism to the Mission of the Church*. 2015: [https://famvin.org/wiki/The\\_Contributions\\_of\\_the\\_Vincentian\\_Charism\\_to\\_the\\_Mission\\_of\\_the\\_Church](https://famvin.org/wiki/The_Contributions_of_the_Vincentian_Charism_to_the_Mission_of_the_Church) (accessed on 6.6.2019).

<sup>66</sup> CCD: XI:191 (Conference: *Repetition of Prayer*, July 24, 1655).

<sup>67</sup> Wilson, R.F (ed). *The Life of St. Vincent de Paul. With an Appendix, Containing Some of His Letters*. Rivingtons, London, Oxford and Cambridge, 1873. p 59.

<sup>68</sup> Kelly, Margaret John. *Louise de Marillac: The Gentle Power of Liberation, Op.cit.*, p 27.

need of spiritual renewal, according to Vincent, Jesus practiced virtues for about thirty years and only last three years he preached the message of God.<sup>69</sup> The spirit of continual state of spiritual renewal helps pastoral leaders to carry out their ministry with conviction by the grace of God.<sup>70</sup>

During the conference on the purpose of the Congregation of the Mission, Vincent explains his anxiety over the fact that false teaching occurred in the Catholic Church through her own ministers. In other words, heresy, erroneous teaching and protest were preached and prevailed through the ministers of the church - priests or those who had studied to become priests, e.g., Luther was a priest, and John Calvin, with financial aid from two ecclesiastical benefices, was studying theology to become a priest. Then at his father's behest, he studied law. However, he did not complete either discipline. Therefore, Vincent cautioned his confreres and collaborators, not to become sources of misfortune and perpetrators of scandal.<sup>71</sup>

The structure and the very existence of the Mission needs to be on a continual state of renewal, including spiritual and corporal. Existence of a particular parish mission need to be relevant to the needs of the local situation. The leaders should be able to sense the necessity of the local situation and close a particular mission, if that mission is not most relevant to the local necessity, because the time and energy of those leaders could be used for other mission activities. Vincent wrote to Monsieur Lambert, a priest of the mission in Richelieu, to close a mission.<sup>72</sup> At the same time the leaders of a busy mission station need physical rest in order to nourish themselves with inner spiritual strength through prayer, otherwise higher goals of theological virtues may not be rightly practiced. Jesus said to his disciples, let us go alone to a quiet place and rest for a while.<sup>73</sup> Jesus is the centre of all our missions, and we must proclaim

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<sup>69</sup> Ryan, Frances and Rybolt, E. John (eds). *Op.cit.*, p 129.

<sup>70</sup> *You must have recourse to God through meditation in order to preserve your soul in His fear and love; for, alas Monsieur, I'm obliged to tell you- and you must know this- that people are often lost while contributing to the salvation of others. ...Now, in order not to fall into the misfortune of Saul or Judas, you must be inseparably attached to our Lord and say often, raising your heart and mind to Him, O Lord, do not allow me, in trying to save others, to be unfortunately lost myself; be my Shepherd, and do not deny me the graces you impart to others through my instrumentality and the functions of my ministry.* CCD: XII:312 (Letter: Advice to Antoine Durand, Named Superior of the Agde Seminary, 1656).

<sup>71</sup> CCD: XII:76 (Conference: Purpose of the Congregation of the Mission, December 6, 1658).

<sup>72</sup> *The mission in Saint-Germain will come to a close in four days with a very special blessing, anticipated by some little occasions for practicing patience.* CCD: I:440 (Letter: Lambert Aux Couteaux, Richelieu, February 20, 1638).

<sup>73</sup> Mark 6:31-32.

the message of Jesus so that we may act in him and he be present in our actions. This is not a one-time goal of life but an ongoing process of development in spiritual life.<sup>74</sup>

People learn gradually to live in the spirit of Jesus and to speak the language of Jesus, who always spoke about his father's love and taught the people about eternal life. Just as development of earthly life involves a process, spiritual life is also a continuous process of development. The continual state of spiritual renewal advised by Vincent during the preparation of the candidates for priestly ordination was visibly marked by improvement in the spiritual life among the whole body of clergy, and became a source of joy.<sup>75</sup>

### 1.1.1.3 To be Able to Find and Develop Strategies

The power of Vincent's pastoral vision is seen in the manner in which he developed strategies to address the problems that he found in so many different situations. Vincent de Paul understands that the strength of parochial leadership consists in finding and developing strategies and implementing them for the betterment of the faithful. When he found that the amount of food donated by the people was being wasted, he decided to organize it systematically, and that is how he organized the lay leadership of the Confraternity of Charity (1617) for social action. This strategical action began as a proposal of Vincent that the women of the parish in Chatillon-les-Dombes join together and engage in organized charity.<sup>76</sup> Later, he found that there are works which women find difficult to carry out because they need to take care of their families. Thus, he established the first Confraternity of Charity for men at Folleville (1620). Madam de Gondi continually requested that he provide for the spiritual care and the evangelization of the hundreds of peasants who lived on her estate, which was involved with lot of works that called for needs of specially trained and motivated priests as servants of the poor, therefore the company of four priests joined together to establish the *Congregation of the Mission* (1625).<sup>77</sup> Then he found, that the priests joined in this action, at times left the Congregation, that is why the vow of stability is introduced. From movement of the confraternities later arose both the *Daughters of Charity* (1633)<sup>78</sup> and the *Ladies of Charity*

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<sup>74</sup> *You must empty yourself of self in order to cloth yourself with Jesus Christ. You know that ordinary causes produce the effects of their nature: a sheep produces a sheep, etc., and a human another human; likewise, if that man who directs and forms others and speaks to them is animated with only a human spirit, those who see him, listen to him, and strive to imitate him will become totally human: no matter what he says and does, he will inspire them with only the appearance of virtue, and not the substance.* CCD: XII:311 (Letter: Advice to Antoine Durand, Named Superior of the Agde Seminary, 1656).

<sup>75</sup> Wilson, R.F (ed). *Op.cit.*, p 117.

<sup>76</sup> Abelly, Louis. *Op.cit.*, I:73.

<sup>77</sup> Abelly, Louis. *Op.cit.*, I:109.

<sup>78</sup> Abelly, Louis. *Op.cit.*, I:133.

(1635) in Paris. All these movements were not meant for institutionalizing things rather it was his strategical expression of addressing root cause of the problem, some of them became later established institution, as there was a necessity of order in the movement in order to maintain regulation and clarity of expression in life and action. However, Vincent took special interest to establish the *Daughters of Charity* and the *Congregation of the Mission*, both of them created new tradition in the history of catholic church. Vincent was never reluctant to discuss his strategies for ministry with his spiritual director de Berulle. His virtue of fear of the God made him discuss his projects with his spiritual director, because he thought, otherwise that might hinder his perfect devotion to God.<sup>79</sup>

#### 1.1.1.4 To Be One Among the People

Hierarchical order is always a great challenge in the pastoral leadership. There is the danger of excluding the uneducated, non-influential and poor people in most circumstances of hierarchical order of administrative reality. This was an aching problem in the beginning of 17<sup>th</sup> century. To meet priests and bishop were not usually that easy, people could meet them only as per schedule, if at all they get an appointment. The poor peasants had fear to approach them, and talk to them. To improve this situation and to turn the hierarchical order anticlockwise, Vincent provoked himself in implementing his own statement which was against the social status and traditional cultural hierarchical perspective<sup>80</sup>; he said “the poor are our lords and masters”<sup>81</sup>; to him the poor peasant parishioners are masters over the clerical work, and then his priestly colleagues were asked to be a servant who is always ready to serve the people, because he understood that in doing the works of service they move closer to the love of God, discovering virtues from the faithful. The verse from the holy Scripture: “the Lord has sent me to bring the *Good News* to the poor” (Lk 4:18) convinced his missionary life to be rooted in steadfast service for the poor up to his last breath. Vincent de Paul advocated nonhierarchically functioning of a circle model of pastoral ministry, wherein the members of the parish and different portfolio holders of a parish together with the parish priest would feel one among themselves in the ministry of evangelization.

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<sup>79</sup> Wilson, R.F (ed). *Op.cit.*, p 43.

<sup>80</sup> Forrestal, Alison. *Op.cit.*, p. 51.

<sup>81</sup> CCD: XI:349 (Conference: *The love for the Poor*. January 1657).

### 1.1.1.5 To Be Invokers of Generosity and Political Representative

We are used to hear the terms charity, love and service for the poor; however, it is the knowledge of the term generosity that illustrates better the Vincentian spiritual approach to ministry in a parish. It is generosity which makes a difference in the spiritual approach in one's life. Generosity is not necessarily connected with monetary help; it needs to be understood in a spirit of spiritual advancement in every sphere of one's religious understanding of living the faith in Jesus Christ. As children are taught to be ethically generous to one another, we need to teach the faithful to be spiritually generous. You add the spirit of generosity to any virtue, then, you will get an extra ordinary super virtue, eloquent in expression and action. As Vincent explained about the spirit of compassion, he said that priests, above all must be filled with the spirit of compassion, since they are obliged by their state and vocation to serve the most weighed down by corporal and spiritual sufferings.<sup>82</sup> Charity can't remain idle, charity impels us to work for the salvation and consolation of others.<sup>83</sup> It is necessary that pastoral administrators practice the spirit of generosity in their words and action which would clearly manifest love of God, Zeal for the souls and concern for the needy people. Invoking the generosity of the people to meet the ends in a parish, is equivalent to trusting the people to organize different pastoral works in coordinating various sources in order to meet the pastoral ends. Generosity is a learned quality which strengthens the foundation of all other virtues; therefore, it should be learned by pastoral leaders and be practiced in their daily lives in words and action.

As per the political situation of a local area and even of a country, profound differences are apparent in the structure and institutions of the people. Then the political situation and opinion is also connected to the cultural, economic and social evolution of the people. Any political change can bring in great influence on the life of the political community, especially regarding the rights and duties of all, in the exercise of civil freedom, in the attainment of the common good, and in organizing the relations of citizens among themselves and with respect to public authority.<sup>84</sup> Vincent de Paul himself was a connecting person between the needy people and the aristocrat class of the then political force in France. He used to present the difficulties of the people to the rulers of the land. Vincent de Paul and his followers played a part in the ministry to the slaves in North Africa during 17th century. Louis XIII had asked

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<sup>82</sup> CCD: XI:69(Conference: *The Spirit of Compassion*).

<sup>83</sup> CCD: XII:216 (Conference: *Charity*, May 30, 1659).

<sup>84</sup> *Gaudium et spes*, #73.

Vincent de Paul to send some of his missionaries to care for the physical and spiritual needs of the Christian slaves in Barbary. In addition to royal funds of ten thousand livres, Vincent received contributions from the Ladies of Charity to establish a house in Marseilles in 1642 from which he sent priests to console and instruct poor captive Christians.<sup>85</sup> Vincent stood for the poor peasants of the rural area, he asked his company not to neglected the care that we should show to poor people, and he recommend above all that we should feed them well, at least as well as we do in our own community.<sup>86</sup> The Lazarists' ability to provide specialized services was a key factor in their attraction to collect funds from patrons; however, Vincent de Paul was indispensable in this movement, for he drew the patrons towards the group in the first place, represented the group, and nurtured the relations necessary to strike a possible deal.<sup>87</sup>

As a true speaker for the people, Vincent was very much involved in the political situation of the land. Perhaps that was the reason why, during the French revolution, only his statue was not destroyed<sup>88</sup>, because all the people, both the believers and those who did not believe in Jesus Christ, respected the political image of Vincent de Paul. Constructive political relations are necessary to be a good pastoral leader. Such relationships join the people of the community with government officials and enable people to present the matters of concern of the people in authority and also, hold those authorities accountable for their action. Vincent provided for both the spiritual and the physical well-being of the people<sup>89</sup> and did this in the same way as Jesus who spoke about the spiritual and physical well-being of the people. For example, Jesus healed the crippled woman to teach the authorities that physical care of a sick person remains within the spiritual realm of the sabbath day that was set apart for the Lord (Lk 13:10-16).

### **1.1.2 Participation in the Evangelization.**

The Constitutions and Statutes of the Congregation of the Mission founded by Vincent de Paul begins with an explanation of the vocation to follow Christ, the evangelizer of the poor. In this regard Vincent defined the charism of the Congregation of the Mission in three dimensions: members need to make every effort to put on the spirit of Christ in order to acquire appropriate perfection to their vocation to evangelize; that members need to work at evangelizing the poor, especially the more abandoned; and that the members also need to be

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<sup>85</sup> Abelly, Louis. *Op.cit.* II:86.

<sup>86</sup> Abelly, Louis. II:264.

<sup>87</sup> Forrestal Alison. *Op.cit.*, p. 132.

<sup>88</sup> Forrestal, Alison. p. 112, 116, 120, 285.

<sup>89</sup> Forrestal, Alison. p. 183, 210, 218, 231, 291.

involved in formation in order to lead the people to a fuller participation in the evangelizing process on behalf of those who are poor.<sup>90</sup> The ministry of the Word and charity of the Congregation of the Mission express the richness of Vincentian charism, its mysticism and its prophetic dimension.<sup>91</sup> Vincent's charism was born of the encounter with the missionary Christ sent by the Father to be the evangelizer of the poor.<sup>92</sup>

Vincentian spirituality advocates two types of participation in the process of evangelization. First, one needs to endeavour to participate in the spirit of Jesus Christ by imbibing that inspiration through reading Scripture. Secondly, one needs to convert the spirit of the gospel to attentive action in order to participate in the signs of the time adapted to the circumstance of the local place. Both these participations remain in a state of constant renewal as far as the evangelization and Christian education are considered<sup>93</sup>.

Vincent distinguished two-dimensions of the process of evangelization, internal and external. The external dimension of evangelization is universal in nature which allows all people to participate in the mission. This is a constant endeavour of the religious, priests and leaders of the Christian community, who have to confront the daily challenges of the people, because those who are in social, economic and in various other difficulties, are always prone to question the articles of the Christian faith. The experience of Vincent in 16<sup>th</sup> century France, motivated him to emphasize the proclamation of the word of God, a process of evangelisation, that was to be carried out on behalf of those people who did not know the word of God and not deep rooted in Christian values. This proclamation of the word of the God to the poor is to be understood as a matter of speaking and acting, in other words, while revealing Jesus Christ to the poor people, the minister also needs to give importance to their social needs, without return of any kind, purely for the love of God.<sup>94</sup>

The second aspect, the internal dimension of the evangelization, is understood as a mission directed to the whole person, that is, to an individual's mind, spirit and body. The

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<sup>90</sup> Constitutions and Statutes of the Congregation of the Mission, #1.

<sup>91</sup> Fernandez, Alvaro Mauricio. "Editor's Note", Translated: Plock, Charles T., in *Vincentiana* (April-June, 2017, #2), p 148.

<sup>92</sup> Mezzadri, Luigi. "Identity and a Sense of Vincentian Belonging", in *Vincentiana* (April-June, 2017, #2), p 208.

<sup>93</sup> Constitutions and Statutes of the Congregation of the Mission, #2. *We read in sacred scripture that our Lord, Jesus Christ, sent on earth for the salvation of the human race, did not begin by teaching; he began by doing. ... Now the little Congregation of the Mission wants, with God's grace, to imitate Christ, the Lord, in so far as that is possible in view of its limitations. ... the whole purpose of the Congregation is: 1° to have a genuine commitment to grow in holiness, patterning ourselves, as far as possible, on the virtues which the great Master himself graciously taught us in what he said and did; 2° to preach the good news of salvation to poor people, especially in rural areas; 3° to help seminarians and priest to grow in knowledge and virtue, so that they can be effective in their ministry.* Common Rules of the Congregation of the Mission. I:1.

<sup>94</sup> Wilson, R.F (ed). *Op.cit.*, p 77.

interior movements of the people need to be touched in order to influence a conversion of the mind, because with a lively faith, people will be enabled to see the splendour of the glory of God. Faith needs to be lively amidst the various engagement of worldly activities of life, then lively faith helps people to find the right direction for spiritual growth. Therefore, evangelisation is a formation process in order to lead people to a fuller participation in the spirit of Jesus Christ, who is the rule of ministry, and shall be considered the centre of Christian spiritual life and activities.<sup>95</sup> “They will have great confidence in the divine providence, abandoning themselves completely to it as an infant does to its wet nurse”<sup>96</sup>

### 1.1.2.1 Activating Mission

Speaking on the topic of catechism, Vincent emphasised that educating the people about the word of God will always be a great charity if we instruct those people who do not know much about the Gospel, and we shall not lose an opportunity to engage in this mission, if this can be done.<sup>97</sup> *Mission as crusade looks at the world as divided between good and evil, true and false. There is an atmosphere of conquest. In the best of times the conquest is primarily spiritual.*<sup>98</sup> An appropriate structure keeps the focus of the ministers at spiritual works and would safeguard them from economic, political and cultural power. An appropriate structure includes ideas and inspirations from other people, for instance, Vincent de Paul had met Francis de Sales and Jane Frances de Chantel, and a deep friendship sprang among them. As Bérulle had played a strategic role in Vincent’s earlier life, so Francis de Sales set Vincent’s heart on fire with love of God and impressed him with the power of gentleness, which helped him to activate the ministry of charity in all his ministries.<sup>99</sup>

In every mission Vincent earnestly monitored to establish a structure which facilitated a method of charitable work based on common rules. Vincent emphasised the importance of rules saying, that practicing rule is a question of salvation if well taken, for although you are not obliged to practice your rules under pain of sin, nevertheless, since you are in the company, you are bound to observe them; they are a route God has traced out for you, they are paths by which he wants to lead you.<sup>100</sup> *The time has come when God who does all things with weight,*

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<sup>95</sup> Constitution and Statutes of the Congregation of the Mission, # 5.

<sup>96</sup> CCD: XIIIb:161 (Common Rules of the Company of Sisters of Charity).

<sup>97</sup> CCD: XI:343 (Conference: *Duty of Catechizing Persons who are Poor*. November 17, 1656).

<sup>98</sup> Maloney, Robert P. *He Hears the Cry of the Poor. On the Spirituality of Vincent de Paul*. New City Press, New York, 1995, p 118.

<sup>99</sup> Ryan, Frances and Rybolt, E. John (eds). *Vincent de Paul and Louise de Marillac. Rules, Conferences and Writings*. Vincentian Studies Institute, The Classics of Western Spirituality, Paulist Press, New York, Mahwah, 1995, p 21.

<sup>100</sup> CCD: IX:249 (Conference: *The Rules*, May 30,1647).

*number, and measure, has made the truth known to us. I was asleep but God, in his mercy, has awakened me and opened my eyes to see how important it is to be steadfast in seeing that the rule is observed.*<sup>101</sup>

The essentials of rules could be traced to the mission of Châtillon; Vincent also gradually adopted a standard format that derived from other groups that he founded up to 1620, and which he later had printed in booklet form for the Lazarists to distribute, which were more practical in orientation as precise guidelines for interior and exterior exercises.<sup>102</sup> Vincent's zealous vision of Zeal for souls continuously reflected in starting many diverse ministries at various places; he did not hesitate to request the members of the company to undertake new missions; Vincent was enthusiastic to grab any opportunity to help the people in their spiritual development, and the success of these missions was largely owing to planning out a structure of specific mission in accordance with the nature of the activity and following the activities through regular correspondence. In accordance with Madame de Gondi, Vincent determined places and times for the first missions to be carried out. It started with the parishes of Villepreux, near Versailles, then Joigny in Bourgogne and Montmirail<sup>103</sup> in Champagne, before going to the villages of Picardy, Folleville, Paillart and Sérévillers. Vincent set out his method in a systematic way.<sup>104</sup> The team will settle in a parish for several weeks to preach, teach catechism, and hear confessions. The momentum of this mission enables the foundation of a *caritas* association to secure the newly created work materially and spiritually. Above all else, Vincent gave importance to bring together the necessary means to carry out the procedure of the mission. He always thought first to set up a group of spiritual people to work together during the mission phase in collaboration with available human power from the adjacent villages. To give strength and momentum to the mission, Vincent did regular correspondence with his acquaintances, as well as those of the Gondi family, priests and members of various orders, who were appreciating his enthusiasm and persuasiveness.<sup>105</sup>

### 1.1.2.2 Spiritual Renewal

Vincent de Paul, founder of the Congregation of the Mission (called also *Lazarists* in France, *Vincentians* in English speaking countries, and *Vinzentiner* in German speaking

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<sup>101</sup> CCD: XII:275 (Conference: *Praying the Divine Office*, September 26, 1659).

<sup>102</sup> Forrestal, Alison. *Op.cit.*, p. 179.

<sup>103</sup> Abelly Louis. *Op.cit.*, I:56.

<sup>104</sup> Pujo, Bernard. *Pionier der Moderne. Das abenteuerliche Leben des Vinzenz von Paul*. Verlag Herder GmbH, Freiburg im Breisgau, Germany, 2008, p 116.

<sup>105</sup> Pujo, Bernard. *Pionier der Moderne. Op.cit.*, p 117.

countries, but they are not the official registered name) is primarily recognized for his charity and compassion for the poor, though he is also known for his reform of the clergy and for his early role in opposing Jansenism.<sup>106</sup> Vincent's intention of founding the Congregation of the Mission was for preaching missions to the peasantry and for educating and training a pastoral clergy.<sup>107</sup> The foundation contract of the congregation of the Mission emphasizes the spiritual ministry more firmly than the material ministry, although the Congregation of the Mission is well known for the charitable activities and Vincent de Paul is proclaimed by the Catholic Church the patron of all charitable societies.<sup>108</sup> Vincent recalls that the evangelization will be having many activities, however the material assistance, helping the sick, feeding the hungry are not an end in themselves; the purpose of the charitable ministry is not only to help the poor physically, but also spiritually. We strive to lead the people in all our ministries to God.<sup>109</sup>

It was not easy to get the approval for the congregation of the Mission, although France supported and recommended, because even at the early 17<sup>th</sup> century, Church could not think of a religious community living not strictly in a monastery, rather this was being proposed as secular religious community, that was obviously new to Roman Pontiff. According to the idea of Vincent the little Congregation of the Mission wants, with God's grace, to imitate Jesus Christ, in so far as that is possible in view of its limitations. This Congregation seeks to imitate his virtues as well as what he did for the salvation of people.<sup>110</sup> Father Francois du Coudray was entrusted to carry out the paperwork regarding getting the approval for the Congregation of the Mission (Lazarists, or Vincentians) in Rome. In his one of the letters Vincent writes to Francois du Coudray, that you make the concerned persons understand that the poor people are being damned for want of knowing the things necessary for salvation, and for lack of confession. Out of our experience and knowledge of the situation we would like to establish this company, so as to remedy the situation, and in order to do this mission, we must live in a congregation.<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>106</sup> Abelly, Louis. *Op.cit.*, I:221

<sup>107</sup> Wilson, R.F (ed). *Op.cit.*, p 103-104.

<sup>108</sup> ... *the situation could be remedied to a certain extent through the pious association of some priests recognized for their knowledge, piety, and ability, who would be willing to renounce the conveniences of the towns as well as all benefices, offices, and dignities of the Church, so that, in accord with the wishes of the Prelates, each within the limits of his own diocese, they could devote themselves entirely and exclusively to the salvation of the poor common people. They would go from village to village, at the expense of their common purse, to preach, instruct, exhort, and catechize those poor people and encourage all of them to make a good general confession of their whole past life, without accepting for this a remuneration of any kind or manner whatsoever, so as to distribute freely the gifts they have freely received from the generous hand of God.* CCD: XIIIa:213-214 (Documents Pertaining to the Congregation of the Mission: Foundation Contract of the Congregation of the Mission. April 17, 1625).

<sup>109</sup> Pujol, Bernard. *Op.cit.*, p. 118.

<sup>110</sup> Common Rules of the Congregation of the Mission, I:1.

<sup>111</sup> CCD: I:112 (Letter: To Francois du Coudray, Rome, 1631).

The Bishop Clement de Bonzi of the Diocese of Béziers, (Béziers which was an independent diocese situated in France and at present is part of the Diocese of Montpellier) asked for clarification about the ministry. As a reply Vincent explained that we work under the authority of Bishops to go to any place in their diocese to which they wish to send us to preach, catechize and hear the general confessions of the poor people, and spiritually prepare the candidates for the priesthood just before their ordination.<sup>112</sup> Vincent said to Bishop de Beauvais on the proposal of training and preparing his ordinands: Monseigneur, *this is a thought which comes from God, this will indeed be a means whereby your whole clergy may little by little be reformed.*<sup>113</sup>

Upon explaining the duty of catechising the people Vincent exhorted that a person can be killed in two ways: either by striking him and giving him the death blow, and by not giving him what can sustain his life. Vincent was convinced that those who teach others the things helpful and necessary for their salvation will shine like stars in eternal life, therefore he always motivated and encouraged his confreres to involve actively in the evangelization to bring a vigorous spiritual life in the people.<sup>114</sup>

### 1.1.2.3 Little Method

Simplicity was Vincent's gospel, and he emphasised simplicity in life and simplicity in preaching.<sup>115</sup> Preaching in simple language was the little method<sup>116</sup> of Vincent de Paul. He emphasised upon spiritual systemic change within the community and the society. He gathered the first group of women to form a confraternity of charity at Chatillon- les- Dombes in November 1617, and in the explanation of the rules Vincent said that the poor sometimes suffer more from lack of order than from lack of charitable person. He encouraged associated people to examine various elements in the life of the common people to see what the necessity is, and he suggested to involve those poor people to be connected to a social system.<sup>117</sup> Living in a spirit of friendship unites people together, and the bond of charity prevents the destruction of the unity.<sup>118</sup>

Vincent's little method was aimed at systemic change. To this end Vincent advised three things: first, the love expressed through charity works are to be not only affective but also

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<sup>112</sup> CCD: I:297 (Letter: To Clement de Bonzi, Bishop of Béziers, September or October 1635).

<sup>113</sup> Wilson, R.F (ed). *Op.cit.*, p 106.

<sup>114</sup> CCD: II:343-344 (Conference: *Duty of Catechising Persons who are Poor*, November 17, 1656).

<sup>115</sup> Maloney, Robert P., *A New Century Dawns*. *Op.cit* p. 17; CCD: IX:477 (Conference: *The Spirit of the Company*, February 24, 1653).

<sup>116</sup> Forrestal Alison. *Op.cit.*, p. 92.

<sup>117</sup> Forrestal, Alison. p 75.

<sup>118</sup> Ryan, Frances and Rybolt, E. John (eds). *Op.cit.*, p 207.

effective;<sup>119</sup> secondly, pastoral work should manifest spiritually and corporally, meaning that we should tend not only to bodily needs but also spiritual needs;<sup>120</sup> thirdly, we need to proclaim the word of God by word and work, involving preaching, teaching, human empowerment, and social development.<sup>121</sup> Vincentian systemic change considers on the preferential option for the poor, on the effects of sin on social structures, on the systemic aspects of justice and injustice, issues of life and peace-making, the stability of family structures and integral liberation. All this could be found in Christ as evangelizer of the poor;<sup>122</sup> Jesus himself used the little method to explain the benefits, necessity and means of attaining virtue.<sup>123</sup> Vincent had tried to address the issues of migration, urbanization, chronic diseases and poverty; these are also contemporary issues which needs local response to these areas of work with suitable initiatives based on charity and social justice, therefore, systemic change concerning larger issues, is also part of spiritual education and spiritual development.<sup>124</sup>

#### 1.1.2.4 Preaching the Gospel by Words and by Works

Vincent de Paul used the word preaching instead of the word evangelization, although the word evangelization is central to the very first article of the Constitution and Statutes of the Congregation of the Mission. Vincent understood evangelization as preaching the good news of salvation to poor people, and this act of teaching and preaching is the purpose of the Congregation of the Mission.<sup>125</sup> The functions of preaching were to teach and move the hearts of people,<sup>126</sup> and draw souls to God. Vincent emphasized three approaches in preaching the Gospel: teaching, exhorting, and teaching and exhorting. Faith is the subject matter of the first method of teaching, the subject matter of the second method of exhorting is the explanation of virtue and vice, and the subject matter of the third method teaching and exhorting is living the faith through virtues.<sup>127</sup> In all these three methods, the theological and moral virtues play a central role. By knowing and accepting this method, we will be influenced by reason, consequently our hearts will be inclined towards virtue. Therefore, preaching becomes focused on the nature and essence of virtue, how the properties of virtue function, and how to prevent acts contrary to virtue.<sup>128</sup> Vincent's ideal model for prayer and work was two virtues of Jesus:

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<sup>119</sup> CCD: IX:466 (Conference: *The Spirit of the Company*, February 9, 1653).

<sup>120</sup> CCD: IX:466 (Conference: *The Spirit of the Company*, February 9, 1653).

<sup>121</sup> CCD: IX:77-78 (Conference: Purpose of the Congregation of the Mission, December 6, 1658).

<sup>122</sup> Maloney P Robert. *A New Century Dawns. Op.cit.*, p. 81.

<sup>123</sup> Forrestal Alison. *Op.cit.* p105; CCD: XI:243(Conference: *Method to be Followed in Preaching*, Aug 20, 1655).

<sup>124</sup> Forrestal Alison. *Op.cit.* p. 11.

<sup>125</sup> Common Rules of the Congregation of the Mission., I:1.

<sup>126</sup> Forrestal, Alison. *Op.cit.*, p. 104.

<sup>127</sup> CCD: XIIIa:31 (Sermon: *on the Catechism*- written between 1613-1616).

<sup>128</sup> CCD: XI:239 (Conference: *Method to be Followed in Preaching*, August 20, 1655).

his filial relationship with his father and his charity towards the neighbour.<sup>129</sup> For Vincent effective preaching is a blend of prayer and work.

Pope John Paul II has made the expression *new evangelization* part of the contemporary catholic approach. Similarly, the address of Pope John XXIII at the opening of second Vatican council, called for *a new expression of Christian faith*, since the substance of the ancient doctrine of the deposit of faith is one thing, and the way in which it is presented is another.<sup>130</sup> The church must investigate the present conditions of the people and their forms of life while interpreting the message of the gospel. Vincent saw in preaching and catechesis, a pedagogical value of edifying through exemplary and energizing stories and verbal imagery on the basis of the experience of preachers and teachers, because they apply abstract concepts to realistic situations and to people to whom they could relate.<sup>131</sup>

An ardent zeal for the glory of God never refuses an opportunity to serve God by helping the people.<sup>132</sup> The attitude for service towards people is derived from the one's own disposition of heart. In order to strengthen this disposition Vincent said that the poor are our masters, and we are their servants<sup>133</sup>. We cannot better assure our eternal happiness than by serving the poor with a genuine renouncement of ourselves.<sup>134</sup> Great prudence is required in order not to offend anyone while preaching, and great charity and humility must be exercised, so as to truly edify the congregation.<sup>135</sup> We have to encourage one another in the ministry,<sup>136</sup> God has chosen us to make his message of love known.<sup>137</sup> Practice of regulations and customs of our vocation will motivate other people to conceive true sentiments of their devotion.<sup>138</sup> People who are involved in preaching the word of God should strive to live in a holy manner and labour with great care to attain perfection, uniting the exercises of a spiritual life with the exterior duties of Christian charity toward the poor, so that they can lead the people by their example.<sup>139</sup>

Vincent understands that a person set apart for the service of God and for the service of the people should be ever willing to take up continuous works.<sup>140</sup> *The priests must have more*

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<sup>129</sup> Maloney, Robert P. *A New Century Dawns. Op.cit.*, p. 17.

<sup>130</sup> Maloney, Robert P. *He Hears the Cry of the Poor. On the Spirituality of Vincent de Paul*. New City Press, New York, 1995, p 107.

<sup>131</sup> Forrester Alison. *Op.cit.*, p. 105.

<sup>132</sup> CCD: XI:191 (Conference: *Repetition of Prayer*, July 24, 1655).

<sup>133</sup> CCD: IX:556 (Conference: *Envy*, June 24, 1654).

<sup>134</sup> CCD: III:384 (Letter: To Jean Barreau, December 4, 1648).

<sup>135</sup> CCD: VI:344 (Letter: To Antoine Durand, June 15, 1657).

<sup>136</sup> Woldemichael, Zeracristos Yosief. "Between Memory and Prophecy", in *Vincentiana*(2016,# 4),p 526.

<sup>137</sup> Wilson, R.F (ed). *Op.cit.*, p 113.

<sup>138</sup> CCD: XI:252 (Conference: *Method to be followed in Preaching, August 20, 1655*).

<sup>139</sup> Ryan, Frances and Rybolt, E. John (eds). *Op.cit.*, p 169.

<sup>140</sup> CCD: XI:262 (Conference: *Repetition of Prayer, August 22, 1655*).

*work than he can do; for as soon as idleness and sloth get hold of a priest, every soon rushes in from all sides: temptations of impurity and so many others.*<sup>141</sup> Good works that are being carried out will sooner or later speak a much more favourable language than any written or spoken message.<sup>142</sup> Works of charity enable pastoral team to mingle with people and to understand the life situation of the people.<sup>143</sup> Memories of work of mercy will never die.<sup>144</sup>

Regarding the works of evangelization Vincent puts forth four personal and two general conventions to be observed and followed. First, we must work to please God, who takes joy in seeing us busily engaged for a good purpose. Secondly, the goal of our work should be to honour the painful, exhausting the toil of Jesus Christ on earth who lent his divine body to the heaviest labours without sparing himself. Thirdly, we must work with the thought that we are working to serve our neighbour who is dear to God who considers the work done to neighbour as done to himself. Fourthly, we have to get rid of the spirit of avarice, which gives the false motivation for amassing wealth.<sup>145</sup> He emphasised two general conventions: first, do not indulge in acts contrary to what is supposed to be done, when you are away from the direct supervision of the authority; secondly, learn to work at difficult times, because if we do not know this, we might go to persons who do not have the same spirit of work but the opposite of what we are supposed to do, which will ultimately lead us to ruin; therefore be well informed to cope with difficult circumstances.<sup>146</sup> Vincent emphasised that the youth should be involved in the charitable works; special camps should be organized under supervision and direction in order to form in them leadership qualities of a master workman in accord with the present regulations.<sup>147</sup>

### **1.1.2.5 Expression of Experience**

Expression of experience includes knowledge, intuition and the acts of sensation. All senses are included in the expression, and the expression of faith cannot be different. How, then, does the expression of faith experience, manifested through the life of the people, explain the belief of people? Meditation is a type of expression of solitude with God. People who meditate live their belief through the act of meditation, and they feel the presence of God in the solitude of their hearts. A pedagogical approach to pastoral ministry raises questions about the manner in which people express their belief. Pastoral leaders and the pastoral community are called, to

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<sup>141</sup> CCD: XI:191 (Conference: *Repetition of Prayer*, July 24, 1655).

<sup>142</sup> CCD: II:311 (Letter: To Bernard Codoing, July 11, 1642).

<sup>143</sup> Ryan, Frances and Rybolt, E. John (eds). *Op.cit.*, p 169.

<sup>144</sup> Abelly Louis. *Op.cit.*, III:121.

<sup>145</sup> CCD: IX:389-390 (Conference: *Love of Work*, November 28, 1649).

<sup>146</sup> CCD: IX:395-396 (Conference: *How to act amid difficulties when far from the Motherhouse*, April 19, 1650).

<sup>147</sup> CCD: XIIIb:82(Conference: *Regulations for a Combined Charity*).

live the virtues, that are indispensable to belief in God and in the service to the poor.<sup>148</sup> That is how Vincent de Paul motivated his confreres, that is, he encouraged them to express their knowledge through virtuous acts since the acquisition of knowledge is necessary and love of God expresses the knowledge through virtue.<sup>149</sup> Vincent considered the acquisition of virtue an excellent study,<sup>150</sup> because virtue is an expression of faith which is equally helpful to the people and to oneself. *Solidarity as a moral virtue and social attitude born of personal conversion, calls for commitment on the part of those responsible for education and formation.*<sup>151</sup> According to Gregory Gey, superior general of the Congregation of the Mission (2004-2016), if we feel ourselves tired in ministry, if we feel that we are worn out, that may be because we do not meditate on the experience of the poor whom we encounter, and perhaps we are not practicing regularly meditation to find strength in the grace of God that comes through prayer.<sup>152</sup>

Pope Francis says in his encyclical *Fratelli Tutti* that an *authentic social dialogue involves the ability to respect the other's point of view and to admit that it may include legitimate convictions and concerns. Based on their identity and experience, others have a contribution to make, and it is desirable that they should articulate their positions for the sake of a more fruitful public debate. When individuals or groups are consistent in their thinking, defend their values and convictions, and develop their arguments, this surely benefits society. Yet, this can only occur to the extent that there is genuine dialogue and openness to others*<sup>153</sup>. Rational arguments alone cannot establish faith in the hearts of the people. The foundation of faith arises from the experience of prayer. The parish community has a special role in creating an atmosphere where the people could have an experience of worship. I would like to state that an experience of faith is related to the practice of spiritual activities, and the expression of faith results from experiences of that same faith. Experience is related to the environment in which an individual lives, that is, to the community and to the people with whom one is related. Faith based imperatives, created through the personal experience of prayer, strengthen the realization of the God experience. Belief in a special attribute of God is derived from experience. Belief in a special attribute of God is not faith in a personal God but a belief developed through personal experience on the special attribute of God.

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<sup>148</sup> Saldaña Moreno, César A. "Lay Vincentian Missionaries and Vincentian Spirituality," op.cit., p 495.

<sup>149</sup> CCD:XI:120.

<sup>150</sup> CCD:IV:131.

<sup>151</sup> Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, # 114.

<sup>152</sup> Gay, G. Gregory. "Address of the Superior General to the 2016 General Assembly", in *Vincentiana* (July-September 2016, # 3) 355.

<sup>153</sup> Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, # 203.

### 1.1.3. Sensitivity and Attitudes

Vincent's spirit of burning love for souls and zeal for God's service, sought out the poorest, most ignorant, and degraded people, and extended them his special care.<sup>154</sup> In his letter to Monsieur Lambert, a priest of the mission in Richelieu on Feb 20, 1638, Vincent explained some of the details of the parish ministry with sensitivity and a charitable attitude both towards the poor people of the parish and the person in charge of the mission.<sup>155</sup> The capacity of listening is the basis of connecting sensitivity and charitable outreach, since the capacity of listening constantly strives to integrate people's life not in terms of isolation and self-absorption but in terms of self-transcendence to the ultimate value of life.<sup>156</sup> Vincent's desire was to labour without interruption at perfecting holiness in his own soul, and to carry on diligently all those good works of charity which he had been instrumental in setting on foot for the glory of God and the salvation of people.<sup>157</sup>

The virtue of mortification helps us to enrich an attitude of sensitivity towards poor people and towards their spiritual welfare. By practicing mortification, we deny ourselves for love of God, to bring our knowledge, intelligence and understanding into harmony with that of our neighbour, submitting ourselves through virtue and confronting to God's judgement of things.<sup>158</sup> To deny ourselves does not mean refusing to say what one thinks about a particular matter, but to deny oneself demands submitting one's reason, because the people who submit their judgement prefers to follow another person's judgement rather than their own. Jesus did not exercise his own judgment but submitted himself to his father.<sup>159</sup> To this end we have to mortify our interior and exterior senses, we must keep perpetual watch over them and take special care to subject them to God.<sup>160</sup>

Upon explaining the rules Vincent encouraged the sisters to ask the grace of God in the right way with the intension of corresponding with grace to the best of their ability and to be faithful in the smallest circumstances, because whoever is faithful in small things, will be

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<sup>154</sup> Wilson, R.F (ed). *Op.cit.*, p 61.

<sup>155</sup> *With regard to alms, give a double to each one who asks; if he is being catechized, give him two liards more or less, according to the person's character. But for the sick, if the bishop does not provide the necessary funds for them, you should contribute fifteen or twenty sous a week, which you can have placed in the alms dish of the woman taking up the collection. But what will you do with regard to remuneration for acting as pastor? I am sending you two hundred livres, which will be given to the Champigny messenger tomorrow. On the next trip, we shall give him the altar-bread irons.* CCD: I:440 (Letter: Lambert Aux Cousteaux, Richelieu, February 20, 1638).

<sup>156</sup> Maloney, Robert P. *He Hears the Cry of the Poor. Op.cit.*, p. 17.

<sup>157</sup> Wilson, R.F (ed). *Op.cit.*, p 69-70.

<sup>158</sup> CCD: XII:175 (Conference: *Mortification*, May 2, 1659).

<sup>159</sup> CCD: XII:175 (Conference: *Mortification*, May 2, 1659).

<sup>160</sup> CCD: XII:176 (Conference: *Mortification*, May 2, 1659).

faithful in great ones. Since everything pertaining to the glory of God is sacred and noble, we must not neglect to do anything that may be in our power to do.<sup>161</sup>

### 1.1.3.1 Apostolic Movements

Seventeenth century France suffered from famine, years of freezes, floods, droughts, epidemics, poverty among common people in the countryside, thirty years of war, political struggles and heresy against catholic teaching.<sup>162</sup> Poor people migrated to Paris and other towns, and as a consequence, beggars and abandoned children became common sights and a worrisome problem. The peasants found often went hungry, but still they had to pay their tithes, a condition that later provoked civil riots in the country. The rich did not see Christ in the poor people but rather perceived them as people to be feared. However, it should be noted that some Bishops had tried to establish groups of religious women who would dedicate their lives to service on behalf of the poor and the sick people but those groups succumbed to the mentality of the time, because it was totally unthinkable women religious to live outside the cloistered enclosure. Even many pious ladies were anxious to be allowed to undertake a regular system of visiting the patients, and serving the poor people of the country side.<sup>163</sup>

In the history of catholic Church few saints have been as active as Vincent de Paul and yet his contemporaries also regarded him as a contemplative, a man of prayer.<sup>164</sup> Vincent, filled with zeal for the souls, envisaged the possibility of founding the Congregation of the Mission. Inspired by the spirit of Christian revival, his followers preached in the country parishes and followed a special method of preaching which was also the style of evangelization and strictly followed the community form of life in their spiritual exercises. The main pedagogy of preaching was catechetical in nature, and the preachers invited the people to make a general confession in order to have a personal encounter with God. The first six years of existence the Congregation was composed of five priests, who preached about 140 missions (Vincent de Paul – priest and superior at the *Collège des Bons-Enfants*, Francis du Coudry- priest of the diocese of Amiens, Anthony Portail -priest of diocese of Arles, John de la Salle -priest of the diocese of Amiens, and Belin).<sup>165</sup>

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<sup>161</sup> CCD: IX:251 (Conference: *The Rules*, May 30, 1647).

<sup>162</sup> Abelly Louis. *Op.cit.* I:31-32.

<sup>163</sup> Wilson, R.F (ed). *Op.cit.*, p 155.

<sup>164</sup> Maloney, Robert P. *A New Century Dawns. Op.cit.*, p. 30.

<sup>165</sup> Coste, Pierre, C.M. *The Life and Work of Saint Vincent de Paul*, 3 volumes, translated from the French by Joseph Leonard, CM, The Newman Press, Westminster, Maryland, 1952, volume I, p. 151-152.

Action guided the evangelization process, and Vincent motivated many women to come together (under the leadership of Louise de Marillac) to engage in charity works. The first members of the community that would become known as the Daughters of Charity resided in the house of Mademoiselle Le Gras in the parish of Saint Nicolas du Chardonnet. Later, the community was transferred to another house about one and a half miles from Paris in the village of La Chapelle. In 1642 they resumed the formation programme in a house in the Saint Lazare section of Paris and presently still reside there.<sup>166</sup> Vincent prescribed rules and constitutions for them, which were approved by the archbishop of Paris. The archbishop constituted them as Congregation under the title Daughters of Charity and placed them under the direction of the superior general of the Congregation of the Mission.<sup>167</sup> The king confirmed and authorized their establishment by letters patent which were approved by the Parlement<sup>168</sup> of Paris.<sup>169</sup>

This pastoral movement established the congregation known as the Daughters of Charity which was one of the most significant creative idea of Vincent in the history of religious life in the catholic church. Vincent and Louise de Marillac<sup>170</sup> discovered a new form of community life for religious women, one that involved them in pastoral ministry. They led a life different from the traditional cloistered convent life. They had a religious life without solemn profession of vows and were also not obliged to wear special religious habits. Vincent also abandoned the custom of having those women contribute a patrimony to the organization that they were about to join. Instead, Vincent desired candidates who would be able to understand the situation and the needs of poor people.

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<sup>166</sup> Abelly, Louis. *Op.cit.*, I:136.

<sup>167</sup> The foundation contract was signed before the notaries Dupuys and Boucher on April 17<sup>th</sup> 1625; Francois de Gondi, Archbishop of Paris gave his consent on April 24<sup>th</sup>, 1626. The court, the Grand Chambers, Tournelle and de IÉdit have seen the letter of patent issued in Paris in May 1627 which is signed by Louis and sealed on silk knotted cords with great seal in green wax; this letter of patent confirms the foundation made by Philippe-Emmanuel de Gondi, Comte de Joigny (at the time General of the Galleys and during 1631 priest of the congregation of the Oratory of Jesus) and by his wife Françoise-Marguerite de Silly. This letter of patent recognizes the ability to form a congregation and association under the name of Priests of the Mission.

<sup>168</sup> A parlement, in the Ancien Regime of France, was a provincial appellate court. Originally there was only the Parlement of Paris. Others were created later for the provinces, but the parlement of Paris retained jurisdiction over nearly half the kingdom. In 1789, France had 13 parlements. The English word parliament derives from this French term, however parlements in France were not legislative bodies. They consisted of a dozen or more appellate judges.

<sup>169</sup> CCD: XIIIa:258 (Document: *Registration in the Parlement of Letters Patent of May 1627 and February 15, 1630*).

<sup>170</sup> Louise de Marillac was born on August 12, 1591, married Antoine Le Gras on February 5, 1613; the couple had their only child, Michel; Antoine died in 1625. In 1629, Vincent invited Louise to become involved in his work with the Confraternities of Charity. The movement of confraternities of charities later developed to Daughters of Charity.

Vincent's idea of pastoral sensitivity is expressed in an apostolic movement which focused on spiritual piety<sup>171</sup>, charitable works of mercy, and justice for the poor country people. Vincent involved more laity actively in mission work for an effective pastoral outreach to the poor and he tried as well as to establish confraternities which gave a structural organization to the ministry of charity. He preached of the word of God in poor parishes, with a view toward preparing people for general confession and instructing them in moral values. Vincent initiated an intensive spiritual formation program for candidates to priesthood with the intention to inculcate in them a sensitivity towards the spiritual needs of the poor. The involvement of lay people in ministry established a new era of the lay apostolate, one that would later spread to all parts of the world and later influenced the writing of *Gaudium et spes* regarding church's mission in the society. The lay ministers are a beneficial force within the Church.<sup>172</sup>

### 1.1.3.2 Withstanding Early Difficulties

The idea of establishing a congregation was an incredible initiative but the process of obtaining approval was strenuous and laborious.<sup>173</sup> According to Robert P. Maloney (23rd Superior General of the Congregation of the mission 1992 to 2004), oppressive ideologies can

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<sup>171</sup> Speaking at the repetition of prayer of a brother who knelt and asked pardon of God and of the company for failing to be present at the community exercise of prayer, Vincent advocated the community that you will lose nothing by participating in the community exercise of prayer and God will make up for the time you have used to serve him by being in the chapel (CCD:XI:284 [Conference: *Repetition of Prayer*, October 17, 1655]).

<sup>172</sup> Roldríguez, Jorge Luis. *Mission of Inner-earth, Colombia, "Our Land"*, in *Vincentiana*, (May/June, 1998, #3).

<sup>173</sup> The foundation contract was signed before the notaries Dupuys and Boucher in Saint- Sauveur parish in Paris on April 17th 1625. (Modification of the foundation contract of the Congregation of the Mission was done on April 17, 1627; it was undersigned by Philippe Emmanuel de Gondy, Pierre de Gondy, Dupuys and Le Boucher; CCD: XIIIa:224-225 (Document: Modification of the Foundation Contract of the Congregation of the Mission, April 17, 1627)). It was undersigned by the notaries Dupuys and Boucher, Philippe Emmanuel de Gondi and his wife Françoise Marguerite de Silly (CCD: XIIIa:213 (Document: Foundation Contract of the Congregation of the Mission, April 17, 1625) François de Gondi, Archbishop of Paris gave his consent and approval on April 24th, 1626 (Coste, Pierre, C.M. *Op.cit.*, I:151). On September 4, 1626, before two notaries of Châtelet in Paris, Vincent and his first companions declared that they had joined together to live in a community to devote themselves to the salvation of the poor country people. Only three priests signed this declaration with Vincent de Paul, Du Coudray, Antoine Portail, and Jean de la Salle. Very soon afterwards four other priests joined the little company: Jean Bécu, of the Diocese of Amiens, Anthony Lucas, of Paris; John Brunet, of the Diocese of Clermont; and Jean Dehorgny, of the Diocese of Noyon. The court, the Grand Chambers, Tournelle and de l'Édit have seen the patent letter issued in Paris in May 1627. It was signed by Louis with silk knotted cords and great seal in green wax. This letter of patent confirms the foundation established by Philippe-Emmanuel de Gondi, count of Joigny (then General of the Galleys and during 1630s a priest of the Congregation of the Oratory of Jesus) and by his wife Françoise-Marguerite de Silly. This patent letter authorized the formation of a congregation and association under the name of Priests of the Mission. This letter was presented to the court for ratification. The court had also in its possession the act of December 4, 1630 containing the opposition formulated by the Maître Étienne Tonnelier, priest, doctor of the faculty of theology in the university of Paris, pastor of saint-Eustache, and of the Syndic of pastors of the city of Paris and suburbs of Paris. (CCD: XIIIa:258-259 (Document: Registration in the Parlement of Letters Patent of May 1627 and February 15, 1630), XIIIa:253 (Document: Opposition of the Pastors of Paris to Approval of the Congregation of the Mission, December 4, 1630)).

be present not only in civil society but also in the Church and religious life as well. Voices that call for renewal and changes can be marginalized and silenced.<sup>174</sup>

Jean Francois de Gondi, Archbishop of Paris granted faculties to the priests of the mission in his letter addressed to Vincent de Paul. He granted Vincent and his associates, in virtue of the letter the authority, power and faculty to go through all cities, towns, and villages of the Diocese of Paris, to teach the people Christian doctrine, to absolve persons from ecclesiastical censures and cases reserved, to establish the Confraternity of Charity in those places where the works are necessary, to commute vows, and to grant indulgences which the bishop would have done. The archbishop also commanded the deans, chapters, priors, religious houses, pastors, assistants who were subjected him to invite priests of the mission for the above-mentioned ministries.<sup>175</sup> Louis XIII wrote a letter to Comte de Béthune, the French ambassador to the Holy See and requested the pope to accept the request of establishing a congregation the priests of the mission, founded to go from village to village to preach, exhort, catechize, and hear the confession of the poor country people,<sup>176</sup> with no temporal remuneration. He was motivated to make this request because of the good results and great edification owing to what his poor subjects received from the priests.<sup>177</sup> The same request was also made to Pope Urban VIII.<sup>178</sup>

In the letter dated September 1, 1628, addressed to the nuncio of France, Propaganda Fide states that the request which Vincent de Paul, the director of the mission of the Comtesse de Joigny made to the congregation of the propaganda fide has been rejected by his holiness and by the propaganda fide for the reason that this seems excessive and concerns the institution of a new religious order rather than a mission.<sup>179</sup> A worried Nuncio wrote back to Bishop Ingoli, that he would be displeased if the business of the missionaries of the *Comte* and *Comtesse de Joigny* did not go through because the institute is very successful in this kingdom. At least your Lordship might act in a more appropriate way so that a series of articles might be drawn up there, which the congregation could accept, and send them to him so that with them he will be

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<sup>174</sup> Maloney, Robert. P. *He Hears the Cry of the Poor*. *Op.cit.*, p. 44.

<sup>175</sup> CCD: XIIIa:244 (Doc: *Faculties Granted to the Priests of the Mission by the Archbishop of Paris, April 10, 1628*).

<sup>176</sup> Coste Pierre, C.M. *Op.cit.*, I:148.

<sup>177</sup> CCD: XIIIa:244 (Doc: *Letter of Louis XII to Comte de Béthune, French Ambassador to the Holy See, 06, 24, 1628*).

<sup>178</sup> CCD: XIIIa:244 (Doc: *Letter of Louis XIII to Pope Urban VIII, June 24, 1628*).

<sup>179</sup> CCD: XIIIa:250 (Document: *Propaganda Fide to the Nuncio to France, September 1, 1628*).

able to appease these good priests, who might be too upset, if they heard that their wishes were rejected out of hand.<sup>180</sup>

One of the minutes of the propaganda fide on November 5, 1627 gives consent with reference to the request of cardinal Bontivoglio regarding the mission founded<sup>181</sup> by Philippe Emmanuel de Gondi and Françoise-Marguerite de Silly (*Comte und Comtesse de Joigny*- Count and Countess of Joigny) -husband and wife, on April 17, 1625 under the title of Congregation of the Priests of the Mission, with a capital of 45000 livres in French currency. In the same letter they recognize the approval of the same congregation by the Archbishop of Paris on April 24, 1626.<sup>182</sup>

Although his holiness and the cardinals concerned with approving the mission, highly praised the founders and gave orders that the permission for faculties of the holy office be granted in due time to Vincent de Paul, the priest of Dax and director of the mission, and to his companies, and they even advised to choose a protector and recommended the archbishop of Paris to be the protector,<sup>183</sup> in 1628 they denied the permission completely. The meeting held in the Quirinal in the presence of his holiness and the six cardinals who took part namely, Millini, Borgia, Roberto Ubaldini, Guido Bentivoglio, Ludovisio, Francesco Antonio Barberini-the brother of pope Urban VIII and two consultors for propaganda fide, decided against the report presented by the cardinal Bentivoglio concerning the letters of the Nuncio to France<sup>184</sup> and the petitions of Vincent de Paul - priest of Dax, director of the mission founded and endowed by the Comte and Comtesse de Joigny. The meeting decided that petitions exceed the limits of the mission and tend toward the founding of a new religious institute and judged that they should be rejected altogether.<sup>185</sup> In the report of the judgement for the denial the last sentence is the most interesting one; that the Apostolic See does not think it well to establish either religious communities or confraternities or congregation of missions, since, apart from the fact that the nature of the mission is contrary to these bonds, the perpetuity of congregation, religious communities and confraternities, is contrary to the same mission, which are established to meet certain needs that cease with the conversion of the people to whom they are sent.<sup>186</sup> The

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<sup>180</sup> CCD: XIIIa:251 (Doc: *Letter of the Nuncio to Bishop Ingoli*, September 11, 1628).

<sup>181</sup> Vincent de Paul was director of the mission (CCD: XIIIa:238 [Document: *Reply to the Nuncio to Propaganda Fide Concerning the Suitability of Vincent de Paul to Direct the Missio*, September 26, 1627]).

<sup>182</sup> CCD: XIIIa:239 (Doc: *Minutes of the Session of Propaganda Fide Approving the Mission*, Nov 5, 1627).

<sup>183</sup> CCD: XIIIa:240 (Doc: *Request to the Nuncio to Inform Vincent of Papal Approval for the CM*, Nov 13, 1627).

<sup>184</sup> Giovanni Francesco Guidi di Bagno.

<sup>185</sup> CCD: XIIIa:250 (Doc: *Decision of Propaganda Fide on the June 1628 Petition of Vincent*, August 22, 1628).

<sup>186</sup> CCD: XIIIa:249 (Document: *Report to Propaganda Fide on the June 1628 Petition of Vincent*).

Apostolic See could not then understand the necessities of ongoing spiritual education and they interpreted the mission as a one-time event and not an on-going commitment.

Pope Urban VIII with the publication of the bull *Salvatoris Nostri* formally approved<sup>187</sup> the congregation called “Congregation of the Mission” on January 12, 1633.<sup>188</sup> The Pope recognized that those who live on the estates, farms, in the countryside, in hamlets and in the humbler places, especially peasants who do not know the precepts of the catholic faith need greater help than can be offered by their pastors. He believed that it would be most effective for the salvation of souls and most pleasing to God, if this devoted Congregation of Mission, composed of virtuous and capable men were established who would have the responsibility of instructing the peasants and inhabitants of the countryside and hamlets, and those places that are more deprived. Vincent de Paul described the Congregation from the moment of its foundation, as a company and confraternity, affirming that its confreres were united by their sense of spiritual solidarity and fraternity, and motivated by a common sense of spiritual service.<sup>189</sup> In 1655 Alexander VII was elected Pope. He was very aware of the activities of the Congregation within the Church and he was favourably disposed toward the Missionaries. Soon after his election, on September 22, 1655 he published the brief *Ex commissa nobis*, which approved vows for the Congregation of the Mission. Then on August 12, 1659 the brief *Alias nos* was published and with this the Statute on the vow of poverty was ratified.<sup>190</sup> Vincent successfully founded the Congregation of the Mission. By the time of his death (September 27, 1660)<sup>191</sup>, this congregation had spread to Poland, Italy, Algeria, Madagascar, Ireland, Scotland, the Hebrides, and the Orkneys. During his lifetime, the mother house St. Lazare gave more than a thousand popular missions.<sup>192</sup>

### 1.1.3.3 Effect, Internal Preparation, Objective

Vincent’s reflection on his own evangelical method brought to the world a mission of faith in action, which was developed amid the political, social and ecclesial environment of France, especially in Paris and in the adjacent towns and villages of Paris. Vincent’s mission,

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<sup>187</sup> Forrester, Alison. *Op.cit.*, p. 11.

<sup>188</sup> CCD: XIIIa:296 (Document: *Salvatoris Nostri*, *Bull of Erection of the Congregation of the Mission*, January 12, 1633. Other important Papal documents include, *Ex commissa nobis* of Alexander VII, *Exponi Nobis* of Benedict XIII, and *Aequa Apostolicae* of Benedict XIV. Kanjirathamkunnel, Shijo. “Privileges of the Congregation of the Mission,” in *Vincentiana* (January-March, 2016, # 1), p 55.

<sup>189</sup> Forrester, Alison. *Op.cit.*, p. 67.

<sup>190</sup> Ornelas, Adelino. “Vincent de Paul and the Holy See”, Trans. Plock, Charles T., in *Vincentiana* (April-June, 2011, N° 2) p 159.

<sup>191</sup> Abelly Louis. *Op.cit.*, I:261.

<sup>192</sup> Maloney. Robert P. *A New Century Dawns. Op.cit.*, p. 31.

“religious renaissance of early seventeenth century”<sup>193</sup>, caused a vibrant transformation with the committed service of women and men in France and gave a new face to religious life in the catholic church.<sup>194</sup> We can today see the effect of his evangelical method in three main areas: spiritual education, pastoral ministry, and charitable service.

These three areas did not come automatically, they were rightly founded on three types of internal preparation based on perceiving, mediating and performance. Vincent perceived the necessity of faith formation and charitable works in the outskirts of the city of Paris, because the poor rarely got any regular spiritual<sup>195</sup> and material help; then he consulted and judged the situation in the early stages of any mission of the company together with the local authority of Bishop, with madam de Gondi, and with the members of the company; once the result of the mediation was positive, he sought after members to take up the mission and trained them, and he followed up the performance of the mission work and establishment of the same mission.<sup>196</sup>

The effect of the mission that we see today, and the internal preparation done by Vincent and his team was founded on five mission objectives. The prime aim of Vincent was to interpret Sacred Scripture in light of Christian moral traditions.<sup>197</sup> Second, he put a name on his experience of a particular situation. Third, he critically analysed the experience with other people regarding the possibilities of spiritual formation<sup>198</sup> and charitable assistance. Fourth, he prepared individuals for faith formation through preaching, administering the sacrament of Penance,<sup>199</sup> and charitable service. Fifth, he had to postpone the mission work because of limited financial resources and personnel. These five objectives provide an overview of Vincent’s fundamental approach to popular missions.

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<sup>193</sup> Forrestal, Alison. *Op.cit.*, p. 3.

<sup>194</sup> Forrestal, Alison. p. 5.

<sup>195</sup> Forrestal, Alison. p. 88; “... *Evangelizare pauperibus misit me*. O Dieu! How beautiful it is to see poor people if we consider them in God and with the esteem in which Jesus Christ held them! If, however, we look on them according to the sentiments of the flesh and a worldly spirit, they will seem contemptible” (CCD: XI:26 [Conference: *The Spirit of Faith*]).

<sup>196</sup> Forrestal Alison. *Op.cit.*, p. 11.

<sup>197</sup> “It may be useful to use some comparison with persons of the nobility; for example, just as the diets ordered by doctors are very beneficial if they are well observed, the same holds true for the regulations of a retreat. We have to instruct them well regarding the daily schedule, the method of meditation (CCD: XI:148 [Conference: *Retreat Ministry*, 1652-1656]).

<sup>198</sup> “What I have to say to you, Messieurs, is that, as you see that there’s a seminary at Saint-Sulpice, at Saint-Nicholas, and at the Bone-Enfants, we should try to have one at Saint Lazare- I mean to practice here the same things being done at those places, so that each individual may be taught what’s done in the seminaries and that, when he’s assigned to it, he’ll know the proper way of proceeding in order to succeed in this area. I think most of the men here present have never had practice in all of those exercises” (CCD: XII:234-235 [Conference, *Moral, Theological, Preaching, Catechizing and Administration of the Sacrament*, August, 5, 1659]).

<sup>199</sup> CCD: XI:6-10 (Conference: *Formation of the Clergy*).

### 1.1.3.4 Ecclesiological Sensitivity

Ecclesiastical sensitivity is having a state of *Misericordia*. The term *Misericordia* is composed of two words: *miseria* (pity) and *cor* (heart), thus *Misericordia* means, having a heart that is open to mercy, to those who suffer in body or in soul.<sup>200</sup> The ecclesiological perception of Vincent is founded on his Christological conviction based on two passages in the New Testament. First, Vincent de Paul was motivated by the versus in the gospel of Luke, *the Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour* (Lk 4:18-19). Vincent described himself as evangelizer of the poor<sup>201</sup>, he was joyful to bring good news to the poor,<sup>202</sup> and he understood that God sends the missionaries as he sent his only begotten son.<sup>203</sup> Vincent found his vocation to serve the poor people in cognizing this text of the Bible, and he appreciated this mission as an integral part of the structural plan in the Church and in the society.<sup>204</sup> Vincent explained to the members of the company about this right spirit to act with the spirit of God, and he exclaimed, how happy will those be, who, at the hour of death, can say these beautiful words of our Lord, *Evangelizare pauperibus misit me Dominus!*<sup>205</sup> “The son of God came to evangelize the poor. And are not we? Messieurs, sent for the same purpose?”<sup>206</sup> We are sent by God, just as Jesus was sent by his father to evangelize the poor people; *Pauperibus evangelizare misit me.*<sup>207</sup> Vincent confirmed that “no matter, our vocation is: *Evangelizare pauperibus*”<sup>208</sup>, the words which Jesus himself said.<sup>209</sup> By using frequently the terms “by the divine mercy” and “by the mercy of God,” Vincent de Paul stated to his confreres, to the members of Daughters of Charity and to all those who wrote letters to him, that all the conversions and progress in the Christen spiritual life are by mercy of God.<sup>210</sup> According to Vincent de Paul, Jesus Christ is the rule of the mission, the centre of their spiritual life and mission activities.<sup>211</sup>

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<sup>200</sup> Koch, Bernard. “Mercy in Our Vincentian Being: Monsieur Vincent, Apostle of Mercy,” in *Vincentiana* (January-March, 2016, # 1), p 78.

<sup>201</sup> CCD: XI:26 (Conference: *The Spirit of Faith*).

<sup>202</sup> CCD: VII:356 (Letter: *To Antoine Fleury in Saintes*, November 6, 1658).

<sup>203</sup> CCD: VIII:41 (Letter: *To Gaspard Stelle in Genoa*, July 18, 1659).

<sup>204</sup> Abelly, Louis. *Op.cit.*, I: 238.

<sup>205</sup> The Lord sent me to bring the good news to the poor (CCD: XI:122 [Conference: *Repetition of Prayer*, October 25, 1643]).

<sup>206</sup> CCD: XI:283 (Conference: *Conformity to the Will of God*, October 15, 1655).

<sup>207</sup> CCD: XII:3 (Conference: *Observance of the Rules*, May 17, 1658).

<sup>208</sup> CCD: XII:79 (Conference: *The Purpose of the Congregation of the Mission*, December 6, 1658).

<sup>209</sup> CCD: XII:299 (Conference: *The Vows*, November 7, 1659) p 299.

<sup>210</sup> Koch, Bernard. “Mercy in Our Vincentian Being: Monsieur Vincent, Apostle of Mercy,” *Op.cit.*, p 80.

<sup>211</sup> Maloney. Robert. P., *The Way of Vincent de Paul*, *op. cit.*, p 20.

Secondly, Vincent de Paul was motivated by the exhortation of apostle Paul: *let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross* (Phil 2:5-8). Vincent acclaimed that we will be happy if this can be said of each of the members what St. Paul said of Christ, he humbled himself, taking the form of a slave; and Vincent prayed to God, cloth us with Christ's virtue of humility, so that we may be like Jesus Christ.<sup>212</sup>

The joy of the missionaries at the public profession of catholic faith by a convert was great, and then Vincent complemented that, this joy verifies the guidance of the holy Spirit on his Church by working as we do, at the instruction and sanctification of poor people.<sup>213</sup> In Vincent's Vision, the liberation that Jesus brings to the poor is integral, both spiritual and corporal.<sup>214</sup> According to Vincent de Paul the title *servants of the poor*<sup>215</sup> is the same as saying servants of Jesus Christ, since he regards what is done for the poor people as something done for Jesus Christ, for they, the poor people are his members.<sup>216</sup> As Vincent explained to the sisters of Daughters of Charity, that all your rules tend to make you good Christian women, good servants of God, and good Daughters of Charity.<sup>217</sup>

### 1.1.3.5 Mission Work as Teamwork

Vincent de Paul had a penchant for structures that enabled charitable activity to be systematically organized through the collective effort of women and men, with lay people and clergy, whether they were for missions, visits to the sick and poor, or priestly formation. His desire for cooperation in ministry extended beyond the organizations that he founded, promoted and governed.<sup>218</sup> For instance, he appreciated teamwork of Etienne Blatiron and Martin in the daily sermons and catechism lessons that both of them gave. He said, the labour will be sweet to them and every task easy, the strong person will relieve the weak one, and the weak will cherish the strong and obtain an increased strength, that will build up the church and multiply the workers of the church attracted by the perfume of charity in team work.<sup>219</sup> In 1960 Pope

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<sup>212</sup> CCD: XII:162 (Conference: *Humility*, April 18, 1659).

<sup>213</sup> CCD: XI:30 (Conference: *Conversion of a Heretic*).

<sup>214</sup> Maloney, Robert. P., *The Way of Vincent de Paul*, op. cit., p 25.

<sup>215</sup> Abelly, Louis. *Op.cit.*, I: 135.

<sup>216</sup> CCD: IX:256 (Conference: *The Rules*, May 30, 1647).

<sup>217</sup> CCD: IX:433 (Conference: *Fidelity to the Rules*, July 21, 1658).

<sup>218</sup> Forrestal, Alison, *Op.cit.*, p. 199.

<sup>219</sup> CCD: III:258 (Letter: To Etienne Blatiron, December 13, 1647).

John XXIII hailed the team work of St. Louise de Marillac and St. Vincent de Paul, both of them were amazing witness to the effectiveness of team work.<sup>220</sup>

According to Vincent de Paul, in pastoral ministry the providence of God brings a certain number of people together with the intention of honouring and proclaiming the life and mission of Jesus Christ. Each individual member of the team shares in the good that is done by all the members of the team. This means, that together, the individual members have more strength,<sup>221</sup> because Jesus has promised, *where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them* (Mt 18:20). When all the members of the team have the same intention of serving God, there will be a trinitarian experience, because Jesus said that *those who love me will keep my word, and my Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them* (Jn 14:23). He prayed: *holy Father, protect them ..., so that they may be one, as we are one* (Jn 17:11).

The members of the team must evaluate how they spend their time together. They become more and more united in their service to God and to their neighbour as they engage in the works of charity on behalf of the people of God.<sup>222</sup> When the members of the team observe their regulations with the intention of doing the will of God, there is great reason to hope that the work of the team will survive and grow; however, each member of the team should also think that if he/she neglects the regulations of the team, the community will disappear. The work of God cannot be accomplished amid chaos.<sup>223</sup> When a Pastoral ministry fails, it is often due to the failures of the team members. Vincent sarcastically puts this issue before the sisters and stated:

at the hour of death God would reproach you saying “go away you wretched creature; because you did not obey the regulations [of your team] and did not assist [one another in serving] the poor, and you have been the cause of [the failure of the ministry and even] the premature death of many person [in your care and of the failure of the ministry of the team].<sup>224</sup>

I would like to place the suggestions of Vincent de Paul regarding the means of achieving the team spirit and survival of the mission into seven golden rules for community<sup>225</sup>:

- a) To ask God for the grace to live in conformity with the little regulations of the team.

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<sup>220</sup> Kelly, Margaret John. *Louise de Marillac: The Gentle Power of Liberation*, in *Vincentian Heritage*, (Volume 10, # 1, 1989), p 27.

<sup>221</sup> CCD: IX:2 (Conference: *Explanation of the Regulations*, July 31, 1634).

<sup>222</sup> CCD: IX:2-3 (Conference: *Explanation of the Regulations*, July 31, 1634).

<sup>223</sup> CCD: IX:2-3 (Conference: *Explanation of the Regulations*, July 31, 1634).

<sup>224</sup> CCD: IX:10 (Conference: *Explanation of the Regulations*, July 31, 1634).

<sup>225</sup> CCD: IX:10-12 (Conference: *Explanation of the Regulations*, July 31, 1634).

- b) To take earnestly the trouble to observe the regulations in a form of prayer; (Lord I am determined to begin to practice those good things you teach us; I know that I am weak but with your grace I can do all things, and I implore you to give me the strength and courage to live them.)
- c) To live the team plan and the regulations in cordiality and charity with one another.
- d) To practice detachment in order to rely on divine providence and to divest yourselves of all things and have nothing that is your own.
- e) To review and renew your good resolution through annual retreats.
- f) To review the observance of the regulations and resolutions of the team through monthly meetings with person in charge of the ministry.
- g) To practice meditation in order to strengthen the resolutions with the grace of God.

Above all to preserve dedication to the ministry through teamwork members should inevitably have high regard for their vocation and for their ministry and they should reflect often on the grace of God which has been given to them.<sup>226</sup> The art of team spirit will be strengthened by the practice of showing respect to one another. Therefore, be first in showing respect to another member of the team ... being respectful to one another brings the hearts of people together whereas the contrary distances people from one another.<sup>227</sup>

#### 1.1.4 Integrating Holiness with Daily Life

On December 16, 1634, Vincent wrote to Monsieur Belin and stated: “you will see new faces on all sides, but what can you expect? That is how providence subjects us to vicissitude.”<sup>228</sup> Success in mission work should not divert our focus in the on-going process of spiritual development. Although mission work is being carried out in the world, the daily focus of the leaders of the parish mission should be oriented towards a heavenly goal and should also understand that the spiritual development<sup>229</sup> of the people is directly influenced by the pastoral leaders of the community. Symbolic gestures, such as the planting of the cross within the parish boundaries, are helpful in achieving a spiritual objective. Proponents of these kinds of public displays and rituals assume that these symbols help to internalize the message of contrition, and this pedagogy, used by Vincent, offers proof that this has been successfully transmitted to penitents.<sup>230</sup>

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<sup>226</sup> CCD: IX:35 (Conference: *Explanation of the Regulations*, July 31, 1634).

<sup>227</sup> CCD: XII:223 (Conference: *Charity*, May 30, 1659).

<sup>228</sup> CCD: I:269 (Letter: Monsieur Belin, December 16, 1634); we find another letter dated Nov 21, 1637.

<sup>229</sup> CCD: I:270 (Letter: Monsieur Belin, December 16, 1634).

<sup>230</sup> Forrestal Alison. *Op.cit.*, p. 93.

According to Vincent the habit of nurturing prayer in the vigour of virtue involves simple sacramental practices to deepen one's spiritual thought. He advised his followers, upon leaving the house, to take the holy water and kneel before a picture of Jesus Christ in order to ask God's blessing and for the grace not to offend him in ministry. Continuous prayer, even at the time of recognition of personal failure, will prompt us to ask pardon to the Lord and to seek his forgiveness. Then the mercy of God blesses us when we are at home, blesses us when we are on mission, and blesses us through our ministries.<sup>231</sup>

#### 1.1.4.1 The Task of Living Spiritual Life with Analogous Worldly Spirit

Commenting on the moral emerging of Gadamer's dialectical hermeneutics Barthold said that humans have a peculiar task to live between the transcendent and immanent, between the universal and the particular, between the diffuse and the concrete, and to privilege one side over the other is either to elevate human to the status of God or to reduce humans to the status of machines.<sup>232</sup> Both Jewish and Christian scriptures praise God under two aspects. On the one hand, God is above all creation, transcendent. On the other hand, God is intimately involved with his creatures and feels their afflictions, God suffers in pain for his people.<sup>233</sup> When the term hermeneutics is understood as the art of understanding and of making oneself understood, we then realize that Vincent did not follow dialectical hermeneutics but circle hermeneutics. Vincent would not simply distinguish between two opinions on a subject matter. He would say, there are so many elements involved in this subject matter and they are moving in a circle interaction with one another.

According to Vincent, the Christian spirit consists in not pretending anything, but rather in being very sincere, making one's words and works correspond to one's thoughts, loving the truth, avoiding lies, doing good without expecting any reward, preferring to endure evil than to do it, considering it a blessing to be despised and hated for having done good.<sup>234</sup> *The wisdom of this world consist in hiding one's feelings through deviousness, concealing true meaning in words, representing falsehood as truth and truth as falsehood.*<sup>235</sup> As Vincent instructed his confreres to avoid false pretence and asked: does anything seem more foolish to the worldly

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<sup>231</sup> CCD:X:504-504 (Conference: *Order of the Day, an Explanation of the Common Rules Art.17-23*. Mar 16, 1659).

<sup>232</sup> Lauren Swayne Barthold. *Gadamer's Dialectical Hermeneutics*. Lexington Books, 2010, p 124; <https://ndpr.nd.edu/news/gadamer-s-dialectical-hermeneutics> (accessed on 27.10.2020)

<sup>233</sup> Maloney, Robert P. *He Hears the Cry of the Poor*. *Op.cit.*, p. 42.

<sup>234</sup> CCD: XIIIa:163 (Conference: *The Difference between the Spirit of the World and that of Jesus Christ*).

<sup>235</sup> CCD: XIIIa:163 (Conference: *The Difference between the Spirit of the World and that of Jesus Christ*).

than to express one's true feelings in words?<sup>236</sup> Vincent was hinting at the dual nature of human beings. The worldly spirit is disguised under the name of politeness which one learns from childhood.<sup>237</sup> When immanent realities of inner realm of the person are contrary to the transcendent, there will be difficulty in spiritual development due to lack of corresponding action to the inner transcendental thoughts. The dual understanding is also manifested in the characteristics of the Congregation, which is both secular and congregational.<sup>238</sup>

Understanding Jesus from the perspective of the gospel of Luke, namely from the text which Jesus used to proclaim his mission: the Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor, he has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free (Lk 4:18), Vincent visualized a dual but circular movement within human life. Vincent initiated a new way of teaching the catechism based on his own understanding that the catholic religion is not only about a message of transcendent life but must also address the immanent realities of the people. Vincent always tried to understand the particular situation in order to implement the universal character of the church. Corresponding human behaviour to the universal and particular elements of religion, gives relevance to spiritual life and catholic ministry. The moment we shun the necessities of human life in a locality, we fail to understand the necessity of interpreting the transcendent elements of faith and hope through the expectation of living the virtue of love in acts,<sup>239</sup> in order to demonstrate faith and hope. When preaching is not followed by corresponding action, preaching will become diffused<sup>240</sup> but when preaching the word of God is followed by corresponding actions, they will become concrete examples in the mind of the people. We have to preach mainly by good example and by being faithful to regulations and living as good missionaries.<sup>241</sup> The memories of concrete examples will have a profound impact in encouraging people to live a moral life and deepening religious values in the subconscious of the people. Although the transcendent nature of the spiritual life could exist beyond a contextualized historical experience, the very spiritual life is made possible in the contextualized historical situations. Therefore, understanding the concrete situation is equally important as understanding the universal nature of religion and its transcendent spiritual realm.

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<sup>236</sup> CCD: XIIIa:163 (Conference: *The Difference between the Spirit of the World and that of Jesus Christ*).

<sup>237</sup> CCD: XIIIa:163 (Conference: *The Difference between the Spirit of the World and that of Jesus Christ*).

<sup>238</sup> Forrester, Alison. *Op.cit.*, p. 67.

<sup>239</sup> CCD: XII:239 (Conference: *Method to be Followed in Preaching*, August 20, 1655).

<sup>240</sup> "After the Apostles, all apostolic men who followed put their method into practice, preaching familiarly, without that ostentatious eloquence full of vanity" (CCD: XII:244 [Conference: *Method to be Followed in Preaching*, August 20, 1655]).

<sup>241</sup> CCD: XII:252 (Conference: *Method to be Followed in Preaching*, August 20, 1655).

### 1.1.4.2 Suffering is Part of Christian Mission Work

Suffering is part of Christian mission work. This is made real not only through the suffering and the death of Jesus, but also in the life of apostles and innumerable believers in Jesus Christ. Vincent de Paul showed by his serene and even joyful countenance, accepting his sufferings in a spirit of penance and humility.<sup>242</sup> According to Vincent, pastoral ministers are not supposed to claim any credit for their work. They are not supposed to expect praise from people for the good works being done and being carried out in the community, because the virtue of humility recognizes that all good comes from God.<sup>243</sup> Through the work of ministers, people in need are being blessed by God, and in all circumstances, pastoral ministers need to take care of their spiritual development.<sup>244</sup>

Sufferings and setbacks in mission work are to be viewed from the perspective of the sufferings of Jesus Christ. The method of mission work is to labour constantly and humbly in a spirit of humility.<sup>245</sup> Saint Paul reminds us in the letter to Corinthians, that we have this treasure in earthen jars, so that it may be made clear that this extraordinary power belongs to God and does not come from us. We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be made visible in our bodies (2 Cor 4:6-15). When someone asked about his illnesses, Vincent would make light of them, saying they were as nothing compared with the sufferings of our Lord.<sup>246</sup>

In the Christian mission life, we may have to deal with inconveniences, lack of comforts, sufferings, calumnies, and contradictions and all of these are part of the spiritual call to endure these sufferings willingly and for the love of Jesus Christ. Among the multitude of thoughts and inclinations that might arise, many may appear to be good but do not come from God, in those moments, prudence would dictate that one would discern and discriminate, seek counsel and accept advice, pray for God's grace and proceed slowly.<sup>247</sup> Pastoral leaders should have meekness and patience to attract their hearers, and simplicity and prudence to lead them to

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<sup>242</sup> Abelly, Louis. *Op.cit.*, I: 256.

<sup>243</sup> Maloney. Robert. P., *The Way of Vincent de Paul, op. cit.*, p 29.

<sup>244</sup> *We live in Jesus Christ through the death of Jesus Christ, and we must die in Jesus Christ through the life of Jesus Christ, and our life must be hidden in Jesus Christ and filled with Jesus Christ, and in order to die as Jesus Christ, we must live as Jesus Christ. Now once these foundations have been laid, let us give ourselves up to contempt, to shame, to ignominy, and let us disclaim the honours people pay us, the good reputation and the applause they give us, and let us do nothing which has not that end in view.* CCD: I:276 (Letter: Antoine Portail, May 1, 1635).

<sup>245</sup> CCD: I:277 (Letter: Antoine Portail, May 1, 1635).

<sup>246</sup> Abelly, Louis. *Op.cit.*, I: 255.

<sup>247</sup> Melito, Jack, *Saint Vincent de Paul. Windows on his Vision.* 1998, p. 56. *Op.cit.*,

God.<sup>248</sup> Yet, God allows them to suffer sometimes from illness and sometimes from a lack of some material goods. At times they will have to go to places not of their choice and it will be difficult in those places, but Jesus will assist them because they are working to build up the kingdom. Sometimes they will have to suffer from insult and calumnies, and it must be understood that divine providence allows these things to happen to these servants of God.<sup>249</sup> By giving attention to the opinions and needs of the members of the team and community, we could enable ourselves with humility and fraternity, to overcome pastoral difficulties.<sup>250</sup>

According to Vincent, when God decided to make the soul of the person perfect, he permitted that individual to be tempted against the spiritual vocation and he sometimes leads that person through different sufferings. God takes a chisel, like a sculptor, and begins to shape the features of the spiritual nature and makes the spiritual genre of the person strong enough to carry out the mission of God.<sup>251</sup> During times of difficulties, individuals need to take care of their spiritual and physical health, so that they can continue to serve God.<sup>252</sup>

### 1.1.4.3 Associating Difficulties with the Cross of Jesus Christ

The practice of offering all the troubles of life to the foot of the cross with confidence and submission is the best way to resign oneself to the will of God. This is one of the best means to do the will of God and to strengthen inner peace of mind in the practice of spiritual life.<sup>253</sup> Vincent offered all the troubles of the mission and his eagerness to expand this missionary movement out of Paris, at the foot of the cross,<sup>254</sup> and he hoped, that the spirit of the Lord would bless all his works.<sup>255</sup> With regard to analysing the values of different matters, Vincent said, *before anything else, consider the end, which should be the glory of God. After that look for the interest of the little company and then the good and advantages of the persons in question.*<sup>256</sup>

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<sup>248</sup> Abelly, Louis. *Op.cit.*, II:17. *They will endure willingly and for the love of God inconveniences, contractions, ridicule, calumnies, and other mortifications that may befall them, even for the good they have done, after the example of our Lord, who, after having endured so much, even to the point of being crucified, from those very persons who had received so many benefits from Him, prayed for them.* CCD:X:146 (Conference: *Love of Physical and Moral Sufferings, an Explanation of the Common Rules Art.6.* July 23<sup>rd</sup> 1656).

<sup>249</sup> CCD:X:146 (Conference: *Love of Physical and Moral Sufferings, an Explanation of the Common Rules Art.6.* July 23<sup>rd</sup> 1656).

<sup>250</sup> Agostino, Joseph V. "Appreciative Discernment," in *Vincentiana* (January-March 2016, # 1), p 74.

<sup>251</sup> CCD:X:149 (Conference: *Love of Physical and Moral Sufferings, an Explanation of the Common Rules Art.6.* July 23<sup>rd</sup> 1656).

<sup>252</sup> CCD: I:123 (Letter: Isabelle Du Fay, 1631); In 1631 the plague raged unremittingly in Paris.

<sup>253</sup> CCD: IX:393 (Conference: *How to Act Amid Difficulties when far from the Motherhouse.* 19<sup>th</sup> April 1650).

<sup>254</sup> Forrestal, Alison. *Op.cit.*, p 133.

<sup>255</sup> Melito, Jack. *Op.cit.*, p 47.

<sup>256</sup> Kelly, John, Margaret. *Decision Making: Councils of the Daughters of Charity (1646-1659), Op.cit.*, p 72.

With regard to beginning new projects and the associated difficulties for establishing and beginning new activities, people in leadership naturally experience fear and angst while planning and executing. They should rely more on God in prayer, because there is a need to continue to develop the art of trusting in the providence of God when planned projects are being executed or when such projects turn into difficulty. Once the Duchesse de Liancourt insisted for a house for common use in which food and medicine could be distributed. When speaking about this initiative, Vincent feared that the sisters who were involved in distributing food and the sisters who are involved in providing medicine would join together and become content with offering their combined service through this new house, and they may withdraw from visiting the sick in their homes. In his explanation Vincent supported, and at the same time emphasised the need to carry out both missions, that is, visiting the sick people in their homes and caring for the needy from this new house ... and doing all of this without losing the spirit of the mission.<sup>257</sup>

According to Vincent the four parts of the cross represent the virtues proper to the spiritual life. Although the vocation to spiritual life requires people to strive their entire life to practice moral, cardinal and theological virtues in imitation of Jesus Christ, they have to give more attention to those four virtues corresponding to the four directions of extremity of the holy cross, namely, humility, charity, obedience and patience. The inner spiritual orientation of the people in accordance with humility, charity, obedience and patience should reflect their words and daily actions, because those who believe in Jesus Christ need to strive to live in conformity with Jesus Christ, imitating his actions and his conformity to the will of God.<sup>258</sup>

Spirituality involves a process of ongoing spiritual and intellectual formation. Vincent de Paul, in the midst of numerous occupations (superior of the Visitation convent, chaplain to the de Gondis, parish priest of Clichy la Garenne and chaplain general to the galleys of France), also found time for further studies. The diploma of licentiate in cannon law from the university of Paris in 1623 reveals his intellectual search for knowledge and ongoing formation to become perfect.<sup>259</sup>

#### **1.1.4.4 Committed Individuals Become Consecrated Believers**

Disciplined dedication of a person is defined as commitment, and this fervour of commitment enables people to work in the vineyard of the Lord. Jesus taught people about the

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<sup>257</sup> CCD: I286. (Letter: Saint Louise, In Liancourt, 1635).

<sup>258</sup> CCD:X:418 (Conference: *Humility, Charity, Obedience and Patience*. July 14<sup>th</sup>, 1658.).

<sup>259</sup> Coste, Pierre, C.M. *Op.cit.*, p. 144.

need for commitment in order to become his disciple. He said, *whoever comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, and even life itself, cannot be my disciple; whoever does not carry the cross and follow me cannot be my disciple* (Lk 14:26-30).

Vincent de Paul counselled one of his priests about the need to distance himself from family issues. According to Vincent, if one is worried about a division in one's family, one should attempt to remedy the situation through a letter, asking some upright person to mediate. If there is a question of some temporal good, the individual should ask to another what he/she would do if they were there. If one were to handle the affairs of his/her relatives, there would be reason to fear that, instead of settling matters, the individual could be dragged into their disputes and embroiled in their affairs. If one responds and says that it is only to have the family members profit spiritually from said intervention, it must be remembered that frequent association with those who are close to one, diminishes the spirit and often destroys it altogether.<sup>260</sup> According to Vincent de Paul, in order to determine the means necessary for the accomplishment of works for the glory of God, we must always look for God's interest first, and ask the question: will God be glorified in this work?<sup>261</sup>

When Vincent was giving a conference on the necessity to control excessive self-love, he said that self-regulation implies the surrender of those tender feelings in us, which are nothing else than an ill regulated love of self. We have to learn to die to those sentiments and to those desires in order to be totally dedicated to the mission.<sup>262</sup> We have to disobey our relatives if they prevent us from obeying God and following our lord Jesus Christ.<sup>263</sup> Not that we should neglect to attend to the special demands of certain cases and be unsympathetic to them, but we slow down our response in order to be assured, that our motivation is selfless and our work glorifies God.<sup>264</sup> Too much interest towards relatives can spoil one's vocation to serve God. *Some of Vincent's strongest expressions refer to lost vocations, as he described them as scabby sheep who can infect the flock.*<sup>265</sup> Vincent advised the Daughters of Charity that, detachment from relatives, places and all things, in general, is necessary because with it they would not be able to carry out the duties of their calling. *Life of missionaries resembles that of*

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<sup>260</sup> CCD: VII:52 (Letter: *To a Priest of the Mission*).

<sup>261</sup> Kelly, Margaret John. *Decision Making: Councils of the Daughters of Charity (1646-1659)*, *Op.cit.*, p 72.

<sup>262</sup> CCD: IX:136 (Conference: *On Excessive Love*. December 11, 1644).

<sup>263</sup> CCD: IX:177 (Conference: *On Mortification*. May 2, 1659).

<sup>264</sup> Melito, Jack. *Op.cit.*, p 54.

<sup>265</sup> Kelly, Margaret John. *Decision Making: Councils of the Daughters of Charity (1646-1659)*, *Op.cit.*, p 77.

*the Apostles, who had nothing of their own, neither home nor a particular district assigned to them but went wherever the spirit of God sent them.*<sup>266</sup>

In explaining the spirit of self-denial, Vincent said that, *religious are dead to the world, and should no longer even recognize their own relatives.*<sup>267</sup> By virtue of their love for Jesus Christ, the members of the Congregation will stand firm against every temptation to the contrary that will come to them, and change the contrary experience into spiritual encounter.<sup>268</sup> Self-renunciation implies the surrender of those tender feelings within us which are based on self-love. We have to die to those sentiments and feelings in order to become totally dedicated to the Congregation.<sup>269</sup> However, *when Vincent learned that any suffering had come to the relatives of the priests or brothers of his Congregation, he wanted all to sympathize and help the families as much as possible. He himself was the first to sense their grief and offer his consolation in the best way he knew how.*<sup>270</sup>

Perseverance in good works involves mortification. If the good works of the Congregation suffer as a result of individual self-interest, there are some remedies to overcome that situation: first, the tendency of self-love is a sign of doubting salvation, which is in fact a misfortune derived from one's own fault. No one who puts a hand to the plough but keeps looking back is fit for the kingdom of God. Secondly, a crown is promised to those, who do good but is given only to those who persevere. People will begin to jeer at those persons saying that this person began to build and could not finish. Thirdly, we would deprive ourselves of the eternal beatitude, for, blessed is the one who has regard for the lowly and the poor. Fourthly, we can lose paradise by omission as well as by commission, and this is because of failing to assist the poor. Therefore, we deprive ourselves of that happiness based on feelings in order to fulfil the law of God, which is always done by an act of charity.<sup>271</sup> Above all by attending the interests of personal love a member will deprive the public of the edification we have given to the people.<sup>272</sup> After giving the written rule to his Congregation, Vincent prayed. *O Lord give thy blessing to this little book, and let the unction of thy Holy Spirit go with it, that it may work in the souls of those who study it, hatred of sin, detachment from the world, the practice of holiness, and union with Thee.*<sup>273</sup> Vincent's decision making for the spiritual pedagogy began

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<sup>266</sup> CCD:X:127 (Conference, *On Indifference*, June 6, 1656).

<sup>267</sup> Abelly, Louis. *Op.cit.*, II: 277.

<sup>268</sup> CCD:X:109 (Conference: *On Regulations for the Sisters of the Angers Hospital*, 1641).

<sup>269</sup> CCD: IX:136 (Conference: *On Excessive Self Love*. December 11, 1644) p 136.

<sup>270</sup> Abelly, Louis. *Op.cit.*, II: 155.

<sup>271</sup> CCD: XIIIb:412 (Conference: *On Perseverance in Good Works*. December 22, 1645).

<sup>272</sup> CCD: XIIIb:415 (Conference: *On Perseverance in Good Works*. December 22, 1645).

<sup>273</sup> Wilson, R.F (ed). *Op.cit.*, p 255.

with the values driving the company and the hierarchy that he visioned, put the glory of God first and the end of the company before the individual need.<sup>274</sup>

#### 1.1.4.5 Works of Charity

Practice of charity towards needy people gives profound meaning to the daily spiritual activities. Then, when internal thoughts correspond to external actions, the person finds meaning in the various spiritual principles, and as a result of the integral relationship of thought and deed, the person is able to advance in a life of prayer.<sup>275</sup> The Spirit of Christ is the spirit of charity, therefore, works of charity are God's love expressed in action.<sup>276</sup> There is a correlation between prayer and charitable works, perseverance in prayer life calls for charitable works too. Spiritual thoughts of charitable works begin to provide the person with strong foundation. If the charitable works are stopped, then the foundation of the spiritual life will be shaken up. Some ways of preventing this fall are found in recourse to God through prayer and in the renewal of charitable activities.<sup>277</sup> Charity is something like depriving ourselves of happiness in order to fulfil the law of God, which invites us to do charity to our neighbour,<sup>278</sup> *for the one who loves the neighbour has fulfilled the law.*<sup>279</sup>

## Part 1 Chapter 2

### 1.2.1 Missionary Vision of Vincent and Rules of Spiritual Foundation

A broad understanding of the Christian faithful is based on the reality that Christians have been incorporated into Christ through baptism and have been constituted as the people of God. Therefore, since they have become sharers in Christ's priestly, prophetic, and royal office in their own manner, they are called to carry forth the mission which God has entrusted to the Church to fulfil in the world, in accord with the condition proper to each person.<sup>280</sup> All are called to carry forth the mission which God has entrusted to the Church, yet all the members do not have the same function.<sup>281</sup> The Christian missionary vision calls every Christian to become missionary minded and missionary hearted.<sup>282</sup> When we assess Vincent de Paul's contribution to the reform of the church in the midst of the circumstances that existed at that time in France,

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<sup>274</sup> Kelly, Margaret John. *Decision Making: Councils of the Daughters of Charity (1646-1659)*, *Op.cit.*, p 77.

<sup>275</sup> CCD: XIIIb:410 (Conference: *Works of Charity*, January 1, 1638).

<sup>276</sup> *Instruction on Stability Chastity Poverty and Obedience in the Congregation of the Mission. Op.cit.*, p 3.

<sup>277</sup> CCD: XIIIb:411 (Conference: *Perseverance in Good Works*, December 22, 1645).

<sup>278</sup> CCD: XIIIb:410 (Conference: *Perseverance in Good Works*, December 22, 1645).

<sup>279</sup> *Romans* 13:8.

<sup>280</sup> *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, #385.

<sup>281</sup> *Lumen Gentium*, # 32.

<sup>282</sup> *Code of Canon Law*, #204 §1.

we can see the vibrant and active mission works which reflected a pursuit for spiritual reform through many dynamic initiatives involving both women and men.<sup>283</sup> Directly involving women in the mission work was one of his strategic decisions which translated the personal conviction of his vocation into a missionary vision and ministry.

The missionary vision of Vincent de Paul had three elements, namely, missionary perception, missionary cognition and missionary action. Seeing, hearing and feeling with the needy people of France led to Vincent's missionary perception. By speaking for the people in front of the aristocrats and asking for material assistance and by speaking with the church authorities for spiritual assistance, Vincent developed his missionary cognition. Preaching the word of God in the countryside and his readiness to serve the poor people explains his missionary action.

The origin of the congregations founded by Vincent de Paul, place more emphasis on spirituality than on social works, although the apparent nature of both congregations (CM and DC) exhibit more emphasis on charitable works. Charity and prayer were united in the spiritual life which has fundamentally the elements of liberation spirituality. Vincent's vision of the religious life revolved around the concept that the poor and rich had the same privilege. His method for carrying out the mission (religious women going out into the streets and serving poor village people) was unheard of and was contrary to the traditions of the Catholic Church. His spirituality not only connected prayer and charitable works but also connected human persons of different social strata, rich and poor, into a spiritual community with apostolic works. Thus, Vincent envisaged an apostolic community in which people would be supported by one another in their common vocation.

This was a Christocentric spirituality, strengthened by zeal for souls and focused on the proclamation of the message of Jesus Christ. At the very beginning, this Christocentric liberation spirituality was at odds with catholic traditions and conventions. Nonetheless this spirituality always safeguarded the spirit of catholic church and fought against the heresies of that era. This was an effort to strengthen catholic ministry and to make theology relevant to the realities of the common people with a practical approach.<sup>284</sup>

Vincent de Paul was more interested in the practical perspective of the theology than the theoretical. He employed a Christological framework which he learned from masters like

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<sup>283</sup> Forrestal, Alison. *Vincent de Paul, the Lazarist Mission, and French Catholic Reform*. Oxford University Press, Great Clarendon Street, Oxford, UK, 2017, P 10.

<sup>284</sup> Maloney P. Robert, *The Way of Vincent de Paul, op. cit.*, p 19.

de Bérulle, Francis de Sales and André Duval, but that framework remains largely implicit. Vincent neither speaks nor writes about Christology as such, but through his writing and conferences, he developed a way of living in Christ and taught this method to his followers.<sup>285</sup> I have recognized a few important elements in Vincent de Paul's Christocentric liberation spirituality of apostolic community life.

### 1.2.1.1 To be a Person of Prayer

Vincent de Paul wrote to Gaspard Stelle in Genoa, that *we are indebted to God for having sent us, as he sent his eternal son Jesus Christ for the salvation of the people. If we work at this thought daily in our prayer, we will be able to work at this in the spirit of Jesus Christ, and Jesus will give us the light and grace to succeed. Our effort to know Jesus the crucified and to live his life in turn will become our knowledge and source of action.*<sup>286</sup> Personal experience of God is the heart of all spirituality.<sup>287</sup> The Constitutions of the Congregation of the Mission demand that its members engage in one hour of daily personal prayer.<sup>288</sup>

God does not always allow people to perceive the purity of their interior amidst the promptings of corrupt human nature so that they might constantly humble themselves, and since by this means their treasure remains hidden, and may have greater trust in God. The apostle Paul had seen wonderful things in heaven (1 Tim 3:16), but did not consider himself justified because of that, for he saw in himself too much darkness and too many struggles. Still he had great confidence in the God of his faith and was convinced that nothing in the world could separate him from the love of Jesus Christ.<sup>289</sup> Therefore, prayer life involves abandoning oneself into the arms of God's providence during one's own dark moments of life and to have perfect and total confidence in the infinite goodness of Jesus Christ.<sup>290</sup> During the time of the plague in France, Vincent wrote to the members engaged in the caring of sick people and stated: *we must try to conform ourselves to the will of God at the times of trial, so that we can grow daily in the spirit of our vocation.*<sup>291</sup> Indeed, that was the vision of his prayer life.

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<sup>285</sup> Maloney P. Robert, *The Way of Vincent de Paul, op. cit.*, p 20.

<sup>286</sup> CCD: VIII:41 (Letter, *To Gaspard Stelle*, July 18, 1625).

<sup>287</sup> Maloney, Robert P., *The Way of Vincent de Paul Op.cit.*, p 111. (A quote from Karl Rahner, "The Spirituality of the Church of the Future", in *Theological Investigations XX* 150).

<sup>288</sup> *Constitution and Statutes of the Congregation of the Mission*, #47

<sup>289</sup> CCD: IV:317 (Letter, *To A Priest*).

<sup>290</sup> CCD: IV:317 (Letter, *To A Priest*).

<sup>291</sup> CCD: IV:418 (Letter: *To Patrice Valois*, July 19, 1652).

### 1.2.1.2 Perseverance

Vincent de Paul is of the opinion that human beings are like the weather which is never the same. Difficulties will come in the midst of trails. The saints were tried in various ways, and it was through their patience in difficulties and their perseverance in holy undertakings that they were victorious.<sup>292</sup> Fidelity to God in small details will lead to an eternal reward. Through our perseverance we strive to make ourselves faithful to God in all things without exception, in small matters as well as in important matters.<sup>293</sup> Perseverance is a personal response to God and involves the renewal of one's commitment during times of difficulty.<sup>294</sup> Vincent de Paul stated: *Aim unceasingly and without respite from yourself on the model [of Jesus Christ], and you will become more and more a good missionary. In the spiritual life give importance to the beginning, to the progress and to the end. Judas had begun well, but he finished badly; Saint Paul finished well, although he had begun badly. Perfection consists in a constant perseverance to acquire the virtues and become proficient in their practice, because in the spiritual life, not to advance is to fall back, for a person never remains in the same condition.*<sup>295</sup>

### 1.2.1.3 Unfriendly and Friendly Spiritual Sentiments

Proper disposition of the mind is necessary for spiritual advancement of a person. Vincent de Paul invited his confreres to change their dispositions, and become more patient, humble and exact in observing the rules. Vincent de Paul explains four ways in which the unfriendly disposition is manifested and that hinders the spiritual advancement. The nature of excusing one's fault by comparing oneself with other colleagues and members is the first unfriendly disposition against spiritual advancement. The second is complaining about the ability to accomplish the allotted works and assignments, and thinking that the work is a burden for spiritual progress. The third unfriendly disposition is constantly asking for a change of workplace, because one finds the life and work very difficult in the place where one is assigned. The fourth unfriendly disposition is the acknowledgement of self-importance and the presumption that the entire community must always hold one in esteem and therefore, one does not deserve any correction. These four unfriendly dispositions will not allow the spiritual advancement, and they will hinder people from becoming a person of prayer. Opposed to these four unfriendly dispositions are four friendly dispositions which will guide an individual into

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<sup>292</sup> CCD: V:613 (Letter: *To A Priest of the Mission in Saint-Meen*, May 17, 1656).

<sup>293</sup> CCD: IX:496 (Conference: *Fidelity to God*, June 3, 1653).

<sup>294</sup> *Instruction on Stability Chastity Poverty and Obedience in the Congregation of the Mission*. Vincentiana, Congregation of the Mission, General Curia, January -February 1996, p 15.

<sup>295</sup> CCD: II:146 (Letter: *To Etienne Blatiron*, October 9, 1640).

spiritual advancement. The first friendly disposition is to have an intention to preserve the spirit of interest for prayer life. The other three are the practice of patience, humility and the spirit of observing the rules. These four friendly dispositions will strengthen the nature of perseverance in the spiritual advancement through prayer life.<sup>296</sup>

#### 1.2.1.4 Knowing God

Vincent understood knowing God in a very particular way, namely, dedicating oneself to apostolic activity *in nomine Domini*, seeking the will of God as both a means and a method with regard to missionary work, and being firm in the resolutions with regard to the teachings of Jesus Christ.<sup>297</sup> Vincent had a great esteem for meditation and encouraged others to practice meditation, because he considered meditation as a mental prayer, which is a form of “manna” that preserves and perfects the souls of the faithful. He was convinced that regular meditation would lead individuals to further growth in the practice of virtue and he himself engaged in mediation on a daily basis.<sup>298</sup>

Mental prayer creates steadfast dispositions in the person which will naturally be manifested through the spiritual character of the individual. Vincent stated that the best virtues for mental prayer are humility, the recognition of one’s nothingness before God, mortification of the passions and the unregulated movements of nature, interior recollection, uprightness and simplicity of heart, attention to the presence of God, adhering to the will of God, and frequent reminders to oneself of God’s goodness. Vincent explains mental prayer as a reality that changes a person interiorly and exteriorly. That understanding is reflected in his own life and writings which are also expressions of the encounter with God in mental prayer.<sup>299</sup>

#### 1.2.1.5 Seeking God and His Justice

Chapter two of the common rules explains the matter of following the teachings of Jesus Christ, especially, to seek first the kingdom of God and his justice, and all other things which you require will be given to you as well. That means that each member must have a set of priorities, because matters involving their relationship with God are more important than temporal affairs. In practice, then, we should not worry too much about temporal affairs. Indeed, rooted in God’s love, we will never lack what we need even when everything we possess seems

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<sup>296</sup> CCD: III:339 (Letter: *To A Seminarian of the Mission*, July 15, 1648).

<sup>297</sup> CCD: XII:360 (Letter: *To Sister Helene-Angelique Lhuillier*, October 7, 1643).

<sup>298</sup> Abelly, Louis. *Op.cit.*, III: p. 59.

<sup>299</sup> Abelly, Louis. *Op.cit.*, p 59.

headed for disaster.<sup>300</sup> The interior life is essential to carry out pastoral works, then the core of interior spiritual life is to seek God, which should be our primary aim; lack of this state of life leads to dearth in spiritual life, a life with own rules. To seek God and to lead an interior life implies care and action.<sup>301</sup> By caring and acting for interior development of spiritual life, we sanctify the activity of our exterior ministries. The primary elements which form interior spiritual life are guided by faith, love, spiritual exercise and meditation, grounded in a habit of seeking God and God's glory. Still, we have to be prepared in temporal affairs and tend to them in the way God desires but not make them our main concern.<sup>302</sup>

To seek the kingdom of God is also to be understood in the perspective of seeking God's justice, and there cannot be much distinction in relation to the pastoral work and pastoral life between seeking God and his justice. Scope of seeking God's justice is commutative and distributive in nature. God's justice is commutative because God changes people's words into virtues and their merits into rewards, in other words, God grants virtues in proportion to the effort of the people to acquire the virtues and grants grace according to the number and value of good acts. God's justice is distributive because it keeps a certain geometric proportion, since God give paradise- an assemblage of infinite benefits that God distributes to righteous souls, and hell- a place of all sorts of disorders that God distributes to those who live in sin. The rhetorical question regarding the relevance of knowing the distributive and commutative justice is important, because an understanding to distributive and commutative nature of god's justice enables people to seek God properly and to find God happily through their daily apostolic activities.<sup>303</sup> By virtue of an understanding of distributive and commutative justice, and by virtue of practicing the same, people will be enabled to strengthen their souls against three things which contribute the loss of souls, namely, concupiscence of the flesh, concupiscence of the eyes, and pride of life.<sup>304</sup>

### 1.2.2 Dedication to the Mission of Christ

Ministers need to continually form themselves so that they will become gradually more and more filled with a vital missionary spirit. In the spiritual life, one should always remember

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<sup>300</sup> *Common Rules*, II:2. *Let's strive to make ourselves interior men so that Jesu Christ may reign in us; let's strive after this and not remain in a languishing, dissipated state, a worldly, profane state that causes us to busy ourselves with things the senses present, without reflecting on the creator who made them, not making our meditation in order to extricate ourselves from worldly things, or not seeking the sovereign good.* CCD: XII:111 (Conference: *Seeking the Kingdom of God*, February 21, 1659).

<sup>301</sup> CCD: XII:111 *Op.cit.*

<sup>302</sup> CCD: XII:112 *Op.cit.*

<sup>303</sup> CCD: XII:115-116 (Conference: *Seeking the Kingdom of God*, February 21, 1659).

<sup>304</sup> CCD: XIIIb:345 (Document: *Council of June 25, 1656*).

that little account is taken with regard to the beginning of a spiritual life whereas what is important is the progress that one makes in developing the spiritual life. The classical example of Judas who had begun well but ended miserably and of Paul who had begun badly but finished well could be taken as a lesson for the spiritual journey. The way to progress is to be continually grateful for God's mercy and to have a constant fear of failing to remain faithful in our exercises of prayer, spiritual reading, and in the acts of charity, mortification, humility, simplicity, meekness, and zeal for souls. Dedication to the mission of Christ is a gradual formation process which requires the cultivation of five specific virtues, namely: humility, simplicity, mortification, meekness and zeal for souls.<sup>305</sup> These virtues constitute the spirit of the mission and the practice of these virtues will enable people to become good missionaries,<sup>306</sup> and by committing themselves to live these five virtues their approach to spiritual life, individually and collectively, will be advancing.<sup>307</sup> Jesus Christ is characterised by these five missionary virtues,<sup>308</sup> and those same virtues define the movement of Vincentian spiritual life. Dynamic acts of these five virtues in the pastoral service will lead pastoral team and the community to radical dedication to evangelization.<sup>309</sup>

### 1.2.2.1 Humility

The perspective of humility is Christological.<sup>310</sup> As Vincent reflected upon the words of Jesus: *learn of me for I am humble of heart* (Mt 11:29), he exhorted his followers to be people who are by nature, humble. Vincent believed that the mystery of the incarnation of Jesus Christ and the message of salvation were extended to all humankind as an act of God's love and humility. God willed that Jesus' mother should be the humblest person, and Jesus opted to be born and to live in the midst of a humble family.<sup>311</sup> Pride can cause vain complacency. Therefore, we need to ask God constantly to protect and preserve us from the insidious vice of pride, and to help us cultivate the virtue of humility. Then prompted by the motive of honouring God and humbling themselves, people will be able to persevere in their spiritual life.<sup>312</sup> Humility allows constant self-emptying and helps to cogitate upon the interdependence among people

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<sup>305</sup> Renouard, John-Pierre, *Op.cit.*, p. 110; CCD: II:146 (Letter: *To Etienne Blatiron*, October 9, 1640).

<sup>306</sup> CCD: II:146 (Letter: *To Etienne Blatiron*, October 9, 1640).

<sup>307</sup> Forrestal, Alison, *Op.cit.* p. 94.

<sup>308</sup> Maloney, Robert P., *The Way of Vincent de Paul Op.cit.*,p. 28.

<sup>309</sup> Saldaña Moreno, César A. "Lay Vincentian Missionaries and Vincentian Spirituality," in *Vincentiana* (October-December, 2015, # 4), p 497.

<sup>310</sup> Renouard, John-Pierre, *Op.cit.*, p. 112.

<sup>311</sup> CCD: IX:529 (Conference: *Secret Pride*, March 15, 1654).

<sup>312</sup> CCD: XI:45-46 (Conference: *Humility*, No: 36).

and communities.<sup>313</sup> The following five dimensions of humility will help people to understand the practical scope and nature of humility.<sup>314</sup>

- a) Recognition of our creatureliness and redemption, both being gifts of God's love.<sup>315</sup>
- b) Humility is gratitude for gifts (Lk 1:46-50).
- c) Humility involves a servant's attitude (Mk 9:9-35).
- d) Humility entails allowing ourselves to be evangelized by the poor.
- e) Humility is voluntary self-emptying.

Everyone finds the virtue of humility delightful to speculate but, in reality, practicing this virtue is distasteful to human nature.<sup>316</sup> Humility enables a missionary to live in solidarity with other people,<sup>317</sup> and to reflect the merits of the life of Jesus Christ. In order to dedicate our life to the mission of Christ, and to carry out the pastoral works in a fitting manner, we need to constantly strive to acquire this virtue, which is fundamental to any spiritual advancement.<sup>318</sup> This virtue would deepen in us the consideration of corrupt human nature, inconstancy of human mind, limitation of human understanding, the intractability of human will, and the impurity of human affections.<sup>319</sup> Vincent considered humility as the most important of the missionary virtues, which was especially engraved in the heart of Jesus Christ in preference to other virtues.<sup>320</sup>

In pastoral ministry, we are not supposed to flatter ourselves, nor to be complacent, because *we are simple instruments that God deigns to use, as he did with the rod of Moses, which worked wonders and miracles ... that instrument, however, was only a rod, a fragile stick of wood.*<sup>321</sup> According to Vincent an act of virtue that is well done disposes us to do another act well, and the first degree of humility serves us to rise to the second. If our heart is attached to the virtue of humility, God will preserve his grace in us and increase the grace by corresponding acts.<sup>322</sup> When, the pastoral leaders and the faithful live with humility, simplicity and generosity, they will discover new horizons of pastoral act for the people most in need.<sup>323</sup> Thus, the existence of the virtue of humility as an active and passive habit, serves as the foundation for

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<sup>313</sup> Chaves dos Santos, Eli. "The Vincentian Family: A Horizon of Creative Fidelity," Translated: Plock, Charles T., in *Vincentiana* (October-December, 2015, # 4), p 437.

<sup>314</sup> Maloney, Robert P., *Op.cit.*, p. 58.

<sup>315</sup> *Acts* 17:28.; *Psalms* 139:13.

<sup>316</sup> CCD: XI:44 (Conference: *Humility*).

<sup>317</sup> *Instruction on Stability Chastity Poverty and Obedience in the Congregation of the Mission. Op.cit.*, p 6.

<sup>318</sup> CCD: XI:46 (Conference: *Humility*).

<sup>319</sup> CCD: XI:47 (Conference: *Humility*).

<sup>320</sup> Forrestal, Alison, *Op.cit.*, p. 102.

<sup>321</sup> CCD: XI:48 (Conference: *Humility*).

<sup>322</sup> CCD: XI:50 (Conference: *Humility*).

<sup>323</sup> Saldaña Moreno, César A. "Lay Vincentian Missionaries and Vincentian Spirituality," *Op.cit.*, p 498.

dedicating oneself to the mission of Jesus Christ. The interior act of considering oneself unworthy to stand before God and external acts of humility in the community help people to cultivate the virtue of humility. Then, God who resists the proud and gives his grace to the humble would strengthen in us the habit of the virtue humility.<sup>324</sup>

### 1.2.2.2 Simplicity

Simplicity is an attitude of being simple in life and sharing things with others.<sup>325</sup> Simplicity leads people to purity of intention, truthfulness in their words and works, and enables them to be transparent.<sup>326</sup> Living a virtuous life of humility leads people to a life of simplicity. Modern progress, which presents people a more comfortable lifestyle, will always appear more attractive than a simple lifestyle. Therefore, special care should be taken by pastoral leaders in order to lead a life of simplicity after the example of Jesus Christ who preached the word of God through concrete example. In a practical context, simplicity is speaking the truth, witnessing the truth, seeking the truth, being in the truth, and integrating all of these into one's lifestyle.<sup>327</sup> Simplicity consists also in referring things to God alone and leading an unadorned lifestyle.<sup>328</sup>

Once Vincent wrote to his confrere that *simplicity is the virtue, I love the most and to which, I think, I pay the most attention in my actions; and, if it is permissible for me to say so, I would say that I am practicing it with some progress by the mercy of God.*<sup>329</sup> Vincent acknowledged that God had given him a high esteem for the virtue of simplicity, and Vincent named that virtue as his gospel of life.<sup>330</sup>

God is simplicity personified, and where there is simplicity there is God. A common folklore explains that people who walk in simplicity, walks with assurance, whereas those who walk in duplicity and wiliness, are in constant fear that their craftiness will be discovered; and if people are caught in their deception, they will no longer be trust worthy.<sup>331</sup> When pastoral leaders are working in the mission, they must give themselves to God so as to explain the truths of the gospel of Jesus Christ by familiar comparisons. Leaders of the Christian community should always strive to form people in living a simple lifestyle in order to imitate Jesus Christ

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<sup>324</sup> CCD: IX:534 (Conference, *Secret Pride*, March 15, 1654).

<sup>325</sup> Renouard, John-Pierre, *Op.cit.*, p. 111.

<sup>326</sup> *Instruction on Stability Chastity Poverty and Obedience in the Congregation of the Mission. Op.cit.*, p 6.

<sup>327</sup> Maloney, Robert P., *The Way of Vincent de Paul Op.cit.*, p. 56.

<sup>328</sup> *Ibid.* p 38-39.

<sup>329</sup> CCD: I:265 (Letter: *To Francois du Coudray*, November 6, 1634).

<sup>330</sup> CCD: IX:476 (Conference: *The Spirit of the Company*, February 24, 1653).

<sup>331</sup> CCD: IX:40 (Conference: *Simplicity*).

who taught people in parables and explained truths in simple language.<sup>332</sup> The Fourth and fifth articles of the *Common Rules* of the Congregation of the Mission explain on the importance of simplicity and prudence.<sup>333</sup>

Vincent de Paul urged his confreres to practice the virtue of simplicity after the example of Jesus Christ. Jesus told to his apostles that he was sending them like sheep among wolves. He told them at the same time, that they had to be as prudent as serpents and simple as doves. Then he cautioned them, beware, for they will hand you over to the courts and scourge you in their synagogues, and you will be led before governors and kings for my sake, but when they hand you over, do not worry about what you are to say or how you are to speak, for at that moment, you will be given what you are to say, the holy spirit will speak in you. Jesus mentioned in his advice prudence first and simplicity (Mt 10:16). We are called to be prudent on our mission, and not to worry about what to say when difficulties arise.<sup>334</sup> God delights in simple, humble souls, and communicates lavishly with them.<sup>335</sup> Vincent de Paul discerned God's will as he reflect on events and responded to what he heard. He followed the providence of God step by step.<sup>336</sup>

When we lead a life of contemplation, God reveals his secrets to us and shows us the means for our spiritual growth.<sup>337</sup> He will inspire our hearts. When we devote ourselves to prayer, God will enlighten our understanding about incomprehensible truths. God's conversations with humble people are quite different from those of the analogical reasoning of a learned mind. That is why Jesus prayed, *I thank you father, that you have hidden these things from the wise of this world, and have revealed them to the little and the humble.*<sup>338</sup> Jesus is simplicity personified,<sup>339</sup> and simplicity is part of spirit of Jesus<sup>340</sup>, therefore, the virtue of simplicity will enable people to dedicate themselves to the mission of Jesus Christ.

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<sup>332</sup> CCD: IX:41 (Conference: *Simplicity*).

<sup>333</sup> *Jesus, the Lord, expects us to have the simplicity of a dove. This means giving a straightforward opinion about things in the way we honestly see them, without needless reservations. It also means doing things without any double-dealing or manipulation, our intention being focused solely on God. ...But while Christ recommends the simplicity of a dove, he tells us to have the prudence of a serpent as well. ...we should speak and behave with discretion. We ought, therefore, to keep quiet about matters which should not be made known, especially if they are unsuitable or ... would not be for God's glory, or which could harm another person.* Common Rules, II:4-5.

<sup>334</sup> CCD: XII:140-141 (Conference: *Simplicity and Prudence*, March 14, 1659).

<sup>335</sup> CCD: IX:308 (Conference: *The Good Use of Instructions*, May 1, 1648).

<sup>336</sup> Maloney, Robert P., *Go ! On the Missionary Spirituality of St. Vincent de Paul*. Editorial CEME, Santa Marta de Tormes, Salamanca, Espana, 2000, p. 160.

<sup>337</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 315.

<sup>338</sup> *Ibid.* p. 330-331.

<sup>339</sup> CCD: XI:40 (Conference: *Simplicity*).

<sup>340</sup> CCD: XI:41 (Conference: *Simplicity with Crafty Persons*).

### 1.2.2.3Mortification

Mortification unites people to the suffering Christ and frees them from self-seeking and makes them available to the needy people despite difficulties and obstacles.<sup>341</sup> To be mortified might mean bearing poor working conditions, threats and adversity and particular forms of penitential discipline such as fasting, but Vincent de Paul's explanation of mortification primarily involved the nurturing of interior strength to endure aggravation, suffering, and temptation, so that the will of God may be done.<sup>342</sup> This virtue calls people to subject human nature to the grace of God, so that the elements of the superior part of the human person will be stronger than the inferior part of the human person, consequently, the person will tend more towards God than towards the sensual things of the world.<sup>343</sup> Jesus, carrying the cross, is a powerful image of the mortification, to practice the virtue of mortification.<sup>344</sup>

The following practical suggestions can lead people to practice mortification.<sup>345</sup>

- a) Being ready to respond to the needs of one's neighbour.
- b) Being faithful to the duties of one's state in life.
- c) Doing religious duties with fervour and responsibility.
- d) Being constantly faithful to one's prayer life.
- e) Being sparing in obtaining material possessions, and developing a simple life style.
- f) Subjection of passion to reason.

Mortification of senses and mortification of passion are necessary to dedicate oneself to the mission of Jesus Christ. The mortification of senses consists in not using them contrary to the order for which God has given them, using human abilities with moderation, and making use of them for several practices of mortification. Mortification of the passions consists in making use of the faculties of the human person with reason and justice in order to incite love of God and love of neighbour.<sup>346</sup> During the pastoral ministry, the exterior mortifications are of little benefit if they are not accompanied by interior mortifications, which consists of refusing the senses the satisfactions they demand and above all keeping the faculty of speech under control.<sup>347</sup> In mortifying his own will Vincent de Paul observed that he had conformed himself

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<sup>341</sup> *Instruction on Stability Chastity Poverty and Obedience in the Congregation of the Mission. Op.cit.*, p 6.

<sup>342</sup> Forrestal, Alison, *Op.cit.*, p. 101.

<sup>343</sup> CCD:X:45 (Conference: *Mortification of the Senses and Passions*, January 3, 1655).

<sup>344</sup> Renouard, John-Pierre, *Op.cit.*, p. 112.

<sup>345</sup> Maloney, Robert P., *Go ! On the Missionary Spirituality of St. Vincent de Paul. Op.cit.*, p. 44-65.

<sup>346</sup> *Ibid.* p 51.

<sup>347</sup> CCD:X:324 (Conference: *Mortification, Correspondence, Meals, and Journeys*, December 9, 1657).

to the image of Jesus Christ in his thoughts, words and deeds.<sup>348</sup> Mortification involves recognizing our goals and channelling our limited energies into achieving them.<sup>349</sup> In the spiritual journey, it is almost useless to preach penance to others, if the preachers themselves do not practice the same penance in their actions and behaviour.<sup>350</sup>

Those who strive to mortify themselves will acquire a multitude of virtues, and mortification brings rest to the soul. The soul will then always be content with what is happening because the person accepts the necessity of mortification as coming from God.<sup>351</sup> One of the reasons for renouncing self-indulgence is that, when we are preoccupied with what we desire, we are diverted from the thought of God our creator. Self-indulgence also interferes with the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in us. Our God is a God of peace and does not like our minds to be unsettled, and the tendency against mortification is a weakness expressed through self-indulgence which makes us fragile in the spiritual development.<sup>352</sup>

#### 1.2.2.4 Meekness

Jesus Christ chose to live in meekness, and he encouraged people to come to him and stated: *learn from me because I am gentle and humble of heart.*<sup>353</sup> Vincent de Paul was convinced, that if his confreres were to attract others to God, their mission had to be accomplished through gentleness and compassion. When pastoral leaders are meek, they will be approachable, and the people will trust them. Therefore, pastoral ministry should be done with benevolence in order to reflect the compassion of Jesus Christ. Actions that are done with meekness, (for example, instructing the people in an ordinary manner, preaching against vice and bad morals, establishing, and encouraging virtues, showing the necessity of virtues, their practice and means of acquiring them), will be welcomed by the people if they find us approachable.<sup>354</sup>

Practical understanding of meekness could be explained by five behavioural patterns.<sup>355</sup>

- a) Meekness entails the ability to handle anger positively.
- b) Meekness holds committed approachability.
- c) Meekness involves the ability to endure offenses with forgiveness and courage.

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<sup>348</sup> Forrestal, Alison, *Op.cit.*, p. 101.

<sup>349</sup> Maloney, Robert P., *Go ! On the Missionary Spirituality of St. Vincent de Paul. Op.cit.*, p. 65.

<sup>350</sup> CCD: XI:59 (Conference: *Mortification*).

<sup>351</sup> CCD:X:229-230 (Conference: *The Practice of Asking for and Refusing Nothing*, June 17, 1637).

<sup>352</sup> CCD: IX:134 (Conference: *Excessive Self Love*, December 11, 1644).

<sup>353</sup> Renouard, John-Pierre, *Op.cit.*, p. 112.

<sup>354</sup> CCD: II:442 (Letter: *To Guillaume Gallais- Superior in Sedan*, 1643).

<sup>355</sup> Maloney, Robert P., *Go ! On the Missionary Spirituality of St. Vincent de Paul. Op.cit.*, p. 42-62.

- d) Meekness means respect for people.
- e) Meekness transmits gentleness and firmness.

The virtue of meekness pleases God and our neighbour. This is a habit of imitating Jesus Christ, who was filled with gentleness. In pastoral ministry there is no gentleness without respect, and without gentleness there is no charity. At times people may find themselves at ease to practice gentleness to a stranger, but the virtue of meekness calls for showing gentleness to the people with whom we are living, because meekness is a sign that we love the people irrespective of their social situation.<sup>356</sup> Meekness creates interior peace in people and enables them to be gentle and patient with others, especially with the poor.<sup>357</sup>

Christian gentleness characteristically acts to repress and stifle the sallies of the contrary vice.<sup>358</sup> Speaking about the characteristics of Christian gentleness, the apostle Paul wrote in the letter to *Ephesians*, *I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace* (Eph 4:1-3). Gentleness and mildness are contrary to human nature, and these imperfections will be perfected when a person strives, in all their actions, to honour and glorify the perfection of God, which is contrary to human imperfection.<sup>359</sup>

In the pastoral ministry, there may be times when we find ourselves in heated discussion with people. In those situations, we often want our opinion to prevail, but that is not the right way to proceed. Gentleness and affability can open the hearts of the people more than the strength of the debates and the subtlety of the defensive arguments. Servants of the Lord ought not to quarrel and should understand that the virtue of meekness has the power to win people over to God.<sup>360</sup> Among all virtues, gentleness is recommended by Jesus Christ: *take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls* (Mt 11:29). Meekness leads to collaboration, and collaboration is, in a common mission (*Missio Dei*), rooted in the Trinity, because a mission is carried out in collaboration with God for the glory of God. In reality the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit constitute a unity that is in permanent collaboration.<sup>361</sup>

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<sup>356</sup> CCD: IX:206 (Conference: *The Practice of Mutual Respect and Gentleness*, August 19, 1646).

<sup>357</sup> *Instruction on Stability Chastity Poverty and Obedience in the Congregation of the Mission. Op.cit.*, p 6.

<sup>358</sup> CCD: XI:54 (Conference, *Gentleness*).

<sup>359</sup> CCD: XI:52 (Conference: *Human Respect*).

<sup>360</sup> CCD: XI:54-55 (Conference: *Gentleness in Controversies*).

<sup>361</sup> Campuzano, Guillermo. "Collaboration in the Heart of the Vincentian Charism", in *Vincentiana* (April-June, 2016, # 2), p 121.

### 1.2.2.5 Zeal for Souls

All apostolic ministry is done in collaboration with Jesus Christ for the restoration and continued growth of creation, with the desire of guiding all people to God and to restore all things in God.<sup>362</sup> With regard to education and the development of people, the trend of the modern age is to use the phrase “whole person” and we find rarely reference to the soul-body dichotomy. Still the term zeal for souls is as relevant today as it was during the time of Vincent de Paul. That phrase describes the willingness of pastoral ministers to engage in ministry in affective and effective manner.<sup>363</sup> Zeal for souls is expressed through love of God and love of neighbour. In order to contrast a seemingly active paradigm of separation and fragmentation, pastoral leaders and the members of the pastoral community could use the paradigm proposed by Pope Francis in *Laudato Si'*, the paradigm of eco-humanity which is also a paradigm of encounter, collaboration, relationship, and interdependence and, therefore, a paradigm of solidarity, compassion, and mercy.<sup>364</sup>

Pastoral ministry is a vocation and a gift of God. When people live this vocation, inflamed with love of God, they will be zealous leaders in the pastoral community, because their aim is to work for the salvation of the people, in imitation of Jesus Christ, the redeemer who came from heaven to earth to carry out the mission of his Father. Pastoral leaders need to give themselves to this mission of Jesus Christ, so that Jesus might continue to exercise the same function in and through them.<sup>365</sup> The task of putting on the spirit of Jesus is the first duty of any missionary.<sup>366</sup>

When God calls people to engage in pastoral activities, he opens up to them a beautiful field of action. In the spiritual ministry, all those who are involved in the mission have to pray to God that they may be filled with the burning desire to serve God, so that the whole community might experience the love of God.<sup>367</sup> Pastoral leaders have to reflect on their vocation because God has destined them at a particular time to reach out to certain people and not to others, and God will increase day by day, the grace of their vocation with the gifts of the holy Spirit.<sup>368</sup> Zeal for souls is necessary for ecclesiastical state of ministry.<sup>369</sup> Zeal for souls will

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<sup>362</sup> Renouard, John-Pierre, *Op.cit.*, p. 113.

<sup>363</sup> Maloney, Robert P., *Go ! On the Missionary Spirituality of St. Vincent de Paul. Op.cit.*, p. 67.

<sup>364</sup> Campuzano, Guillermo. “Collaboration in the Heart of the Vincentian Charism,” *Op.cit.*, p. 113.

<sup>365</sup> CCD: XI:62 (Conference: *Zeal*).

<sup>366</sup> *Instruction on Stability Chastity Poverty and Obedience in the Congregation of the Mission. Op.cit.*, p 2.

<sup>367</sup> CCD: XI:62-63 (Conference: *Zeal*).

<sup>368</sup> CCD: XI:121-122 (Conference: *Repetition of Prayer*, October 25, 1643).

<sup>369</sup> CCD: XI:185 (Conference: *Repetition of Prayer*, July 18, 1655).

empower people to be constant and faithful at times of suffering for the love of God and for the people.<sup>370</sup> In order to develop zeal for souls in the mind of the people there are three suggestions from Vincentian spirituality.<sup>371</sup>

- a) Encouragement from religious people and from family members.
- b) Attentiveness and sensitivity to the problems of the people.
- c) To know the limitations and to develop a balanced life style.

Zeal is love on fire, and zeal entails working for the salvation of others.<sup>372</sup> Zeal is part of the character of the person which has to be developed and nurtured to become a visible sign, that is why Vincent de Paul spoke of five characteristic virtues to his followers, because they are the sign by which his followers are meant to be recognized. According to Vincent de Paul a missionary is a person who is simple, humble, gentle, mortified and zealous.<sup>373</sup> Pastoral leaders need to examine their conscience, whether do they have these virtues, and their renewed resolution to acquire the spirit of a missionary will enable them to become zealous pastoral leaders, to develop and strengthen these five virtues which is the spirit of their mission.

### 1.2.3 Zeal for Evangelization

Passion for evangelization was called in those years of Vincent de Paul zeal for evangelization.<sup>374</sup> According to Vincent de Paul zeal consists in a pure desire to become pleasing to God and helpful to our neighbour, zeal to spread the kingdom of God and zeal to procure the salvation of our neighbour. *If love of God is fire, zeal is its flame, if love is a sun, zeal is its ray. Zeal is unconditional in the love of God.*<sup>375</sup> Nothing is more in conformity with the gospel of Jesus than to gather light and strength for our soul in meditation, reading, and solitude on the one hand, and then to go out and share this spiritual nourishment with others; for evangelization unites the office of Martha to that of Mary.<sup>376</sup> Vincent frequently said that the true love of God was characterized principally by good acts rather than ecstatic vision or advanced knowledge of theology; an idle missionary risked the onslaught of vice, for a spirit of laziness and comfort seeking could never inspire ardent zeal for God's glory and acceptance of troubles in the evangelization.<sup>377</sup>

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<sup>370</sup> CCD: XI:358 (Conference: *Repetition of Prayer, June 17, 1657*).

<sup>371</sup> Maloney, Robert P., *Go ! On the Missionary Spirituality of St. Vincent de Paul. Op.cit.*, p. 68.

<sup>372</sup> Ibid. p. 46.

<sup>373</sup> CCD: XII:251 (Conference: *The Five Characteristic Virtues, August 22, 1659*).

<sup>374</sup> Renouard, John-Pierre, *Op.cit.*, p. 55.

<sup>375</sup> CCD: XII:250 (Conference: *The Five Characteristic Virtues, August 22, 1659*).

<sup>376</sup> CCD: XI:33 (Conference: *Love of God*).

<sup>377</sup> Forrestal, Alison, *Op.cit.*, p. 101.

Leading an exemplary life at times of adversities will be a situation which challenges the interior religious principles of spiritual life of the people. In order to become pastoral leaders who wishes to help people in their spiritual life, they should be prudent and discreet people, who have an apostolic spirit and excellent judgement of the ministry situation based on the spirit of the gospel, adorned with virtuous, humble and gentle nature. Zeal for preaching the word of God is first developed within the person out of one's own spiritual life, secondly this zeal is supported by the community spirit, thirdly this zeal is developed by the willingness to withstand at times of adversities and lack of success.<sup>378</sup>

Once a lawyer, asked Jesus a question to test him: teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest? Jesus said to him, *you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind* (Mt 22:36-37). This advice of Jesus has three parts, explains Vincent de Paul. In the first part we see that all Christians, especially those who are dedicating themselves to the pastoral ministry, have to love God with all their heart, with all their mind, and with all their understanding. In the second aspect we will be able to see the signs by which we can know if people love God. The third element of this advice of Jesus will be on the means of acquiring and increasing this love and understanding in us, for it is not enough to have this love and understanding, but it must continue to grow.<sup>379</sup>

People engaged in pastoral ministry should always try *to love God with the strength of their arms and the sweat of their brows; for very often many acts of love of God, of devotion, and of other similar affection and interior practices of tender heart, although very good and desirable, are nevertheless, very suspect if they don't translate into the practice of effective love of God.*<sup>380</sup> Jesus said that *my father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit* (Jn 15:8). The exterior recollection and lofty sentiments of meditation should lead us to engage in action. We cannot remain satisfied with the lofty conversation experienced in meditation and remain in the realm of imagination. The question of working for God, of suffering, of mortifying ourselves, of instructing poor people, of going in search of the lost sheep ... all of these activities are to be done with a zeal for evangelization.<sup>381</sup> Vincent de Paul cautions his confreres with the following principle, let us not fool ourselves: *Totum opus nostrum in operatione consistit.*<sup>382</sup> There is no better ministry of witnessing to God in the pastoral community than showing the

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<sup>378</sup> CCD: XI:373 (Conference: *Repetition of Prayer*, August 30, 1657).

<sup>379</sup> CCD: IX:366 (Conference: *The Spirit of Love of God*, September 19, 1649).

<sup>380</sup> CCD: XI:32 (Conference: *Love of God*).

<sup>381</sup> CCD: XI:33 (Conference: *Love of God*).

<sup>382</sup> CCD: XI:33 (Conference, *Love of God*) All our work consists in action.

love of God through works of evangelization. Evangelical zeal generates energy for promoting the kingdom of God and awakens affective and effective enthusiasm for evangelization.<sup>383</sup> As far as the personal vocation of individuals is concerned, they should think that they are called not only to love God, but also to make God loved by others.<sup>384</sup>

### 1.2.3.1 To Be in Action

Each of the core virtues: humility, simplicity, meekness, mortification and zeal for souls, stood in relation to one another and together were the means by which the missionary was to become a person animated by acts of charity.<sup>385</sup> Vincent always wanted to be on the ground fully engaged, ready for everything, approaching members of the upper class to provide for the poor, encouraging everyone to participate in popular missions, and cautioning people against insensitivity.<sup>386</sup> Vincent had a strong desire to animate others in reaching out to the poor country people. He was called a man of action. The motherhouse of Saint Lazare gave 700 missions during his lifetime.<sup>387</sup>

Just as Jesus proclaimed, *he sent me to bring good news to the poor*, so also Vincent said: *Evangelizare pauperibus misit me*. For Vincent meeting poor people was a beautiful experience, because he could experience and share the love of God in and with poor people. However, Vincent cautioned his confreres that if we look on them according to the sentiments of a worldly spirit, they will seem contemptible.<sup>388</sup> Our service is an act of faith expressed in love. In serving poor men and women, we are serving Jesus Christ who has promised an eternal reward to those who give a cup of water to a poor person.<sup>389</sup> Thus, we read in psalm 41: *happy are those who consider the poor, the Lord delivers them in the day of trouble. The Lord protects them and keeps them alive; they are called happy in the land* (Ps 41:1-2). All those who are involved in ministry, are called, by their vocation, to live the love of God among those with whom and to whom they are ministering, to edify their own community members, and to inspire the members of the community with acts of faith.<sup>390</sup>

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<sup>383</sup> *Instruction on Stability Chastity Poverty and Obedience in the Congregation of the Mission. Op.cit.*, p 6.

<sup>384</sup> CCD: XII:215 (Conference, *Charity*, May 30, 1659).

<sup>385</sup> Forrester, Alison, *Op.cit.*, p. 101.

<sup>386</sup> Renouard, John-Pierre, *15 Days of Prayer with Saint Vincent de Paul*. Trans. Rybolt E John, New City Press, Hyde Park, Ny, 2010, p 55.

<sup>387</sup> Renouard, John-Pierre, *15 Days of Prayer with Saint Vincent de Paul. Op.cit.*, p 56.

<sup>388</sup> CCD: XII:26 (Conference: *The Spirit of Faith*).

<sup>389</sup> CCD: XI:199 (Conference: *Love of Vocation and Assistance to the Poor*, February 13, 1646).

<sup>390</sup> CCD: XII:215 (Conference: *Charity*, May 30, 1659).

Vincent was convinced that the Kingdom of God is about service, not rule: *for the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many (Mt 20:28; Mk 10:45)*. Vincent advised his confreres: *we do not bring any money with us to the mother house for our subsistence, so we must earn our living by our work, and this is a good way to establish the company in solid virtue of humility, and thereby we imitate Jesus, Saint Joseph and blessed virgin Mary, who worked all their lives. ... when we begin the work, we should have the intention of pleasing God by honouring the work of Jesus Christ on earth,*<sup>391</sup> who proclaimed good news to the poor (Lk 4:18).

### 1.2.3.2 The Poor are our Masters

Vincent disregarded the traditional way of emphasising the hierarchical functioning of church administration and its exterior adornment. His vision of the church gave prominence to poor people. He understood as a pastor in Clichy, a church near Paris, that the pastoral ministry of the Church must reach out to those poor men and women who request assistance. The ministry of Vincent was rooted in those poor people, and he stated: they are our lords and masters,<sup>392</sup> they represent Jesus Christ, and as ministers of his pastoral mission you are destined to represent the goodness of God to the poor people<sup>393</sup> In this way Vincent gave a new perspective to the theology of the mystical body.<sup>394</sup> Pope Francis repeated this during the 400<sup>th</sup> feast day celebration of St. Vincent de Paul saying: *at the heart of the Vincentian Family is the search for those who are the poorest and most abandoned, and a deep awareness of being unworthy of rendering them our little services.*<sup>395</sup>

Vincent de Paul echoes the letter, 1 John 4:20b: *one who has no love for the brother or sister he has seen, cannot love God he has not seen*, the spirit of Christ is the spirit of charity, God's love expressed in action.<sup>396</sup> For Vincent, the Church is not revealed in an authoritative or comfortable lifestyle. Rather he found the relevance of Church in the body and blood of those who suffer, in the tears of the helpless people, in the community of the poor working class who toiled for their daily bread, in the agony of the suffering galley slaves. His concept of the people of God was all inclusive, the rich and poor, the learned and uneducated ... they all participate

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<sup>391</sup> CCD: IX:381 (Conference: *Love of Work*, November 28, 1649).

<sup>392</sup> CCD: XI:349 (Conference, *The love for the Poor*. January 1657); IX:556 (Conference, *Envy*, June 24, 1654).

<sup>393</sup> CCD:X:268 (Conference: *Service of the Sick and Care of One's Own Health*, November 11, 1657).

<sup>394</sup> A. Sylvestre, *Saint Vincent et L'Eglise*. (Monsieur Vincent, témoin de l'Évangile, Animation Vincentienne, Toulouse, 1990), p 126; Delgado, Juan Corpus. *The Contributions of the Vincentian Charism to the Mission of the Church*. 2015.

<sup>395</sup> Fernández, Alvaro Mauricio. *Letter of the Holy Father Francis to the Vincentian Family for the Feast of Saint Vincent de Paul/ 400th Prayer*, *Op.cit.*, p 298.

<sup>396</sup> *Instruction on Stability Chastity Poverty and Obedience in the Congregation of the Mission*. *Op.cit.*, p 3.

in the mystery of Christ's life, in the mystery of the sufferings and the death of the Son of God. Called to participate in the Council of Conscience, Vincent was mindful of this Church as he attempted to appoint bishops who would serve the people of God and who would especially serve the poor; this was also a movement against the privilege that was bestowed upon the rich and the aristocracy.<sup>397</sup> Vincent understood the concept of the mystical body as all inclusive. According to him:

all of us make up a mystical body, but we're all members of one another. It has never been heard that a member, not even among animals, was insensitive to the suffering of another member, or that one part of a person's body may be bruised, wounded, or injured and the other parts don't feel it. That's impossible. Every part of us is in such sympathy with one another and so interconnected that the pain of one is the pain of the other. Since Christians are members of the same body ..., with even greater reason should they sympathize with one another.<sup>398</sup>

Vincent told his confreres that to work for the salvation of poor country people is the main purpose of their vocation, and all the rest is only accessory to this mission. He went on to say that they would never have worked in ministry for the *ordinands* and in seminaries for the clergy if they hadn't judged that this was necessary to maintain the people and preserve the fruits of the missions given by good priests.<sup>399</sup>

The pastoral vision of Vincent, in the form of evangelization and Christian education, cooperates in action and word, with Jesus who proclaimed the word of God. Thus, Vincent found a close relationship between the mission of Jesus Christ and the pastoral mission of the church in the evangelization and Christian education which is clearly evident in his expressions that refer to the Church as spouse of Jesus Christ<sup>400</sup>, the Lord's vineyard<sup>401</sup>, the harvest that requires workers.<sup>402</sup> We may not be able to do as much as Noah did in preserving the human race during the universal deluge, but we can at least be contributing to the means which God can use for the preservation of his church.<sup>403</sup>

According to Pope Francis, God's heart has a special place for the poor, so much so that he himself became poor.<sup>404</sup> Our faith in Christ, who became poor, and was always close to

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<sup>397</sup> *Op.cit.*, Delgado, Juan Corpus.

<sup>398</sup> CCD: XII:221-222 (Conference, *Charity*, May 30, 1659).

<sup>399</sup> CCD: XI:121 (Conference, *Repetition of Prayer*, October 25, 1643).

<sup>400</sup> CCD: III:188 (Letter, *To Jean Dehorgny*, May 2, 1647); III: 204 (Letter, *To Claude Dufour*, June 15, 1647).

<sup>401</sup> CCD: V:113 (Letter: *To Claude Dufour*, June 15, 1647); III:180 (Letter: *To Charles Ozenne*, August 28, 1654); VII:304 (Letter: *To Jean Barreau*, October 11, 1658); III:559 (Letter: *To Jacques Pesnelle*, May 9, 1659); VIII:147 (Letter, *To Propaganda Fide*, September 23, 1659).

<sup>402</sup> CCD: VIII:145 (Letter: *To Guillaume Desdames*, September 12, 1659); X:100 (Conference: *The Purpose of the Community*, October 18, 1655).

<sup>403</sup> CCD: III:188 (Letter: *To Jean Dehorgny*, May 2, 1647).

<sup>404</sup> *Evangelii Gaudium*, #197.

the poor and the outcast, is the basis of our concern for the integral development of society's most neglected members.<sup>405</sup> Each individual and every community is called to be an instrument of God for the liberation and promotion of the poor, and for enabling them to be fully part of society. This demands that we be docile and attentive to the cry of the poor and to come to their aid.<sup>406</sup> Jesus, the evangelizer par excellence and the Gospel in person, identifies especially with the little ones (Mt 25:40). This reminds us Christians that we are called to care for the vulnerable people of the earth.<sup>407</sup>

### 1.2.3.3 Intellectual and Material Approach

According to Vincent de Paul the first act of religion is to praise God, and this takes precedence over sacrifice. He taught *prius est esse quam operari*, and *prius est esse quam sustentari*: a thing must exist before it can operate, and it must exist before being sustained. In other words, we have to acknowledge the essence and existence of God and have some knowledge of his perfections before offering him sacrifice.<sup>408</sup> The first act of religion is to acknowledge God in accordance with the attributes and perfections he possesses. This process has to be developed in the inner recesses of the heart of the people.<sup>409</sup>

An interior impulse of our soul prompts us to avoid some evil and to do good. In other words, an interior word of God in our heart moves us to charity and thereby enables us to make spiritual progress.<sup>410</sup> Vincent de Paul believes that people must have recourse to the spiritual in order to recognize and discern the proper intellectual inspiration, and we should examine whether the inspiration was accompanied by haste because *non in commotione Dominus*,<sup>411</sup> whether the inspiration contrary to the commandments of God, of the Church, of Christian maxims, of the regulations and holy customs of the house and the community; if anyone of these conditions is present, then those intellectual inspirations are no longer a spiritual inspiration but a temptation.<sup>412</sup> Vincent used the manner in which the prophet, Elijah, met God at Horeb, as a means to educate his confreres about the necessity of intellectual meditation:

Then the word of the Lord came to him, saying, what are you doing here, Elijah? He answered, I have been very zealous for the Lord, the God of hosts; for the Israelites have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword. I alone am left, and they are seeking

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<sup>405</sup> *Evangelii Gaudium*, #186.

<sup>406</sup> *Evangelii Gaudium*, #187.

<sup>407</sup> *Evangelii Gaudium*, #209.

<sup>408</sup> CCD: XII:265 (Conference: *Praying the Divine Office*, September 26, 1656).

<sup>409</sup> CCD: XII:266 (Conference: *Praying the Divine Office*, September 26, 1656).

<sup>410</sup> CCD: XI:90 (Conference: *Repetition of Prayer*, December 27, 1632).

<sup>411</sup> The Lord is not in the earthquake. We read this in the account of how the prophet Elijah met God at Horeb.

<sup>412</sup> CCD: XI:91 (Conference: *Repetition of Prayer*, December 27, 1632).

my life, to take it away. He said, go out and stand on the mountain before the Lord, for the Lord is about to pass by. Now there was a great wind, so strong that it was splitting mountains and breaking rocks in pieces before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake; and after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire a sound of sheer silence. When Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. Then there came a voice to him that said, what are you doing here, Elijah? (1Kgs 19:9b-18)

Elijah could meet God in a moment of sheer silence. Recourse to spiritual direction and meditating over intellectual impulses provides us a silence of the heart. Thereby people will be better equipped to hear the voice of God. People will be able to differentiate inspiration and temptation through the silence of the mind.<sup>413</sup> Therefore people should have a great love for all spiritual regulations, considering them as means that God presents to them to grow in holiness in their vocation, to formulate serious plans, and to make firm resolutions to keep them meticulously.<sup>414</sup> This intellectual approach is to be supported by a material approach designed, in itself, to mortify and to lead to the practice of virtue with regard to food, lodging and clothing. Pastoral ministers are called to follow their rules and regulations, and to follow a suitable order of day in order to develop good habits, which will lead them to spiritual advancements. According to Vincent, our mortification and dedication to the mission has to be observed through a lifestyle which has three basic elements: to rise at four o'clock and go to bed at nine<sup>415</sup>, to make our meditation, to pray the office and to celebrate holy Eucharist.<sup>416</sup>

Our mission is to catechize, instruct and assist persons who are poor so that we may live in conformity with Jesus Christ.<sup>417</sup> We should have a great devotion to being faithful to reading a chapter of the New Testament in order to produce acts of adoration, acts of entering into the sentiments with which our Lord pronounced them, acts of consenting to the truths, and acts of resolving to put these same truths into practice. When we read blessed are the poor or blessed are the meek, we should resolve to practice this at the next opportunity.<sup>418</sup> Thus the invisible intellectual approach has to be adequately accompanied by visible material approach.

#### **1.2.3.4 Affective to Effective Love**

Francis de Sales explained a form of spiritualized effectivity, meaning that he distinguished between affective and effective love, and it was perhaps he who led Vincent de Paul to concede that contemplative devotion served little purpose without conformity to God's

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<sup>413</sup> CCD: XI:91 (Conference: *Repetition of Prayer*, December 27, 1632).

<sup>414</sup> CCD: XI:92 (Conference: *Retreat Recommendations*, 1632).

<sup>415</sup> He means to say to sleep after the night prayer and to rise up early in the morning.

<sup>416</sup> CCD: XI:93 (Conference: *Retreat Recommendations*, 1632).

<sup>417</sup> CCD: XI:98-99 (Conference: *Perseverance in Vocation*, October 29, 1638).

<sup>418</sup> CCD: XI:102 (Conference: *Recommendations at Chapter*, January 19, 1642).

will in holy indifference.<sup>419</sup> This offers more practical guidance on precisely how any Christian might serve God's will through sanctifying actions.<sup>420</sup> Vincent de Paul was moved by understanding the situation of the poor which challenged him to revitalize his faith and discover Christ in the midst of serving the needy people.<sup>421</sup>

Jesus gave us the message that God is love (1Jn 3:16). Jesus said to his disciples: *I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another* (Jn 13:34-35). Hence, St. John advises: *let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love* (1Jn 4:7-8). Based on this, Vincent encouraged the sisters to lead a life worthy of their call. While no one had ever thought of giving a name to this group of sisters, yet in the course of time, when people saw them totally devoted to the service of poor men and women, people called them familiarly, *Daughters of Charity*. Therefore, the sisters are to live in a manner that is worthy of their name, because *Daughters of Charity* is nothing else than *daughters of God* since whoever lives in charity lives in God and God is in them. Vincent stated: *there must be close union among yourselves as a community after the model of the blessed Trinity, for if we do not practice the virtue among ourselves, we cannot practice charity and gentleness with persons who are poor;*<sup>422</sup> charity is essential to an apostolic spirit.<sup>423</sup> In the *Common Rules* of the Congregation of the Mission we read:

*Christ said: Seek first the kingdom of God and his justice, and all these things which you need will be given to you as well. That is the basis for each of us having the following set of priorities: matters involving our relationship with God are more important than temporal affairs; spiritual health is more important than physical; God's glory is more important than human approval. Each one should, moreover, be determined to prefer, like St. Paul, to do without necessities, to be slandered or tortured, or even killed, rather than lose Christ's love. In practice, then, we should not worry too much about temporal affairs. We ought to have confidence in God that he will look after us since we know for certain that as long as we are grounded in that sort of love and trust we will be always under the protection of God in heaven, we will remain unaffected by evil and never lack what we need even when everything we possess seems headed for disaster.*<sup>424</sup>

Vincent de Paul advised his confreres that the charitable behaviour towards the neighbour should always be characteristic of the members of the Congregation of the Mission.

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<sup>419</sup> Forrestal, Alison, *Op.cit.*, p. 99.

<sup>420</sup> Forrestal, Alison, *Op.cit.*, p. 100.

<sup>421</sup> *Instruction on Stability Chastity Poverty and Obedience in the Congregation of the Mission. Op.cit.*, p 2.

<sup>422</sup> CCD: IX:44 (Conference: *Faults and Failings of the Past Year*, January 6, 1642).

<sup>423</sup> CCD: I:98-99 (Letter: To Saint Louise, November, 1637).

<sup>424</sup> *Common Rules*, II:2.

To this end we should practice eight objectives in conformity with the commandment of God, teachings of the Church and the constitution, in our spiritual life: [1] to behave towards others in the way we might reasonably expect to be treated by them; [2] to agree with others, and to accept everything in the Lord; [3] to put up with one another without grumbling; [4] to weep with those who weep; [5] to rejoice with those who rejoice; [6] to yield precedence to one another [7] to be kind and helpful to one another in all sincerity; [8] to be charitable to all people so that we may win everyone for Christ.<sup>425</sup>

Following Jesus Christ challenges people to make their own twofold thrust which Vincent de Paul described as, religion toward God and charity toward humanity.<sup>426</sup> In the *Common Rule*, Vincent taught his followers that the sure way for a Christian to grow rapidly in holiness is a conscientious effort to always carry out God's will in all circumstances. Individuals, then, should try to integrate into their life, as far as possible, these four principles:

first, we should conscientiously carry out what is ordered and avoid what is forbidden, when these orders or prohibitions come from God, from the Church, from our superiors, or from the Rules or Constitutions of the Congregation; second, when there is choice open to us in matters neither ordered nor forbidden, we should choose the less palatable rather than the more pleasing. ... (if) there is no real element of personal preference between the options available, then any one of them may be chosen at random as coming from God's providence; third, when something unexpected happens to us in body or mind, good or bad, we are to accept it without fuss as from God's loving hand; fourth, our motive for putting the above three principles into practice is that they are God's will. It is in this way that we can imitate Christ, the Lord, who always lived the will of his father.<sup>427</sup>

The law and the prophets proclaim the love of God and neighbour, and anyone who possess charity fulfils the law of God because they will reveal the love of God in all their actions.<sup>428</sup> Vincent cautioned his confreres that charity cannot allow acts that go against the law of God and against the constitution and statutes of the Congregation.<sup>429</sup> Hence effective love is made real in parish ministry by making sure that the acts of the leaders of the parish fall within the framework of established rules and regulations. The way of following Jesus varies according to the gifts that men and women possess and according to their different vocations. The members of the Congregation of the Mission are urged to commit themselves to follow Jesus as Vincent de Paul did, striving to incarnate his missionary charism as evangelizer of the poor within the perspective of affective and effective love.<sup>430</sup>

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<sup>425</sup> CCD: XII:213 (Conference: *Charity*, May 30, 1659); *Common Rules*, II:12.

<sup>426</sup> *Instruction on Stability Chastity Poverty and Obedience in the Congregation of the Mission. Op.cit.*, p 2.

<sup>427</sup> *Common Rules*, II:3.

<sup>428</sup> CCD: XII:213 (Conference: *Charity*, May 30, 1659).

<sup>429</sup> CCD: XII:224 (Conference: *Charity*, May 30, 1659).

<sup>430</sup> *Instruction on Stability Chastity Poverty and Obedience in the Congregation of the Mission. Op.cit.*, p 1.

### 1.2.3.5 To be in a State of Virtuous Life

According to Vincent de Paul, the desire to learn the state of a virtuous life is good, provided the effort is moderated. He explains that virtue is always accompanied by two vices: default or excess.<sup>431</sup> Vincent invited his colleagues to listen to the words of Apostle Paul, who appealed to his brothers and sisters:

...by the mercies of God, to present their bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is the spiritual worship; and do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of their minds, so that they may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect (Rm 12:1-2).

To be in a state of virtuous life requires human acts which support the state of spiritual life. For instance, the Israelites had to rise early in the morning to gather manna. If they were late, they could not gather manna. Therefore, if we wish to be faithful to morning prayer and morning meditation, then we have to rise early in the morning. Then the effort of rising early in the morning will be blessed by God in order that we might be punctual and modest in our spiritual activities. Gradually, a beautiful harmony will develop in the rhythm of our daily activities and virtue will go on increasing and we will become stronger in our vocation.<sup>432</sup>

The intangible nature of virtue requires careful consideration of analysing in what the act of virtue consists, what are its principal attributes and distinctive features and what are their effects and the means of putting them into practice. The practice of seeking for reasons that prompt the person to embrace virtue, and the practice of reflecting the reasons that affect the people in their daily life, will be deepened more and more by reading the holy Scripture and the teachings of the Fathers of Church. This reading habit will assist the concentration of the mind in pondering on the spiritual matters, and thereby the human mind will be enlightened towards refined understanding.<sup>433</sup> Vincent was motivated by the biblical text of Luke 4,18: *the spirit of the Lord...has sent me to bring glad tidings to the poor*; and another text from Mt. 25,40: *“as often as you did it for one of my least brothers and sisters, you did it for me*. This proves that when people are deeply touched by a biblical text, they will embody the Gospel.<sup>434</sup>

People of prayer are able to give witness to their spirituality amidst their daily activities. Together with Saint Paul they can say: *I can do all things in Him who sustains and comforts me* (Phil 4:13). According to Vincent de Paul, the practice of meditation is like an impregnable

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<sup>431</sup> CCD: VIII:40 (Letter: *To Gaspard Stelle*, July 18, 1659).

<sup>432</sup> CCD: III:532 (Letter: *To Superiors of the Houses of the Company*, January 15, 1650).

<sup>433</sup> CCD: XI:360 (Conference: *Repetition of Prayer*, August 10, 1657).

<sup>434</sup> *Instruction on Stability Chastity Poverty and Obedience in the Congregation of the Mission. Op.cit.*, p 1.

rampart that will protect the missionaries against all forms of disturbance in their spiritual life and ministry. Daily meditation is like a mystical arsenal, like the tower of David, which will supply people with various spiritual weapons not only to defend themselves but also to counter and rout all inimical thoughts against God's glory.<sup>435</sup> In the meditation, we preach to ourselves in the silence of the heart in order to convince ourselves of the need to turn toward God and of the need to cooperate with God's grace in order to uproot vices and to implant virtues. Meditation allows the flow of spiritual thoughts to take root in the heart. This is a gentle and subtle elevation of the mind by submitting the speculations of our understanding, and empowers to listen to the voice of God,<sup>436</sup> and prompts our mind to a state of spiritual life.<sup>437</sup> Regular repetition of a form of prayer will enable individuals to make resolutions to strive in the future for the acquisition of virtue, to identify ways to live a virtuous life, and to anticipate the pitfalls that might prevent them from advancing in holiness.<sup>438</sup>

### 1.2.4 Characteristics of Vincentian Evangelical Spirituality

The nature of Vincentian evangelic spirituality is founded on the spirit of prayer which is fundamentally a voluntary human act, because prayer involves intention, determination and decision making. Prayer is an expression of trust in the providence of God. Therefore, prayer is also personal, relational and involves communication.<sup>439</sup> Our prayer life should be faithful amidst the life situations in the world, in the new manner of living.<sup>440</sup> Our pastoral ministry which unites our service for the poor should not cause stifle of diverse talents against the spirit of prayer but shall direct our diverse talents to the regular practice of prayer.

According to Vincent de Paul mental prayer is essential to an evangelic spirituality. Mental prayer can be made in two ways: first by understanding and secondly by the will. Prayer of understanding begins, after hearing and comprehending what is read. Then the mind is reawakened in the presence of God and is occupied with seeking to know the meaning of the mystery proposed in the reading. The mind rekindles the desire to see the lesson proper to the meaning of the mystery and to produce affections in seeking good and avoiding evil. Although the will produces human acts, this act of mental prayer is still called prayer of understanding, because of the function of the mind, which is searching for the meaning of the mystery. This

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<sup>435</sup> CCD: XI:76 (Conference: *Meditation*).

<sup>436</sup> CCD: XI:76 (Conference: *Meditation*).

<sup>437</sup> CCD: XI:77 (Conference: *Meditation*).

<sup>438</sup> Forrestal, Alison, *Op.cit.*, p. 100.

<sup>439</sup> Maloney, Robert P., *Seasons in Spirituality, Op.cit.*, p. 156.

<sup>440</sup> Agostino, Joseph V. "Appreciative Discernment," *Op.cit.*, p 75.

involve our understanding, which is occupied primarily with the subject matter. Ordinarily this process is referred to as meditation and everyone is called to practice meditation and to do this according to their ability and the inspiration that God gives them.<sup>441</sup>

#### 1.2.4.1 God Leads People into Mission

God hears our prayer, and he leads us into the mission. Vincent explained to his followers that the holy scripture tells us that one day Moses went before God, and he did not say a word. Moses heard the voice of God saying, Moses, you are driving me crazy; you are forcing me to do what I don't want to do. This group of people is ungrateful and rebellious to my law; I want to destroy them, and you want me to save them. Vincent says that this is a wonderful example of how constrained God feels by prayer, and in this example, it was mental prayer. Moses did not say a word, yet his prayer was heard, and God spoke to him,<sup>442</sup> even though God didn't want to engage in a new initiative. Therefore, if we continue to be faithful to prayer, God will lead us.

Vincent viewed obedience as the fundamental element that leads people into mission. Obedience is mortification and is like the narrative of the call of Abraham who trusting in the providence of God distanced himself from his relatives to fulfil the mission of God.<sup>443</sup> Jesus had the same perspective with regard to mortification. One of his disciples asked him to allow him to go and bury his father. Jesus said to him, *follow me, and let the dead bury their own dead.*<sup>444</sup> Obedience is accepting the commission of Jesus Christ, because God sends people forth to proclamation of the message of salvation ... and to do this in the same manner that Jesus commissioned his disciples. Jesus said to his disciples, *go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation* (Mk 16:15). These words of Jesus, before ascending to heaven, are also addressed to all missionaries and to all pastoral ministers, especially preachers.<sup>445</sup> The fundamental purpose of the mission is to preach the message of salvation to everyone<sup>446</sup> ... and Jesus sends forth people in the same manner that he was sent forth by the Father.<sup>447</sup>

No one comprehends the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. Now God's Spirit, who reveals God, makes known to us Christ, his Word, his living Utterance, but the Spirit does not speak of himself. The Spirit who "has spoken through the prophets" makes us hear the Father's Word, but we do not hear the Spirit himself. We know him only in the movement by which he reveals the Word to us and

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<sup>441</sup> CCD: IX:330 (Conference; *Mental Prayer*, May 31, 1648).

<sup>442</sup> CCD: IX:329 (Conference; *Mental Prayer*, May 31, 1648).

<sup>443</sup> Genesis 12:1-3; CCD: XII:178 (Conference; *Mortification*, May 2, 1659).

<sup>444</sup> Matthew 8:22; CCD: XII:178 (Conference; *Mortification*, May 2, 1659).

<sup>445</sup> CCD: XI:237 (Conference; *Method to be Followed in Preaching*, August 20, 1655).

<sup>446</sup> CCD: XII:24 (Conference; *Repetition of Prayer*, June 9, 1658).

<sup>447</sup> CCD: XII:75 (Conference; *Purpose of the Congregation of the Mission*, December 6, 1658).

disposes us to welcome him in faith. The Spirit of truth who "unveils" Christ to us "will not speak on his own." Such properly divine self-effacement explains why "the world cannot receive [him], because it neither sees him nor knows him," while those who believe in Christ know the Spirit because he dwells with them. The Church, a communion living in the faith of the apostles which she transmits, is the place where we know the Holy Spirit: in the Scriptures he inspired; in the Tradition, to which the Church Fathers are always timely witnesses; in the Church's Magisterium, which he assists; in the sacramental liturgy, through its words and symbols, in which the Holy Spirit puts us into communion with Christ; in prayer, wherein he intercedes for us; in the charisms and ministries by which the Church is built up; in the signs of apostolic and missionary life; in the witness of saints through whom he manifests his holiness and continues the work of salvation.<sup>448</sup>

Those who believe in Jesus Christ know the holy Spirit because he dwells with them.<sup>449</sup>

The communion of the pastoral community living in faith of the apostles teach and learn holy Scripture, the tradition of the church, the teachings of fathers of the Church, Church's magisterium, sacraments, and liturgical prayer and its words and symbols. Spirit resides in the Church<sup>450</sup> and the same Spirit inspires people to proclaim the message of salvation.<sup>451</sup>

#### 1.2.4.2 Encountering Christ in the poor

Vincent de Paul regularly taught the sisters and the confreres that they were serving Jesus Christ in the person of the poor. Jesus has promised an eternal reward to those who give a cup of water to a poor person. Those inspiring words offer hope to pastoral ministers.<sup>452</sup> God grants eternal glory to those who serve God and the poor.<sup>453</sup> The engagement in charitable works is derived from the inspiring words of Jesus Christ who said to his disciples, *be merciful just as my father is merciful (Lk 6:36)*. Jesus exhorted his disciples and said: *... inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me (Mt 25:31-36)*. Therefore Vincent de Paul advised his confreres, as per the holy custom of the church: *she takes a patron for all the works, and since the works gain their value and dignity from the purpose for which they are performed, for the service of the poor we will take patron from Jesus Christ and aim for the accomplishment of his very ardent desire that Christians should practice among themselves the works of charity and mercy.*<sup>454</sup> People need

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<sup>448</sup> Catechism of the Catholic Church, #687-688.

<sup>449</sup> CCD: XII:93-96 (Conference: *Members of the Congregation and their Ministries*, December 13, 1658).

<sup>450</sup> CCD: VI:413 (Letter: *To a Priest of the Mission*, 1657).

<sup>451</sup> CCD: VIII:173 (Letter: *To Gabriel Delespiney*, October 17, 1659).

<sup>452</sup> CCD: IX:199 (Conference: *Love of Vacation and Assistance to the Poor*, February 13, 1646).

<sup>453</sup> CCD: VIII:322 (Letter: *To Michel Caset*, March 27, 1660).

<sup>454</sup> CCD: XIIIb:9 (Conference: *Charity of Women*, November, 1617).

to empty themselves to put on Jesus Christ and then, Jesus Christ becomes the centre of their activities which will gradually lead to an encounter with him.<sup>455</sup>

God, who is actively present in the midst of the people in the *Old Testament* and *New Testament*, wants people to share their time and resources with poor people, who are marginalized and often excluded from participation in society. God said to Moses: ... *they shall know that I am the Lord their God, who brought them out of the land of Egypt that I might dwell among them* (Ex 29:44-45a). Vincent de Paul explained that Christians view God as being present everywhere. God fills all beings, and he is present everywhere. *If I go to heaven*, said David, *he's there: if I descend into hell, he's there. ... God is a being who is present in all places*.<sup>456</sup>

God is not only everywhere but is found in a very special way in those individuals who are filled with his love.<sup>457</sup> This conviction of Vincent that God dwells in people was clearly evident as he spoke to the priests of *Saint-Sulpice* on the occasion of the death of their founder. ...*since I am unable to give you his living body, I thought I should present you with his spirit, which is the better part of him. The earth holds his body, heaven his soul, but his spirit is for you, and if God judged him worthy of a place in paradise with the angels, you should not find him unworthy of also having a place in your hearts*.<sup>458</sup>

During the exercise of our pastoral ministry, we need to stop being concerned only about things happening far away. We should devote our attention to domestic activities. The rest will come in due time. Grace has its moments and movements. People should be most cordial with everyone and spare nothing for the assistance of the sick members of the community.<sup>459</sup> Vincent de Paul affirms that the poor are our teachers of the faith because they have been educated through their own life on a series of fundamental Christian virtues and attitudes, and that true religion is lived and practiced specially by the poor and the humble people. Vincent de Paul invites people to have recourse to the school of the poor, because they poor believe simply, without dissecting, arguing and doubting everything; they submit themselves to God, and they are patient amidst their abject poverty; some of them are working all day long in the great heat

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<sup>455</sup> Maloney, Robert P., *Op.cit.*, p. 21.

<sup>456</sup> CCD:X:472 (Conference: *Order of the Day*, November 17, 1658).

<sup>457</sup> CCD:X:472 (Conference: *Order of the Day*, November 17, 1658).

<sup>458</sup> CCD: XIIIa:184 (Conference: *Address to Priests of Saint-Sulpice at the Death of their Founder*, April, 1657).

<sup>459</sup> CCD: II:499 (Letter: *To Bernard Codoing*, March 16, 1644).

of the sun, who expect that pastoral ministers pray for them while they wear themselves out in working.<sup>460</sup>

Jesus took joy in choosing poor people and sinners to establish the kingdom of God. Jesus overturned the wisdom of the philosophers through poor fishermen.<sup>461</sup> The fundamental Christological question in every age which Jesus asked to his disciples is still relevant: *who do you say that I am?*<sup>462</sup> The knowledge of God which results from the theological perspective of the poor is an activity and commitment, and people can capture the nuances of this theology of encountering God in the poor through their willingness to engage in acts of justice in the struggle to defend the rights of the helpless who cannot defend their own rights. That is why Vincent de Paul advised the sisters that when they leave meditation and holy mass to serve a poor person, they lose nothing, because to serve those who are poor is to go to God and they shall see God in them.<sup>463</sup> Jesus announces the good news of the kingdom to all, but especially to poor people, the vulnerable members of society, the lowly and the outcasts.<sup>464</sup> Vincent de Paul described himself as the evangelizer of the poor. He stated: *how beautiful it is to see poor people if we consider them in God and with the esteem in which Jesus Christ held them, however if we look on them according the sentiments of the flesh and a worldly spirit, they will seem contemptible mainly due to their appearance and lack of intelligence.*<sup>465</sup>

### 1.2.4.3 Participation in Mission Work

The approach of Vincent de Paul to the mission was to view mission as a sacramental, as a herald, and as servant. From this perspective, Vincent de Paul envisioned three circles of activity as participation in mission work, namely: preaching, partnership, and prayer. First, he emphasised mission work as preaching the message of Jesus Christ, catechising, and inviting people to repentance. The purpose of preaching is to draw souls to heaven.<sup>466</sup> People participate in the mission of Jesus when they preach and live the word of God. Second, through pastoral ministry people enter into a partnership with the missionary spirit of meekness, humility and simplicity of Jesus Christ,<sup>467</sup> and participate in the apostolic mission of the *New Testament*. To become a witness of Jesus is to participate, in spirit, in the idea of the kingdom of Jesus Christ.

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<sup>460</sup> CCD: XII:190-191 (Conference: *Repetition of Prayer*, July 24, 1655).

<sup>461</sup> CCD: XI:120 (Conference: *Repetition of Prayer*, October 21, 1643).

<sup>462</sup> Maloney, Robert P., *The Way of Vincent de Paul*, *Op.cit.*, p. 22; *Matthew* 16:15.

<sup>463</sup> CCD: IX:5 (Conference: *Explanation of the Regulations*, July 31, 1634).

<sup>464</sup> Maloney, Robert P., *The Way of Vincent de Paul*, *Op.cit.*, p. 23.

<sup>465</sup> CCD: XI:26 (Conference: *The Spirit of Faith*).

<sup>466</sup> CCD: XIIIa:31 (Conference: *Sermon on the Catechism*).

<sup>467</sup> CCD: I:518 (Letter: *To Robert de Sergis*, December 17, 1638).

Third, prayer is the missionary weapon,<sup>468</sup> the means of obtaining grace, virtue<sup>469</sup> disposition for meditation and constant communication with God.<sup>470</sup> Vincent de Paul often uses the word prayer to explain the term spirituality, that is to say, prayer involves spiritual education and formation, community life, observation of rules and regulations, reconciliation, meditation and works of charity. People are participating in the salvific mission of God by entering into constant communication with God.

Vincent de Paul's spirituality flows from his contemplation of Jesus who proclaimed good news to the poor. Vincent encouraged his followers to contemplate the character of Jesus Christ as evangelizer of the poor. In doing so they become educated and formed in the mission of Jesus Christ.<sup>471</sup> Participating in the mission leads people to practice and experience the presence of God because then people are trying to adopt the practice of doing the will of God in all their activities.<sup>472</sup> When people teach others to pray and when they themselves pray, they are placing themselves before God. This act of placing themselves willingly before God, enables people to persevere in their communication with God, because faith teaches them that God is everywhere.<sup>473</sup> Vincent suggested five practical methods of placing oneself before God, namely, to make one's meditation as best as one can, to consider that God sees and looks on each individual, to contemplate a spiritual subject, to practice meditation on a daily basis,<sup>474</sup> and to look at the crucifix of Jesus in order to reflect upon the sufferings of Jesus.<sup>475</sup>

#### 1.2.4.4 Contemplative in Action

Borrowing a phrase from the Jesuit tradition<sup>476</sup>, the article 42 of the Constitutions of the Congregation of the Mission call each member to be a contemplative in action and an apostle in prayer.<sup>477</sup> Vincent often advised his followers to give themselves to God in service on behalf of the poor. This advice of Vincent de Paul has two parts, first, to give themselves to God, second, in service on behalf of the poor. The former is of the contemplative dimension and the latter is the pastoral, ministerial dimension. An empirical examination of the stages of pastoral ministry might find that people place more emphasis on the second part of Vincent's advice of

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<sup>468</sup> CCD: XI:281 (Conference: *The Ecclesiastical State*, September 1655).

<sup>469</sup> CCD: IX:142 (Conference: *Excessive Self Love*, December 11, 1644).

<sup>470</sup> CCD: IX: 286 (Conference: *Purity of Intention*, July 11, 1646-50).

<sup>471</sup> Maloney, Robert P. *The Way of Vincent de Paul*, *Op.cit.*, p. 23.

<sup>472</sup> CCD: IX:287 (Conference: *Repetition of Prayer*, October 17, 1655).

<sup>473</sup> CCD: IX:4 (Conference: *Explanation of the Regulations*, July 31, 1634).

<sup>474</sup> CCD: IX:234 (Conference: *Repetition of Prayer*, August 16, 1655).

<sup>475</sup> CCD: IX:28 (Conference: *Fidelity to Rising and Mental Prayer*, August 2, 1640).

<sup>476</sup> The phrase seems to have been used first by Jerome Nadal (1507-1580), one of the closest collaborators of Saint Ignatius of Loyola, to describe the Jesuit founder's way of proceeding of ministries.

<sup>477</sup> Maloney, Robert P. "Saint Vincent as a Mystic of Charity", in *Vincentiana* (April-June, 2017, #1), p 114.

servicing the poor in the early stages of their life. To be contemplative in action suggests practicing simultaneously both dimensions of spiritual life.<sup>478</sup> Jesus is the best example for the ministry of contemplation in action. For instance, his act of selecting the twelve apostles was preceded by a night in prayer.<sup>479</sup> *He spent the night in prayer to God. When day came, he called his disciples and chose twelve of them, whom he also named apostles* (Lk 6:12-13). *He would withdraw to some deserted places and pray.*<sup>480</sup> Vincent de Paul's spirituality is based on this Christological vision. Vincent found that this specific spirituality enables people to transcend themselves. Vincent's pastoral experience reveals that people can be rooted in God and at the same time relate themselves to the created world.<sup>481</sup>

Vincent de Paul considered prayer as an act of contemplation. Then the question arises: how to engage in the act of contemplation? According to Vincent, to pray well is to observe the pauses and pronounce the words devoutly and distinctly.<sup>482</sup> Pauses and the distinct articulation of words gives people the opportunity to ponder the meaning of the words. Vincent says this method of praying well is not an invention. But, when people understand that they have a personal obligation to pray well, they are moving forward in their spiritual development.<sup>483</sup> Through his ministry on behalf of the poor, Vincent found God and discovered the path along which he could journey,<sup>484</sup> being effectively and affectively a contemplative in action. Vincent's life explains complementary relationship between action and contemplation.<sup>485</sup>

We can lose our perspective as we tend to the psychical, physical, and spiritual needs of others. When we neglect the need for contemplation and become overly preoccupied with charitable activity, we are putting our own spiritual growth in danger. In the Old Testament, Saul was found worthy to be King because he was living well in his father's house. Yet, after being raised to the throne, he fell from God's grace,<sup>486</sup> because he distanced himself from God. Jesus instructed his apostles on the need for contemplation by his own example. For instance, after feeding the five thousand, Jesus made his disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to Bethsaida, ... Jesus went up on the mountain to pray (Mk 6: 45-46). Jesus wanted his disciples to become attached to God through prayer so that the grace of God would flow

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<sup>478</sup> Maloney, Robert P. *Reflections on Vincentian Spirituality in Today's World*. *Op.cit.*, p 39.

<sup>479</sup> CCD: VIII: 183 (Letter: *To Toussaint Bourdais In Madagascar*, November, 1659).

<sup>480</sup> Luke 5: 16; CCD: IV:480 (Letter, *To Marc Coglée, Superior in Sedan*, October 15, 1652).

<sup>481</sup> Maloney, Robert P., *The Way of Vincent de Paul*, *Op.cit.*, p. 21.

<sup>482</sup> CCD: XII:269 (Conference: *Praying the Divine Office*, September 26, 1659).

<sup>483</sup> CCD: XII:270 (Conference: *Praying the Divine Office*, September 26, 1659).

<sup>484</sup> Maloney, Robert P., *Go! On the Missionary Spirituality of St. Vincent de Paul*, *Op.cit.*, p. 160.

<sup>485</sup> Álvarez, Francisco Javier. "Commentary on the Final Document of the 2016 General Assembly", in *Vincentiana* (October- December, 2016, # 4), p 495.

<sup>486</sup> CCD: XI:312 (Conference: *Advice to Antoine Durand, Named Superior of the Agde Seminary*, 1656).

continuously through the instrumentality and the functions of their ministry.<sup>487</sup> Abelly writes that the spirit of Vincent de Paul was continually attentive to the presence of God,<sup>488</sup> which is the best expression of a contemplative in action.

#### 1.2.4.5 To Be Charitable

Although charity was a virtue with an ancient pedigree that stretched back to the teachings of Jesus Christ and the epistles in the New Testament, its prominence in Vincent de Paul's teaching was charged especially by the passionate affection that he developed from the late 1610s onwards for the person and teaching of Francois de Sales.<sup>489</sup> Charity can never act against the law of God, that is one of the significant reasons why people should be charitable. Charity is a human act, hence human act will reflect the elements of charity through words, deeds, and omissions. Vincent de Paul suggests eight simple means to educate oneself and to grow in charity in the beginning stage of spirituality:<sup>490</sup>

- a) Doing to others the good we would reasonably want them to do to us.
- b) Never contradicting anyone and finding everything good in our Lord.
- c) Bearing with one another without grumbling.
- d) Weeping with those who weep.
- e) Rejoicing with those who rejoice.
- f) Being the first to show respect to the other.
- g) Showing affection to people and cheerfully help people.
- i) to be always benevolent to all people so that the name of Jesus Christ be glorified.

To be charitable is the fruit of many virtuous habits. Dispositions of virtue cannot remain passive but must be made manifest in the form of acts of virtue. However, people can have a habit of charitable activity without a proper disposition of the virtue of charity. Vincent de Paul said:

Each thing produces, as it were, a species and image of itself, as we see in a mirror, which represents objects just as they are: an ugly face appears ugly, and a handsome one looks handsome. In the same way, good or bad qualities are spread exteriorly, especially charity, which, in itself is contagious and produces charity. A heart truly on fire and animated with this virtue makes its ardour felt; and everything in a charitable man breathes and preaches charity.<sup>491</sup>

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<sup>487</sup> CCD: XI:312 (Conference: *Advice to Antoine Durand, Named Superior of the Agde Seminary*, 1656).

<sup>488</sup> Maloney, Robert P., *Go! On the Missionary Spirituality of St. Vincent de Paul*, *Op.cit.*, p. 167.

<sup>489</sup> Forrestal, Alison, *Op.cit.*, p. 99.

<sup>490</sup> CCD: XII:224 (Conference: *Charity*, May 30, 1659); *Common Rules*, II:12.

<sup>491</sup> CCD: XI:66 (Conference: *Charity*).

As an act, charity will be authenticated by visible act of love, both of God and of the neighbour.<sup>492</sup> Act of love makes our faith alive, visible and tangible.<sup>493</sup> Fraternal charity is one of the signs of their predestination, since by it a person is recognized as a true disciple of Jesus Christ. Vincent de Paul told his confreres that the *Congregation of the Mission* will continue in existence as long as charity reigns in it.<sup>494</sup> In the same way people could affirm that the pastoral activities will remain lively as long as charity reigns in pastoral ministry.

Charity is the soul of virtues and the paradise of communities. Pastoral ministry will be successful if the paradise of charity is found in the ministry, and this paradise of charity is nothing other than love and union. The perfect happiness of eternal life consists in loving God continuously, a constant beatific love.<sup>495</sup> Christian charity enables people to love one another as brothers and sisters in God. Therefore, through the virtue of charity, people are able to see God in every person they serve.<sup>496</sup>

## Part 1 Chapter 3

### 1.3.1 Journey towards Holiness

The human journey towards holiness has an inseparable element of suffering, and at times suffering will be terrible to bear with ... Jesus was deeply grieved and was sad unto death (Mk 14: 34) in apprehension of what he had to suffer. During times of suffering, people are in a situation of being able to honour Jesus's suffering<sup>497</sup> and such suffering should not prevent them from continuing their journey towards holiness.<sup>498</sup> The spiritual journey is carried out with the help of God and this journey is guided by the providence of God. Therefore, if people are ready to abandon themselves to the providence of God with trust and submission, the human act will be so propitious in the people as to free them from their distress.<sup>499</sup> There is no better human act which helps an individual to know the will of God more clearly than prayer. The habit of prayer rejuvenates the soul. Yet, the soul which is weakened by bad habits, recovers and become dynamic through prayer. Through prayer, the soul of the individual recovers its sight where previously it had become blind, the ears once deaf to the voice of God will be

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<sup>492</sup> Melito, Jack. *Op.cit.*, p. 127.

<sup>493</sup> Woldemichael, Zeracristos Yosief. "Between Memory and Prophecy", *Op.cit.*, p 534.

<sup>494</sup> CCD: XI:67 (Conference: *Charity*).

<sup>495</sup> CCD: XI:67 (Conference: *Charity*).

<sup>496</sup> CCD: XI:67 (Conference: *Charity*).

<sup>497</sup> CCD: IV:146 (Letter: *To René Alméras, Superior in Rome, January 13, 1651*).

<sup>498</sup> Maloney, Robert P., *Seasons in Spirituality, Op.cit.*, p. 28.

<sup>499</sup> CCD: IV:145 (Letter: *To Jean Barreau, Consul of France in Algiers, January 15, 1651*).

opened to good inspirations, and the heart will receive a renewed strength and will be energized by a courage that hadn't been experienced before.<sup>500</sup>

The journey towards holiness, in a broad sense, is an act of charity, because every Christian is obliged to educate other people, including Christians, who do not know about the things necessary for salvation and who are ignorant about the message of the gospel.<sup>501</sup> In a pastoral community people need to be instructed in the mystery of God out of the love for their salvation and for the glory of God. Vincent de Paul formulates three suggestions towards this extended function of the virtue of charity: 1) to have great devotion towards the zeal for teaching the mysteries of the faith; 2) make a resolution never to be with poor people without teaching them the things necessary for their salvation; 3) to ask pardon of God for our negligence in observing the resolution of instructing people.<sup>502</sup>

Regular meditation before the most blessed sacrament of the altar is an enriching habit towards contemplation. Meditation helps people to listen to God, and to ask God to inspire them with spiritual impulse for the advancement in their daily spiritual life. However, Vincent de Paul urges, that the act of reasoning in mediation has to be supported by the act of the will in the daily life. That means, spirituality cannot be restricted to just act of reason, for reason is fruitless if there is no affection.<sup>503</sup> The act of thanksgiving in the form of adoration for the incomparable benefit received through Jesus Christ, guides people towards the act of the will, the exercise of the spiritual affection in the form of charity.<sup>504</sup>

Meditation helps people to take resolutions, and those resolutions which are taken, have to be renewed and reviewed for growth in holiness.<sup>505</sup> After the holy Mass, after mental prayer and after praying the breviary usually people get good inspirations and insights. Good inspirations can help people to concentrate in meditation. Having a desire to observe silence after night prayer until after next morning prayer in order to give space to the inspirations of the day is a good practice and a spiritual necessity to enter into contemplative state of mind, and God communicates to the simple-minded people.<sup>506</sup> Observance of silence allows the mind

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<sup>500</sup> CCD: IX:328 (Conference, *Mental Prayer*, May 31, 1648).

<sup>501</sup> CCD: XI:173 (Conference *Repetition of Prayer*, May 23, 1655).

<sup>502</sup> CCD: XI:174 (Conference: *Repetition of Prayer*, May 23, 1655).

<sup>503</sup> CCD: XI:175 (Conference: *Repetition of Prayer*, May 27, 1655).

<sup>504</sup> CCD: XI:175 (Conference: *Repetition of Prayer*, May 27, 1655).

<sup>505</sup> CCD:X:590 (Conference: *The Virtues of Louise De Marillac*, July 24, 1660).

<sup>506</sup> CCD: IX:174-175 (Conference: *Observance of the Rule*, January 22, 1645).

to keep busy with spiritual thoughts, and keeping the mind busy with spiritual thoughts eventually guides the person to holiness.<sup>507</sup>

### 1.3.1.1 Jesus the Role Model

Vincent understood Christology and ecclesiology different from the classical description of *from above*, but *from below*, and he focuses on data about the humanity of Jesus while also affirming his divinity, accepting the scriptural data about his weakness, his lack of knowledge about the future, his ignorance of events outside the scope of his experience, his anger, his deep human love, his feelings and his emotions. An ecclesiology from below emphasizes base communities, the role of the lay person, shared decision making and responsibility, varied ministries, the identification of the Church with the poor and their struggles.<sup>508</sup>

There is a beautiful pastoral vision from which to denounce the maxims of the world and embrace those of Jesus Christ. Jesus was in the world without adopting the maxims of the world. He preached against the evil in the maxims of the society, for the world has high regard for the wealth, honour and charm and shuns poverty. When we accept Jesus as the role model for life, we accept the gospel maxims, because Jesus is the author of gospel maxims.<sup>509</sup> The maxims of Jesus Christ are like solid rocks, and they are inviolable and sacred maxims for spiritual advancement.<sup>510</sup> For Vincent, Jesus was the driving force. Vincent tells the members of the Congregation of the Mission: *Jesus Christ is the rule of the mission and centre of their life and activity.*<sup>511</sup>

In the pastoral ministry, Jesus Christ must be our model in all our ways of acting, for he was not satisfied with his sermons, his works, his fasting, shedding of his blood, and even his death, but he added meditation to all that. Jesus had no need of meditation, yet he prayed for us and taught us to do the same, to pray both for our personal concerns and for those people who will encounter God through us.<sup>512</sup> In giving themselves to God, pastoral leaders will work in the humble spirit of Jesus Christ, acknowledging that their doctrine is not their own but comes from

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<sup>507</sup> CCD: IX:175 (Conference: *Observance of the Rule*, January 22, 1645).

<sup>508</sup> Maloney, Robert P., *The Way of Vincent de Paul*, *Op.cit.*, p. 50-51.

<sup>509</sup> CCD:X:112 (Conference: *The Maxims of the World and those of the World*, November 2, 1655).

<sup>510</sup> CCD: XIIIa:92 (Document: *Journal of the Last Days of Saint Vincent*, June 5, 1660).

<sup>511</sup> Maloney, Robert P., *The Way of Vincent de Paul*, *Op.cit.*, p. 21.

<sup>512</sup> CCD: XI:312 (Conference: *Advice to Antoine Durand, Named Superior of the Agde Seminary*, 1656).

the Gospel. Therefore, pastoral leaders, in their preaching and teaching should use simple of words and comparisons ... as Jesus did when he was among us.<sup>513</sup>

Even during the lifetime of Vincent de Paul many members of the company lost their lives while carrying out the missions of the pastoral ministries. At times the difficulties in the ministries can even cause sickness and death to the people who are carrying out the missions, and we may have to weep due to the pain and agony of the suffering; abrupt separation due to death could be a sword of sorrow for our soul, then our steadfast faith should enable us to recall to mind that God is treating us just as he treated his own beloved son whom he sent into the world to establish the church by his passion, and that was the only just means God could find for the salvation of the people. Having understood the necessity of passion of the cross, he went to pray in the garden of Gethsemane in order to fulfil the will of his father (Mt 26:36). At the times of suffering Jesus is our model, and perhaps the suffering is a special design on us for a better instrumentality.<sup>514</sup> During the time of suffering our motivation will give us meaning to our commitment to ministry, enables us to continue to follow Jesus Christ, and strengthen us to respond to the universal call to holiness, by constantly searching for God's will.<sup>515</sup> Jesus's sufferings were both interior and exterior and his interior suffering was continual and incomparably greater than his exterior suffering (his crucifixion). Jesus suffered to purge us of our sins and to adorn us with his virtue in order that his Father's name might be glorified in us and his kingdom may be built up among us. By our sufferings in pastoral ministry, we partake of the sufferings of Jesus Christ.<sup>516</sup>

### 1.3.1.2 Humility and Self-emptying Love

Everyone finds the virtue of humility beautiful and loveable, but few people practice this virtue, because menschen are content to think about this virtue. It is delightful to speculate but in practice there is an aspect that is distasteful to human nature, for example, to choose always the lowest place, to endure calumnies, to accept contempt. Therefore, serious effort is necessary to practice the virtue of humility.<sup>517</sup> The virtue of humility is self-emptying love for Jesus Christ, that is, we empty ourselves in order to put on Jesus Christ.<sup>518</sup>

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<sup>513</sup> CCD: XI:313-314 (Conference: *Advice to Antoine Durand, Named Superior of the Agde Seminary*, 1656).

<sup>514</sup> CCD: VIII:181-182 (Letter: *To Toussaint Bourdaisé In Madagascar*, November, 1659).

<sup>515</sup> Saldaña Moreno, César A. "Lay Vincentian Missionaries and Vincentian Spirituality," *Op.cit.*, p 495.

<sup>516</sup> CCD: VIII:374 (Letter: *To a Visitation Nun*, June 27, 1660).

<sup>517</sup> CCD: XI:44 (Conference: *Humility*).

<sup>518</sup> Maloney, Robert P., *Go ! On the Missionary Spirituality of St. Vincent de Paul*, *Op.cit.*, p. 71.

Pastoral leaders must try to do all their duties well and educate themselves to become humble, patient, mortified and charitable. Jesus had never allowed people to speak about the miracles that he did, but exhorted people to have faith in God. The virtue of humility is an expression of submitting all our success to God. Therefore, we must trample underfoot self-interest when engaged in charitable works on behalf of the people of God.<sup>519</sup> The humble person recognizes interdependence among *menschen* both as a sign of their limitedness and as a source of enrichment. Pastoral leader need others and cannot do ministry without them. In solidarity with the people, pastoral ministers journey toward the kingdom of God.<sup>520</sup>

According to Vincent de Paul the practice of patience, humility, and exact observance of the rule of the community is a true sign of perseverance in spiritual life. Through the acquisition of these virtues, people will develop an advanced spirituality through the grace of God.<sup>521</sup> The precepts of the rule came into existence owing to disorders, and moreover, human inclination tend towards evil in so many ways that divine and human prudence had to offer specific remedies for them. That is why the Old and New Testaments are filled with commandments, counsels, and rules for salvation. In addition, the church has made many ordinances and decrees, and jurists have established laws for civil matters for a harmonious social life.<sup>522</sup> Humility consists in emptying ourselves completely before God, overcoming self-interest to place God in our heart, not seeking the esteem of others, and struggling constantly against any impulse of vanity, and glorifying God through words and deeds.<sup>523</sup>

People who have humility are not at variance with others, for humility engenders charity. The reason for the petty disagreement among the people is very often the thought that each person wants to be highly thought of and wants others to know what the person is capable of. Such thinking will not allow people to withdraw but rather stress their demands. Humility and charity together make up the spiritual cross of Jesus Christ. They represent the two arms of the material cross. Charity is represented by submission to the cross of Jesus Christ and humility is represented at the foot of the cross, to show us that humility makes us love lowly places of mission and lowly ministries.<sup>524</sup> Mary, the mother of Jesus amidst all her difficulties, recognized God's gifts, without diminishing or denying them and responded with gratitude.<sup>525</sup> God looked

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<sup>519</sup> CCD: IV:480 (Letter: *To Marc Coglée, Superior in Sedan*, October 15, 1652).

<sup>520</sup> Maloney, Robert P., *The Way of Vincent de Paul*, *Op.cit.*, p. 58.

<sup>521</sup> CCD: III:339 (Letter: *To a Seminarian of the Mission*, July 15, 1648).

<sup>522</sup> CCD: III:343 (Letter: *To Claude Dufour*, July 24, 1648).

<sup>523</sup> Mezzadri, Luigi. "Identity and a Sense of Vincentian Belonging", *Op.cit.*, p 210

<sup>524</sup> CCD:X:425-426 (Conference: *Humility, Charity, Obedience and Patience*, July 14, 1658).

<sup>525</sup> Maloney, Robert P., *The Way of Vincent de Paul*, *Op.cit.*, p. 59.

upon the blessed virgin Mary because she was humble, while God resists the proud and gives his grace to the humble. In order to cultivate humility, people need to perform acts of humility, not only external acts but also interior acts of humility. The interior act is a result of the inner disposition of the person. Menschen have to interiorly attribute what is good to others, then this interior disposition of humility will give them happiness and interior delight to the soul<sup>526</sup>

### 1.3.1.3 Ministry as a Path to an Encounter with Christ

God wants to incite his people to go forth and proclaim everywhere the message of the love of God.<sup>527</sup> Good servants of God do not wait until they are comfortable with everything to love and console the poor. They will always be ready with utmost interest to be involved in ministry. This burning love for the ministry gives them happiness.<sup>528</sup> Vincent de Paul discovered in his encounters with peasants that there was nothing in the world more worthwhile than to teach them about God's love, so that they might believe, hope and love God.<sup>529</sup> In his ministry Vincent experienced the presence of God in the poor. The awareness of the increased number of common concerns should lead pastoral leaders to move beyond ideological and cultural interests to a preferred strategy of focus, to meet Christ in the service with the poor.<sup>530</sup>

Being a Christian is a vocation and engaging in ministry for the people is a vocation within the vocation. While doing ministry, people should always remember, that the inspirations of God are always gentle, peaceful, and inclining us lovingly towards the good which God desires of people. If the insights cause disturbance or violence, then those insights are suggestions of the evil spirit.<sup>531</sup> *The joy of the gospel fills the hearts and lives of all who encounter Jesus.*<sup>532</sup> Pastoral ministry is one of the paths to encounter Jesus Christ, both for those who are carrying out the ministry and for those who are receiving the service of the ministry, because pastoral leaders are engaged in the evangelical service of Jesus. In pastoral ministry there is always an emphasis on personal spiritual growth, for all are called to be perfect through spiritual advancement (Mt 5:48). In the beginning stage, spiritual activities should be an introduction to the spiritual life. Spiritual advancement is a gradual process, even to the religious and pastoral leaders. An individual cannot get accustomed to a too many practices of daily prayer all of a sudden. Vincent de Paul wrote to Louise regarding the formation of

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<sup>526</sup> CCD: IX:534-535 (Conference: *Secret Pride*, March 15, 1654).

<sup>527</sup> CCD: III:351 (Letter: *To Denis Gautier, Superior in Richelieu*, July, 1648).

<sup>528</sup> CCD: III:351 (Letter: *To Denis Gautier, Superior in Richelieu*, July, 1648).

<sup>529</sup> Forrestal, Alison, *Op.cit.*, p. 103.

<sup>530</sup> Chaves dos Santos, Eli. "The Vincentian Family: A Horizon of Creative Fidelity," *Op.cit.*, p 438.

<sup>531</sup> CCD: V:569 (Letter: *To a Priest of the Mission*, June 4, 1653).

<sup>532</sup> Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*. (24 November 2013), # 1.

candidates, that, as candidates are introduced themselves to the spirituality, they will follow the spiritual life in a leisurely way according to the pastoral situation and of pastoral duties.<sup>533</sup> Meditation is a form of personal prayer through which people will be able to worship God in spirit and truth. Jesus said to the woman of Samaria, *but the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth* (Jn 4:23). Meditation helps people to deepen the awareness about the presence of God. In his letter to the Corinthians St. Paul writes, *do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you?* (1Cor 3:16). Those who practice regular personal prayer could gradually understand the presence of the Holy Spirit within them, then, they will steadily understand that they are not alone but God is with them (1Cor 6:19).

The people who are engaged in pastoral ministry and the people who are interested in spiritual progress will be distinguished by the magnanimity of their evangelic virtues. They will be arduous in working for God in both good and bad times, because the tranquillity of the spiritual dispositions will neither be emotionally elated nor depressed. Therefore, living one's vocation leads to ministry, and doing ministry for the glory of God and for the good of the Christian community leads to spiritual dispositions that enable people to encounter Jesus Christ.<sup>534</sup>

#### 1.3.1.4 Solidarity

The word, solidarity, is rooted in the Latin word, *solidus*, which means solid, compact, and whole. In the beginning, this word was utilized in the realm of construction of buildings. Later this word was utilized in a more symbolic manner in the area of jurisprudence, then, *soliditus* was used to refer to the unity of law. Some years later, the word solidarity was applied to the ethical and political sphere.<sup>535</sup> One of the identities of the catholic church is her solidarity and concern for those in the greatest need. This is visibly present in the catholic church despite the tide of secularism which has influenced contemporary societies.<sup>536</sup> This is a matter of joy and a living reality that the values of an authentic Christian humanism is present where great number of people have received baptism and express their faith and solidarity with others in a variety of ways.<sup>537</sup> *The means of human communication have made unprecedented advances,*

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<sup>533</sup> CCD: I:158 (Letter, *To Saint Louise*, May, 1632).

<sup>534</sup> CCD: XIIIa:91-92 (Document: *Deposition at the Process of Beatification of Francis de Sales*, April 17, 1628).

<sup>535</sup> Motto, Andres R. M. "The Value of Solidarity in the Congregation of the Mission", in *Vincentiana* (July-September 2017, # 3), p 374.

<sup>536</sup> Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*. (24 November 2013), # 65.

<sup>537</sup> Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*. (24 November 2013), # 68.

*we sense the challenge of finding and sharing a mystique of living together, of mingling and encounter, of embracing and supporting one another, of stepping into this flood tide which, while chaotic, can become a genuine experience of fraternity, a caravan of solidarity, a sacred pilgrimage. Greater possibilities for communication thus turn into greater possibilities for encounter and solidarity for everyone*<sup>538</sup>.

Practice of mutual respect and gentleness causes a growth in solidarity among the members of the team which in turn, leads to a more effective functioning of the team. In his first social encyclical, *Laborem exercens*, Pope John Paul II explained the necessity to understand the important ethical values of solidarity, as well as appealed to a common action. He stated that movements of solidarity of the workers and with the workers (*Laborem exercens*, # 8) ought to lead to dialogue and collaboration with others.<sup>539</sup> As a member of the pastoral team, one should strive to acquire the virtue of respect and gentleness because these virtues please God and neighbour, for this is imitating Jesus Christ who was full of gentleness, and without gentleness there is no charity. Limiting ourselves to showing charity to strangers is not enough for spiritual development. We must educate ourselves to show charity to the people with whom we live and to those people whom we see very often, charity and solidarity refer to something more than a few sporadic acts of generosity.<sup>540</sup> If we fail to show solidarity, respect and gentleness, those expressions will be a sign that we do not have any love for them. Therefore, we have to lead a spiritual life worthy of our vocation in order to enter into solidarity with the people whom we serve.<sup>541</sup>

If pastoral leaders, who are God's means of listening the poor, turn deaf ears to the plea of the poor, they oppose God's will and his plan, and that poor person might cry to the Lord against them, and they would incur guilt (Deut 15:9). A lack of solidarity towards needs of the people could directly affect one's relationship with God,<sup>542</sup> and the social dimension of charity.<sup>543</sup> Pope Francis says that in this context we can understand the command of Jesus to his disciples: *you yourselves give them something to eat* (Mk 6:37). This pastoral exhortation would mean *working to eliminate the structural causes of poverty and to promote the integral*

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<sup>538</sup> Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*. (24 November 2013), # 87.

<sup>539</sup> Motto, Andres R. M. "The Value of Solidarity in the Congregation of the Mission", *Op.cit.*, p 375.

<sup>540</sup> Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*. (24 November 2013), # 188.

<sup>541</sup> CCD: IX:206 (Conference: *The Practice of Mutual Respect and Gentleness*, August 19, 1646).

<sup>542</sup> Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*. (24 November 2013), # 187.

<sup>543</sup> Motto, Andres R. M. "The Value of Solidarity in the Congregation of the Mission", *Op.cit.*, p 374.

*development of the poor, as well as small daily acts of solidarity in meeting the real needs which we encounter.*<sup>544</sup>

Parish and pastoral institutions do have elements of responsibility of a social organization, and a parish involves a group of people, they are a part of a society. The words of John Paul II in this regard is a good means of guideline in order to evaluate the pastoral activities, he said that *a society becomes alienated when its forms of social organization, production and consumption make it more difficult to offer the gift of self and to establish solidarity between people*<sup>545</sup>. John Paul II popularized this word when he referred to solidarity as a key to resolving the social question.<sup>546</sup>

As Jesus said to his disciples, *learn from me for I am gentle and humble of heart* (Mt 11:29), so also, we have to learn to master this virtue of gentleness, for people will know through this virtue of gentleness that we are disciples of Jesus Christ. In his encyclical, *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, Pope John Paul II pointed out that solidarity has various points of reference to charity and justice, and solidarity is a distinctive characteristic of apostles (John 13:35; *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, # 40).<sup>547</sup> The virtue of solidarity gives respect to the people. Respect and gentleness foster peace. Where there is peace God abides and works done with gentleness and peace are always pleasing to God.<sup>548</sup> Vincent de Paul suggests seven important ways to strengthen habit of solidarity.<sup>549</sup>

- a) Manifesting great submission with a happy and cheerful expressions
- b) Doing to others what we would like them to do to us
- c) being ready to help
- d) Never doing anything contrary to the honour of another
- e) Regard people as servant of God
- f) Greeting them with joyful expression
- g) Not using contemptuous language

Growing into a habit of being in solidarity with others is a process of education, which demands a lot of personal effort to acquire this virtue and to act against the contrary habits. The words of Jesus to learn from me that I am gentle and humble is an invitation to this spiritual

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<sup>544</sup> Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*. (24 November 2013), # 188.

<sup>545</sup> John Paul II, *Encyclical Letter Centesimus Annus* (1 May 1991), # 41; Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*. (24 November 2013), # 198.

<sup>546</sup> Motto, Andres R. M. "The Value of Solidarity in the Congregation of the Mission", *Op.cit.*, p 375.

<sup>547</sup> Motto, Andres R. M. "The Value of Solidarity in the Congregation of the Mission", *Op.cit.*, p 378.

<sup>548</sup> CCD: IX:207 (Conference: *The Practice of Mutual Respect and Gentleness*, August 19, 1646).

<sup>549</sup> CCD: IX:208 (Conference: *The Practice of Mutual Respect and Gentleness*, August 19, 1646).

education. Solidarity is a fundamental sign of the virtue of love, which is an essential character of living a Christian life.<sup>550</sup>

### 1.3.1.5 Integral Involvement of People

Growth in charity is the perennial challenge in every age and growth in the charity of Christ is a call to all Christians. In a community this means warmth and gentleness towards one's brothers and sisters, young and old, for charity according to Vincent de Paul is love and gentleness.<sup>551</sup> Integral involvement of people in an apostolic context is an evangelical challenge to grow in charity. As a message of hope for a change for the whole Church, the Synod of Bishops, the Special Assembly for the Pan-Amazonian region states that *the defence of the Amazon's and its people's life requires a profound personal, social, and structural conversion. The Church is included in this call to unlearn, learn, and relearn, in order to overcome any tendency toward colonizing models that have caused harm in the past*<sup>552</sup> The Church requires a synodal conversion, synodality of the People of God under the guidance of the Spirit. With this horizon of communion and participation the church seeks new ecclesial paths, especially in her ministry and sacramental life. Religious life, the laity and especially women, are always and ever, new protagonists who call us to this conversion.<sup>553</sup>

Vincent de Paul was a man of prayer, but he rarely used the term conversion, rather he used the term reconciliation to describe the state of the change of mind. On one occasion he wrote to Jean Barreau not to speak about conversion in his assigned area of mission, and not to support those that take place contrary to the law of the country.<sup>554</sup> This nuance of reconciliation is present in the idea of integral involvement of people, because only reconciliation can bring about any integral involvement of people. If any group of people is always in the mainstream of action and the other group of people is always excluded and marginalized, then there would naturally exist a conflict by virtue of monopoly and attribution of eligibility. This conflict weakens harmony and creates wounds which are both internal and external wounds. The idea of integral involvement calls for healing of the wounds and that process is reconciliation.

The concept of integration should be founded on the concept of the people of God. The Catechism of the Catholic Church explains the concept people of God in the following way: *at all times and in every race, anyone who fears God and does what is right has been acceptable*

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<sup>550</sup> CCD: IX:211 (Conference: *The Practice of Mutual Respect and Gentleness*, August 19, 1646).

<sup>551</sup> Maloney, Robert P., *Seasons in Spirituality*, *Op.cit.*, p. 38.

<sup>552</sup> *The Amazon: New Paths for the Church and for an Integral Ecology*, #81.

<sup>553</sup> *The Amazon: New Paths for the Church and for an Integral Ecology*, #86.

<sup>554</sup> CCD: III:47 (Letter: *To Jean Barreau*, September 6, 1646).

to him. ... he called together a race made up of Jews and Gentiles which would be one, not according to the flesh, but in the Spirit.<sup>555</sup> The People of God are marked by seven characteristics that clearly distinguish them from all other religious, ethnic, political, or cultural groups found in history:

a) God is not the property of any one people, but he acquired a people for himself from those who previously were not a people, a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation; b) one becomes a member of this people not by a physical birth, but by being born anew, a birth of water and the Spirit, that is, by faith in Christ, and Baptism; c) this people has for its head Jesus Christ, because the same anointing, the Holy Spirit, flows from the head into the body, this is the messianic people; d) the status of this people is that of the dignity and freedom of the sons of God, in whose hearts the Holy Spirit dwells as in a temple; e) its law is the new commandment to love as Christ loved us, this is the new law of the Holy Spirit; f) its mission is to be salt of the earth and light of the world, this people is a most sure seed of unity, hope, and salvation for the whole human race; g) its destiny, finally, is the Kingdom of God which has been begun by God himself on earth and which must be further extended until it has been brought to perfection by him at the end of time.<sup>556</sup>

*Jesus Christ is the one whom the Father anointed with the Holy Spirit and established as priest, prophet, and king. The whole People of God participates in these three offices of Christ and bears the responsibilities for mission and service that flow from them.*<sup>557</sup> Integral involvement of people reflects commutative justice of God, who changes people's works into virtues and their merits into rewards.<sup>558</sup> Spiritual works of people accompany them (Rev 14:13) in a spiritual way making the kingdom of God grow within them.

### 1.3.2 Eucharistic Celebration as Community Activity

Celebration of the sacrament of the Eucharist is an activity of communal gathering of the faithful. The Catechism of the catholic Church teaches that *the holy Eucharist completes Christian initiation. Those who have been raised to the dignity of the royal priesthood by Baptism and configured more deeply to Christ by Confirmation participate with the whole community in the Lord's own sacrifice by means of the Eucharist.*<sup>559</sup> The whole parish community is invited to join in the celebration of the Eucharist and in this unending praise.<sup>560</sup> The celebrant prays for the whole Church, prays for the Pope, for Bishops, (especially the name of the local Bishop is said in order to signify the local Bishop's presidency over the particular Church), for deacons, all ministers, religious, laity. (Although not explicitly mentioned, the

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<sup>555</sup> Catechism of the Catholic Church, #781.

<sup>556</sup> Catechism of the Catholic Church, #782.

<sup>557</sup> Catechism of the Catholic Church, #783.

<sup>558</sup> CCD: XII:114 (Conference: *Seeking the Kingdom of God*, February 21, 1659).

<sup>559</sup> Catechism of the Catholic Church, #1322.

<sup>560</sup> Catechism of the Catholic Church, #1352.

Church prays all its members especially for women religious.) The gathered community of the faithful intercedes for the celebrant who offer the Eucharistic sacrifice.<sup>561</sup>

The idea of active participation in the liturgy was first formulated by Pope Saint Pius XI. According to him, in order that the faithful may more actively participate in divine worship, when the faithful assist at the sacred ceremonies, when pious solidarities take part with the clergy in a procession, they shall try not to be silent spectators, rather filled with an understanding of the meaning and beauty of the Liturgy, they shall sing alternately with the clergy and the choir, as it is prescribed in a liturgy.<sup>562</sup>

The two fundamental structures of the eucharistic celebration, preserved throughout the centuries, reveal the elements of a fundamental unity: the liturgy of the Word and the liturgy of the Eucharist.<sup>563</sup> The whole community is invited to the liturgical celebration of the memorial of Christ, of his life, of his death, of his resurrection, and of his intercession in the presence of the father.<sup>564</sup> The liturgy of Eucharist is an *anamnesis* because this is a command of Jesus: *do this in remembrance of me* (Lk 22:19; 1 Cor 11:24) *At the Last Supper, on the night when He was betrayed, our Saviour instituted the eucharistic sacrifice of His Body and Blood. He did this in order to perpetuate the sacrifice of the Cross throughout the centuries until He should come again, and so to entrust to His beloved spouse, the Church, a memorial of His death and resurrection: a sacrament of love, a sign of unity, a bond of charity, a paschal banquet in which Christ is eaten, the mind is filled with grace, and a pledge of future glory is given to us.*<sup>565</sup> The faithful prepare themselves by understanding the meaning of the salvific love of God in the liturgy of the word and prepare themselves for a meaningful participation, as a community, in the Eucharist.

### 1.3.2.1 Catechetics

The principal aim of Catechetics is to deepen the faith through exegetical presuppositions based on the certainties of faith. There are three basic convictions to be followed by pastoral leaders before entering into catechetics. First, Holy Bible is inspired by God, entrusted to the Church for nurturing the faith and for guiding the Christian life. Secondly, the people who are involved in catechesis should adhere to the ecclesial community in the

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<sup>561</sup> *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, #1369.

<sup>562</sup> Pope Pius XI. *Divini Cultus*. 1928.

<sup>563</sup> *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. # 1346.

<sup>564</sup> *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. # 1341.

<sup>565</sup> Pope Paul VI. *Constitution of the Sacred Liturgy, Sacrosanctum Concilium*. 1963, # 47.

process of theological reflection. Thirdly, in the catechetics, people who teach, apply the reflections undertaken by systematic theologians upon the inspiration of the holy Bible, giving emphasis to the practical function of the theological reflection in the daily life and presenting lively precise awareness of the historical character of biblical inspiration. These three circles of convictions in catechesis build relationships between theological learning and pastoral community. Based on these three convictions, regular catechesis for children, youths, adults, and elders should be organized for their advancement in their spirituality. Pastoral team can nurture the participation of many lay people for the ministry of catechism.<sup>566</sup>

The Constitutions and Statutes of the Congregation of the Mission state: *recognizing the great importance of education for both youth and adults, members should take up this work of teaching and educating where it is needed to achieve the purpose of the Congregation. This work should be carried out, however, not only in schools of various kinds, but also within the family circle, in places of work, and across the whole spectrum of society, wherever young people and adults spend their time... Among the means to be used by the Congregation in its work of evangelization, a suitable place should be given to technical media of social communication, with the purpose of spreading the word of salvation more widely and more effectively.*<sup>567</sup>

**a) Moral Catechesis:** Moral catechesis develops the Biblical narratives concerning the history of salvation, the commandments, counsels of wisdom, prophetic exhortations and parables. By assessing the biblical text, catechists relate the significance of the biblical text to the present time. This is a rather complicated task, because often the biblical narrations do not provide us with a universal moral principle but rather, they offer us particular prescriptions, counsels and ordinances. The progress of moral understanding in the Old Testament<sup>568</sup> is completed with the message of love as explained in the New Testament. *We have to do our utmost always to bring virtue to the highest degree as possible and this can be achieved not by our own effort but by recourse to God and frequent prayer.*<sup>569</sup> The catechists, relying upon

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<sup>566</sup> Saldaña Moreno, César A. "Lay Vincentian Missionaries and Vincentian Spirituality," *Op.cit.*, p 500; *Evangelii Gaudium* # 102.

<sup>567</sup> *Constitution and Statutes of the Congregation of the Mission*, #11&12.

<sup>568</sup> Pope Paul VI. *Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation, Dei Verbum*. 1965, #15. *Now the books of the Old Testament, in accordance with the state of mankind before the time of salvation established by Christ, reveal to all men the knowledge of God and of man and the ways in which God, just and merciful, deals with men. These books, though they also contain some things which are incomplete and temporary, nevertheless show us true divine pedagogy. These same books, then, give expression to a lively sense of God, contain a store of sublime teachings about God, sound wisdom about human life, and a wonderful treasury of prayers, and in them the mystery of our salvation is present in a hidden way. Christians should receive them with reverence.*

<sup>569</sup> CCD:XI:86.

biblical exegesis, need to undertake a process of discernment to interpret and extract the moral lesson from provisional elements of biblical stories. Biblical images are often paradoxical and therefore, people need to have recourse to exegesis and the creative use of these images in order to instil moral values in children, youth and adults. *The gospels are a wonderful synthesis of Jesus' activity and contemplation, of Jesus' active life and his prayer life. Vincent de Paul as a mystic taught that God is to be found in prayer and in action.*<sup>570</sup> We have to creatively open ourselves to the word of God from the perspective of the charism so that we might be more effective in our service to the poor.<sup>571</sup> If pastoral leaders could develop an attitude of availability<sup>572</sup> for discussion and an attitude to help people, that will increase the approachability of the members of the parish, and when the contact with the people increases, the occasion for teaching catechism will steadily progress.

Vincent de Paul tried to explain the message of beatitudes in terms of maxims of Jesus Christ and the maxims of the world. The maxims of the world are often considered as values that might not be formulated. Vincent used the beatitudes to describe the contrast between the maxims of the world and the attitudes of Jesus Christ: Jesus says blessed are the poor while the world says blessed are the rich, Jesus say blessed are the meek and gentle but the world says that we must stand fast and make ourselves feared, Jesus proclaimed blessed are those who hunger and thirst but the world considers them as useless individuals.<sup>573</sup> Thus moral catechesis can be explained through comparisons and examples which are easy to understand.

**b) Systematic Catechesis:** Moral catechesis might lead to a systematic catechesis, because in order to orient people in the development of their moral life, choosing a specific theme for catechesis will give life to the biblical text<sup>574</sup> and to the revealed truth. *Therefore, all the clergy must hold fast to the Sacred Scriptures through diligent sacred reading and careful study, especially the priests of Christ and others, such as deacons and catechists who are legitimately active in the ministry of the word. This is to be done so that none of them will become an empty preacher of the word of God outwardly, who is not a listener to it inwardly since they must share the abundant wealth of the divine word with the faithful committed to them, especially in the sacred liturgy. The sacred synod also earnestly and specially urges all*

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<sup>570</sup> Alvarez, Francisco Javier, *Op.cit.*, p. 500.

<sup>571</sup> Delgado, Juan Corpus. "Significant Events XLII Assembly of the Congregation of the Mission", Translated: Plock, Charles T, in *Vincentiana* (October- December, 2016,# 4), p 510.

<sup>572</sup> Infante, María Ángeles. "The Daughters of Charity in the Church: At the time of the 400th anniversary of the origin of their charism", in *Vincentiana* (October-December, 2015,# 4), p 462.

<sup>573</sup> Melito, Jack, *Op.cit.*, p 32.

<sup>574</sup> Second Vatican Council, *Dei Verbum*, 1965, #24.

*the Christian faithful, especially Religious, to learn by frequent reading of the divine Scriptures the excellent knowledge of Jesus Christ (Phil. 3:8). For ignorance of the Scriptures is ignorance of Christ.*<sup>575</sup>

Vincent de Paul constantly used the scriptures, especially the New Testament. His biblical references could be divided into three categories: direct quotations, clear allusions, and passing or vague allusions. The passing or vague allusions normally require a more extensive knowledge of scripture for recognition, and those allusions refer to a number of different biblical texts that enrich subjective understanding.<sup>576</sup>

### 1.3.2.2 Prayer is an Invitation

People invite God through prayer into their life, rather than impressing and telling their story to God. As children invite their parents in order to extend their help to them, people as children of God invite their God to come to them.<sup>577</sup> God has adopted the people as children of God through the redemptive work of Jesus Christ, and because people are children of God, with the help of the holy Spirit they invite God into their hearts.<sup>578</sup> Church is the people of God, the community of faithful gathered together by the message of the gospels and nourished by sacramental signs of presence of Jesus.<sup>579</sup> Within the context of pastoral community, pastoral leaders play an important role to connect people through prayer. Connecting people through prayer by the method of invitation has three circles of activity happening within an invitation namely, communion, education and confidence. These three circles form an atmosphere for pastoral growth and spiritual advancement.

**a) Communion:** Pastoral work is a means of inviting people to experience the love of God. People who receive the invitation come in contact to the pastoral team and they begin to know one another through fellowship of the pastoral community. For instance, St. Paul wrote to the Corinthians to take his invitation, and explains to the people who have accepted the invitation about the salvific message, stating that, now is the acceptable time of salvation! But we are putting no obstacle in anyone's way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, but as servants of God we have commended ourselves in every way: through great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, beatings, imprisonments, riots, labours, sleepless nights,

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<sup>575</sup> Pope Paul VI. *Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation, Dei Verbum*. 1965, # 25.

<sup>576</sup> Dicharry, Warren. "Saint Vincent and Sacred Scripture", in *Vincentian Heritage*, (Vol. X, #2, 1989), p 140-141.

<sup>577</sup> Romans 8:15.

<sup>578</sup> Galatians 4:6.

<sup>579</sup> Maloney, Robert. P., ... *Reflections on Vincentian Spirituality in Today's World. Op.cit.*, p 103.

hunger; by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, holiness of spirit, genuine love, truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; in honour and dishonour, in ill repute and good repute (2 Cor 6:1-8). In his explanation St. Paul is trying to elucidate how they are living for the word of God, and he is trying to establish a communion with the people through fellowship.

Union is the image of blessed Trinity, the three persons are one same God, united by love from all eternity. Prayer connects the people together into a body in several person, united with the same end in view for the love of God. Jesus Christ willed to give himself in a communion with those who believe in him; that is why people of pastoral community need to ardently involve themselves in prayer that the union with Jesus Christ always exists in them, because God loves to dwell with them. In prayer people ask God to grant them the grace to reflect on the necessity of union and to help them to remember the elements that drive them out of the union with God.<sup>580</sup>

Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches that the Eucharist is the efficacious sign and sublime cause of that communion in the divine life and that unity of the People of God by which the pastoral community is kept in being. This union is the culmination of God's action of sanctifying the world in Christ and of the worship people offer to Christ, and the prayer made through him to the Father in the Holy Spirit<sup>581</sup> Catechism of the Catholic Church also teaches that in the intercessory prayers of a Eucharistic celebration, the Church indicates that the Eucharist is celebrated in communion with the whole Church in heaven and on earth, the living and the dead, and in communion with the pastors of the Church, the Pope, the diocesan bishop, his presbyterium and his deacons, and all the bishops of the whole world together with their Churches.<sup>582</sup>

Vincent de Paul elucidates the means of communion in the context of conference on holy communion; this explanation has pastoral implications for spiritual advancement as well, hence I could see in his explanation seven positive means of communion of prayer in a pastoral context which could be considered as positive results of the method of prayer in communion.<sup>583</sup> These seven elements describe why pastoral leaders should encourage the aspect of prayer in communion:

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<sup>580</sup> CCD: IX: 81 (Conference, *Union within the Community*, April 26, 1643).

<sup>581</sup> *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. Art. 1325.

<sup>582</sup> CCC, Art. 1354.

<sup>583</sup> CCD: IX: 183-189 (Conference, *Holy Communion*, January 22, 1646).

- a) Unites people with God.
- b) Prevents people from bad habits.
- c) Helps people to reason the motive for doing and avoiding something.
- d) Prepares people to do things well.
- e) Source of grace.
- f) Gives peace and tranquillity of heart.
- g) Creates new disposition and transform people.

Prayer creates both communion among people and communion with God. Communion with people in prayer helps them to practice and grow in the virtue of prayer; communion with God makes the soul of the people in the state of grace, in true peace, being united to God.<sup>584</sup>

**b) Formation:** Prayer is a form of spiritual formation. Through prayer people try to establish a relationship with God, discover their own short comings in order to enhance their friendship with God and form spiritual habits which lead them to spiritual growth. In developing the role of formation in the spiritual life, the Common Rules of the Congregation of the Mission cite the words of Jesus, *anyone who wants to come after me must deny himself and take up his cross each day*. St. Paul, in the same vein, stated: *if you live according to your unspiritual nature you shall die, but if, by the Spirit, you mortify it you shall live*. Therefore, each member of the Congregation should be most conscientious in accepting some denial of his personal wishes and opinion and in disciplining the gratification of each of his senses.<sup>585</sup> Experience of prayer in community can form people about the need of setting aside their personal desires and views which will enable them to grow in the habit of trusting in the providence of God. They will also learn to pray in communion with others.

Formation through prayer creates a change in one's character. Like any formation, the process of prayer formation strengthens the spiritual habit through repetition of prayer. Vincent de Paul advised his followers to pray before beginning their work and after finishing their work, before leaving the house and after arriving back home.<sup>586</sup> Relating personal activities to prayer helps people make resolutions to adopt spiritual ideas in their respective field of work. At the same time connecting prayer to ministry will form people in moral principles which will gradually lead to spiritual development in their daily life. In Catholic moral theology, the human person is the criterion for what is morally right and wrong. If the human conscience is well

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<sup>584</sup> Ibid. p 188.

<sup>585</sup> *Common Rules of the Congregation of the Mission*. Chapter II, Art. 8.

<sup>586</sup> CCD:X: 504 (Conference, *Order of Day*, March 16, 1659).

formed, people can arrive at moral decisions by reflecting on the human person from an integral perspective.<sup>587</sup>

Prayer has the element of forming the mind through repetition. Many prayers are frequently repeated, and this enables people to think about the content of the prayer that is being recited. Such reflection will lead to heart-felt convictions. This method was even suggested by Vincent de Paul for teaching theology because he was convinced that this was a way for the subject matter to become rooted in one's life.<sup>588</sup>

**c) Confidence:** Although prayer is an invitation, this invitation has a space of dependency, because both the invitee and inviter are depended on one another. God has invited the people to accept the message of salvation through Jesus Christ; God who knows the heart of the people expects that people keep with him in regular contact which is from a human point of view the prayer. When people are praying to God, they are also inviting God into their life, to help them, to live in and through them. This dependency is formed out of confidence and trust.

Prayer is a means of creating confidence in two circles of actions: one circle comprises of people with God and another circle comprises of people and people. Trust in the providence of God is connected to the virtue of hope and the virtue of hope is filled with faith, and God gives enough grace to progress in spiritual life provided people use the means of regular prayer.<sup>589</sup> Regular communion of prayer among people creates in them confidence in the method of liturgical prayer and in the behavioural pattern of the people; prayer meetings create opportunity for sharing the problems and experiences, help people to know one another and create healthy friendship.

Building up confidence in the pastoral community is necessary for pastoral development and for pastoral spiritual harmony of the people, that the people are both able to participate in the activities of liturgy and integrate their activities with liturgy. If the liturgy and the life of the people in the community exist as independent circles of activity, the spiritual advancement of the pastoral community is highly at the risk of collapse. The secret of the spiritual advancement of the pastoral community is basically founded in the spirit of the union of pastoral liturgy and pastoral life of the people, no matter how competent either of them may be, they would never

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<sup>587</sup> Maloney, Robert. P., *Seasons in Spirituality. Reflections on Vincentian Spirituality in Today's World. Op.cit.*, p 104; *Gaudium et Spes* 51.

<sup>588</sup> CCD: II: 240 (Letter, *To Bernard Codoing*, December, 1641).

<sup>589</sup> CCD:X:403 (Conference: *Trust in the Divine Providence*, June 9, 1658).

succeed in the spiritual advancement if both are not united in the spirit of confidence, because this confidence leads to trust in the providence of God, the strength of the weak, and the eye of the blind.<sup>590</sup>

### 1.3.2.3 Encouraging Small Groups within the Parish

In the midst of his many projects, the rural missions remained for Vincent de Paul the heart and the essential center of his labours and his apostolate. As often as possible, he, together with the members of the mission team, took part in this pastoral ministry.<sup>591</sup> In the letter to the Hebrews we read, *let us consider how to provoke one another towards love and good deeds, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the day approaching (Heb 10: 24-25)*. Vincent encouraged many pastoral activities, but he also cautioned that nothing should be done in haste because he was convinced that the Lord is not in the earthquake.<sup>592</sup> There are three pastoral circles of internal activities that are required for creating small groups for spiritual development, namely, vision, intentionality and conversion. Every small group within the parish has a purpose based on their objective and aim. Pastors guide the leaders of the small groups with regard to their purpose and give them regular formation so that they may grow in the knowledge of the Scriptures. One of the priorities of the members of any pastoral group is that the individuals grow in personal prayer, pastoral action and thus, participate in the mission of the church. Hence, by the means of formation in various relevant subjects the members of the multiple small groups will become transformative agents who are able to impact the spiritual development of other parishioners.

A vision for spiritual growth could encourage pastors to intentionally create groups in order to lead people to spiritual development and social engagement. One of the possibilities for establishing such groups might be to focus on young men and women. For instance, a small group could be created for children aged between the ages of 9 to 15 years (after receiving the sacrament of holy communion, there is a gap of circa seven years before those individuals receive the sacrament of confirmation). Exploring this possibility could lead to the establishment of seven groups that would enable young people to be guided and motivated towards the sacrament of confirmation.

The purpose for establishing small groups should be spiritual transformation which occurs through the change of heart and action. This goes against a general trend that leads

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<sup>590</sup> CCD: III:159 (Letter: *To Jean Martin*, February 28, 1647).

<sup>591</sup> Pujo, Bernard. *Pionier der Moderne. Das abenteuerliche Leben des Vinzenz von Paul*. *Op.cit.*, p. 164.

<sup>592</sup> CCD: XI:91, (Conference: *Repetition of Prayer*, December 27); 1 Kings 19:11.

people to become passive listeners rather than active doers. If Menschen are receiving information about the Christian life in a passive manner, they are not being assisted in their pastoral growth because the purpose of knowledge is to love Christian spirituality and to grow steadily in faith and virtue. As Christians, all need to be continually converted in order to become more closely united to God ... and this happens only through a change of heart that is created by prayer and by allowing the Holy Spirit to operate.

#### 1.3.2.4 Connecting People through Charity

Vincent de Paul's experience of acts of faith in God was deepened through a committed life of prayer that was obviously manifested in his service on behalf of poor men and women. Vincent's service became more effective as a result of the establishment of three different groups: the Confraternities of Charity (1617), the Congregation of the Mission (1625), and the Daughters of Charity (1633). Historians like to relate the establishment of institutions to specific needs that arise as a result of certain events. The Vincentian movement was considered to be a prophetic contribution to the world. Vincent and his followers attempted to change the social and spiritual situations that were inconsistent with the gospel demands. This movement has thrived and brought about change in the church and still continues to give witness to the gospel values. Giving life to Jesus's mission to draw all people together in the Father's love will lead the Christian community to reflect on the virtue of charity from a Trinitarian perspective because the source of Christian love is God and the communion of the faithful is ultimately a gift of God. The theme of connecting people through charity is also reflected in the prayer of Jesus as he lifted up his voice to the Father: *I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me* (Jn 17:20-21).

Although the communion of the faithful is a gift of God, pastoral leaders are instruments in creating the Christian community. Indeed, without them the Christian community cannot come into existence.<sup>593</sup> St. Paul, in his letter to the Ephesians, explains the importance of human effort in creating Christian community:

I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one

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<sup>593</sup> Maloney, Robert P., *The Way of Vincent de Paul. Op.cit.*, p 132.

Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all (Eph 4:1-4).

The members of the Christian community and the virtue of charity are integral elements of the relationship between the parish community and theological source of spiritual activity. The Constitution and Statutes of the Congregation of the Mission explain this reality: *The Church finds the ultimate source of its life and action in the Trinity. The Congregation, within the church, does the same. [1] Gathered in community to announce the Father's love for all, we express that same love in our own life; [2] We follow Christ who called apostles and disciples and shared a fraternal life with them to evangelize the poor; [3] Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, we build up a unity among ourselves to achieve our mission, and so offer credible witness to Christ the saviour.*<sup>594</sup> As far as connecting the people through charity and leading men and women toward spiritual advancement is considered, the initiative of the people should be evaluated in the light of the purpose of their action because in any group of people many different individuals are contributing toward the effort of spiritual development and this, in turn, makes the ministry more effective.<sup>595</sup>

### 1.3.2.5 Emphasizing the Relevance of Belief in God

The theological virtue of faith is a gift of God even though we often relate the word “faith” with reason. Reason provides a personal and collective explanation to faith, so that, people can ask God’s grace for faith and can their experience of faith with others share and discuss, in turn, can learn more about faith through the explanation of the reasons that led to such faith. Steadfast faith develops with reason, which increases the faith of the people and motivates their approach to faith. There are certain kind of belief in proportion to the acts of faith. An example of the theological content of belief can be seen in the expression, “merciful and benevolent God”, and an example of the practical content of belief is expressed in phrases such as: “the parish church is a dwelling place of God”, “the effort of the church is holy”, and “helping the poor is dear to the heart of God”. This theological and practical content are true, but they become meaningful to an individual through belief. People explain belief through their own conviction, and people express their faith through their belief.

St. Paul explains in his letter to the Romans: *if you declare with your mouth, Jesus is Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved; for it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess*

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<sup>594</sup> Constitution and Statutes of the Congregation of the Mission, #20.

<sup>595</sup> Maloney, Robert P., *The Way of Vincent de Paul. Op.cit.*, p. 133.

*your faith and are saved* (Rm 10:9-10). St. Paul understands belief in relation to the movement of the heart, and movement of the heart was viewed as an act of faith. Vincent de Paul explains belief as an act of charity. According to him an act of charity is grounded on faith<sup>596</sup> and constitutes an expression of faith, because *charity is the soul of virtues and the paradise of communities*.<sup>597</sup> *Charity is at the heart of the Church; it is the reason for its action, the soul of its mission*.<sup>598</sup> Where there is charity, God abides; *God's cloister is charity*.<sup>599</sup> St. Vincent de Paul encourages us to recognize Jesus and serve him in the most abandoned with practical, concrete charity.<sup>600</sup>

Some cultural and social elements based on the interpretation of philosophy of ethics has caused a crisis of meaning with regard to the approach of religion. This crisis revolves around the use of concepts to explain one's view of religion. *This crisis is not limited to the multiple partial meanings that individuals can find in the everyday actions that they perform, but the meaning that gives unity to everything that exists and happened to us in experience which the believers call the religious sense*.<sup>601</sup> The experience of faith in God encourages people to lead a better life in the world (this is grounded on the belief of the possibility of an afterlife, and a belief in the grace of God). People know that faith is one of the three theological virtues, but people would not easily understand that an experience of faith in God becomes meaningful through individual acts and that this same experience of faith, expressed in individual acts, generates belief. Thus, belief is a meaningful subjective expression of the goal, namely, faith in God. A pedagogical approach to pastoral ministry plays an important role in creating a favourable atmosphere toward faith experience. Emphasising the relevance of belief in God is the same as emphasising the importance of the faith experience.

Belief in God encourages people to contemplate his presence, to see him in the wonders of creation, to love him in the beauty of nature and in the majesty of mountains, and in the stars at night.<sup>602</sup> Besides this, Vincentian spirituality emphasises seeing and encountering God in the neighbour, and to all the members of the worldwide Vincentian Family, this encountering is the very core of what they are about, encountering God in the service to those men and women who

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<sup>596</sup> "What is done out of charity is done for God." Abelly Louis. *Op.cit.* Book III, p 108.

<sup>597</sup> CCD:XI:67.

<sup>598</sup> Fernández, Alvaro Mauricio. *Letter of the Holy Father Francis to the Vincentian Family for the Feast of Saint Vincent de Paul/ 400th Prayer*, *Op.cit.*, p 299

<sup>599</sup> CCD:XI:231

<sup>600</sup> Maloney, P. Robert, *Go! On the Missionary Spirituality of St. Vincent de Paul*, *Op.cit.*, p 91.

<sup>601</sup> Teixeira, Vinicius Augusto. "Mission and Charity: An identity in Relationship", in *Vincentiana* (April- June 2017, # 2) 215.

<sup>602</sup> Maloney, P. Robert, *Go! On the Missionary Spirituality of St. Vincent de Paul*, *Op.cit.*, p 90.

are poor, abandoned and living on the peripheries. Vincent de Paul suggests five important measures to increase belief, so that the people could have a subjective experience of faith.

- a) Those who practice mortification find more consolation than difficulty.<sup>603</sup> When people take pleasure in mortification, their joy is a subjective expression of an internal understanding. The parish community could encourage people, especially during Lent and Advent, to practice mortification in order to create space for spiritual consolation. Psalm 34 says: *taste and see that the Lord is good.*<sup>604</sup> Mortification is one of the means to prepare oneself “to taste” the personal experience of Jesus Christ.
- b) Abraham is a great example of faith to all Christians. However, he also struggled with his faith.<sup>605</sup> *Man proposes, but God disposes.*<sup>606</sup> It is important to accept the reality that God has a plan when choosing us for specific assignments and works. This is one of the aspects of pastoral pedagogy that should be explained to the people, so that they can understand their role in the process of evangelization. Linking their services to neighbour and humanity with theological explanations provides a powerful means of advancing in perfection.<sup>607</sup>
- c) People might feel deceived when they come to experience that physical nature is subject to illness and suffering and temptation. Explaining the language of the spirit of darkness through the example of Adam and Eve could enlighten people when they find themselves in situations of temptation.<sup>608</sup> Examples of deceptive illusion create space for understanding that all inspirations are not grounded in good spirit, and people with the help of God’s grace, have to discern clearly between good and evil. Deceptive inspiration is a necessary subject that must be constantly discussed in the pastoral community.
- d) While shouldering the responsibilities and obligations of the world, and involving in the concerns of the world, the habit of withdrawing from worldly interests, minimum for an hour daily, will give exposure to acts of faith, and simultaneously people will develop reason to believe spiritual elements rather than illusions of the world.<sup>609</sup> Vincent cites the example of Jesus, saying that he often withdrew from the crowd, and was in recollection with his father. Pastoral pedagogical approach could give tips to people how to develop the habit of prayer. Jesus brought those worldly concerns to his prayer and then become more deeply involved in the concerns of people which led him again to prayer and so on... an on-going interplay between the concerns of the world and prayer. True prayer illustrates symbolically that we have the Bible in one hand and today’s edition of the newspaper in the other hand.

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<sup>603</sup> CCD:X:325.

<sup>604</sup> Psalm 34:8.

<sup>605</sup> Genesis 15:1

<sup>606</sup> Proverbs 19:21.

<sup>607</sup> CCD:IX:105.

<sup>608</sup> CCD:XII:278.

<sup>609</sup> CCD:XII:279.

- e) Explaining (for the good of people and for the consolation of their neighbour) authentic inspiration in the light of faith can provide an impetus for personal and communitarian discussion of the Christian life.<sup>610</sup> The engagement of the people in discussing matters of faith develops convictions, and consequently the people will believe their convictions.

Regularly finding a quiet time for meditative prayer is a wonderful means for listening to the living Lord and for discerning what he is asking of us in living the faith.<sup>611</sup>

### 1.3.3 Systemic Change

Systemic change denotes change in a social system which is animated by dynamic leadership that discovers a problem and want to transform the functioning system of the society. People cannot deny the innumerable environmental, economic, financial, political, social, cultural, ethical, and spiritual challenges of today and their irrefutable interconnection. Systemic thinking and vision will help us to understand the evils of humanity, and to find solutions.<sup>612</sup> Vincent de Paul was courageous and strong as he engaged in dialogue with church authorities to bring about institutional reforms designed at transforming the behaviour of society. The components of his systemic change were five circles of social action, namely, establishing relationship with people, discovering problems, experimentation of innovative ideas, discovering the possibilities and social adaptation. The idea of the need of systemic change which has been comprehended, is based on the predicament of the social situation. This idea which explains what change is envisaged, is fundamental in its characteristics. But how the leadership is involving the existing social systems and people to the innovative idea is the Christian pastoral application. Hence, there are two main circles in systemic change: fundamental idea and pastoral application.

The personal dimension in systemic change is equally important as the collective dimension because both the initiative of individuals and the initiative of a group of individuals can bring about systemic change. The idea about what spiritual change is envisaged from a systemic environment is in fact the knowledge, which evolved out of personal and collective experience regarding the paradigm of spiritual education to address the spiritual needs of the people. The idea of systemic change is fundamental because, this knowledge informs the approach to the systemic change. How to transform the society by making knowledge into

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<sup>610</sup> CCD:XII:279.

<sup>611</sup> Maloney, P. Robert, *Go! On the Missionary Spirituality of St. Vincent de Paul*, *Op.cit.*, p 91.

<sup>612</sup> Campuzano, Guillermo. "Identity and Sense of Belonging: Our Journey to the Heart of Humanity and the Earth", in *Vincentiana* (April-June, 2017, # 2), p 199.

action, is the practical means of pastoral application, wherein the capacity to gather people with affection for the project become mandatory for the success of both the fundamental idea and means of pastoral application. The members of the community are continually responsible for their own development, especially as they renew the principal elements of their living and acting.<sup>613</sup> The members of the community shall try to live a life animated by love, particularly with the practice of the five virtues, namely, simplicity, humility, gentleness, mortification, and zeal for souls, so that each member will be a support to the apostolate and a sign to the world of the newness of evangelical life.<sup>614</sup>

### 1.3.3.1 Establishing Relationship with People

The expansion of the limited pastoral experience of Vincent de Paul happened through the relations that he established in those years which later became determinants in the opening of different available options to populate his idea with the authorities of the church and people with whom he shared the spiritual vision. Vincent de Paul was for nearly two years from November 1611 priest of the rural parish of Clichy which is 14 miles north of Paris.<sup>615</sup> He took possession of the parish Clichy on May 1612,<sup>616</sup> that enabled him besides the activities at Clichy to have contacts with many offices and people in Paris. Vincent met Pierre de Bérulle in the year 1610, the founder of the French Oratory in 1611, a congregation of the secular priests. Pierre de Bérulle was Vincent's spiritual director for many years; he tried to prevent the approbation of the Congregation of the Mission in the Curia of Rome, and Bérulle was made cardinal but died a year later on October 2, 1629.<sup>617</sup> During these years Vincent strengthened the relation with Pierre de Bérulle, who had also an exalted status as a theologian and had access to members of "Parisian robe", a spiritual revival group, which was involved in intensive spiritual discussions, theological study, and the foundation of convents and churches. Through Pierre de Bérulle, Vincent came in contact with professors Jacques Gallemant and André Duval.<sup>618</sup>

He joined the noble household of general of Galleys, Philippe Emmanuel and François Marguerite de Gondi in September 1613 as tutor to their three children, Pierre, Henri, and Jean-

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<sup>613</sup> Constitution and Statutes of the Congregation of the Mission, #25.

<sup>614</sup> Constitution and Statutes of the Congregation of the Mission, #24.

<sup>615</sup> Forrestal, Alison, *Op.cit.*, p. 31.

<sup>616</sup> CCD: XIIIa:22 (Document: *Act of Taking Possession of the Parish of Clichy*, May 2, 1612).

<sup>617</sup> CCD: I:19-20 (Letter: Madame de Gondi to Saint Vincent, September 1617). (In 1611 Pierre de Bérulle founded the Congregation of the Oratory of which he became the first Superior. He expected, Vincent de Paul to be part of the Oratory, but Vincent had the idea of Congregation of the Mission. This is the only reasonable issue, why Pierre de Bérulle tried to prevent the approval of the Congregation of the Mission in the Curia of Rome.)

<sup>618</sup> Forrestal, Alison, *Op.cit.*, p. 32.

François Paul. Madam de Gondi was impressed by the simple life style of Vincent, and de Paul become spiritual director of Madam. On 28<sup>th</sup> February 1614 Vincent de Paul, a priest of the diocese of Dax, was appointed pastor and dean of Gamaches of the diocese of Rouen at the recommendation of Lord Emmanuel de Gondi, the husband of Françoise Marguerite de Silly, who was Comte de Joigny and Baron of Plessis, Lieutenant of Christian King of France, general of the Galleys of the king on the eastern and western seas.<sup>619</sup> As a result of a request from François Marguerite de Gondi (who is known as Madame de Gondi but her actual name was Françoise Marguérîte de Silly) Vincent de Paul founded the Congregation of the Mission in 1625, a mission formally set up to give missions to the neglected poor people of the French countryside. Although Françoise Marguérîte de Silly died in 1626, the Gondi family was involved in the life of Vincent de Paul both before and after 1625. During those years the Gondi family had great influence and power in France.

After hearing about the result of Vincent's sermon at Folleville in 1617<sup>620</sup>, François Marguerite de Gondi developed a plan for periodical missions to be preached on her estates. But Vincent de Paul could not find religious clergy in Paris to carry out these missions at country side. Then Madame de Gondi encouraged Vincent de Paul to establish a community of missionaries. Philippe Emmanuel de Gondi, the husband of François Marguerite de Gondi, supported the plan. The initial approval was easily obtained from the brother Philippe Emmanuel, Jean François de Gondi, who was then the Archbishop of Paris. The members of the Congregation of the Mission lived at the beginning in the Collège des Bons Enfants, a former hostel for students in the Rue Saint Victor in Paris. This was made possible through the Archbishop of Paris, as well as by Philippe Emmanuel and Madame de Gondi. Vincent de Paul just agreed to everything what God inspired through Gondi Family. The letter appointing Vincent, Principal of the Collège des Bons Enfants was signed on 1st March 1624. Interestingly on 6<sup>th</sup> March 1624, Vincent took charge of this appointment by proxy which was legal, the proxy person was Father Antoine Portail, who was one of the initial four members of the company.<sup>621</sup> The contract of setting up the *Congregation of the Mission* was signed by Philippe Emmanuel de Gondi, Françoise Marguérîte de Gondi, Vincent de Paul, and two Paris Notaries John Dupys and Nicolas Le Bouche on April 17, 1625. Gondi family organized a sum of 45,000

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<sup>619</sup> CCD: XIIIa:25-26 (Document: *Appointment as Pastor of Gamaches*, February 28, 1614).

<sup>620</sup> Vincent de Paul spent about seven months in 1617 as priest of the Châtillon, an annexe of the parish of Buénans, north east of Lyon; Forrestal Alison, *Vincent de Paul, the Lazarist Mission, and French Catholic Reform*. Oxford University Press, Great Clarendon Street, Oxford, UK, 2017, P 32.

<sup>621</sup> The first four members were François du Coudray and Jean de la Salle (priests of the Amien diocese), Antoine Portail (a priest of the Arles diocese), and Vincent de Paul (a priest of the Dax diocese), CCD: XIIIa:222 [Document: *Act of the Association of the First Missionaries*, September 4, 1626].

livres for the work of missions to be directed to poor people of country side and in the estates of Gondi family and in other places. Vincent trusted in the providence of God manifested through different people; this is a classical illustration how contact and relation with many like-minded people can establish systemic change, that is how the beginning of the *Congregation of the Mission* could be established.

With the support of a new set of patrons Vincent de Paul sought to place the realization of pastoral ambitions in a distinctive structural setting in which *Saint Lazare* the mother house was surrounded by other houses which served the provinces permanently. This led to the progress of the *Congregation of the Mission* and various undertakings of its members while the foundation of the houses was heavily dependent on the personal links which Vincent de Paul indirectly connected with key donors, and gradually the Congregation could plan out their mission independent of the orbit of Gondi family, and by expanding the company could begin new missions.<sup>622</sup>

### 1.3.3.2 Finding Problems

This is a pivotal aspect of doing ministry in a parish from the perspective of a systemic change. Here, in order that pastoral activity responds to the felt needs of people and not significantly to the ministers needs and thoughts, pastoral leaders need to work in three specific circles so that the project under consideration responds to the need of the people. First circle of activity is to listen to the need of the people, the second circle of activity is to engage in dialogue with people in order to discover the possibilities and to know the resources, the third circle of activity is to analyse with people the reality in which they live to discuss the pros and cons of the project under consideration. From the dialogue and listening, the actual problems are discovered, and then corresponding strategies could be developed to confront and resolve those unjust situations. Then as people engage in those activities, the Kingdom of God becomes more visible and more present in their midst, through pastoral works. However, the process of listening, dialogue and analysis are most important.

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<sup>622</sup> Forrestal, Alison, *Op.cit.*, p. 129-130. The Richelieu family stepped forward to offer patronage of enormous worth, and the cardinal's favourite niece, Marie de Vignerod de Pontcourlay-widow of the marquis of Combalet, commonly known as the duchess of Aiguillon, would remain one of the Lazarist's most generous benefactors. They were joined by eight others from the political and religious elite, and during the initial phase of development, de Paul was able to approve the opening of many houses, like the foundation of house in Toul in 1635, missions with army and foundation of house in Liancourt in 1636, opening of internal seminary in La Rose near Agen in 1637, opening of houses in Richelieu, Lucon, and Troyes in 1638, foundation of Alet house and Angers in 1639, foundation of Annecy house in 1640 and many other initiatives..

There could be many reasons why people are involving themselves in works of charity. There are people who understand charity as human promotion and social development. However, one of the important elements of charity is to work for justice, because working for justice will take care of the works of charity.<sup>623</sup> *Action on behalf of justice and participation in the transformation of the world fully appears to us as a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the Gospel, or, in other words, of the Church's mission for the redemption of the human race and its liberation from every oppressive situation.*<sup>624</sup> The obligations of justice have priority over the apparent works of charity.<sup>625</sup> Vincent makes little distinction between seeking the kingdom of God and his justice, for he explained God's justice is commutative and distributive<sup>626</sup>. The Lord is just, and he loves just deeds (Ps 11:7).

Justice of God is commutative because God changes the works of people into virtue and their merits into rewards. Thus God grants virtues in proportion to the effort people make to acquire them and gives glory according to the number and value of good acts.<sup>627</sup> The Book of Revelation says: *they will rest from their labours, for their deeds follow them (Rev 14:13)*. People have to strive for virtue, quicken their pace with regard to action and become spiritual people by practicing daily spiritual exercise. In this way the kingdom of God become more clearly present within them. Therefore, people need to perform good deed in order to harvest a reward.<sup>628</sup>

The justice of God is distributive from the point of view of granting paradise to the souls of the righteous and punishment to those people who did not allow the kingdom of God to develop within them. The glory of God is paradise and his kingdom and therefore people have to work at spreading of the glory of God.<sup>629</sup> Finding the problem to carryout systemic change is to envisage acts for the establishment of God's justice and thereby to involve themselves in the spreading of the kingdom of God. This has two circles of human acts, interior and exterior. Interior human acts of finding the acts of justice for the systemic change is seeking the kingdom of God, and exterior act of finding the means of acts of justice for the systemic change is spreading the glory of God. The ontological understanding of the object is considered within

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<sup>623</sup> Lopez Saez Paulino, "The Value of Mercy in Saint Vincent de Paul" in *Vincentiana*, Volume 60, (January-March 2016, #1) p. 93.

<sup>624</sup> World Synod of Catholic Bishops: Justice in the World, 1971, #6. <https://www.cctwincities.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Justicia-in-Mundo.pdf>. (Accessed on 19.8.2020).

<sup>625</sup> CCD: VII: 633 (Letter: *To Jean Bareau, Consul in Algiers*, June 27, 1659).

<sup>626</sup> CCD: XII: 114 (Conference: *Seek the Kingdom of God*, February 21, 1659).

<sup>627</sup> CCD: XII: 114 (Conference: *Seek the Kingdom of God*, February 21, 1659).

<sup>628</sup> CCD: XII: 115 (Conference: *Seek the Kingdom of God*, February 21, 1659).

<sup>629</sup> CCD: XII: 115-116 (Conference: *Seek the Kingdom of God*, February 21, 1659). 115-116.

the realm of the theme of subjective acts of the person which is an element of human activity. The object of finding the problem for systemic change and goal that is objective of finding the problem for systemic change are both substantive human acts happening within two circles of which the interior circle of seeking the kingdom of God takes precedence over the exterior circle of spreading the glory of God. However before entering into the act of carrying out the project, the role of three circles of activity namely listening, dialogue and analysis are essential to respond to the need of the people.

### 1.3.3.3 Experimentation with Innovative Ideas

We read in the Second Book of Kings that Isaiah spoke to Hezekiah and stated: *hear the word of the Lord: days are coming when all that is in your house, and that which your ancestors have stored up until this day, shall be carried to Babylon; nothing shall be left, says the Lord. Some of your own sons who are born to you shall be taken away; they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon. Then Hezekiah said to Isaiah, the word of the Lord that you have spoken is good. For he thought, why not, if there will be peace and security in my days?* (2Kgs 20:17-19) Hezekiah was in fact concerned about his own safety and did not give much thought to the difficulties that the people would have to endure and confront. According to Vincent de Paul *we have our Lord's promise that he will take care of all our needs, without our worrying about them; still, we have to be prepared in temporal affairs and tend to them in the way God desires, but not make them our main concern. God expects this care of us, and the company will do well to be watchful about it; if, however, it makes the mistake of seeking exterior and perishable things, neglecting those that are interior and divine, it will no longer be the Mission; it will be a body without a soul.*<sup>630</sup>

The Common Rules of the Congregation of the Mission teach that a sure way for a Christians to grow in holiness is a conscientious effort to carry out God's will in all circumstances and at all times. People should try to integrate into their life, as far as possible, these principles: people should conscientiously carry out what is ordered and avoid what is forbidden, when these orders or prohibitions come from God, from the Church, from their superiors, or from the rules or constitutions of Congregation; when there is choice open to them in matters neither ordered nor forbidden, they should choose the less palatable rather than the more pleasing. This does not apply, of course, if the more pleasing things, being in some sense necessary, have to be chosen. Still, though, in such cases their motivation ought not to be that

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<sup>630</sup> CCD: XII:112 (Conference: *Seek the Kingdom of God*, February 21, 1659).

we like them, but simply that they are more pleasing to God. Finally, if when faced with a choice between things neither ordered nor forbidden there is no real element of personal preference between the options available, then any one of them may be chosen at random as coming from God's providence.<sup>631</sup>

After gaining proficiency in the spiritual life, people should continue to develop their spiritual life, so that they may become instruments of spreading the kingdom of God. Human nature holds enormous potential, but in order for these potentials to become reality people need to discover innovative initiatives and experiment with them for the glory of God. There is much more to human life than what people are able to see with their physical eye and the zigzag experience of joy and pain in everyday life. The life of Hezekiah reveals that the future destiny of human life is important than the past and present because the past which has become completed history in the annals of life and has been proven to be finite while the future is infinite. Spiritual development of transcendental life is possible for people who are united with God, for God makes people anew with his grace, *the mystery of the relationship between the individual believer and his/her ever-faithful God.*<sup>632</sup> We read in the book of Revelation that, *the one who was seated on the throne said, see, I am making all things new. He said, write this, for these words are trustworthy and true. Then he said, I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give water as a gift from the spring of the water of life (Rev 21:5-6).*

The future is a factor that motivates people to act with dedication and love. By seeking the kingdom of God, people are being evangelized and they become a cause for evangelization which, in turn, will be reflected in spreading the kingdom of God. Becoming the cause for evangelization is an area wherein people have to experiment with innovative ideas for the good of the people and for the glory of God. People cannot stop at having discovered a problem for systemic change. Rather the ontological understanding of the object of action has to become the subjective element of human action and therefore, there is a need of innovative ideas that have a pragmatic approach.

The faith which makes people become involved in pastoral action also serves as a shield to resist temptation and as a torch to see clearly the immensity of God's mercy, the infinite value of the passion and death of Jesus Christ, and the infallible truth of the promises he has

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<sup>631</sup> Common Rules of the Congregation of the Mission, #3.

<sup>632</sup> Salanova, Josefina Salvo and Garvi, Jaime Carlos Moreno. "Martyrs of the Vincentian Family Spain 1936-1937", in *Vincentiana* (July-September 2017, # 3), p 412.

made to repentant people. The bright light of faith and the wonderful ardour of charity is followed by infallible flame of hope.<sup>633</sup> Jesus came into the world to instil people with the love of God. Elijah had an ardour and zeal for the glory of God, he was burning with enthusiasm to impress hearts of the people with respect and awe. That is why people pray, let God's will be done,<sup>634</sup> in all innovative ideas of systemic change.

Pope John Paul II writes in his encyclicals *Dives in Misericordia* that, before his own towns people, in Nazareth, Jesus Christ refers to the words of the prophet Isaiah: The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord. These phrases, according to Luke, are Jesus's first messianic declaration. They are followed by the actions and words through which Jesus makes the message of the God present among people. Significantly, the people in question are the poor, those without means of subsistence, those deprived of their freedom, the blind who cannot see the beauty of creation, those living with broken hearts who are suffering from social injustice. Jesus became for all these individuals a clear sign of God who is love. In this visible sign the people of our own time, just like the people then, can see God. Jesus, through his life and his actions, revealed that love could be present in the world in which people live. Jesus showed an effective love, a love that addresses itself to people and embraces everything that makes up his humanity. This love makes penetrates all human suffering, injustice and poverty – penetrates the whole historical human condition, which in various ways reveals people's physical and moral limitation and frailty. This mode and sphere in which love manifests itself is referenced in the Bible as mercy.<sup>635</sup>

Innovative ideas and experiments with regard to action for systemic change should be rooted in the concept of mercy. Indeed, God is merciful and his glory cannot be having any reference to the absence of the spirit of mercy. For any systemic change, mercy stands as the first element of connecting people through acts of charity. Vincent de Paul advised his confreres that when they go to visit poor person, they have to sympathize with them in order to suffer with them, and put themselves in the dispositions of the words of St. Paul who said: *I have become all things to all people, that I might by all means save some.*<sup>636</sup>

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<sup>633</sup> CCD: II:383 (Letter: *To Pierre Du Chesne, in Crecy*, January, 1643).

<sup>634</sup> CCD: XII:130 (Conference: *Conformity to the Will of God*, March 7, 1659).

<sup>635</sup> Pope John Paul II, *Dives in Misericordia*. #3.

<sup>636</sup> CCD: XI:308 (Conference, *The Spirit of Mercy and Compassion*, August 6, 1656); I *Corinthians* 9:22.

### 1.3.3.4 Discovering the Possibilities

Systemic change discovers pastoral possibilities in order to resolve the agony of the people. As far as possible people should enter into solidarity with one another to avoid a situation which we read in psalm: *I looked for pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none* (Ps 69:20b). Pastoral ministers should try to stir their hearts and make them sensitive to the sufferings and miseries of their neighbour. They should ask God to give them the true spirit of mercy, which is characteristic of the spirit of God.<sup>637</sup> When people seek to discover the possibilities for systemic change, the inner voice of their hearts should enable them to hear the words from people that yes, there are merciful people and people who seek to strengthen the bonds of solidarity.<sup>638</sup>

Discovering the possibilities for systemic change is another way of serving people for the glory of God. Jesus Christ said: seek first the kingdom of God and his justice, and all things which people need will be given to them as well. That is the basis for each person having the following set of priorities: matters involving their relationship with God are more important than temporal affairs; spiritual health is more important than physical; God's glory is more important than human approval.<sup>639</sup> The spiritual goal of pastoral *mission has to be directed to poor people who are thirsting for God and not for those who are looking for fancy decorations on their piety.*<sup>640</sup>

One of the initiatives of Vincent de Paul was the prison ministry, and his idea and method led to a systemic change in the administration of prisons. Vincent wanted to change the prison environment and interpret the spiritual justification of prisoners. The distribution of small pots of food to prisoners through his team opened up a context to give some words of religious instruction and to exhort them to make a general confession of their sin, in order to develop their spirituality. His team helped the prisoners to attend Holy Eucharist. They equipped the chapels, distributed small books of devotion, made many initiatives to improve the living condition of prisoners by suppling straw, mattresses, coal, cloths and organized visits by doctors to the sick.<sup>641</sup>

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<sup>637</sup> CCD: XI:308 (Conference, *The Spirit of Mercy and Compassion*, August 6, 1656).

<sup>638</sup> CCD: XI:308. *Op.cit.*

<sup>639</sup> Common Rules of the Congregation of the Mission, II:2.

<sup>640</sup> Renouard, Jean-Pierre, *Op.cit.*, p. 65.

<sup>641</sup> Forrestal, Alison, *Op.cit.*, p. 203.

People are encountered by God in the context of their life. Vincent de Paul understood the words of Jesus as recorded in Luke (*today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing Lk 4:21*) as his response to the situation in which he would accomplish his mission. *The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour (Lk4:18-19)*. The situation of the people in Jesus era was one of suffering, deprivation, poverty, captivity, injustice and upheaval. We read in the gospel of John: *the word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth (Jn 1:14)*. Indeed, within the salvific plan of God, the Word became flesh and lived and in the midst of the people whom he intended to save. God, in his mercy, wanted to save all humankind. The incarnation of Jesus also has a particular paradigm shift in that the Word of God becomes flesh in every life situation of those people who receive the sacrament of Eucharist. As Jesus proclaimed the message of the love of God, *he went around to all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and curing every disease and illness (Mt 9:35)*. Pastoral ministers are called to follow Jesus in the way of service to the poor, and discover the possibilities that will enable them to serve the poor in more effective ways ... because to serve the poor is to serve God.<sup>642</sup>

Therefore, discovering the possibility for systemic change means discovering specific realities of the lived situation of people. This in turn helps pastoral leaders to understand and analyze the situation of the people of a geographical area and then, proclaim the Good News in light of that lived situation. Systemic change addresses directly the specific circumstances of the people whom the pastoral team is serving. Vincent de Paul proposed a new perspective in that those who minister on behalf of the poor are challenged to see the face of the suffering Christ in those poor men and women who they serve.<sup>643</sup>

By means of this art of discovering new pastoral possibilities, pastoral leaders become “students” in learning and analysing the lived situation in which the people live. Integration of demographic information into the process of pastoral planning, provides the pastoral team with a significant means to understand international, national and regional religious and social developments. Pastoral leaders must continuously present God offerings of service to the people

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<sup>642</sup> Renouard, Jean-Pierre, *Op.cit.*, p. 68.

<sup>643</sup> Renouard, Jean-Pierre, *Op.cit.*, p. 67.

and desire to obtain kingdom for the goodness of God, grace for his Church, and virtues for the team.<sup>644</sup>

### 1.3.3.5 Social Adaptation

Understanding the implications of the situation of the people helps the pastoral leader and the community to read the signs of the time and to become sensitive to the needs of the people. By reading the signs of the time, pastoral leaders could become intentional students of spirituality in understanding the scripture and in serving the people on their journey of faith which, in a real sense, is a continuation of the journey of Abraham, blessed by the grace of Jesus Christ and in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. After understanding the situation of the people, pastoral leaders have to think outside the conventional horizons of liturgical life. According to the need of the geographical area, moving beyond the conventional assumptions of the traditional way of functioning, will enable pastoral leaders to a true understanding of what is actually happening to people, and will enable them to address the hopes and dreams of the people. Social adaptation slowly became an aspect of Vincent's approach from as early as 1600s. With the available resources, Vincent discussed his ideas with like-minded people and with theologians and these individuals shaped his understanding of pastoral ministry. He gradually embraced a less conventional clerical career and involved many lay people and women in his ministry.<sup>645</sup>

Social adaptation is necessary because pastoral leaders will be ineffective if they allow preconceived ideas of people's living situation to guide their approach to ministry. Indeed, if pastoral leaders operate from the context of preconceived and predetermined ideas, their ministry will most often become authoritarian. This makes it clear that ministers are constantly challenged to enter into the life of the people, to listen and dialogue with people allowing the spirit of God work in them and through them. Then together they formulate a plan that will enable them to move forward. Relying upon a demographic study as a finished product will never provide a complete description of the situation of the people. Such studies should prompt leaders to search for more information, information that can be provided by the people whom they serve. All of this involves leaders in the on-going task of adapting themselves to ever-changing situations so that together with the people whom they serve, they create more just and more human situations in which the image of God becomes more clearly revealed and the Kingdom of God become more visible in their midst. Systemic Change is an approach that

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<sup>644</sup> CCD: XII:112 (Conference: *Seek the Kingdom of God*, February 21, 1659).

<sup>645</sup> Forrestal, Alison, *Op.cit.*, p. 268.

seeks to tear down and eliminate unjust structures that oppress and enslave people and do not allow people to reflect their dignity as sons and daughters of God.

According to the geographical area, different methods could be used to inculcate social adaptation. For example, Vincent de Paul organized the distribution of food and clothing to the poor migrants and he began to mobilize resources for this project. Today we could organize many other similar projects to mobilize people so that pastoral leaders could come closer to the people and could discover their necessities through social adaptation. (i) Arranging Group Action Programme: host a common programme suited to the local situation, in order to involve participation of the people, to create interest among them and to develop trust and confidence with the pastoral team. It could be any project like helping poor children in their education, helping widows, helping migrant people etc. (ii) Prayer Groups: encourage people of a defined geographical area to form small groups in order to pray regularly, listen to and relate with one another. The feedback from these groups will provide much support to the pastoral mission. Vincent de Paul used the feedback from the *Confraternities* and the *Daughters* and his confreres to develop more affective and effective means of ministry. (iii) Organizing Special Programmes: Organizing special programmes like inviting guest lectures who could provide the people with good formation, picnics, excursions, study tours and pilgrimages ... all of these activities could gather people together from different walks of life and the pastoral team would benefit as a result of these interactions with people.

## Part 1 Chapter 4

### 1.4.1 Reading the Signs of the Time

In this chapter entitled, *reading the signs of the time*, I would like to explain some of the elements which led St. Vincent's de Paul to discover and understand the signs of the time in the early 1600. First of all, reading the signs of the time is not intended to imply seeking for signs like the Pharisees and Sadducees in the Gospel (Mt 16:1). Reading the signs of time could be in other words explained as: see, judge, and act in accordance with the present reality of the pastoral challenges, in the midst of which we develop our Christian vocation and our life.<sup>646</sup> Generally reading the signs of the time involves an entrance into the realities of circles of good and evil. Both the circles of good and evil become structured. At times the structure of evil does

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<sup>646</sup> Álvarez, Francisco Javier. "Commentary on the Final Document of the 2016 General Assembly" *Op.cit.*, p494.

not appear empirically as absolute evil, therefore without a process of critical analysis, people cannot discover the existing evil of a structure which is modified with elements of goodness. At times I used to wonder, why did Jesus use harsh words against the Pharisees and Sadducees, who came to Jesus in order to listen to his message. Participating in the activities of Jesus is in fact an act which shows human effort, (and this can be seen as an element of goodness). Jesus, however, was not satisfied with mere participation. Jesus knew that the Pharisees and Sadducees were rival groups, and they almost never came together for a shared dialogue. They came to Jesus for two reasons, first because of the ruling Jewish council, the Sanhedrin (Acts 23:6), and secondly, they were united in their common opposition to the person of Jesus. Sadducees did not like Jesus and Pharisees too did not like Jesus. Both were enemies and the enemy of their enemy united them as friends who sought to defeat Jesus. At the same time, they were united in their efforts to safeguard the existing structures. Here, the initiative of the Sanhedrin has the element of modified goodness, but their purpose and intention were evil. Therefore, Jesus condemned them.

Vincent de Paul organized his apostolate systematically in order to heal the elements of problem which he diagnosed. His style of ministry was action-oriented team work. He was deeply rooted in his spirituality through meditation and prayer. Problems which he diagnosed were signs that threatened spiritual life of the people. Being a spiritual person, Vincent de Paul informed and formed people about their spiritual development. As for the resources for his ministry, the primary one was a team of priests who would work together during the mission. His relationship with the de Gondi family provided him with financial resources, and various religious orders offered him moral support. Vincent's approach to the mission was new, and in order to continue that mission, he needed the financial resource, and the de Gondi's had at the early stage offered him the necessary financial support.<sup>647</sup>

Vincent de Paul saw that the people of Villepreux were not active participants in the liturgy. Therefore, in 1618, he established a small community consisting of Jean Conqueret (a theologian), and two clerks of the *parlement of Paris* namely Berger and Gontière. The missionaries taught the children catechism and hymns to sing at services, and gradually people changed from being spectators to active participants. As the people became more engaged in the liturgy and listened to the sermons, they thronged to the confessionals as a sign of their desire to prepare for Eucharistic communion.<sup>648</sup> As the mission progressed many women were

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<sup>647</sup> Pujo, Bernard. *Op.cit.*, p. 116.

<sup>648</sup> Pujo, Bernard. *Op.cit.*, p. 118.

willing to help the poor people in their community and therefore, Vincent established the Confraternity of Charity in Villepreux.<sup>649</sup>

During the mission at Joigny and in the surrounding area, there were forty ladies who were willing to help the poor people. Vincent appreciated their initiative and readiness to involve themselves in the ministry, and in 1618 he established the Confraternity of Charity in Joigny, which was financially supported by Madame de Gondi, who was the countess of Joigny (she could provide the necessary funds as a result of the tolls levied on the sailors who passed under the bridge of the city on Sundays and feast days).<sup>650</sup>

Vincent de Paul experienced difficulty in finding priests who would go to the countryside and preach popular missions. Madame de Gondi, however, was enthusiastic about the continual achievements of this ministry that was led by Vincent de Paul, and she encouraged him to establish a congregation whose members would be willing to work in the country side. Vincent de Paul approached some already existing orders, especially the Oratorians and the Jesuits, but they were not interested in collaborating with Vincent de Paul and were conducting missions in their own proper manner. Lack of support from the priests to preach missions in the countryside surprised Madame de Gondi. After consulting the archbishop of Paris, she suggested that Vincent de Paul establish his own congregation whose work would be to preach missions in the countryside. Vincent who was open to the many suggestions that Madame de Gondi offered (and who in this instance was providing financial funding and political assistance), had some hesitation with regard to the acceptance of her wish to establish a congregation. Vincent pondered this idea in his heart, and in order to decide this matter, he made a retreat at Soissons. During this retreat, he became convinced that the suggestion of Madame de Gondi was in conformity with the divine will. Unfortunately, Madame de Gondi became sick and she was sensing that she would die soon. She contacted the archbishop of Paris, who facilitated the transfer of the building Collège des Bons-Enfants as a residence for the members of the new congregation. The letter naming Vincent de Paul the primary owner of the Collège des Bons-Enfants was signed on March 1, 1624, and Antoine de Portail, who was Vincent de Paul's faithful assistant, took possession of the buildings and lands.<sup>651</sup> One year later, on April 15, 1625 the de Gondis signed the first contract of the Congregation of the Mission at

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<sup>649</sup> Pujo, Bernard. *Op.cit.*, p. 119. (*caritasverein von Villepreux*)

<sup>650</sup> Pujo, Bernard. *Op.cit.*, p. 119.

<sup>651</sup> Pujo, Bernard. *Op.cit.*, p. 137.

the palace on the rue Pavée, in the parish of Saint Sauveur.<sup>652</sup> On April 24, 1626 the archbishop of Paris, Jean Francois de Gondi, gave official approval to this initiative.

Vincent de Paul, hundreds of years ahead of Second Vatican Council, emphasized the need to read the signs of the times. Pastoral leaders have the responsibility to carry forward the works of Jesus Christ, who came into this world and instructed his apostles to give witness to the truth, to rescue and not to judge, to serve and not to be served. The article 4 of *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, Gaudium et spes*<sup>653</sup> describes twelve situations of the people in the modern world and speaks about the need to scrutinize the signs of the times and to interpret them in the light of the Gospel:

- a) To carry forward the works of Jesus Christ, the Church has the duty of scrutinizing the signs of the times and of interpreting them in the light of the Gospel.
- b) Recognizing and understanding the world in which we live with its explanations and longings, pastoral leaders need to interpret the message of Jesus in a language intelligible to present generation.
- c) Triggered by the intelligence and creative energies developed by people, profound and rapid changes are spreading by degrees around the whole world. Consequently, the manner of thinking and acting, with respect to these changes, is manifested in their desires and decisions both individually and collectively. As a result, cultural and social transformation will have repercussions on religious life as well.
- d) Social transformation can cause serious difficulties as people extend their power in every aspect of their social life.
- e) People of a community may not always be able to subject their acts to their own welfare, rather they may strive to probe more profoundly into deeper recesses of their own mind, and they could frequently appear more unsure of themselves.
- f) The human race enjoys abundance of wealth, resources and economic power, and yet a large majority of people are still tormented by hunger, poverty and illiteracy.
- g) There is a new yearning for freedom, yet at the same time new forms of social and psychological slavery make their appearance.
- h) The world today has a very vivid awareness of the need for unity and people understand the need for greater solidarity and yet so often people are divided into opposing camps that refuse to dialogue with one another.

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<sup>652</sup> Two months later after signing the first contract on June 23 1624 Francoise Marguerite de Sille died, who was called as Madame de Gondi, the wife of Philippe Emmanuel de Gondi. Pujo, Bernard. *Op.cit.*, p. 138-139.

<sup>653</sup> Pope Paul VI. *Gaudium et spes*, # 4.

- i) The ideal of unity is placed before people but political, social, economic, racial and ideological disputes still continue, and with them there is the danger of war which would reduce everything to ashes.
- j) There is a growing exchange of ideas, but the very words which are used to express key concepts take on quite different meanings in the various ideological systems.
- k) People search for a better world but without a corresponding spiritual development.
- l) Pastoral leaders need to help people to accurately identify permanent values so that they may not be torn between hope and anxiety and thus, might acquire calmness.

In the above twelve significant points, the subjective placement of “the people” could be replaced by the word community or group or individual, for a better subjective application of the meaning and scope of reading the signs of the times in accordance to the demands of particular situations. Understanding the changing condition of social and religious life is part of a broader revolution. Intellectual formation has become increasingly focused on the mathematical and natural sciences. This new scientific spirit has a novel impact on the cultural sphere and mode of thought of the people. The advanced biological, psychological and sociological information has improved people’s self-knowledge, and this information of scientific knowledge has a direct influence on the social life of the people. The human race has passed from a rather static concept of reality to a more dynamic, evolutionary one. Consequently, there has arisen a new series of problems, calling for new efforts of analysis and synthesis.<sup>654</sup>

In the history of the Congregation of the Mission, one of the earliest missions that was given at Folleville is considered to be the “first act” of the Congregation. That event is at times misinterpreted and seen as the most significant event that shaped Vincent’s outlook. Even after having preached there Vincent de Paul did not express that he reached a supreme enlightenment. He did not all of a sudden resolve to convert to a life of a missionary, except his temporary relocation to Châtillon. Before Folleville, Vincent de Paul was fully engaged in rural pastoral ministry.<sup>655</sup> *Folleville should be understood as the apex of de Paul’s activities between late 1612 and January 1617 rather than as a marker of a new phase or a transition in his vocation.*<sup>656</sup> At the same time Folleville should not be interpreted apart from Chatillon. In Folleville Vincent discovered the spiritual poverty of the poor country people, and that led him to continue preaching popular missions; and in Chatillon Vincent discovered the material poverty of the

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<sup>654</sup> Pope Paul VI. *Gaudium et spes*, # 5.

<sup>655</sup> Forrestal, Alison, *Op.cit.*, p. 47.

<sup>656</sup> Forrestal, Alison, *Op.cit.*

poor country people, which led him to establish the Confraternity of Charity in every place where he preached a mission. Reading the signs of time is not something that can be done quickly, it calls for finding the relevance of the idea in the contemporary settings through discernment.<sup>657</sup> Louise de Marillac helped Vincent in this matter and she enriched his thinking. Her strategies that were expressions of her love for the poor people were so profound that at the beginning of the Congregation, Vincent saw the will of God being revealed through her. Vincent's conviction with regard to the spiritual and material care of the poor grew intensively between the years 1611 to 1618. Vincent de Paul allowed the Spirit to lead him. Christian tradition tells us that the spiritual journey might be turbulent, but it will also be rewarding.<sup>658</sup>

The unprecedented nature of present local and international political environment does not mean, that they are more adverse than to the Gospel proposal of former times. The paradigm shift which looms on the horizon demands of pastoral leaders a greater attention to the signs of the times in order to give an adequate response in accord with the charism of the gospel passage: he has sent me to preach the Good News to the poor.<sup>659</sup>

#### 1.4.1.1 Bible- Believing Christian

The educational role of pastoral ministry is quite significant in moulding the pastoral community into Bible-believing Christians, who lead their life trusting on the word of God. Interpretation of the Holy Bible gives glory to the eternal Father, proclaims the suffering of the Son, and gives life to the word of God.<sup>660</sup> *There is reason to rejoice in seeing the Bible in the hands of people of lowly condition and of the poor; they can bring to its interpretation and to its actualization a light more penetrating, from the spiritual and existential point of view, than that which comes from a learning that relies upon its own resources alone.*<sup>661</sup> The more the people come to know the Bible, the more often will they seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit. If the Scriptures are not explained in a language that people can understand, then pastoral leaders will never be able to instil in people a habit of reading and studying the Bible. Pastoral leaders cannot presume that the people already know and are familiar with the Word of God. This is not an easy task, but rather a complicated ministry that requires creative skill to inspire people to reflect on the scriptures. Pastoral leaders need to accompany people, respect their own

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<sup>657</sup> O'Donnell, Hugh. "Formation, a Life Process" in *Vincentiana* (May-June 2007,# 3), p 193.

<sup>658</sup> Maloney, P. Robert, *Go! On the Missionary Spirituality of St. Vincent de Paul*, *Op.cit.*, p 94.

<sup>659</sup> Pereira, Nélio Pita. "Mission and Charity in Desert Situations and the Challenges to the CM", *Op.cit.*, p 246.

<sup>660</sup> Schnelle, Otto. *Vinzenz von Paul. Worte des Erbarmens*. Herder, Freiburg, 1980, p 16.

<sup>661</sup> Ermers, Jan W.M. *Inculturation and the Vincentian Charisma: An overview*, in *Vincentiana*, (July, October, 1996, # 4-5); (*The interpretation of the Bible in the Church*, Pontifical Biblical Commission, November 1993).

particular vocation, and lead them to greater spiritual development. In order to progress in one's understanding of the message of salvation, developing the habit of reflection on the scriptures is a great help.<sup>662</sup>

The administrative nature of the parish can lead to an emphasis on the legalities of the functioning of the parish activities. Remembering, however, the words of St. Paul who stated that Christianity is not a legalistic faith and that love is the fulfilment of the law (Rm 13:8-10; Gal 5:1-14), will enable people to rediscover the dynamism of Christian spirituality. According to Vincent de Paul, *in order to know this better, we should know that the New Testament contains first the explanation of Holy Scripture and its elaboration for the people's instruction and good living; and second, the institution of the Holy Sacrifice, the Sacraments, and the orders Jesus Christ established. Third, it contains preceptive teaching, which gives a command, and directive teaching or teaching of direction; ...and what the rule mention is mainly the third type of evangelical teaching, both preceptive and directive.*<sup>663</sup>

*In modern mission theology, Joseph Schmidlin, a missiologist from Münster, the founder of the first chair of mission theology underlined the importance of conversion in the first half of the 20th century and of the preaching of the Gospel, which convinces people to convert and begin a new life in Christ. In this respect he concurs with the Protestant missiologist Gustav Warneck. In contrast Pierre Charles, a Belgian Jesuit from Leuven, stresses the old mediaeval Church missionary doctrine of the planting of the Church (plantatio ecclesiae), the purpose of which was to 'plant' indigenous churches in the overseas colonies so as to give the new native Christians a chance to express their faith using their own cultural means.*<sup>664</sup>

Faith in the word of God written down in the Holy Bible become meaningful to an individual when that same person understands and practices the message of the Bible. Creating space for understanding and practicing the message of the Bible challenges pastoral educational ministers to form Bible-believing Christian community activities. Vincent de Paul suggests some possibilities that could increase belief in the message of the Gospel.<sup>665</sup>

- a) We find in the Holy Gospel what our Lord most frequently practiced, and our rule of life is grounded on the message of the Gospel.
- b) When messages are literally taken from the Bible, they have more impact, because they come from God, and word of God contains inspiration.

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<sup>662</sup> CCD:XIIIa:307.

<sup>663</sup> CCD: XII: 100-101.

<sup>664</sup> Rethmann, Albert Peter. "Mission and dialogue – being Christian in a plural society", in *Mission and Dialogue Approaches to a Communicative Understanding of Mission*, ed. by Krämer Klaus and Vellguth Klaus, Verlag Herder GmbH, Freiburg in Breisgau, 2012, p 220.

<sup>665</sup> CCD:X:112-113.

- c) God has inspired people to write down the message of salvation. The more the people know about the Bible, they will detest the maxims of the world and embrace those of Jesus Christ.
- d) The world has a high regard for wealth, honour and charm. Jesus Christ lived in the world without adopting these maxims of the world. Maxims of the Gospel explain the splendour and beauty of God.

In order to increase belief in Bible, Vincent de Paul suggests three circles of activity: desire, reading and practicing.<sup>666</sup> First, the desire of being united to Jesus Christ is the fundamental circle of inner activity. This could be a self-learned movement, and this could be learned through curriculum activity, wherein the teacher creates a desire in the pupil to know more through discovering other possibilities. In the broad sense of this pedagogical approach of the Christian mission, pastoral ministry utilizes direct and indirect educational principles which are intended to stimulate people in their desire for more knowledge. Second, the means to ground people firmly in the teachings of the Gospel is to read with attention and devotion the New Testament and Old Testament. Third, being united to Jesus is to do what he did, hence the desire to be united to Jesus will generate an interest to practice his way of life and his teaching, in order to become like him, to please the eternal Father, and to be useful to the community and to the church. The concurrent movement of these three circles, namely desire, reading the Bible and practicing what one has learned, will gradually develop belief in Bible. Vincent was convinced that the basis of the moral code consists in the words: *go, and do to your neighbour whatever you would have him do to you; and we can regulate all the actions of secular justice on this principle, just like Justinian<sup>667</sup> established his law on it, as have jurists in formulating civil and canon laws. And since every conclusion drawn from one or several principles must show with certainty what they ordain for the practice of virtue or forbid for the avoidance of vice, in the same way certain consequences are drawn from the Gospel teachings, which, in accord with the plan of our Lord, prompt us not only to avoid evil and do good but also to procure the greatest glory to God his Father and to acquire Christian perfection.*<sup>668</sup>

#### **1.4.1.2 Narrow Difference Between Faith and Heresy**

Often there exists narrow gap between faith and heresy. Many of the used words and concepts will be the same. Because of this apparent similarity, many people may not notice the

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<sup>666</sup> CCD:XII:108-109.

<sup>667</sup> Justinian I, (482-565) was Byzantine Emperor and restorer of the Roman Empire.

<sup>668</sup> CCD:XII:101.

error in heresy and therefore pastoral leaders need to be always vigilant to safeguard the faith of the community.

The right Christian faith consists in giving one's voluntary assent to Christ in all that truly belongs to His teaching. There are, therefore, two ways of deviating from Christianity: the one by refusing to believe in Christ Himself, which is the way of infidelity, common to Pagans and Jews; the other by restricting belief to certain points of Christ's doctrine selected and fashioned at pleasure, which is the way of heretics. The subject-matter of both faith and heresy is, therefore, the deposit of the faith, that is, the sum total of truths revealed in Scripture and Tradition as proposed to our belief by the Church. The believer accepts the whole deposit as proposed by the Church; the heretic accepts only such parts of it as commend themselves to his own approval. The heretical tenets may be ignorance of the true creed, erroneous judgment, imperfect apprehension and comprehension of dogmas: in none of these does the will play an appreciable part, wherefore one of the necessary conditions of sinfulness--free choice--is wanting and such heresy is merely objective, or material. On the other hand, the will may freely incline the intellect to adhere to tenets declared false by the Divine teaching authority of the Church. The impelling motives are many: intellectual pride or exaggerated reliance on one's own insight; the illusions of religious zeal; the allurements of political or ecclesiastical power; the ties of material interests and personal status; and perhaps others more dishonourable. Heresy thus willed is imputable to the subject and carries with it a varying degree of guilt; it is called formal, because to the material error it adds the informative element of freely willed.<sup>669</sup>

St. Thomas Aquinas says that the word heresy denotes choosing. There are two ways in which people may deviate from the rectitude of the Christian faith. First, because they are unwilling to assent to Christ (such people have an evil will in respect of the very end). This belongs to the species of unbelief in pagans and Jews. Secondly, because, though they intend to assent to Christ, yet they fail in their choice of those things wherein they assent to Christ, because they choose not what Christ really taught, but the suggestions of their own mind.<sup>670</sup>

In his letter to Desbordes, Vincent de Paul raises one of his concerns of dealing with heretical teaching. He says that *since one of our practices during missions to settle difference, it is to be feared, that if the Company were to persist obstinately in a new dispute to the civil court of law, God might deprive us of the grace of working at reconciliation.*<sup>671</sup> To Vincent de Paul disputes and debates on matter of theology are part of the process of spiritual education. They are not to be aimed at defeating people but at attaining the correct understanding of the person. Debates, disputes, and dialogues on spiritual matters are to be seen as occasions for reconciliation and the expression of charity.

The problem of recognizing heresy and fighting against heresy is a delicate issue because the heresy often looks like a personalized explanation of faith. Heretics choose some of the elements of catholic teachings. Therefore, to convince those individuals that they have

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<sup>669</sup> Catholic Encyclopedia. *Heresy*, <https://www.newadvent.org/cathen/07256b.htm>, (accessed on 12.10.2020).

<sup>670</sup> ST. II-II: 11:1

<sup>671</sup> CCD:VII:424-425.

not chosen the entire teaching of the catholic church but only some parts, becomes difficult, because people may not want to offend and lose friends. Heretics restrict their belief to certain points of Christ's doctrine selected and fashioned in view of their own self-interest. The condition of sinfulness in heretics is self-assuredness. Very often heretics have an exaggerated reliance on their own insight and the illusions of religious zeal. Vincent de Paul admits that meekness, humility and patience in dealing with these poor misguided people is the essence of constructive contradiction of heresy.<sup>672</sup>

At times the love towards the teachings of the catholic Church could also be diminished due to a communication gap and the slowness of a response to various initiatives. But that depends upon how people understand the providence of God and his guidance. One of the examples is the initial stage of the Congregation of the Mission, founded by Vincent de Paul with the help of Francoise Marguerite de Silly, Philip Emanuel de Gondy, Dupuys Le Boucher, and Archbishop Jean Francois de Gondi. The faithful people of France, King, archbishop, nuncio recommended the approval of the Congregation of the Mission founded on January 25, 1625, but Rome was slow, reluctant, and was not convinced of the secular nature of religious life. Vincent de Paul was able to submit all his problems, including the sudden demise of Francoise Marguerite de Silly and the delay from Rome, to the providence of God. The tremendous commitment of the team and the trust of Vincent de Paul in the providence of God was answered with the publication of the bull of Urban VIII, *Salvatoris Nostris* which formally approved the establishment of the Congregation of the Mission.<sup>673</sup> However, the original copy of the Bull *Salvatoris Nostris* was found missing but a copy of the original is in the present offices of the curia of the Congregation of the Mission in Rome (the first curia was in Paris).

#### 1.4.1.3 Light is the Light of the Believing Subject

According to Pope Francis the light of the ecclesial form of faith is seen in the light of the believing community. *Theology also shares in the ecclesial form of faith; its light is the light of the believing subject which is the Church. This implies, on the one hand, that theology*

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<sup>672</sup> CCD:I:58.

<sup>673</sup> Pierre Coste who brought together all of Vincent's extant writings and conferences, put them into an authoritative critical edition learned that Giovanni Mazzini of the Vatican Library, had found a document in the Archives of the Congregation of Religious, which settled some vexing questions of chronology: the Bull *Salvatoris nostri*, for the erection of the Congregation of the Mission, had been issued "on the eve of the Ides of January, in the year of the Incarnation of our Lord 1632, the tenth year of our pontificate". With the publication of Mazzini's discovery, in *Annales Congregation of the Mission* 1926 pp.140-144, it was noted that the year of the incarnation began not on January 1<sup>st</sup> but on March 25. Therefore, the "eve of the ides of January, in the year of the incarnation of our Lord 1632 is actually January 12 of the civil year 1633. Furthermore, Urban VIII was elected pope on August 5. 1623, so the tenth year of our pontificate would be 1633, making the date of *Salvatoris nostri* January 12, 1633. CCD:XIIIa:296.

*must be at the service of the faith of Christians, that it must work humbly to protect and deepen the faith of everyone, especially ordinary believers. On the other hand, because it draws its life from faith, theology cannot consider the magisterium of the Pope and the bishops in communion with him as something extrinsic, a limitation of its freedom, but rather as one of its internal, constitutive dimensions, for the magisterium ensures our contact with the primordial source and thus provides the certainty of attaining to the word of Christ in all its integrity.*<sup>674</sup> The magisterium guides people as they strive to attain the goal of eternal life. The magisterium helps people to understand the fundamental elements of the faith that they practice. Indeed, people are encouraged to lead a way of life corresponding to the teachings of the Church. Individual illusions can create many repercussions, divisions and problems, whereas collective effort represents prudent decision, depth in knowledge and in the application of norms and directives. Magisterium is also intended to assist people as they strive to carry forward the light of Jesus Christ in the world: *Charity needs the light of the truth that we constantly seek. That light is both the light of reason and the light of faith, and does not admit any form of relativism. Yet it also respects the development of the sciences and their essential contribution to finding the surest and most practical means of achieving the desired results.*<sup>675</sup>

Vincent de Paul suggests seven methods that will enable people of faith to be light as well as to grow in their service of faith.<sup>676</sup>

- a) Avoid being complacent in ministry.
- b) Avoid blowing one's own horn.
- c) Understand human inability to do good and inclination to evil.
- d) While doing ministry think more about your neighbour than yourself.
- e) Appreciate one another and attribute success to others.
- f) Remember what is loveable and well-ordered remains longer.
- g) Strive to be clothed with the spirit of Jesus.

Vincent advised his confreres that *if the Congregation of the Mission, with the help of God's grace, is to achieve what it sees as its purpose, a genuine effort to put on the spirit of Christ will be needed. How to do this is learned mainly from what is taught in the Gospel: Christ's poverty, his chastity, and obedience, his love for the sick, his decorum, the sort of life style and behaviour which he inspired in his disciples, his way of getting along with people, his daily spiritual exercises, preaching missions and other ministries which he undertook on behalf of the people.*<sup>677</sup>

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<sup>674</sup> Pope Francis, *Lumen Fidei*, # 36.

<sup>675</sup> Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, # 185.

<sup>676</sup> CCD:XII:92-93.

<sup>677</sup> CCD:XII:83.

Standing by the side of Vincent de Paul both pastoral leaders and the pastoral community can receive much inspiration from this advice. Vincent emphasised that Jesus Christ is the centre of Christian spirituality and mission.

*In the life of Saint Augustine, we find a significant example of this process whereby reason, with its desire for truth and clarity, was integrated into the horizon of faith and thus gained new understanding. Augustine accepted the Greek philosophy of light, with its insistence on the importance of sight. His encounter with Neoplatonism introduced him to the paradigm of the light which, descending from on high to illumine all reality, is a symbol of God. Augustine thus came to appreciate God's transcendence and discovered that all things have a certain transparency, that they can reflect God's goodness. This realization liberated him from his earlier Manichaeism, which had led him to think that good and evil were in constant conflict, confused and intertwined. The realization that God is light provided Augustine with a new direction in life and enabled him to acknowledge his sinfulness and to turn towards the good.<sup>678</sup>*

*Popular devotions of the Christian people are to be highly commended, provided they accord with the laws and norms of the Church, above all when they are ordered by the Apostolic See. Devotions proper to individual Churches also have a special dignity if they are undertaken by mandate of the bishops according to customs or books lawfully approved. But these devotions should be so drawn up that they harmonize with the liturgical seasons, accord with the sacred liturgy are in some fashion derived from it, and lead the people to it, since, in fact, the liturgy by its very nature far surpasses any of them.<sup>679</sup>*

Vincent's interest in rural ministry began in 1610 when he realizes the country people were ignored by the priests who sought better financial and living accommodations in Paris. Vincent began to criticize the imperfections of the priests that he witnessed and at times he included his own followers in his condemnation of priestly mediocrity. He may have intended this to be a gesture of humility and as a model for other priests, encouraging them to reflect on their ineffectiveness. Indeed, the clergy needed to become more conscious of the own failures and to dedicate themselves anew to Christ, consistently striving to live in accord with the demands of their vocation (renouncing their own will and living as servants of God as they minister the people entrusted to their care).<sup>680</sup>

#### **1.4.1.4 Encouraging Seminars and Retreats**

Jesus used different educational methods to form his disciples, and one of his practical methods was that he sent his disciples forth to engage in mission preaching; they preached prophetically: then *the apostles gathered around Jesus, and told him all that they had done and*

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<sup>678</sup> Pope Francis, *Lumen Fidei*, # 33.

<sup>679</sup> Pope Paul VI, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, # 13.

<sup>680</sup> Forrestal, Alison, *Op.cit.*, p. 97.

*taught. He said to them, Come away to a deserted place all by yourselves and rest a while.* (Mk 6:30-32). Jesus was cautious to direct the disciples toward the transcendental elements of spirituality, practical, hands-on experience, all of which are important as means for the development of the spiritual life, but the purpose of life is union with God. Karl Rahner says that *it is not enough for us to know that God is more than what we have hitherto grasped of God in our human knowledge, as we get to know in an anthropology. We must also know that God may speak and may refrain from speaking. Only then can God's actual speaking to us, if it really happens, be understood for what it is: the unpredictable act of God's personal love, before which we fall upon our knees in worship.*<sup>681</sup> Jesus understood that his disciples had not reached the end of their spiritual journey. Therefore, Jesus invited his disciple to find rest in God through prayer and recollection.

According to Vincent there are two spiritual movements that are essential in retreat ministry. First movement is related to pastors and all parish leaders who engage themselves in preaching the retreat to the people because they value the grace of God and want to assist people as they journey toward salvation. The second movement is related to the participants in the retreat who want to renew their spiritual life. This movement usually involves a remorse and a desire to act differently.<sup>682</sup> Vincent de Paul wanted those who sought admittance into the Congregation of the Mission to have the intention of serving God and the intention of obeying the rule.<sup>683</sup> Candidates for the Congregation of the Mission *should be gradually introduced into the apostolate, so that they learn to view, to judge, and to do all things in the light of faith, and, through their actions, to develop and perfect themselves with the others.*<sup>684</sup> The purpose of the institute of the Congregation of the Mission is to lead its members to labour all their lives not only for their own perfection by the observance of the rules and constitutions, but also for the salvation of the poor country people by means of missions and the formation of the clergy by means of seminaries, retreats, conferences, and on-going formation.<sup>685</sup>

Retreats and seminars provided people with an opportunity to reflect upon their spiritual progress.<sup>686</sup> Vincent de Paul suggests two types of means for guiding retreatants:

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<sup>681</sup> Rahner Karl. *Hearer of the Word*. Trans.by Donceel, Joseph. Continuum, New York, 1994, p 64.

<sup>682</sup> CCD:XI:12.

<sup>683</sup> Pujó, Bernard. *Op.cit.*, p. 211.

<sup>684</sup> *Constitution and Statutes of the Congregation of the Mission*. Part II. Art. 92.

<sup>685</sup> Denys, Martinus. "Short Account of the Institute of the Congregation of the Mission, Approved and Confirmed by our Holy Fathers, Popes Urban VIII and Alexander VII: Its Origin, Functions, and Manner of life to Attain Its End", in *Vincentian Heritage*, (Vol.X. 1, 1988), p 72.

<sup>686</sup> Roche, Paul C. *International Community in London*, in *Vincentiana* (July-September 2017, # 3), p 409.

*When they don't know how to meditate, we have to ask them if they have studied. If they are theologians or physicians, tell them that it is almost a study of philosophy or theology, except those theologians and physicians use only memory and understanding, whereas in meditation, we also have recourse to the imagination and feelings; and we should add that reasons are drawn from considerations. If they have not studied, advise them to take their book in hand, pause at a particular consideration, and dwell on it for a long time, in order to allow it to permeate the memory so that they will remember it; to permeate the understanding so that they may understand the truth; and lastly, the will, so that they may become attached to it. Second means: we should recommend the retreatants fidelity to the regulations of the retreat. It is important to discern the social status of those we are guiding; for a person of the upper class must be guided differently from an ordinary man, and an ignorant person differently from a scholar. Fidelity, however, is to be recommended to all of them. It may be useful to use some comparison with persons of the nobility; for example, just as the diets ordered by doctors are very beneficial if they are well observed, the same holds true for the regulations of a retreat. We have to instruct them well regarding the daily schedule, the method of meditation and of the particular examen, recommend that they never leave their rooms before getting dressed, and to keep silence.<sup>687</sup>*

Retreats and seminars help the members of a parish to listen to the Gospel, which is celebrated and lived in the church.<sup>688</sup> Proclamation of the word of God is one of the most important pastoral responsibilities for which the pastoral leaders have to find new pedagogical methods. The Constitution and Statutes of the Congregation of the Mission says that, *all who work in human formation are called to exercise great responsibility in the work of effectively implementing the pedagogical projects in which they are involved. If they are people of personal maturity and balance who are well-prepared, this can have a strongly positive influence on students. Therefore, it is important that their own formation includes not only professional qualifications but also cultural and spiritual preparedness. The education of the human person, especially developmentally, requires great care and ongoing formation. Simply repeating the standard points of a discipline is not enough. Today's educators are expected to be able to accompany their students towards lofty and challenging goals, cherish high expectations for them, involve and connect students to each other and to the world.*<sup>689</sup>

#### **1.4.1.5 Subject and Object**

Lay people are the subject and object as far as retreats and seminars are concerned. People can be actively involved in the ministry of retreats and seminars, and people can be formed through the same ministry. God has entrusted this ministry to the church, and every member of the church has a responsibility to listen to the word of God and deepen its meaning and relevance in daily life. Vincent de Paul says that, God is the author of retreat ministry, and pastoral leaders have the obligation to continue this ministry. All the maxims of ministry could

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<sup>687</sup> CCD:XI:148.

<sup>688</sup> Cajuste, Yasmine. "Essential Models of Education-Communication for Mobilization", in *Vincentiana* (October-December 2017, # 4), p 519.

<sup>689</sup> Congregation for Catholic Education. *Male and Female, He Created Them. Towards a Path of Dialogue on the Question of Gender Theory in Education*, #47.

be summarized with the words: *Nemo dat quod non habet* (no one gives what he does not have). People can change and advance in the spiritual life, and their new convictions and spiritual empowerment will motivate them to become directors of others.<sup>690</sup>

Seminars provide ample opportunity to explain different questions relevant to the signs of the time. Some of the questions which Karl Rahner asks have not lost their importance as people engage in the spiritual journey to hear the word of God: *In what direction do we turn to listen for the possible coming of a revelation of God or to be struck by the silence of God? Does such a revelation happen in the spirit's pure interiority? In a rapture and ecstasy of the soul, carried away out of the space and time of worldliness into the spheres beyond all appearances and images, for a speechless Thou-to Thou of spirit to Spirit? Or is the place of God's revelation the dark interiority of a basic mood, of a feeling, in whose infinite yearning the infinite speaks?... Can we, as it were, tell God whither to come in order to meet humanity? Can we make bold to determine by ourselves the place of a possible encounter? Does such an idea not at once contradict the conclusion that God is supremely free, hence unpredictable for us? On the other hand, when we mention a place at which God's revelation must happen, is this not an a priori imposed by us on such a revelation?*<sup>691</sup> The possible revelation of God cannot be determined through human restrictions, and reducing the revelation of God to the objective counterpart of human religious disposition is the basic error of every modernistic philosophy of religion.<sup>692</sup> Pastoral situations and pastoral leaders are instruments of creating the possibilities for the revelation of God. The function of religious dispositions and experience can be strongly influenced by the input people receive during seminars and retreats.

#### **1.4.2 Discovering New Means of Evangelization**

Pope John Paul II says in his apostolic exhortation *Redemptionis Donum, men and women religious, who, in their consecration to God through the vows of the evangelical counsels, strive towards a particular fullness of Christian life. Their special vocation and the whole of their life in the Church and the world took specific character and spiritual power from the depth of the mystery of the Redemption.*<sup>693</sup> The way of the evangelical counsels challenges each individual to go beyond the strict demands of the law, indicating not only what is necessary for evangelization but also what is best for evangelization, for example, the exhortation not to

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<sup>690</sup> CCD:XI:143.

<sup>691</sup> Rahner Karl. *Hearer of the Word. Op.cit.*, p. 91-92.

<sup>692</sup> Rahner Karl. *Hearer of the Word. Op.cit.*

<sup>693</sup> Pope John Paul II, *Redemptionis Donum*, # 1.

judge (Mt 7:1), to lend and expect nothing in return (Lk 6:35), to comply with all the requests and desires of our neighbour (Mt 5: 40-42), to invite the poor to share a meal (Lk 14:13-14), and to pardon always (Mt 6: 14-15). The evangelical counsels invite us to collaborate with others who share our charism, as well as with those who evangelize and serve poor people.<sup>694</sup>

The capitalistic tendency of making a quick profit is a risky consideration for discovering new means with regard to the spiritual development of the members of the pastoral community. Even in the material things, to care for the world and community in which we live, means that we continually care for ourselves and evaluate our behavioural patterns. The members of the pastoral community need to think of themselves more and more as a family connected to one another and dwelling in a common home. Life in the midst of the community is an on-going process, and we cannot think like capitalists who demand quick profits.<sup>695</sup>

One of the important reasons for discovering new means of evangelization is the difference in the state of affairs of the mission. In his letter to Bernard Codoing in Rome, Vincent wrote:

*there is a shortage of manpower in our company; there are strong reasons to doubt that our Lord should want bishops taken from among Missionaries, any more than from the Jesuits; there is nothing to be done at present in Babylon where it is unlawful to speak against the religion of Mohammed, under pain of death. If there is any good to be accomplished, it is in the city where the King of Persia resides, three hundred leagues away. There are two or three kinds of religious there: Carmelites, Capuchins and Dominicans. There are no Catholics, except for a few poor boys whom they have tried to raise in our holy religion. There are close to sixty thousand Greek Christians, Armenians, who have been transported as slaves to a town the King has had built and settled by them close to his own royal city.*<sup>696</sup>

This letter reveals a changing situation with regard to the mission. Vincent wrote this letter to explain the different problems that had to be addressed and to explain his intention of adjusting to the difficulties that were encountered. In the tradition of the Catholic Church, the evangelical counsels have focused on the three elements, of chastity, poverty and obedience, which are the key elements that sum up the economy of salvation.<sup>697</sup> However every counsel in the Gospel creates a programme to the way of following Jesus Christ. The economy of redemption is *the transformation of the entire cosmos through the change of the heart of people from within: for the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. . . and will be set free from its bondage to decay and obtain the glorious liberty of the children of*

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<sup>694</sup> Gay, G. Gregory. "Address of the Superior General to the 2016 General Assembly", in *Vincentiana* (July-September 2016, # 3) 355.

<sup>695</sup> Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, # 17.

<sup>696</sup> CCD:II:459.

<sup>697</sup> Pope John Paul II, *Redemptionis Donum*, # 9.

*God (Rm 8: 19-21). This transformation takes place in step with that love which Christ's call infuses in the depth of the individual.*<sup>698</sup>

The vision of Vincent de Paul and the ministry of the Congregation of the Mission were developed with elements focused on the process of evangelizing the poor. All the initiatives of Vincent de Paul were grounded on assisting the poor in spiritual and material matters, and this dedication to the mission in imitation of Jesus Christ describes Vincentian spirituality.<sup>699</sup> The early missions of the Congregation of the Mission in *Folleville* and *Châtillon* were the burning bush that Moses encountered. They were a sign of life that was the beginning.<sup>700</sup> Through the grace of God, this simple human initiative become a charism and a recognizable style of life.

### **1.4.2.3 Discovering Your Charism**

The charisma of preaching the gospel could be explained as the charism of a person, of a group and of an organization because the affirmation of this charism occurs when people understand and appreciate the grace of God that has been given to them. This understanding is also rooted in the etymological meaning of the word charism, for this word is derived from the Greek word *khárisma* which is related to *kharis* meaning grace. Today, people who are distinguished because of their manner of proclaiming the word of God are referred to as charismatic individuals. These men and women preach the word of God for the good of the faithful and for the Church and also as a means to revive Christian spirituality.<sup>701</sup> Action gives a face to the charism. Vincent de Paul, in his ministry, attempted *to prioritize the translation of the intentions into virtuous actions that fulfilled God's will, and he articulated rules of engagement that encouraged a balance between interior and exterior devotion.*<sup>702</sup>

Jesus invited his disciples to proclaim the message of salvation to the ends of the world. The apostles shared their knowledge and grace which they had received from Jesus. The Church continues this mission through her never-ending efforts of evangelization of the people and through the proclamation of the word of God. The Second Vatican Council spoke not only to the sons and daughters of the Church, but to all who invoke the name of Christ, that is, to the whole of humanity. There is a profound desire to explain to everyone how the Council viewed the presence and the activity of the Church in the world of today. The world is that place which

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<sup>698</sup> Pope John Paul II, *Redemptionis Donum*, # 9.

<sup>699</sup> Orcajo, Antonio. "The Vincentian Charism, Fidelity to the Founder's Charism", in *Vincentiana* (April- June 2017, # 2) 260.

<sup>700</sup> Mezzadri, Luigi. "Identity and Sense of Vincentian Belonging", in *Vincentiana* (April- June 2017, # 2) 214.

<sup>701</sup> Orcajo, Antonio. "The Vincentian Charism, Fidelity to the Founder's Charism", in *Vincentiana* (April- June 2017, # 2) 253.

<sup>702</sup> Forrestal, Alison, *Op.cit.*, p. 96.

the Christian sees as created and sustained by the love of the Creator, but fallen into the bondage of sin. Nevertheless, the world has been emancipated by Christ, who was crucified and rose again to break the strangle hold of personified evil, so that the world might be fashioned anew according to God's design and reach its fulfilment.<sup>703</sup>

According to the need of the time, the Holy Spirit endowed men and women with special graces and enabled them to proclaim the message of God to people who were confronting various afflictions. Like the movement initiated by Vincent de Paul, the members of the Benedictines, Dominicans, Franciscans, Jesuits and Salesians helped people move forward in their spiritual development through the use of educational, cultural, social and religious means. Most historians view the origin of these communities within the broader context of a specific situation.<sup>704</sup> Reducing these spiritual movements to a response to social and religious phenomenon that existed in history at a particular time, does not help us to understand the vibrant elements of the charism of the founder of those institutions. The Congregation of the Mission has to be understood from the perspective of the charism of the founder Vincent de Paul whose spirituality was deeply rooted in the evangelization of the poor.

According to Louis Abelly, *at the beginning of the little Company, (Congregation of the Mission) the first concern was our own spiritual development, and then the evangelization of the poor. At times we were preoccupied with ourselves, and at other times we would go to the people in the countryside. God allowed us to begin like that, but in the fullness of time he has called us to contribute to the formation of good priests, to provide pastors for the people, and to show them what they must know and do.*<sup>705</sup>

#### 1.4.2.2 The Scope of New Means of Evangelization

The discovery of new means of evangelization has countless challenges. However, each parish can shoulder this responsibility together with their bishop and explore questions which call for further study, reflection and action based on gospel of Jesus Christ and the norms of the church.<sup>706</sup> There are challenges in the present socio-cultural reality, but the challenges are not simply statements about our reality or about some problems that influence our lives, rather they

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<sup>703</sup> Vatican Council II, *Gaudium et Spes*, #2.

<sup>704</sup> Orcajo, Antonio. "The Vincentian Charism, Fidelity to the Founder's Charism", in *Vincentiana* (April- June 2017, # 2) 253.

<sup>705</sup> Abelly, Louis. *The Life of the Venerable Servant of God Vincent de Paul: Founder and First Superior General of the Congregation of the Mission*, 3 volumes, edited by John E. Rybolt, CM, translated by William Quinn, FSC, notes by Edward R. Udovic, CM and John E. Rybolt, CM, introduction by Stafford Poole, CM, New City Press, New Rochelle, New York, 1993. Volume I, p 251.

<sup>706</sup> Forrestal, Alison, *Op.cit.*, p. 105.

are opportunities to grow in our identity and in our fulfilment of the mission.<sup>707</sup> Pope Francis suggests seven guidelines which can encourage the whole church in a new phase of evangelization based on the teaching of the dogmatic constitution *Lumen Gentium*.<sup>708</sup>

- a) Reform of the Church in her missionary outreach
- b) Temptations faced by pastoral workers
- c) The Church, understood as the entire People of God which evangelizes
- d) Homily and its preparation
- f) Inclusion of the poor in society
- g) Peace and dialogue within society
- h) The spiritual motivations for mission

Pope Francis understands that these suggestions might appear as extreme for some people, but he proposes an extensive horizon when referring to new means of evangelization which has many practical implications in the pastoral ministry. Based on these seven suggestions pastoral leaders and the members of the parish community can undertake various effort to proclaim the joy in the Lord (Phil 4:4). Pope Francis emphasizes in his encyclical, *Fratelli Tutti* that the pastoral leaders speak in *catechesis and preaching more directly and clearly about the social meaning of existence, the fraternal dimension of spirituality, our conviction of the inalienable dignity of each person*<sup>709</sup>. Using modern familiar vocabulary is an essential character of speaking directly. Vincent de Paul understood that the new means of evangelization had to focus on the art of communication in order to explain the specific virtue necessary to living faith in relation to the theme explained, outline benefits of seeking this virtue, identify the defining necessary qualities, and illustrate the means of achieving the virtue.<sup>710</sup>

Maintaining peace in the community is of great importance. *Peace is worth more than worldly possessions, God rewards peace even in this life;*<sup>711</sup> *peace and health are treasures of life.*<sup>712</sup> To this end Vincent de Paul suggests five lines of action:

- a) Pray for peace.<sup>713</sup>
- b) Use prudence and charity in your words and actions so that the people who come in contact with you will not feel offended.<sup>714</sup>

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<sup>707</sup> Álvarez, Francisco Javier. “Commentary on ... Document of the 2016 General Assembly”, *Op.cit.*, p 494.

<sup>708</sup> Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, # 17.

<sup>709</sup> Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, # 86.

<sup>710</sup> Forrestal, Alison, *Op.cit.*, p. 105.

<sup>711</sup> CCD:III:612.

<sup>712</sup> CCD:VI:188.

<sup>713</sup> CCD:XI:189.

<sup>714</sup> CCD:VI:344.

- c) Be humble and respectful to those who are against us and to the heretics, and work humbly and respectfully.<sup>715</sup>
- d) Strive to be moderate in order to be uniform.<sup>716</sup>
- e) We strive to obtain the conversion of souls and not the esteem of others.<sup>717</sup>

Vincent de Paul was a precursor and revolutionary. In his time, women were mostly restricted to household chores and were kept away from any external responsibility. They were to be satisfied with being the docile companion of their husbands, and the Church only allowed women religious to live a cloistered life. The revolutionary vision of Vincent de Paul gave him confidence to entrust new roles to women as they represented the Church and reached out to people who were excluded and marginalized. Through the service of women Vincent de Paul continued his works of charity, and thanks to their tremendous work and generosity, Vincent was able to succeed together with the financial resources of his projects organized by them.<sup>718</sup> Providing equal rights for women at home, in the work place, and also in Church affairs<sup>719</sup> can give more enthusiasm for ministry and strengthen the spirit of understanding of human dignity. *Vita Consecrata* says that it is urgently necessary to take concrete steps, beginning by providing room for women to participate in different fields and at all levels, including decision-making processes, above all in matters which concern women themselves.<sup>720</sup>

### 1.4.2.3 Discovering New Means of Education

Discovering new means of education is one of the prophetic dimensions of Vincentian spirituality, and is a consequence of their living in solidarity with persons who are impoverished.<sup>721</sup> The role of education and discovering new means of education is to be like salt in the midst of the world of impoverished people. God, who became incarnate in the person of Jesus, is the role model of being salt to the people of God.<sup>722</sup> God is love and he is infinite goodness: *When this great God created us with the plan to require of us that pleasant duty of loving him and this honourable tribute, he willed to place in us the seed of love, which is our resemblance to him, so that we may not excuse ourselves, saying that we don't have the means*

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<sup>715</sup> CCD:I:276.

<sup>716</sup> CCD:XII:210.

<sup>717</sup> CCD:I:184.

<sup>718</sup> Pujo, Bernard. *Op.cit.*, p. 120.

<sup>719</sup> Maloney, Robert P. "The Freedom of the Children of God, the Fruit of Indifference, Vincent de Paul's Image-Filled Teaching," in *Vincentiana* (April-June, 2016,# 2), p 68.

<sup>720</sup> John Paul II. *Vita Consecrata*, 1996, # 58

<sup>721</sup> Marroquin Stuyardo, *Vincentian Spirituality and Prophecy: The Salt that never loses its flavour*. Translated: Plock, T. Charles, *Vincentiana*, Congregation of the Mission, General Curia, October – Dec 2017, p 476.

<sup>722</sup> Marroquin Stuyardo, *Vincentian Spirituality and Prophecy: The Salt that never loses its flavour*. Translated: Plock, T. Charles, in *Vincentiana*, (October –December 2017, #4), p 473.

*to give it.*<sup>723</sup> Our inventive method of loving God helps us to discover new means of spiritual education. Indeed, in helping people to learn about God, we express the love of God. Louis Abelly explains that one of the aims of the Company was to organize programmes for the spiritual good of priests. The Company often contributed to the spiritual education of priests and trained young men to fulfil the duties of their office worthily. Many priests and people were led to a true conversion, and so a source of scandal was removed from the Church.<sup>724</sup>

New methods could be creatively activated in any existing pastoral setting. For instance, Vincent de Paul introduced a new method of preaching. Personally, Vincent was inspired by the *modern method*, developed in the 12<sup>th</sup> century. The sermons were composed of four parts, first the theme and the statement of prayer based on the theme, then divisions which treated theological points and moral applications. In the late 1620s Vincent de Paul introduced the *little method* to the Congregation which stressed the importance of simplicity in preaching. The little method was different from the Augustinian style of sacred eloquence. The little method used direct language in proportion to the people's mental capacity, maintained brevity and plainness of speech regarding the vices that should be avoided and virtues that should be practiced.<sup>725</sup> Vincent de Paul trained his confreres to practice the little method, and this training of the clergy in the little method was intended to help them, to form the members of the pastoral community.

*When the 'formation of formators' is undertaken on the basis of the Christian principles, it has as its objective not only the formation of individual teachers but the building up and consolidation of an entire educational community through a fruitful exchange between all involved, one that has both didactic and emotional dimensions. Thus, dynamic relationships grow between educators, and professional development is enriched by well-rounded personal growth, so that the work of teaching is carried out at the service of humanization.*<sup>726</sup>

Discovering new means of spiritual education is one of the fraternal responsibilities to the people. Obviously, people who are born into spiritually stable families receive a fine education and grow up spiritually nourished. Yet the same expectation cannot be applied to all the people. There could be many who lack a good spiritual foundation and adequate spiritual care. If we take up a principle of being governed primarily by the criteria of market freedom and efficiency, there will be no place for those who suffer from a lack of spiritual education, and fraternity will remain just another vague ideal.<sup>727</sup>

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<sup>723</sup> CCD:I:131.

<sup>724</sup> Abelly Louis. *Op.cit.*, Book II, p 218.

<sup>725</sup> Forrestal, Alison, *Op.cit.*, p. 103-104.

<sup>726</sup> Congregation for Catholic Education. *Male and Female, He Created Them. Towards a Path of Dialogue on the Question of Gender Theory in Education*, # 49.

<sup>727</sup> Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, # 109.

#### 1.4.2.4 Need of Permanent Formation

Pastoral leaders cannot ignore the reality of human weakness. There is a necessity of seeking to grow, day by day, through ongoing formation, so that we might be renewed in our ministry of evangelization.<sup>728</sup> People need constant spiritual support and guidance in order that they may discern, with the help of God, the best manner to confront the problems of their daily life. Success in pastoral teaching is rooted in adaptability with regard to the use of words, the style of expression, choosing material that is best suited to simple and efficacious exposition of the message of the gospel.<sup>729</sup>

*The autonomy and freedom of teaching is recognised today in many legal systems. ... To this end, pedagogues, those who work in teacher-training and experts on literature for children and adolescents alike can all contribute to the creation of a body of innovative and creative tools that, in the face of other visions that are partial or distorted, offer a solid and integrated education of the human person from infancy onwards. Against the background of the renewal of the education alliance, collaboration at local, national and international level between all parties involved must not limit itself to sharing of ideas or useful swapping of best practice but should be made available as a key means of permanent formation of educators themselves.*<sup>730</sup>

Pope Francis writes about five important necessities of spiritual education in his encyclical *Fratelli Tutti*.

- a) It is important to teach through catechesis and preaching more directly and clearly about the social meaning of existence, the fraternal dimension of spirituality, and the catholic conviction of the inalienable dignity of each person, and the reasons for loving and accepting all our brothers and sisters.<sup>731</sup>
- b) The spiritual stature of an individual is measured by love, which is the criterion for the definitive decision about a human life's worth or lack thereof. Yet, there are believers who think about the imposition of their own ideologies upon everyone else, which at time ends in impressive demonstrations of strength. All Catholics need to accept that love is the beginning of spirituality, and the greatest danger lies in failing to love (1 Cor 13:1-13).<sup>732</sup>
- c) Priests, pastoral leaders and teachers, who have the thought-provoking task of educating children and youth in schools or other settings, need to be also conscious that their responsibility extends to the moral, spiritual and social aspects of human life. Christian values of freedom, mutual respect and solidarity can be educated and handed on to pupil from a tender age.<sup>733</sup>

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<sup>728</sup> Saldaña Moreno, César A. "Lay Vincentian Missionaries and Vincentian Spirituality," *Op.cit.*, p 499.

<sup>729</sup> Forrestal, Alison, *Op.cit.*, p. 104.

<sup>730</sup> Congregation for Catholic Education. *Male and Female, He Created Them. Towards a Path of Dialogue on the Question of Gender Theory in Education*. Vatican City, Vatican Press 2019, # 51.

<sup>731</sup> Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, # 86.

<sup>732</sup> Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, # 92.

<sup>733</sup> Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, # 114.

- d) Life of people is linked to many circles of activities. Therefore, educating them for spiritual upbringing, developing in them a concern for others, teaching them to have a well-integrated view of life and of the necessity of spiritual growth are essential for quality human relationships in the family, community and society so that they may rightly react against injustices, aberrations, and abuses of economic, technological, political and media power.<sup>734</sup>
- e) Giving due respect to the political situation of the people of the land, religious leaders have the duty to reawaken the spiritual energy of people in order to contribute to the betterment of society.<sup>735</sup>

Pastoral leaders need to explore the means and methods to educate the Christian faithful. Vincent understood that without formation, any application of the spiritual life is difficult for most people. Understanding the need to reform the clergy so that people would have good pastors, Vincent began to organize a small seminary in the Collège de Bons-Enfants for training candidates for the priesthood. He was not, however, satisfied with the results of the formation. Young men, who had no desire to commit themselves to the priesthood, came there to pursue courses of humanitarian studies. Vincent, however, was convinced of the need to provide spiritual education and train the candidates for ministry, not only through retreats but through one or two years of education, about their duties and functions as ministers for the people. He opened a novitiate in 1637, for training priests. Vincent also established a major seminary in the year 1642 with the help of Cardinal de Richelieu in the Collège de Bons-Enfants, and because of the large number of students a minor seminary was established on the grounds of Saint Lazare.<sup>736</sup> If the spiritual development of priests could only be enriched through formation, so also the laity in a parish community will need guidance and formation for their spiritual development. The method and means are to be sought in accordance with the parish situation.

#### **1.4.2.5 Material Preparation**

Constant intellectual preparation is necessary in order to advance in spiritual development. For this reason, Vincent advised people to read books of devotion, because individuals are able to speak to God in the mental prayer, and in their reading, God speaks to people. Therefore, people necessarily have to train themselves in order to listen to God through their reading, and there is no less benefit or lesser happiness in listening to God than in speaking to God. Reading spiritual books engages people with good thoughts and helps them in the

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<sup>734</sup> Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, # 167.

<sup>735</sup> Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, # 276.

<sup>736</sup> Pujo, Bernard. *Op.cit.*, p. 216-217.

general examination of the conscience.<sup>737</sup> Reading specific topics for prayer enriches the practice of prayer that will be done the following day.<sup>738</sup> The spiritual journey essentially knits together all activities in the spirit of prayer.<sup>739</sup> During the spiritual journey of the people, the spirit of prayer will gradually influence their personality and mental strength, thereby they will be able to knit together their daily activities with their spirituality.

Conformity to regular spiritual reading keeps people in a state of grace, and helps people to develop the virtue of humility, gentleness, simplicity and moderation.<sup>740</sup> Spending time in prayer is an investment for spiritual development. Therefore, Vincent advised his followers to make an hour of mental prayer together in the chapel, and to recite morning, noon and evening prayer together.<sup>741</sup> When our mind is drawn to the love of God, the words and actions of our daily life would reflect that reality.<sup>742</sup> Through repetition of these practices people will develop a habit of praying over all the events that they encounter in the course of each day. Vincent advised his council never to offer an opinion until they have turned to God in prayer, and when a subject matter is proposed, first raise the mind to God.<sup>743</sup>

According to Vincent de Paul there is nothing good that does not meet with opposition, and such opposition should not be valued any less because opposition counters objections. Acquisition of virtue is an excellent study. The most learned persons do not produce great results because they have failed to learn virtue.<sup>744</sup> By learning virtue people attempt to discover the will of God, and they will, in turn, give good example to the community. Vincent explained four guidelines towards the idea of material preparation for the mission of charitable activity: (1) Ask God this grace, (2) Retire early the preceding evening and do some profitable reading, (3) Make your morning prayer on the subject of that reading, and attend Mass afterward, (4) Keep yourself more recollected on that day.<sup>745</sup> This material preparation is an internal preparation which enables people to understand the *importance* of the mission.

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<sup>737</sup> CCD: IX:95 (Conference, *Explanation of the Regulations*, June 14, 1643).

<sup>738</sup> CCD: IX:125 (Document: *Regulations of the Daughters of Charity*, 1645).

<sup>739</sup> Renouard, John-Pierre, *15 Days of Prayer with Saint Vincent de Paul*. Trans. Rybolt E John, New City Press, Hyde Park, Ny, 2010, p 108.

<sup>740</sup> CCD: IX:135-136 (Conference: *Erection of the Company of the DC as a Confraternity*, November 20, 1646).

<sup>741</sup> CCD: I:554 (Letter: *To Saint Jane Frances*, July 14, 1639).

<sup>742</sup> CCD: XI:105 (Conference: *The Theological Virtues*, March 22, 1642).

<sup>743</sup> CCD: XIIIb:271 (Document: *Council of October 25, 1646*).

<sup>744</sup> CCD: IV:131 (Letter: *To A priest of the Mission in the Saintes House*, December 28, 1650).

<sup>745</sup> CCD: XIIIb:379 (Document: *Documents Pertaining to the Ladies of Charity, 185- Visiting the Sick*).

### 1.4.3 Encouraging Diversity in Devotion

Pope Francis says that the world has learned from the experience of the past wars and is slowly moving towards various forms of integration. The dream of a united Europe, capable of acknowledging its shared roots and rejoicing its rich diversity, has become a reality. The firm conviction of the founders of the European Union, who envisioned a future based on the capacity to work together in bridging divisions and in fostering peace and fellowship between all the peoples of this continent has made European Union a reality.<sup>746</sup> Pope Francis recommends taking into consideration the various situations of the world. People need to be courageous to contemplate the variety and diversity which each individual can offer. This is a process of learning to live together as a human family in harmony and peace.<sup>747</sup> Vincent de Paul said: *Let us give ourselves to God to obey him faithfully, and receive gladly what will come from him.*<sup>748</sup> Karl Rahner once reflecting on Magi said: *let us also stride forward on the heart's adventurous journey toward God! Let us run! Let us forget what lies behind us. The whole future lies open to us. Every possibility of life is still open, because we can still find God, still find him more. Human emptiness is overcome in those who run to meet God, the God whose smallest reality is greater than our boldest illusion, the God who is eternal youth.*<sup>749</sup>

#### 1.4.3.1 Diversity is a Plan of God

During one of his conferences to the Sisters, Vincent de Paul explained, *that we have two important examples of diversity in Holy Scripture. The first is that of the sister of Moses and the second that of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. When Moses, who was governing the people of God, led them into the desert, Korah, Dathan, and Abiram found fault with that; they said that Moses was a magician and murmured against him and the rules God had dictated to him. By divine permission, the earth opened and swallowed them into hell in punishment of their murmuring in the presence of the people. It happened that the sister of Moses, named Miriam, having heard what was being said about her brother, whom she had seen as a little boy, entertained the same ideas, seeing the works he was doing.*<sup>750</sup>

There was a situation of murmuring among the sisters. This arose because of various reasons (differences in ministry and differences in the social origins of the Sisters) and so

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<sup>746</sup> Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, #10.

<sup>747</sup> Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, #100.

<sup>748</sup> CCD:XII:350.

<sup>749</sup> Maloney, P. Robert, *Go! On the Missionary Spirituality of St. Vincent de Paul*, *Op.cit.*, p 82; Karl Rahner, *The Great Church Year*. Crossroad, New York, 1994, p 105.

<sup>750</sup> CCD:X:348-349.

Vincent instructed them and told them that *murmuring is a worse sin than murder, you kill the soul of your sister who listens to you.*<sup>751</sup> Diversity is part of the ministry, but the same diversity can create murmuring. Diversity is part of God's plan, which is also evident in the holy bible. In the book of Genesis, we read about God's covenant with Abram, and the Lord said: *I am the Lord who brought you from Ur of the Chaldeans* (Gen 15:7). Ur was part of Mesopotamia, therefore ethnically he was rooted in Mesopotamian culture. In the book of Exodus, we read the narration of the tenth plague- death of the firstborn. Thereafter, there was an exodus of Israelites from Rameses to Succoth. During this exodus, *the Israelites journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about thousand men on foot, besides children. A mixed crowd also went up with them* (Ex 12: 37-38). This implies that people from other ethnic origins also joined the Israelites and became part of them. This community was also influenced by people of *cush* or *Cushite* origin.<sup>752</sup> Cush was a black African kingdom located along the Nile River at the south of Egypt. The wife of Moses was a Cushite. Because Moses married a Cushite woman (black skinned women), at Hazeroth some of the people opposed him, including his sister Miriam. And the anger of the Lord was against all those who opposed Moses (Num 12:8-9). The sons of Elimelech took Moabite wives; *the name of the one was Orpah and the name of the other Ruth* (Ruth 1:4). Jeremiah was rescued by *Ebed-melech* an Ethiopian – in Hebrew a Cushite (Jer 38:12). *Ebed-melech played a crucial role in saving the prophet Jeremiah*, this symbolizes the inclusion of Gentiles in the future (Jer 38&39).

St. Paul writes in his letter to Romans about the inclusion of gentile, because diversity is a part of God's plan: *for the promise that he would inherit the world did not come to Abraham or to his descendants through the law but through the righteousness of faith. ... it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his descendants, not only to the adherents of the law but also to those who share the faith of Abraham* (Rom 4: 13-16). The Book of Revelation speaks about *saints from every tribe and language and people and nation* (Rev 5:9), which is also a sign of diversity in the salvific plan of God.

Affirming diversity in the spiritual life, Vincent advised his confreres that true missionaries ought to be like Carthusians in their houses and apostles outside the house.<sup>753</sup> According to Vincent, pastoral leaders have to engage in different types of ministries but take

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<sup>751</sup> CCD:X:348.

<sup>752</sup> The word *Cushi* or *Kushi* (Hebrew: *kušī*) is seen several times in the Hebrew Bible which refers to dark-skinned person of northeast African descent, which is equivalent to Greek reference Aethiops. This word has later been changed to Ethiopia or Ethiopian in non-Hebrew versions of the Bible in order to match the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible. The word *Cushi* derives from Cush, the ancient Kingdom of Kush.

<sup>753</sup> Abelly Louis. *Op.cit.*, Book I, p 124.

nothing in return, because *we have received the grace of God for the instruction and conversion of the people, that has cost us nothing; let us also be careful not to take anything.*<sup>754</sup> However Vincent would never hesitate to receive and ask for donations to be able to serve those who were poor and marginalized. Without money there would be no missionary work. When speaking poor sick people, Vincent stated: *to serve the poor, even the chalices of the Church should be sold.*<sup>755</sup>

Speaking about the beauty and necessity of diversity, St. Paul wrote to the people of Corinth, *for just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, ... If the foot would say, "because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. .... If all were a single member, where would the body be?* (1Cor 12:12-19) Diversity is an integral part of God's plan.

In the story of the tower of Babel we read that God created diversity for the spiritual benefit of human person. *The attempt to build the tower Babel that would reach to heaven was not an expression of unity between various peoples speaking to one another from their diversity. Instead, it was a misguided attempt, born of pride and ambition, to create a unity other than that willed by God in his providential plan for the nations (cf. Gen 11:1-9)*<sup>756</sup>. God made the people speak different languages, and the diversity of language then reduced temptation against God.

#### **1.4.3.2 Benefits of Diversity in Spiritual Approach**

The Book of Proverbs says: *those who counsel peace have joy* (Prov 12:20). Counsel from the people, considered as opinion, could be of various types, therefore discernment in choosing the form of counsel is important to create joy. In religious communities, members and groups are called to engage in common discernment on important matters.<sup>757</sup> However, the inevitable diversity of counsel from people of different cultures creates challenges with regard to common discernment. Francis explains that, *no authentic, profound and enduring change is possible unless it starts from the different cultures, particularly those of the poor. A cultural covenant eschews a monolithic understanding of the identity of a particular place; it entails respect for diversity by offering opportunities for advancement and social integration to all.*<sup>758</sup>

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<sup>754</sup> CCD: XII:313.

<sup>755</sup> CCD: XII:334.

<sup>756</sup> Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, # 144.

<sup>757</sup> Thottamkara, Varghese. "Discernment", in *Vincentiana* (July-September 2016, # 3) 336.

<sup>758</sup> Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, # 220.

Some people are mastering the ways to use words like democracy, freedom, justice as tools for their vested interests and to justify their actions; some people are busy in creating an individualism by advocating that people forget their history, reject the experience of their elders, and look down on their past, so that the young people will be drawn in by these new advocates and do only what is told to them<sup>759</sup>. *This is a new form of cultural colonization. Let us not forget that peoples that abandon their tradition, either from a craze to mimic others or to foment violence, or from unpardonable negligence or apathy, allow others to rob their very soul, end up losing not only their spiritual identity but also their moral consistency and, in the end, their intellectual, economic and political independence.*<sup>760</sup>

**a) Love is Inventive to Infinity:** Simultaneously linking diversity and spirituality suggests a shift in emphasis on the part of the practitioner rather than on the part of the administrator of the parish. This paradigm shift from pastoral leader to participant helps the pastoral community to reconceptualize the pastoral life in order to facilitate different ways for the spiritual development of the laity which could simultaneously help pastoral leaders to advance in their spirituality. Vincent de Paul spoke about the diversity of the plan of God and explained to a dying brother, that the *love is inventive to infinity*<sup>761</sup>; *God was not content with placing in us the resemblance and mark of his divinity, but even willed by the same plan that we should love him to make himself like us and clothe himself with our very humanity.*<sup>762</sup> Stressing on the importance of creative thinking in ministry, the Superior General of the Congregation of the Mission, Tomaž Mavrič, encouraged all the confreres: *Let us seek, together, new and creative ways to come to the assistance of the poor. Our efforts, struggles, and common dreams cannot stop until charity is globalized. Our common wish is that more and more people will join the walk toward the globalization of charity.*<sup>763</sup> In order to instil the love of God in the mind of the people, pastoral leaders have to invent new creative means of serving the people in order to contribute to their spiritual development. To this end pastoral leaders must be able to accept and respect diverse ways of expressing the love of God and love of neighbour. An extreme conservative approach provides less room for a shift in emphasis from pastoral team to pastoral community.

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<sup>759</sup> Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, # 13-14.

<sup>760</sup> Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, # 14.

<sup>761</sup> CCD: XI:131.

<sup>762</sup> CCD: XI:131.

<sup>763</sup> Mavric Tomaz. "Closing Eucharist of the Symposium, Basilica of Saint Paul Outside- the- Walls", in *Vincentiana* (October-December 2017, # 4), p. 429.

**b) Adaptation:** Diversity in pastoral approach encourages relationships among various groups and pastoral leaders, and a reduced didactic approach allows the participation of more people in the process of decision making. *In the diversity of peoples who experience the gift of God, each in accordance with its own culture, the Church expresses her genuine catholicity and shows forth the “beauty of her varied face”.*<sup>764</sup> Mission situations might be different and may demand more patience and a gentler approach. An example of this is seen in the manner in which Vincent de Paul organized prison ministry. *Visiting prisoners was a specialized act of virtue, usually carried out by the most dedicated and experienced consoeurs who could endure the foul language, filth, and odours that greeted those who came to give spiritual and material consolation to the condemned men. These formed a tiny group of twenty specially deputed women, who committed to visiting not merely the 400 prisons in La Tournelle on a weekly basis, but eight other prisons dotted around the city as well.*<sup>765</sup> People have different approaches to life. The situation in which they find themselves demands, that they adapt their practice of virtues and their approach to spirituality, to a style of their life, to their vocation in life. Therefore, diversity in spiritual approach increases the scope of adaptation.<sup>766</sup> Adaptation is an important element in the scope of diversity of pastoral ministry, even giving homily has a scope for adaptation, because according to Vincent de Paul the homily should be arranged by determining the education and ability of those who would hear it.<sup>767</sup>

**c) Familiarity:** Diversity in spiritual approach encourages the dialogue between pastoral community members, enriches pastoral relationships and helps people to be open to other forms and experiences of spirituality. During dialogue with various members of the pastoral community, people use ordinary language for their communication rather than theological and philosophical terminology. Messages communicated in a familiar language become a helpful means of creating confidence and familiarity. That is how the apostles communicated.<sup>768</sup> Vincent de Paul sent missionaries to Ireland, and after arriving in Ireland, they separated among themselves to begin their work. Some priests went to the diocese of Limerick, others to the diocese of Cashel. They began by offering catechism lessons, then added simple clear and moving exhortations, (Vincent de Paul had recommended that they use these familiar instruction methods to teach the people of the truths of the faith and the obligations of Christianity). The missionaries then encouraged people to live in accord with this teaching, to

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<sup>764</sup> Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, 2013, # 116

<sup>765</sup> Forrestal, Alison, *Op.cit.*, p. 203.

<sup>766</sup> CCD: XI: 249, (Conference: *Method to be Followed in Preaching*, August 20, 1655).

<sup>767</sup> Forrestal, Alison, *Op.cit.*, p. 105.

<sup>768</sup> CCD: XI: 237, (Conference: *Method to be Followed in Preaching*, August 20, 1655).

renounce sin through the practice of penance, and to embracing the practice of virtue proper to their state of life.<sup>769</sup>

**d) Learning Process:** Diversity in spirituality reminds people that spirituality is a learning process. We are trying to be perfect in all that we do. Reflecting on the fact that all are learners with regard to the spiritual life, allows people to understand the complexity of the spiritual life. Louis Abelly records the manner in which a certain priest of noble birth and known piety, and a canon of a cathedral church, wrote to Vincent about the situation of the clergy: *In this diocese the clergy are without discipline, the people without respect. Priests lack devotion and charity, pulpits lack preachers. Learning is not respected, vice is not punished, virtue is oppressed. The authority of the Church is either hated or defied. Personal interest is the law of the sanctuary, while the most scandalous are the most powerful. In short, flesh and blood have supplanted the Gospel and spirit of Jesus Christ. When you see the condition of our diocese, I am sure you will do what you can to help us. Quis novit utrum ad regnum idcirco veneris, ut in tali tempore parareris? (Who knows but that it was for a time like this that you obtained the royal dignity?)*<sup>770</sup> *The humble prayer I make to you to consider this seriously before the Lord is worthy of your charity, for it comes from one of the first of your sons.*<sup>771</sup>

Diversity in spiritual approach is necessary because spirituality calls for continuous learning. In the learning process people need to master the art of practicing the virtues and giving life to the gospel values: *We have favourable opportunities always and everywhere. We have to make exterior and interior human acts.*<sup>772</sup> According to Vincent de Paul, in the learning process of spirituality, people need to remember four things: (1) We must expect to be tempted, especially as we advance in virtue. (2) We must not be surprised to be tempted. (3) Accept being tempted. (4) Thank God for it.<sup>773</sup>

**e) Creates Resemblance to Christ:** Enlightening the Gospel teaching, Vincent de Paul explained: *one of the good means to lead us to the practice of the teachings of the gospel is to consider often that, from the beginning, the company had the desire of being united to Jesus Christ, to do what he did by the practice of his teaching, in order to become like him, pleasing to his eternal father, and useful to his Church and that it has really tried to progress in this and*

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<sup>769</sup> Abelly Louis. *Op.cit.*, Book II, p 127.

<sup>770</sup> This alludes to the fact that at this time, Vincent began to be consulted by Louis XIII, Anne of Austria and Cardinal Richelieu regarding the appointment of bishops.

<sup>771</sup> The term, "One of the first of your sons" refers to a member of the Tuesday Conference; Abelly Louis. *Op.cit.*, Book II, p 184.

<sup>772</sup> CCD:XI:230.

<sup>773</sup> CCD:XI:134.

*grow in holiness.*<sup>774</sup> Vincent felt that he was inspired by the Holy Spirit to be gentle and humble of heart in order to resemble Jesus Christ in his ministries. Vincent de Paul not only viewed the ministry of his companions as a prolongation of the mission of Jesus Christ, but he unequivocally affirmed that the poor are their proper portion. This is a heritage that had been entrusted to the church.<sup>775</sup> Bringing the message of Christ to poor people in a diverse manner, includes addressing delicate themes like race, gender, religious difference, culture and rites. Keeping in mind the fundamental values of faith, pastoral leaders should not forget to emphasize and interpret Christian values and the Christian belief system. According to Vincent de Paul, the kingdom of God *is to be understood to mean God reigns over all creatures; that God is the one who has given insights throughout the world, that have enlightened saints, confronted the wicked, dissipated doubts, maintained the truth, unmasked errors, and shows the ways by which the church in general and each of the faithful in particular are able to proceed securely; that God reigns in a special way over the righteous who honour and serve him; he is God of virtues, and there is none that doesn't come from him. They all proceed from this infinite source, who gives them to chases souls, who, because they are always ready to welcome them, are always faithful in practicing them. That is how they gain the kingdom of God; and that is how God reign in them.*<sup>776</sup> Culture, race, and language are diverse in nature but the message of the kingdom of God gives a specific identity to the diversity.

**f) Explores Human Potentiality:** Diverse approaches to spiritual development explore human potentiality and expands the traditional approach to a new horizon. Individuals never cease to evangelize, unless they fail to commit themselves to their ministry.<sup>777</sup> As people live in different strata of life, their approach to the spiritual life could be different. Vincent de Paul developed a ministry that was in harmony with the life of the poor and needy. Those people who involved themselves in the mission could experience development in their spiritual life. Vincent's mission was related to the transformation of people and of the church.<sup>778</sup> Mission creates a process of the conversion with regard to living the values of the gospel. Louis Abelly states: *experience shows us that preachers who appeal to truths of faith do more for souls than those who fill their sermons with mere human and philosophical wisdom. The light of faith is always accompanied by a certain heavenly unction that diffuses itself secretly in the hearts of*

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<sup>774</sup> CCD: XII:109.

<sup>775</sup> Delgado, Corpus. "God's Providence Has Inspired the Company with This Holy, Ingenious Means", in *Vincentiana* (January- March 2017, # 1), p 92.

<sup>776</sup> CCD: XII:112-113.

<sup>777</sup> Motto R.M. Andrés. "Vincent de Paul's Experience of the Charitable Mission", trans. Plock T. Charles, in *Vincentiana* (January- March 2017, # 1), p 98.

<sup>778</sup> Motto R.M. Andrés. "Vincent de Paul's Experience of the Charitable Mission". *Op.cit.*, p 110.

*those who listen.*<sup>779</sup> As people become more and more involved in different activities in their daily life, Vincent de Paul encourages them to take care of three elements if they wish to make steady progress in the life of prayer: intention, diligence and devotion.<sup>780</sup>

**g) Personal Growth:** Spirituality provides people with opportunities for personal growth in new educational and ecumenical situations. The Congregation of the Mission is involved in a radical manner, in the process of evangelization, which is the grace, vocation and identity of the mission.<sup>781</sup> The term evangelization describes the ministry of the whole church, but the Congregation of the Mission has a special charism in this regard. The command of Jesus to go and make disciples, *echoes in the changing scenarios and ever new challenges to the Church's mission of evangelization, and all of us are called to take part in this new missionary "going forth". Each Christian and every community must discern the path that the Lord points out, but all of us are asked to obey his call to go forth from our own comfort zone in order to reach all the "peripheries" in need of the light of the Gospel.*<sup>782</sup>

In an attempt to help the pastoral community, we recognize that cultural diversity is not a threat to unity of Church. We could affirm this by referring to the words of Pope Francis who stated, *the Holy Spirit, sent by the Father and the Son, transforms our hearts and enables us to enter into the perfect communion of the blessed Trinity, where all things find their unity. He builds up the communion and harmony of the people of God.*<sup>783</sup> Throughout the world, diversity is seen in every walk of life. We cannot find an absolute unique way of life in the world. Culture, environment, race and language influence the life and thinking pattern of people. Moreover, *the message of peace is not about a negotiated settlement but rather the conviction that the unity brought by the Spirit can harmonize every diversity. It overcomes every conflict by creating a new and promising synthesis. Diversity is a beautiful thing when it can constantly enter into a process of reconciliation and seal a sort of cultural covenant resulting in a "reconciled diversity".*<sup>784</sup>

Internationality and interculturality are two key words discussed during the 42<sup>nd</sup> General Assembly of the Congregation of the Mission (2016). These two concepts explain the character and spirit of the Congregation of the Mission. At the same time, however, the socio-cultural,

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<sup>779</sup> Abelly Louis. *Op.cit.*, Book III, p 184.

<sup>780</sup> CCD: XII: 268, (Conference: *Praying the Divine Office*, September 26, 1659).

<sup>781</sup> Fernández Celestino. "The Vincentian Charism and the New Evangelization", in *Vincentiana* (July- September 2016, # 3), p 319.

<sup>782</sup> Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, # 20.

<sup>783</sup> Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, # 117.

<sup>784</sup> Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, # 230.

socio-religious, socio-political and socio-economical contexts of everyday life can create challenges to spiritual growth in diversity because of cultural and language differences.<sup>785</sup> Due to the decline of vocations to priesthood and the increasing number of elderly priests in many countries, there is a need for priests to minister in certain countries that had previously sent forth priests to other countries. Setting aside the cultural differences, collaboration in this context can enhance the beauty of the church and can give a new dynamism to the life of the faithful.<sup>786</sup> *Indeed, the ever-increasing number of interconnections and communications in today's world makes us powerfully aware of the unity and common destiny of the nations. In the dynamics of history, and in the diversity of ethnic groups, societies and cultures, we see the seeds of a vocation to form a community composed of brothers and sisters who accept and care for one another.*<sup>787</sup> Diversity expands the horizon of understanding of the individual and of the community, and that is one of the dynamic characteristics of globalization. In fact, the meaning of the word “catholic”, which existed hundreds of years before of the concept of “globalization”, is its equivalent. Spirituality is a learning process. We should be happy of the various occasions and opportunities given by God to grow in spiritual matters. *We have seen the abundant blessings God had poured forth on the missions of Monsieur Vincent and his Congregation. We can judge from their fruits how appropriate they were for converting souls to God, dispelling ignorance, helping them leave their sinful ways, and leading them to take up the practice of Christian living. Our Saviour Jesus Christ planted faith and other virtues in all parts of the earth through the ministry of his apostles, the main and first of the missionaries, which is what the title apostle means. In the same way he also used Monsieur Vincent and all those who share his spirit to restore that same faith in many souls, and even to augment it and make it more fruitful.*<sup>788</sup>

### 1.4.3.3 Developing Personal Dispositions

Disciples of Jesus understood that Jesus spends daily many hours in prayer, and Jesus was not after fame and popularity, although so many people thronged at him. Whereas the disciples were taken up by the large crowds and they did not know how to connect their activities with prayer. At the request of the disciples Jesus teaches them how to pray. Disciples learned the method of connecting their life with prayer by repeating the prayer our father.<sup>789</sup>

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<sup>785</sup> Riyanto Armada. “Missionary Charism of Vincent de Paul in the Asian Context”, in *Vincentiana* (January-March 2017, # 1), p. 80.

<sup>786</sup> Riyanto Armada. “Missionary Charism of Vincent de Paul in the Asian Context”. *Op.cit.*, p. 81.

<sup>787</sup> Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, # 96.

<sup>788</sup> Abelly Louis. *Op.cit.*, Book II, p 183.

<sup>789</sup> Matthew 6:9-13.

Prayer created a new disposition in the disciples, which helped them to give more emphasis to spiritual perspective rather than to social perspective. Of all the prayers that we have today, *Pater Noster* is taught by Jesus to his apostles, which is the principal prayer of all our prayers including in the prayer of rosary that God inspired to Saint Dominic.<sup>790</sup>

Jesus said, let anyone who is thirsty come to me, and let the one who believes in me drink. Then as the scripture says, out of the believer's heart shall flow rivers of living water.<sup>791</sup> If people are united with God in prayer acts of charity would flow through their life. Saint Paul in his letter to Galatians explains that a person is justified not by the works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ. We believe in Christ Jesus, so that we might be justified by faith in Christ, and not by doing the works of the law, because no one will be justified by the works of the law (Gal 2:16). Faith in Jesus is the centre of all spiritual activities of the pastoral community; the faith is nourished by regular prayer, that is why people need to have good spiritual dispositions developed through prayer in order to connect charities with prayer life. Works of charity and prayer are two external circles connected to one another, the inner disposition of faith is the source of energy to both the external circles of works charity and prayer.

According to Vincent those who find hard to meditate at least half an hour daily, lack discernment.<sup>792</sup> Vincent finds that early in the morning is the best time to meditate, then people can dedicate time as they get up; this is also a motivation to get up early. The mental prayer could also be done at different times of the day even during the work and while returning home from serving the poor people. There cannot be any difficulty in doing particular examination of the conscience before meals and saying a prayer of grace after meals, thus all the activities shall be connected to prayer.<sup>793</sup> To develop personal dispositions there need to be two basic circles of activity. First is the willingness to rise early to praise and thank God which gradually strengthen the spirit of daily prayer and create disposition conducive to love the practice prayer. The second is the prudence in selecting the reading material and being selective in watching the television programmes,<sup>794</sup> because many of the commercial nature of journalism and negative criticism do not support the formation of spiritual dispositions, and not being watchful to those negative writings and programmes could cause negative dispositions against the spirit of prayer,

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<sup>790</sup> CCD: X: 498 (Conference, *Order of the Day*, December 8, 1658).

<sup>791</sup> John 7:37-38.

<sup>792</sup> CCD: IX: 94 (Conference, *Explanation of the Regulations*, June 14, 1643).

<sup>793</sup> CCD: IX: 94 (Conference, *Explanation of the Regulations*, June 14, 1643).

<sup>794</sup> Maloney, Robert. P., .... *Reflections on Vincentian Spirituality in Today's World*. *Op.cit.*, p 48.

consequently the spiritual advancement will be hindered and people will find difficulty in understanding the meaning of the relation between prayer and charity.

#### 1.4.3.4 Discovering Opportunities

Vincent de Paul looked for ways to preserve the good resolutions that the *ordinandi* made during their ordination retreats. For this purpose, he adopted the suggestion of one of them to bring former retreatants together once a week. This was the beginning of the *Tuesday Conferences*<sup>795</sup>, in which more than 250 priests, from several dioceses, participated.<sup>796</sup> Vincent de Paul was motivated by the words of Jesus in Luke 4:43, and he was convinced that he must preach the good news of the kingdom of God. This inspiration of Vincent de Paul is strongly affirmed in the Constitutions of the Congregation of the Mission: *the love of Christ, who had pity on the crowd (Mk 8:2), is the source of all our apostolic activity, and urges us, in the words of St. Vincent, to make the Gospel really effective (SV, XII, 84). According to the varying circumstances of time and place, our work of evangelization in word and action should strive ...to be faithful to the kingdom i.e., the new world, the new order, the new manner of being, of living, of living in community, which the gospel inaugurates (EN, 23).*<sup>797</sup> Pastoral leaders need to find creative means for holistic spiritual formation on both the initial and ongoing levels, and those creative means could include integral aspects such as the human, spiritual, apostolic, biblical, theological and Vincentian. However, in all aspects the participants will be ultimately responsible for their own formation.<sup>798</sup> Organizers can suggest and motivate the participants by offering resources regarding spiritual formation, and by sharing knowledge on specific matters through the involvement of resource persons.<sup>799</sup>

- a) On various occasions during the year retreats and seminars for the elderly could be organized in the parish.
- b) Retreats and seminars could be organized for children and students in a parish during their holidays.
- c) Lenten mini-retreats could be organized in a parish, either on Saturday afternoon or Sunday afternoon.
- d) Annual retreats could be organized in a parish in order to assist people in their participation in the sacrament of reconciliation.
- e) Seminars on a chosen spiritual theme could be organized especially for teachers belonging to various parish institutions as well as for the employees of the parish.

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<sup>795</sup> The title Tuesday Conference was purposely chosen by Vincent de Paul because of the etymology of conference, a word which comes from *cum ferre* which means to bring together. These conferences brought together the priests together to reflect on a given subject. These meetings were not an occasion for passive listening to a prepared talk.

<sup>796</sup> Pujo, Bernard. *Pionier der Moderne. Das abenteuerliche Leben des Vinzenz von Paul*. *Op.cit.*, p. 160.

<sup>797</sup> *Constitution and Statutes of the Congregation of the Mission*, #11

<sup>798</sup> Maloney, Robert.P. *He Hears the Cry of the Poor*. *Op.cit.*, p. 141.

<sup>799</sup> Kelly, Margaret John, *Councils of the Daughters of Charity*, *Op.cit.*, p 80.

The purpose of retreat and seminar are to engage people with spiritual themes and to guide people in their spiritual development through prayer, sharing experiences, personal contacts, and dialogue. In the hierarchy of values, Vincent presented three priorities to guide decision making: the glory of God, the interests of the group or community, and the interests of the individual.<sup>800</sup> In order to assure these values Vincent de Paul stressed the necessity of simplicity and objectivity, and motivated his followers to identify specific failings in this regard, and requested them to avoid acts which are done to please someone.<sup>801</sup>

#### 1.4.3.5 Empowerment of Women

We must seriously reflect on the lack of respect and dignity towards women in many countries in our world. Women are exploited and oppressed in many parts of the world, yet it is often the woman who is the first force in the family to educate, to change their way of thinking.<sup>802</sup> The Synod of Bishops, a Special Assembly for the Pan-Amazonian region was a great initiative of the catholic church towards some structural change of the functioning perspective of the church which is being highlighted with the verse from the Book of Revelation *The one who sat on the throne said, behold, I make all things new. Then he said, write these words down, for they are trustworthy and true* (Rev 21:5). After a long synodal journey of listening to the People of God in the Church of the Amazon, Pope Francis inaugurated the synod during his visit to the Amazon on 19th January 2018, and later the Synod took place in Rome in a fraternal gathering of 21 days in October 2019.

The Church in the Amazon wants to “create still broader opportunities for a more incisive female presence in the Church” (EG 103). “Let us not reduce the involvement of women in the Church, but instead promote their active role in the ecclesial community. If the Church, in her complete and real dimension, loses women, she risks becoming sterile” (Francis, *Meeting with the Brazilian Episcopate*, Rio de Janeiro, 27.7.2013). ...The Magisterium of the Church since the Second Vatican Council has highlighted the central place that women occupy within the Church: “The hour is coming, in fact has come, when the vocation of women is being achieved in its fullness, the hour in which woman acquires in the world an influence, an effect and a power never reached until now. That is why, at this moment when the human race is under-going so deep a mutation, women impregnated with the spirit of the Gospel can do so much to aid mankind in not falling” (*Closing of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council: Address of Pope Paul VI to Women*, 8.12.1965; AAS 58, 1966, 13-14). ...We value the role of women, recognizing their fundamental role in the formation and continuity of cultures, in spirituality, in communities and families. Their leadership must be more fully assumed in the heart of the Church, recognized and promoted by strengthening their participation in the pastoral councils of parishes and dioceses, and also in positions of governance.<sup>803</sup>

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<sup>800</sup> Kelly, Margaret John, *Councils of the Daughters of Charity*, *Op.cit.*, p 72.

<sup>801</sup> Kelly, Margaret John, *Councils of the Daughters of Charity*, *Op.cit.*, p 73.

<sup>802</sup> Opeka, Pedro. “In the Footsteps of Vincent de Paul”, Translated: Borlik, Dan Paul., in *Vincentiana* (July-September, 2017,# 3), p 369.

<sup>803</sup> *The Amazon: New Paths for the Church and for an Integral Ecology*, #99-103.

This synod gives two significant hopes with regard to the empowerment of women in the structural function of the Catholic Church. The first reason is obvious, that the synod documents the necessity of formally giving the opportunity of administrative rights to women, although emphasising the cultural context of the people of Amazon. Thereby many women in the world feel happy for the women in the region of Amazon, that the subject of empowering women in the area of structural functioning of the Catholic Church is once again taken up and is beginning to become a positive reality. The second glimpse of hope for the women in the universal church is the usage of the term indigenous people. The term indigenous peoples is known in some regions as first peoples, first nations, aboriginal peoples or native peoples. They are ethnic peoples who are the original and earliest known inhabitants of an area, in contrast to groups that have settled, occupied or colonized the area. The term emphasizes cultural difference. The term also accepts that the culture of the earliest inhabitants and the culture of the new inhabitants are different, in other words, both groups have a different way of life and they have different traditions. The term tradition could be understood as an inherited, established, customary pattern of thought, action and the behaviour of handing down of information, beliefs, and customs by word of mouth and by example from one generation to another without written instruction. Tradition can be unlearned and relearned.

Vincent de Paul wrote in his letter to Étienne Blatiron, superior in Genoa, that in the beginning of the charities of Joigny and Montmirail, both of them were governed by persons of both sexes; the men were responsible for the care of the poor who were in good health, and the women for those who were ill, but because the funds were in common, we were obliged to remove men, for the men wanted to assume the entire responsibility and the women could tolerate this. And Vincent testifies in favour of the women, that there is no fault to be found in their administration because they are so careful and trustworthy.<sup>804</sup>

The Daughters of Charity were the first Sisters of in the history of the Catholic Church to do the ministry in secular and ordinary dress.<sup>805</sup> Vincent admitted that he could not have made that revolutionary decision by himself as a parish priest, rather it was God who initiated this movement.<sup>806</sup> This group of Sisters, encouraged by Louise de Marillac and Vincent de Paul, decided to lead a secular life rather than a cloistered life even though that was contrary to the tradition of that era.<sup>807</sup> The Daughters of Charity are sisters who come and go, like lay women,

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<sup>804</sup> CCD: IV:76 (Letter: *To Étienne Blatiron*, September 2, 1650).

<sup>805</sup> CCD: IX:165 (Conference: *Observance of the Rule*, January 22, 1645).

<sup>806</sup> CCD: IX:165 (Conference: *Observance of the Rule*, January 22, 1645).

<sup>807</sup> CCD: IV:7 (Letter: *Letter of Saint Louise de Marillac to Saint Vincent*, April, 1650).

they are parishioners under the guidance of the pastors in the places where they are established.<sup>808</sup> Thus Vincent and Louise de Marillac revolutionized the norms for women religious life by bringing them out from behind the walls of the cloister life, and they promoted the vocation of numerous women, ready to go to the aid of the poor.<sup>809</sup> Vincent inspired men and women to follow Christ and to become ministers of God's love.<sup>810</sup>

Vincent was even for the financial empowerment of women; he said that women should not depend on men for the money.<sup>811</sup> Vincent de Paul considered the Daughters of Charity to be similar to the deaconesses of the early church who had taught the poor their faith, and he even extended this consideration to the members of the confraternities that he founded.<sup>812</sup>

## Conclusion

The Catholic reform movement, initiated by Vincent de Paul, produced a renewal of religious devotion, a new approach to religious life, a better understanding of the ministry of charity, and advancement in virtue and spiritual discipline within the society of the seventeenth century, especially in France. One of Vincent's more significant reforms was his innovations in the area of systematic change which had a profound effect on the religious life of women. Before Vincent women religious had to be cloistered. This change with regard to women's religious life established a new direction in the Catholic Church, one that would continue to expand with the passing of the years.

The Lazarist Mission, also known as the Vincentian Mission, which is in fact Congregation of the Mission is a gift of God to the Catholic Church, a gift that came to life through Vincent de Paul and Louise de Marillac. If we attempt to give a date to this event then we would cite January 1617 (the preaching of the mission in Folleville). The charism of charity advocated by Vincent and Louise and practiced by the early members of these Congregations -- a charism that has been passed down through the centuries --- has given a dynamic to the acts of charity in the pastoral strategies of the universal church. From the very beginning of the church, this charism existed. Vincentians made explicit some simple elements of charity in their pastoral ministry, for example, caring for sick people in their homes, caring for the elderly, providing poor people with food and clothing, preaching in a simple manner to the poor country

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<sup>808</sup> CCD: VIII:277 (Letter: *To Jacques de la Fosse*, February 7, 1660).

<sup>809</sup> Opeka, Pedro. "In the Footsteps of Vincent de Paul", *Op.cit.*, p 362.

<sup>810</sup> Saldaña Moreno, César A. "Lay Vincentian Missionaries and Vincentian Spirituality," *Op.cit.*, p 496.

<sup>811</sup> CCD:X:70 (Letter, *To Saint Louise*, 1630).

<sup>812</sup> Forrestal, Alison, *Op.cit.*, p. 194.

people, prison ministry done by the Daughters, spiritual formation of people, spiritual formation of clerics, debates and dialogue during the Tuesday conferences, accommodating and caring for migrants. These and so many other activities highlight the simple practical activities which would become part of the church's mission.

These days the theme of giving respect and status to lay people in the Church is considered in many seminars and theological discussions. The Catholic Church has a master for this model of collaboration with lay people, a master named Vincent de Paul who involved numerous lay people from the different classes of society (poor and rich) in his pastoral ministry. The reform movement had already been initiated by the Jesuits and Oratorians before Vincent de Paul arrived in Paris. Nevertheless, Vincent de Paul implemented strategies for reformation in the pastoral care of poor country people. Vincent de Paul's pastoral approach involved people in active ministry ... participation of the priests and religious, the lay people, (poor and rich) was the fruit of a visionary, missionary strategy with regard to the process of evangelization. Vincent de Paul's pastoral strategy was determined by the theological virtue of charity. A large number of people united under the banner of charity, and different groups could express commitment to the mission of the church through their participation in various charitable activities.

Vincent de Paul was convinced that existing structures did not meet people's needs. Success in pastoral ministry involved creating opportunities for the continuation of the mission of the church, opportunities to provide for the spiritual and material needs of those persons living on the margins of society and in initiating projects which allow the poor to experience reconciliation with God and the church and therefore, to experience the joy of the Gospel.

The spirituality of Vincent de Paul explains his vision and activity as he responded to the needs of the poor. With all humility he was able to ask others to contribute to his ministry. By accepting his limitation over the years, he became convinced, that he was not called to engage in the mission by himself. Therefore, he involved many lay people and many members of the clergy. Entrusting pastoral ministry to the lay people, promoting female charitable organizations, establishing the Confraternities of Charity, Congregation of the Mission and Daughters of Charity ... all of these are expressions of his spirit of involving people in the church's mission. Activating women in public ministry and creating a new form of life for women religious gave a new face to the Church, a new face as people engaged in pastoral ministry with a new enthusiasm and a new dynamism.

## Part II

### A Tri Millennial Concept of Vincentian-Thomistic Evangelization and Christian Education

#### Introduction

The Catholic faith confronts three major challenges to evangelisation in the third millennium: the first challenge is that the Church needs to set her thoughts clearly against the tendency to subject Christian revelation to being a common human experience, one that equates itself as equal with experience of any other religion; the second challenge is that the Church must proclaim theological and philosophical thoughts against the false theology that conceives God as being another cause within the created world; the third challenge is to activate spiritual interests and habit of prayer among the faithful. The Congregation for Catholic Education records that on the threshold of the third millennium education faces new challenges because, *we have a crisis of values which, in highly developed societies in particular, assumes the form, often exalted by the media, of subjectivism, moral relativism and nihilism.*<sup>813</sup> At the beginning of the second part of this research, I would like to imitate Karl Rahner who prayed to St. Thomas Aquinas: Grant me your intercession with God, since all saints are there for all other saints, including poor sinner like me – intercede on my behalf so that at least from a distance I can become a little like you, similar and sober, with courage to think first before putting my pen to the paper.<sup>814</sup>

Spiritual concepts, with regard to Vincentian-Thomistic evangelization, attempt to discover new pastoral approaches and methods in order to strengthen the spiritual convictions of the faithful, thereby a new scope of activating mission could be opened. I would like to propose spiritual advancement of people within the realm of educational perspective of pastoral community development with reference to Vincent de Paul and Thomas Aquinas, in which I rely upon the interpretation of Vincentian spirituality and *Summa Theologiae*, with a view to pastoral community development, which I believe can help people transcend the cultural and

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<sup>813</sup> *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the third Millennium*. Congregation for Catholic Education, Rome, 28th December 1997, #1.

[https://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc\\_con\\_ccatheduc\\_doc\\_27041998\\_sch00l2000\\_en.html](https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_27041998_sch00l2000_en.html) (accessed on 5.01.2020).

<sup>814</sup> Rahner, Karl. *Gebete des Lebens*. Raffelt, Albert (Hg.), Herder, Freiburg im Breisgau, 1984, p 177; „Schenke mir deine Fürsprache bei Gott, da alle Heiligen für alle anderen Heiligen da sind, zu denen auch die armen Sünder wie ich gehören- schenke mir deine Fürsprache, dass ich wenigstens von ferne dir ein wenig ähnlich werde: ähnlich und nüchtern, mit dem Mut, zuerst einmal zu denken, bevor feurige Reden gehalten werden; kirchlich, aber nicht klerikal.“

ethnic vicissitudes, with the force of reason to gain a better understanding of Christian life with reference to modern life.

Education is a comprehensive, lifelong process of developing and unfolding those skills that enable Menschen to develop their potentiality, to act in a responsible manner, to acquire problem-solving skills, to enrich their personal relationships, to give meaning and purpose to life, to deepen their faith and to help them clothe themselves in gospel values.<sup>815</sup> The act of proclaiming the Gospel afresh in a highly secularized social environment has enormous consequences in the places of evangelization, that is, the parish, family and school.<sup>816</sup> The process of Christian evangelization leads us to pray in the words of Jesus: *thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done...* (Mt 6:10). John Paul II, regarding the permanent validity of the Church's missionary mandate stated that in the third millennium ministers must seek to encourage a development in which the people of the non-Christian world and of the traditional Christian world draw closer to the gospel values to affirm the dignity of human person and role of women.<sup>817</sup>

### **Problem of Language**

The problem of understanding language correctly is as old as language itself, because every active language uses new words, continues to develop new phrases and increases its vocabulary. For instance, Christians confess that they believe in Jesus Christ. Here, the word Christ is a striking impetus for all Christians. Initially, in the language preferred by the apostle Paul, the word Christ, was not originally meant to be a name but a title (messiah). Today Christians are aware of the meaning of this title, and the word Christ has become a name.<sup>818</sup> At times people have to use more words to convey the meaning of a single word of another culture. In 1998, Hadwig Müller encountered the French word “*pastorale d'engendrement*”, which was the syntactic construction of Edouard Pousset on his pastoral discovery. Hadwig Müller explains the meaning of the phrase of this pastoral care, *pastorale d'engendrement*, in the context of Germany with the help of the phrase: *zeugende Pastoral*, (begetting/witnessing

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<sup>815</sup> Mette, Nobert. „Der aktuelle Diskurs über Bildungsgerechtigkeit in den beiden (Groß) Kirchen in Deutschland“, in *Bildung und Gerechtigkeit. Warum religiöse Bildung politisch sein muss*. Könnemann, Judith and Mette, Norbert(eds.). Matthias Grünewald Verlag der Schwabenverlag AG, Ostfildern, Deutschland, 2013, p 27.

<sup>816</sup> Pope Benedict XVI. *Meeting with the Bishops of England, Scotland and Wales*. Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2010.

[http://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/speeches/2010/september/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_spe\\_20100919\\_vescovi-inghilterra.html](http://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/speeches/2010/september/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20100919_vescovi-inghilterra.html). (accessed on 5.1.2020).

<sup>817</sup> John Paul II. Encyclical: *Redemptoris Missio* , Libreria Editrice Vaticana 1990, # 86.

<sup>818</sup> Ratzinger, Joseph. *Einführung in das Christentum*. Kösel Verlag KG, München, Germany, 1968, p 161.

pastoral care).<sup>819</sup> However, he finds the correct theological nuance of *pastorale d'engendrement* may not be aptly expressed in the above German phrase. Witnessing in a pastoral setting, in other words begetting pastoral, i.e., *zeugende Pastoral*, is a subjective understanding; here, the object is not directly expressed but is expected and desired in the witnessing which is a creative pastoral activity.<sup>820</sup>

Like the word *pastorale d'engendrement*, the word spirituality is vague in its expression and there is a need to understand the depth of the meaning of this word. The early use of the Latin word *spiritualitas* was in the 5<sup>th</sup> century. Just as the Latin word *spiritualitas* has different denotations, its English translation “spirituality” is one of the vaguest words in contemporary religious language and lacks a definite specific understanding and meaning. Both Vincent de Paul and Thomas Aquinas speaks of “spiritual”, but I do not find in their writings any direct use of the word spirituality, however, we find many words which imply the concept of spirituality. Identical to the analogical sense of the word “light” which help menschen (human being) to obtain possible source for their cognitive faculties in attaining knowledge<sup>821</sup>, the analogy of the word *spirituality* brings us into the immaterial (noncorporeal or spiritual) ambit of relationship between God and mensch, a process of encounter with God. Thomas Aquinas understands God as self-evident, and he explains the existence of God in beginning part of *Summa theologiae*,<sup>822</sup> which is generally named, five ways to know God.<sup>823</sup> Spirituality designates the reality lived by an individual, which is the quality of life conducted by the spirit.<sup>824</sup> This grace of spirit, both in the life of Thomas Aquinas and Vincent de Paul, explains that spirituality is a life charity,<sup>825</sup> and prayer. A second meaning of spirituality refers to proposing concrete rules of action according to certain spirit with an aim to stimulate a renewal and advancement of spiritual life; and this teaching, which aims at concrete action, is derived from the conviction of the same teacher, born out of one’s own experience under the guidance

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<sup>819</sup> Müller Hadwig. „Hoffnung des Übersetzens“ in *Frei Geben. Pastoraltheologische Impulse aus Frankreich*. Feiter, Reinhard und Müller, Hadwig (eds.), Matthias Grünewald Verlag, Ostfeldern, Deutschland, 2012, p 12-15.

<sup>820</sup> Müller Hadwig. „Hoffnung des Übersetzens“ in *Frei Geben. Op.cit.*, p 16.

<sup>821</sup> *ST*. I q. 67, a. 1.

<sup>822</sup> *ST*. I q. 2, a. 3.

<sup>823</sup> (1) God, the prime mover; (2) God, the first cause; (3) God, the necessary being; (4) God, the absolute being; (5) God, the grand designer.

<sup>824</sup> The first appearances in Latin of *spiritualitas*, in the 5<sup>th</sup> and sixth centuries, retain this meaning, as does Thomas Aquinas. The first mention of *spiritualitas* is in the seventh letter of pseudo-Jerome (in reality, Pelagius): “Age ut in spiritualitae proficias. Cave ne quod accepisti bonum, incautus et negligens custos amittas” (PL 30, 144D-115A). The second use comes a century later in the 14<sup>th</sup> letter of Saint Avit addressed to his brother: “Minus enim procul dubio salva observatione apparet affectus, sed ostendistis quanta spiritualitate vos exercere delectet quod praeterisse sic doluit” (MGH, Auctores antiquissimi VI/2, ed. R. Peiper (Berlin, 1883), 47); See: Torell, Jean Pierre. *Saint Thomas Aquinas. Spiritual Master. Volume 2*, Trans. Royal Robert, The Catholic University of America Press, Washington, D.C, 2003, p 19.

<sup>825</sup> *ST*, I-II, q. 65, a. 2.

of the spirit.<sup>826</sup> Taking into account the second meaning, I attempt to discover the spirituality of Thomas Aquinas and Vincent de Paul. Aquinas was convinced: God exists. The whole *Summa theologiae* explains philosophically and theologically various means of drawing closer to God and living in his presence, in the vocabulary known to Thomas Aquinas. There is need to find the corresponding words in present day spiritual education and spirituality, so as to understand the proposed spirituality of Thomas Aquinas. The means of doing voluntary acts, practicing virtues, intellectual reasoning, meditation and contemplation could be understood as the spirituality advocated by Aquinas. We understand spirituality as a quality of being concerned with soul as opposed to material things. Aquinas explained it with two terms as spiritual and corporeal substance.<sup>827</sup> Aquinas was convinced that spiritual and corporeal substances are two different elements, but at the same time he did not want to accept the dualism of Plato. In his explanation of spiritual and corporeal substance, thinking beyond metaphysical assumptions regarding cause, effect, substance and essence, Aquinas explained a type of dualism, which is being named as *hylemorphic dualism*, because by emphasising form and matter, he explained immaterial and subsistent constituent.

Aquinas considered both form and matter as act- principle. *We must assert that the intellect which is the principle of intellectual operation is the form of the human body. For that whereby primarily anything acts is a form of the thing to which the act is to be attributed: for instance, ... health is a form of the body, and knowledge is a form of the soul... and this action of understanding is the action of this particular man.*<sup>828</sup> Vincent de Paul explained spirituality through words that were different than form and matter. He too was convinced of the two elements, and he accepted partially the idea of Aquinas, that both are act- principles, but he named them as prayer and charity. Both prayer and charity are act-principle, which are related to one another and are unified in action. Charity has an element of prayer as well as a material act towards the needy, in the same way Christian prayer has an element of charity received through Christ as well as voluntary act by the individual. Thus, Vincent de Paul a student of Toulouse where Thomistic ideas were studied and discussed, gave new scope to the explanation of spirituality through the words, prayer and charity. An answer to the question who is spiritual, involves the understanding, Menschen who allow themselves to be led by the spirit.<sup>829</sup> People

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<sup>826</sup> Torell, Jean Pierre. *Saint Thomas Aquinas. Spiritual Master. Op.cit.*, p 20.

<sup>827</sup> *ST*, I, q. 75. *A substance is not some sort of generic existent differentiated by adding a certain nature, but the word substance expresses a certain special way of existing- namely, existing on its own.* \_\_\_Thomas Aquinas Selected Philosophical Writings. Selected and Translated by McDermott, Timothy., The World's Classics, Oxford University Press, New York, 1993, p 53.

<sup>828</sup> *ST*, I, q. 76, a. 1.

<sup>829</sup> Torell, Jean Pierre. *Saint Thomas Aquinas. Spiritual Master. Volume 2, Op.cit.*, p 200.

who are listening to God in prayer and in reading the holy Bible and put them into practice are also people who built their house on solid rock.<sup>830</sup>

The word spirituality is diverse in expression like the word dogma. A dogma designates a doctrine of faith. Michael Seewald explains how we can understand the meaning of the word dogma, a word which has a degree of certainty and a binding force, albeit, understood differently by people of various cultures in different times. According to Michael Seewald, Thomas Aquinas, for example, avoids the word dogma. The fact that he sings a “dogma datur christianis” in his hymn *Lauda Sion salvatorem* is something Martin Elze describes as a poetic freedom, although it would be an exaggeration to claim, a complete absence of the concept of dogma in the 13th Century. The word *articulus fidei* is much more prominent in Thomas Aquinas' work, although it remained quite controversial. The Latin word *articulus* must be derived from the Greek word *arthron*, meaning joint. According to Thomas, the goal of joint is to ensure a *coaptatio*, which could perhaps be translated elegantly but precisely as “the production of a perfect fit”. A joint or hinge ensures different parts fit into one another to become a whole entity. Therefore, according to Thomas, the Christian doctrine of the faith also contains different articles, because at the same time diversity and unity can be found in it: Unity because the “divine truth” is only one, diversity provided, it is “multiplied in our minds”. The one divine reality becomes intellectually accessible to people only in a variety of belief systems. This diversity, like joints or hinge, of holding the individual parts of the body together is the task of the *articuli fidei*, through which it should be possible to think of the doctrine of faith both as one and as consisting of different doctrines. Such a conception brings with it a dynamization, because its starting point is the one divine reality that turns to the Menschen in the history of Israel and in the life of Jesus, which, in order to be understood, has to be broken down into various teachings, which in turn act like joints or hinges connected to a single body.<sup>831</sup>

### **Theological Identity**

Andreas Speer says that the opinions on the *Summa theologiae* are divided. Some see *Summa theologiae* as a model of a scholastic structure of thought, as a conceptual cathedral of unique cohesion and transparency. Others see precisely in the formalization of the presentation and the argumentation a petrification of thinking, in the sense of Hegel's invective, against the dry ‘mind metaphysics’ of the medieval scholastic philosophy, which drifts around in baseless

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<sup>830</sup> CCD: XII: 106, (Conference. Gospel Teachings, February 14, 1659).

<sup>831</sup> Seewald Michael. *Dogma im Wandel. Wie Glaubenslehren sich entwickeln*. Herder, Freiburg im Breisgau, 2018, p 32.

connections of categories and intellectual determinations. Yet others consider the *Summa theologiae* to be the ultimate classic Christian dogmatics, endowed with the full authority of the Doctor of the Church, (Thomas was given this title by Pope Pius V in 1567). Just this postulated normativity of Thomas's theology is often met with vehement criticism. Above all, however, the *Summa theologiae* is the epitome of the scholastic synthesis of reason and faith, of philosophy and theology, and the Thomistic synthesis is a model for the medieval understanding of philosophy and theology.<sup>832</sup>

In the *Summa theologiae*, Aquinas gives preference to the authority of biblical revelation over that of any human being. At times he expresses agreement with certain Jewish and Islamic authors, but those agreements are largely philosophical.<sup>833</sup> Thomas Aquinas begins theological discourse with what God has revealed about himself and his action in creating and redeeming the world, and he understands this world in that light. He begins his philosophical discourse with acquired knowledge of the world, and he understands that the explanation of God is conditioned by vocabulary known from the world. With the exception of the commentaries on Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* and a few writings (e.g., the early writings *De ente et essentia*: On beings and of essence), Thomas Aquinas's philosophy is embedded in the theological works. In his philosophical discussions, theological thought predominates.<sup>834</sup> Aquinas's theological works are often paradigms of the engagement between theological and philosophical reflection, because he considers discussion concerning subjects like nature of God, nature of Menschen, nature of good and fulfilment can be both theological and philosophical. *There is no reason why those things which may be learned from philosophical science, so far as they can be known by natural reason, may not also be taught us by another science so far as they fall within revelation. Hence theology included in sacred doctrine differs in kind from that theology which is part of philosophy.*<sup>835</sup> The word theologian is currently attributed to a university person and not to a catechist, whereas for Thomas Aquinas, the theologian was a person who is pursuing the common Christian vocation of holiness.<sup>836</sup>

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<sup>832</sup> Speer, Andreas. "Die Summa theologiae lesen-eine Einführung". In *Thomas von Aquin: Die Summa theologiae. Werkinterpretationen*. Speer, Andreas (Hrsg.), Walter de Gruyter, Berlin, 2005, p 1.

<sup>833</sup> Davies, Brian. *Thomas Aquinas's Summa Theologiae. A Guide and Commentary*. Oxford University Press, New York, 2014, p 354-355.

<sup>834</sup> *Herders Kleines philosophisches Wörterbuch*. Müller, Max und Halder, Alois (Hrsg.), Herder-Bücherei, Verlag Herder KG Freiburg im Breisgau 1958, p 179.

<sup>835</sup> *ST*, I, q. 1, a. 1 ad 2.

<sup>836</sup> McInerney, Ralph. "Foreword"; In, *The Aquinas Catechism. A Simple Explanation of the Catholic Faith by the Church's Greatest Theologian*. Sophia Institute Press, Manchester, New Hampshire, 2000, p xiv.

The theology of Aquinas describes the relationship between God and Menschen and explains how Menschen's reconciliation with the Divine is made possible through Christ. Aquinas was a master in Sacred Scripture, and his reference to the word *theologia* denotes *sacra doctrina*. Indeed, the word *sacra doctrina* has a wider scope than the modern word theology. *Sacra doctrine* has two categories of meaning, objective and active. Objective meaning indicates what is taught, which applies to Christian truth as a body of doctrine, and this doctrine in a wider sense runs from Scripture to theology. *Sacra doctrina* is for Aquinas saving truth. Unless the menschen can rely on God to know what they can never find out on their own, there will be no salvation for them. This knowledge is given to menschen in Jesus Christ, the Word incarnate, which means that the core of *sacra doctrina* is the knowledge of the truth about the trinitarian God (Father, Son and Spirit), and of the truth of the incarnation, for the knowledge of Jesus Christ is the consummation of the whole initiative of theology.<sup>837</sup> The active meaning indicates the act of teaching, because doctrine suggests every activity through which Christian truth comes to Menschen. This act of teaching includes God's teaching made known through revelation, Christian tradition, catechesis, the Church's teaching and theological interpretation.<sup>838</sup>

The continuity of thought from Peter Lombard of the 12<sup>th</sup> century and Aristotle is evident in the works of Thomas Aquinas.<sup>839</sup> Aquinas's theology has mainly three dimensions: speculative, scripture and practical. The speculative dimension is the reason's effort to comprehend what is initiated by faith with syllogisms and new conclusions. The Scriptural dimension designates a positive historical re-reading of the Holy Bible from the standpoint of one's own life. Thomas Aquinas commented on Scripture throughout his life in a philosophical manner. The practical dimension is what is named as moral theology of Aquinas, which is also a mystical approach.<sup>840</sup> The practical dimension is an inseparable part of his theological understanding, because the act of believing does not reach completion in the formulas but in reality itself.<sup>841</sup> Respecting all these three aspects in his research and methods he collected supportive sources to describe everything of his understanding in connection with God from the Church fathers, Aristotle, Augustine of Hippo, Avicenna, Averroes, Al-Ghazali, Boethius,

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<sup>837</sup> Mongeau, Gilly. *Embracing Wisdom. The Summa theologiae as Spiritual Pedagogy*. Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies. Toronto, Canada, 2015, p 10.

<sup>838</sup> Torell, Jean Pierre. *Saint Thomas Aquinas. Spiritual Master. Volume 2, Op.cit.*, p 2.

<sup>839</sup> Hogg, David S. "Sufficient for All, Efficient for Some. Definite Atonement in The Medieval Church"; In, *From Heaven He Came and Sought Her. Definite Atonement in Historical, Biblical, Theological and Pastoral Perspective*. Gibson, David and Gibson, Jonathan (eds.), Crossway, Wheaton, Illinois, 2013, p 89.

<sup>840</sup> Torell, Jean Pierre. *Saint Thomas Aquinas. Spiritual Master. Volume 2, Trans. Royal Robert, Op.cit.*, p 4-3.

<sup>841</sup> *ST*, II-II, q. 1, a. 2 ad 2.

John of Damascus, Paul the Apostle, Pseudo-Dionysius, Maimonides, Anselm of Canterbury, Plato, Cicero and John Scotus Eriugena. *Though obviously a man of his times, Aquinas believed that theologians need to draw on what is intellectually good while pressing forward and trying to express the mysteries of the Christian faith in new ways.*<sup>842</sup>

The reason for the founding contract of the *Congregation of the Mission* was to preach, instruct, exhort, and catechize poor country people, and to get everyone ready to make a good general confession of their past life.<sup>843</sup> The spiritual life according to Vincent de Paul has two aspects: first, being conscious of the vocation to follow Jesus Christ and to continue the mission of Christ in proclaiming and bearing witness to the gospel to the poor and second, to engage in a constant life of prayer.<sup>844</sup> During the years in Dax or at the University of Toulouse, Vincent de Paul lived with modesty and wisdom that he spread the good odour of his spiritual conviction everywhere. He was esteemed and loved by all who came in contact with him. He was particularly devoted to the young students he supervised, not only teaching them well but likewise giving them a strong taste for Christian piety. His reputation in Toulouse was so well founded that his boarding school became popular.<sup>845</sup> Regarding the theological identity of Vincent de Paul, I have already spoken about this in the introduction of part one. Vincent de Paul's theological understanding of pastoral ministry was grounded on five virtues: simplicity, humility, meekness, mortification, and zeal for souls.<sup>846</sup> He understood, Jesus Christ is truly God and truly human, and he was convinced that pastoral ministry should strive to honour, love and serve God by honouring, loving and serving the poor, the abandoned, the excluded, and people living in adverse situations. People of good will admired his commitment to the spiritual well-being of both the poor and the rich, and he enjoyed unchallenged authority at the council of Conscience (1643-1645). Indeed, the Anne of Austria regularly agreed with the choice of Vincent de Paul regarding any nomination to Church office, because she had a great appreciation of the retreats organized by Vincent de Paul and his team.<sup>847</sup> Vincentian spirituality encourages development of relationships that transcends age and culture.

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<sup>842</sup> Davies, Brian. *Thomas Aquinas's Summa Theologiae. A Guide and Commentary. Op.cit.*, p 358.

<sup>843</sup> Braga, Carlo. "The Constitutions of the Congregation of the Mission Historical Notes", Trans. Stone, Robert and Delagoza, Rolando, in *Vincentiana* (2000, # 4-5), p 1.

<sup>844</sup> Antonello, Erminio. "Constitutions: Fount of the Missionary's Spiritual Life", Trans. India, J. Stephen, in *Vincentiana* (2000, # 4-5).

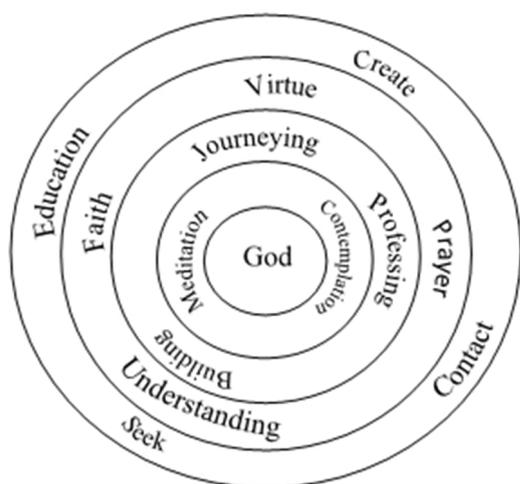
<sup>845</sup> Abelly, Louis. *The Life of the Venerable Servant of God Vincent de Paul: Founder and First Superior General of the Congregation of the Mission*, 3 volumes, edited by John E. Rybolt, CM, translated by William Quinn, FSC, notes by Edward R. Udovic, CM and John E. Rybolt, CM, introduction by Stafford Poole, CM, New City Press, New Rochelle, New York, 1993. Volume I, p.42.

<sup>846</sup> *Common Rules*. XII,12.

<sup>847</sup> Pujo, Bernard. *Op.cit.*, p. 229.

## Theological Perspective

My research is based on my theological conviction that the spiritual life is an expression of understanding of God through activities based on virtues sustained by habitual prayer. An understanding of faith leads to an understanding God, to an intellectual act of prayer, and to acts of virtue. The role of Christian education consists of helping the members of the community to understand their faith in God. With regard to the spiritual formation of pastoral communities, pastoral leaders have a greater and more urgent responsibility to seek and find contact and ultimately create appropriate unity within the parish community<sup>848</sup> and pastoral leaders, to facilitate the development of an environment of educational dialogue for attaining spiritual knowledge.



The theological concept of the mission perspective of the pastoral leaders can be well understood in those three movements advocated by Pope Francis. Journeying is the first circle of movement. Journeying in the presence of the Lord, in the light of the Lord, seeking to live with the blamelessness that God asked of Abraham in his promise. Building is the second circle of movement. Building the Church, the Bride of

Christ, on the cornerstone which is the Lord himself. The third circle of movement is professing. According to Francis we can walk as much as we want, we can build many things, but if we do not profess Jesus Christ, things go wrong. We may become a charitable NGO, but not the Church, the Bride of the Lord. When we are not walking, we stop moving. When we are not building on the stones, it will collapse. The same thing that happens to children on the beach when they build sandcastles: everything is swept away, there is no solidity. When we do not profess Jesus Christ, the saying of Léon Bloy comes to mind: anyone who does not pray to the Lord prays to the devil. When we do not profess Jesus Christ, we profess the worldliness of the devil, a demonic worldliness. These movements of journeying, building, and professing are interconnected movements with crosses, suffering and set-backs.<sup>849</sup>

<sup>848</sup> Rahner, Karl. *Praxis des Glaubens. Geistliches Lesebuch*. Lehmann, Karl und Raffelt, Albert (eds.), Herder, Freiburg, im Breisgau, 1982, p 263.

<sup>849</sup> Francis. „Gehen, Aufbauen, Bekennen. Predigt in der Eucharistiefeyer mit den Kardinälen. Sixtinische Kapelle, 14. März 2013.“ In *Und jetzt beginnen wir diesen Weg. Die ersten Botschaften des Pontifikats*. Herder, Freiburg im Breisgau, 2013, p 17-19.

Educating oneself to understand as much as possible, the theological virtues of faith, hope and charity, lead people to enrich their desire to understand a little of God whom they worship. Belief is the starting point in the spiritual life; therefore, understanding is a process of spiritual cognition which a person can begin with belief in God. The book of Isaiah says: *If you do not stand firm in faith, you shall not stand at all (7:9)*. In other words, if you do not believe in God, you cannot understand him. A question might arise, whether we should understand before we believe? Obviously, a preliminary, probably a vague understanding is necessary in order to turn the mind towards the theological subject<sup>850</sup> of spirituality, which is God. A preliminary, perhaps ambiguous information about God is obviously available in the present world, through signs and symbols, songs and stories, influence of religions, and sacred literature. The Holy Bible and teachings of the church are the main sources of information of Catholic faith, and the inspired word of God written down almost in every language is not unknown to men, although all of them might not have read the Bible. Hence, I would say, there is already a preliminary understanding of God. Catholic theology finds in the theological virtue of faith not only its point of departure but also its reason for being.<sup>851</sup>

All theological knowledge and all human effort places God at the center of everything that can be done, said, and thought. If theology is theologically centered, so will the spirituality that flows from it.<sup>852</sup> Spirituality is deeply rooted in the faith practiced by an individual, and we cannot explain faith from the perspective of some doctrine but we will be able to explain and educate about faith in a pastoral context of meeting men, *in the appropriation of the perfection and blessedness of Christ, the secret point of union between Jesus Christ and the individual, personal communication with Jesus Christ, a moral power, a sanctifying principle, a new life.*<sup>853</sup>

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<sup>850</sup> The notion of subject denotes Aquinas's Aristotelian perspective, *the subject is what is the reality outside the mind, which science seeks to know*. In the modern language we use the word object where Aquinas speaks of subject; Torell, Jean Pierre. *Saint Thomas Aquinas. Spiritual Master*. Trans. Royal Robert, *Op.cit.*, p 10.

<sup>851</sup> Torell, Jean Pierre. *Saint Thomas Aquinas. Spiritual Master. Volume 2*, Trans. Royal Robert, *Op.cit.*, p 5.

<sup>852</sup> Torell, Jean Pierre. *Saint Thomas Aquinas. Spiritual Master. Volume 2*, Trans. Royal Robert, *Op.cit.*, p 12.

<sup>853</sup> Bavinck, Herman. *Reformed Dogmatics. Holy Spirit, Church, and New Creation*. Vol. 4., Bolt, John ed., Trans. Vriend John, Baker Academic, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 2008, p 118.

## Part 2 Chapter 1

### 2.1.1 Thomas Aquinas and Vincent de Paul

Thomas Aquinas was a prolific writer who preached with great conviction, and he did not do both to provide a new footnote on the Middle Ages, rather he preached and wrote to lead his hearers and readers to holiness.<sup>854</sup> The desire for spiritual advancement made Vincent de Paul repeat his favourite sentence: give me persons of prayer and they will be able to do anything. According to the mind of Vincent, prayer is the living source of the spiritual life of an individual. Through prayer missionaries put on Christ, become rooted in the teachings of the gospel, discern things and events before God, and remain always in God's love and mercy. The Spirit of Christ will always make their words and actions effective.<sup>855</sup>

There are two maxims which ruled the life of Vincent de Paul. The first was not to rest satisfied with a feeling of love to God in the heart, with glowing thoughts of his goodness, and great desires for his glory, but to make this love active, and to give proof of it in works. The second ruling maxim of him was always to behold in others Jesus Christ, and thus to kindle a fervent desire in the heart to render them all possible duties and services of charity. This principle completely possessed his own soul, that he saw Jesus Christ in all persons, whosoever and whatsoever they might be.<sup>856</sup> Vincent de Paul explained that charity is an act of love, which causes people to enter one another's hearts and to feel what they feel. The spirit of compassion and being sensitive to the sufferings of the people enable Christians to be better members of the mystical body of Jesus Christ.<sup>857</sup>

In 1601 Clement VIII was Pope and Vincent greatly admired this pope whom he considered to be a saint, especially when Vincent heard that Pope Clement VIII wept when he climbed the holy stairs located adjacent to the Basilica of Saint John Lateran. Perhaps Vincent found in this narration his first encounter with a personal call to holiness which at that time remained simply a desire.<sup>858</sup> Vincent de Paul's spirituality was centered on scripture, and he encouraged his confreres to preach through the use of familiar comparisons and not to use quotations from the profane authors, unless those quotations were used as stepping stones to

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<sup>854</sup> McInerney, Ralph. "Foreword", in *The Aquinas Catechism. Op.cit.*, p xv.

<sup>855</sup> *Constitutions and Statutes of the Congregation of the Mission.* # 41.

<sup>856</sup> Wilson, R.F (ed). *The Life of St. Vincent de Paul. With an Appendix, Containing Some of His Letters.* Rivingtons, London, Oxford and Cambridge, 1873. p 73-75.

<sup>857</sup> CCD: XII: 221 (Conference. Charity, May 30, 1659).

<sup>858</sup> Ornelas, Adelino. "Vincent de Paul and the Holy See", Trans. Plock, Charles T., in *Vincentiana* (April-June, 2011, N° 2) p 156.

holy scripture.<sup>859</sup> Many ideas which Vincent de Paul spoke about preaching seem to echo the ideas of Vincent Ferrer.<sup>860</sup>

*Encouraged by the love of Christ, Vincent de Paul knew how to organize permanent forms of service for marginalized people, giving life to the so-called “Charités” and “Charities,” that is the groups of women who gave their time and belongings to the most marginalized people. Some of these volunteers chose to consecrate themselves completely to God and to the poor, with St Louise de Marillac, and St Vincent, Founder of the “Daughters of Charity” the first female congregation to live a consecrated life “in the world,” with the common people, including the sick and the needy.<sup>861</sup>*

Vincent de Paul’s heart was moved to compassion by the economic plight of the people. He built hospitals, asylums, and even bridges. The divisions and heresies in the church caused him great anguish. Vincent believed that a revival of faith and morals depended upon the restoration of church unity through effective preaching.<sup>862</sup> René Alméras the second superior general of the Congregation of the Mission (1661-1672) initiated the preparation of a biography of the founder of the Congregation of the Mission, Vincent de Paul. This work was entrusted to Luis Abelly, a personal friend of Vincent and was published in 1664, four years after Vincent’s death.<sup>863</sup>

### 2.1.1.1 Knowing, Discovering and Loving God

Christians, like the Ephesians, need basically two types of spiritual knowledge: a basic and a deeper knowledge (Eph 1). People need to know the salvific and redemptive plan of God. They also need to understand that God elected and redeemed them so that they could become one Body in one Spirit, which is the fullness of him who fills all in all (Eph 1:23). Redeemed people live on the basis of their closeness to God and on his reality, so that quite of their own accord they become people of peace.<sup>864</sup> The elements of *knowing, discovering and loving God* places the question of belief in the midst of daily life because the word “believe” always contains a dimension of change of direction in the sense of moving away from the center, a lengthening of the center. Such a process can shape existence, and this defining connection between faith, repentance and life comes first in the Gospels, but not the question of God as

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<sup>859</sup> Abelly, Louis. *Op.cit.*, II:19.

<sup>860</sup> Collins, Patrick. “The Influence of St Vincent Ferrer on St Vincent de Paul”, in *Vincentiana*, (April-June, 2011, N° 2) p 212.

<sup>861</sup> Benedict XVI. “The Word of the Pope at the Angelus Sunday”, (September 26, 2010), in *Vincentiana*, (October-December 2010, N°1), p 33-34.

<sup>862</sup> Collins, Patrick. “The Influence of St Vincent Ferrer on St Vincent de Paul”, *Op.cit.*, p 207.

<sup>863</sup> Vázquez, Alfredo Becerra. “Father René Alméras, C.M.: Second Superior General of the Congregation of the Mission (1661-1672)”, in *Vincentiana*, (April-June, 2011, N° 2) p 134.

<sup>864</sup> Ratzinger, Joseph. *What It Means to Be a Christian. Three Sermons*. Trans. Taylor, Henry. Ignatius Press, San Francisco, 2006, p 23.

such, detached from concrete questions of everyday life.<sup>865</sup> According to Albert Rouet, a true local church cannot exist unless repentance is first and essentially made. This is the deepest reason why local churches are slow to assert themselves. Because it is not about improving the parish structure, not even about enlarging it. Rather, it is about taking the sacraments of Christian initiation as a basis and building on their fruitfulness for the life of the church.<sup>866</sup> Christians need good pastoral leaders for the pastoral education of the community. Likewise, they need to experience good example in the parish church because it is in this way that spiritual formation will be able to achieve its goals.<sup>867</sup> Education is the key to the life of the world, and spiritual life cannot be different from this perspective. In order for this conviction to become a reality, it is necessary to maintain an understanding of education based on fundamental ethical considerations, which focuses on people as a person, as the designer of their own history and the bearer of responsibility in social relationships.<sup>868</sup>

A focus on the idea of witnessing in the proclamation of the word of God and education of Christian theology can efficiently lead the faithful and the pastoral team to know, love and adore the Lord. How can we better explain and recommend the Christian faith in the contemporary world, is one of the pastoral questions in the evangelization. Thomas Aquinas stressed the practice of contemplation and Vincent de Paul insisted upon habitual prayer in order for people to achieve evangelical vitality. The Christian faith is not only an ideological system and a system of values, but also it is a foundation, an inner structure and source to build up oneself, to build up the church and the world in a responsible manner, according to the plan of God.<sup>869</sup> Article 20 of the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church deals with the continuation of the apostolic office and proclamation of the gospel. This mission of continuing the of the word of God was entrusted by Christ to the apostles. This ministry will last until the end of the world, since the Gospel that they are to teach, is for all time the source of life for the Church. Therefore, the apostles, appointed as rulers in this society, took care to appoint successors. Just as the council traced the office of bishop back to the gospel, so the concept of witness brings

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<sup>865</sup> Müller Hadwig. „Hoffnung des Übersetzens“ in *Frei Geben. Op.cit.*, p 21.

<sup>866</sup> Rouet Albert. „Örtliche Gemeinde in der Stadt“, in *Frei Geben. Pastoraltheologische Impulse aus Frankreich. Feiter, Reinhard und Müller, Hadwig (eds.)*. Matthias Grünewald Verlag, Ostfeldern, Deutschland, 2012, p 156.

<sup>867</sup> Ambadan, Jaison. *Meine Freude am Christsein*. tredition, Hamburg, 2020, p 8.

<sup>868</sup> Mette, Nobert. „Der aktuelle Diskurs über Bildungsgerechtigkeit ...“, *Op.cit.*, p 25.

<sup>869</sup> Müller Hadwig. „Hoffnung des Übersetzens“ in *Frei Geben. Op.cit.*, p 21.

everything back to the gospel.<sup>870</sup> A lively parish community, as a local church, has necessarily an inner active relationship with the diocese and the universal church and its office.<sup>871</sup>

Reinhard Feiter explains that, if anything is the quintessence of productive pastoral care, then it is the gospel. According to *Lumen Gentium*, the gospel is the life principle of the church. The gospel is the norm, the beginning and source of its vitality and pastoral care.<sup>872</sup> Cardinal Jorge Marion Bergoglio, before becoming Pope Francis, theologically envisioned the Church as a proclaiming church that goes out of itself, that reverently hears the word of God and proclaims it faithfully.<sup>873</sup> The proclamation of the word of God is also viewed from the perspective of its relevance to place and time. In view of these two important elements of deliberation, the church forms three basic motifs of giving witness based on metaphor, method and style.<sup>874</sup> In the witnessing concept the role of witnessing the faith to others is obviously important, to make the metaphor understandable, because a metaphor can disturb and stumble Menschen.<sup>875</sup> The positive approach of witnessing binds believers to the word of God in Scripture.<sup>876</sup> Today one can only speak meaningfully of the church if one makes it clear from the outset: the Church is in no way equated with the hierarchy because the hierarchy means holy rule! It is precisely this that should not exist in the church and this is also the word does not even appear in the New Testament; another word appears in the New Testament: diakonia which means service.<sup>877</sup>

## 2. 1.1.2 Apologetic Approach Helps Faith

Theologians and pastoral leaders have the responsibility to explain to the Christian community that belief is not unreasonable, and it is important that they repeatedly renew their understanding of what the first article of the confession of faith implies.<sup>878</sup> An integral part of the life of a lively pastoral community is that the community is open to hear the interpretation of the gospel. The faithful have the right to hear and learn the teachings regarding faith. Therefore, the unabbreviated message of the Christian faith of the holy Catholic and Roman

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<sup>870</sup> Feiter Reinhard. „Das Evangelium wird zur guten Nachricht“; In, *Frei Geben. Pastoraltheologische Impulse aus Frankreich*. Feiter, Reinhard und Müller, Hadwig (eds.). Matthias Grünewald Verlag, Ostfeldern, Deutschland, 2012, p 139.

<sup>871</sup> Rahner, Karl. *Praxis des Glaubens. Geistliches Lesebuch*. *Op.cit.*, p 258.

<sup>872</sup> Feiter Reinhard. „Das Evangelium wird zur guten Nachricht“. *Op.cit.*, p 139.

<sup>873</sup> Zollitsch, Robert. „Papst Franziskus, Ein Mann der Zeichen und Symbole“. In, *Und Jetzt Beginnen wir diesen Weg. Die erste Botschaft des Pontifikats*. Herder, Freiburg im Breisgau, 2013, p 13.

<sup>874</sup> Feiter Reinhard. „Das Evangelium wird zur guten Nachricht“. *Op.cit.*, p 139.

<sup>875</sup> Müller Hadwig. „Hoffnung des Übersetzens“ in *Frei Geben*. *Op.cit.*, p 14.

<sup>876</sup> Bavinck, Herman. *Reformed Dogmatics. Holy Spirit, Church, and New Creation*. *Op.cit.*, p 119.

<sup>877</sup> Küng, Hans. *Credo. Das Apostolische Glaubensbekenntnis-Zeitgenossen erklärt*. Piper, München, 1992, p 175.

<sup>878</sup> Torell, Jean Pierre. *Saint Thomas Aquinas. Spiritual Master. Volume 2*, Trans. Royal Robert, *Op.cit.*, p 26.

Church must be proclaimed and lived to the fullest.<sup>879</sup> Salvific plan of God is being continued with all those who are engaged in living the spirit of Jesus Christ. There is a fundamental continuity between Jesus, the paraclete present in the community, and the Spirit as the future paraclete, who, according to the gospel of John, Jesus himself (Jn 5:37), comes from the Father - also with the participation of the exalted Christ (John 16: 7) - and whose task is to teach the disciples everything and to remind them of everything that Jesus told them.<sup>880</sup>

Hans Küng says that, statements of faith do not have the character of mathematical or physical laws. Their content cannot be demonstrated, like in mathematics or in physics, by direct evidence or by experiment *ad oculos*. The reality of God would not be God's reality at all if it were so visible, tangible, and empirically ascertainable or if it were experimentally verifiable or mathematically and logically deducible.<sup>881</sup> This character of faith calls for elucidation and interpretation, which is a continuing process of the mission of evangelization. When I live in a secular community, my faith will be confronted with different situations alien to my faith or by people who live in a manner that is distinct from my lifestyle. Lack of profound knowledge about my faith could make my faith intellectually vulnerable and incompatible to the others in my neighbourhood. Therefore, one cannot take for granted the fact that the faith is simply received from one's own parents or grandparents. Such an approach could end up losing one's faith owing to lack of personal critical claims as to why he has accepted his faith. It is necessary that a person possess the heart of a child and the knowledge of an adult in order to be wise as serpents, to discern one's life in accord with faith. Faith is like habitus that allows us to grasp the principles of theology.<sup>882</sup> The reading of Scripture, the chanting of psalms, listening to sermons, the offering of petitions in prayer, all these religious acts help menschen and provide them with the opportunity for spiritual advancement.<sup>883</sup>

Apologetic reasoning gives reason for the hope within an individual. The Apostle Peter says "but in your hearts sanctify Christ as Lord. Always be ready to make your defense to anyone who demands from you an accounting for the hope that is in you (1 Pet 3:15) Vincent de Paul had a composed nature, and whenever he got an opportunity to speak on a subject, he penetrated deep into the subject, prepared his address well so as to help the listeners understand

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<sup>879</sup> Rahner, Karl. *Praxis des Glaubens. Geistliches Lesebuch. Op.cit.*, p 259.

<sup>880</sup> Seewald Michael. *Dogma im Wandel. Wie Glaubenslehren sich entwickeln. Op.cit.*, p 103-104.

<sup>881</sup> Küng, Hans. *Credo. Das Apostolische Glaubensbekenntnis-Zeitgenossen erklärt. Op.cit.*, p 20.

<sup>882</sup> Torell, Jean Pierre. *Saint Thomas Aquinas. Spiritual Master. Volume 2*, Trans. Royal Robert, *Op.cit.*, p 13.

<sup>883</sup> "A Treatise on the Soul" (Tertullian), Translated by Peter Holmes. From Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 3. Edited by Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson, and A. Cleveland Coxe. (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1885.) Revised and edited for New Advent by Kevin Knight, 2009, 9. <<http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0310.htm>>.

different aspects of his thinking and his view point.<sup>884</sup> When a person does not know why he believes, he may not have a clear conscience concerning his faith.

*Then Paul stood in front of the Areopagus and said, "Athenians, I see how extremely religious you are in every way. For as I went through the city and looked carefully at the objects of your worship, I found among them an altar with the inscription, 'To an unknown god.' What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you.... (Acts 17:22–31)*

A believer in Jesus Christ may face many objections, may have to confront a distortion of facts and may experience contrary witnesses from other people living in the community. Therefore, believers, grounded on the gospel, need to be informed about theology, the history of Christian faith, and other disciplines related to their faith in order to master the art of Christian living. When speaking about spiritual formation, the concept of the *doctrine of virtue* is one of the great discoveries in the history of humankind's self-understanding, and it has continued to be part and parcel of the European consciousness.<sup>885</sup> *Let no evil talk come out of your mouths, but only what is useful for building up, as there is need, so that your words may give grace to those who hear (Eph 4:29).*

As to the question, how are you? a spontaneous reply might be: I am fine, thank you. In the same way, Menschen do not like to hear that they commit sins, that they are involved in distorting the truth and compromising their faith in God. Interestingly Mensch love to develop self-exalting ways to elaborate compromised world views, like a sense of reality, neglecting the existence of God.

*For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and wickedness of those who by their wickedness suppress the truth. For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. Ever since the creation of the world his eternal power and divine nature, invisible though they are, have been understood and seen through the things he has made. So, they are without excuse; for though they knew God, they did not honour him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their senseless minds were darkened. ...(Rm 1:18-32)*

People are yearning for more, searching for transcendence and eternal life, although there is a lack of a sense of sin and a lack of sensitivity to disbelief. People are becoming individualistic and many are limited to their own smart phone circle, not knowing that they are alone and have lost the art of communicating and relating with people. Understanding this situation provides a focus for pastoral<sup>886</sup> education in order to present a social understanding of

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<sup>884</sup> Wilson, R.F (ed). *Op.cit.*, p 71.

<sup>885</sup> Pieper, Josef. *The Four Cardinal Virtues*. University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame, Indiana, 1966, p xi.

<sup>886</sup> *Gaudium et spes*, Preface: "The Pastoral Constitution "De Ecclesia in Mundo Huius Temporis" is made up of two parts; yet it constitutes an organic unity. By way of explanation: the constitution is called "pastoral" because, while resting on doctrinal principles, it seeks to express the relation of the Church to the world and modern mankind. The result is that, on the one hand, a pastoral slant is present in the first part, and, on the other hand, a doctrinal slant is present in the second part. In the first part, the Church develops her teaching on man, on the world

the love of God relevant to the modern living conditions. According to Hadwig Müller, the concept of *zeugenden Pastoral* calls for a need to find a new unity between life, sacraments and the scriptures, on which faith and church are built. The interpretation of this new unity must be clarified to the contemporary culture when speaking about the different figures of faith in the Gospels: women and men in the crowd, the disciples, the twelve apostles.<sup>887</sup>

The faithful need to know at least some basic theology in order to confront the arguments that may arise from within the person or from the environment in which they live. Good arguments need concrete examples, to this end a believer needs to know the example of the saints who lived in different cultural situations and about the difficulties that they confronted. Teaching the lives of the saints and the history of the church can contribute to a systematic spiritual education. According to Hans Küng pastoral theology needs necessarily constant support from systematic theology. He says: the church of today needs good systematic theology: an exploration of God's revelation in its context and its fullness of meaning, at the same time modestly confessing its ignorance and obediently seeking knowledge in the word of God. What is required today is a systematic theology (fundamental theology, dogmatics, ethics) that does not invent its own small peripheral problems, but allows its great questions and answers to be given by the Word of God in the human words of Scripture; which does not take a historical canon of theses, which has become quite accidental, as the measure of importance and unimportance, correctness and incorrectness, but rather the perspectives to be shown, the dimensions to be observed, the accents to be set and the architectonics to be erected from the Word of God in Scripture as the primary source and norm of Christian theology.<sup>888</sup> Reason is a God-given sensitivity to understand the perceived elements. Although reason is receptive in nature, reason functions actively, because the mind reconstructs within itself the connecting links that the mind seeks in an object which it discovers. The act of reasoning helps the mind in connecting elements of faith with tradition and scripture. This is a systematic approach to understanding the faith. Pastoral theology is closely related to systematic theology because systematic theology is located midway between the scriptures and its application by its ministers to human needs, and it gathers digested contents to facilitate communication.<sup>889</sup>

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which is the enveloping context of man's existence, and on man's relations to his fellow men. In part two, the Church gives closer consideration to various aspects of modern life and human society; special consideration is given to those questions and problems which, in this general area, seem to have a greater urgency in our day."

<sup>887</sup> Müller Hadwig. „Hoffnung des Übersetzens“ in *Frei Geben. Op.cit.*, p 21.

<sup>888</sup> Küng, Hans. *Theologie and Kirche*. Benziger Verlag, Einsiedeln, 1965, p 17-18.

<sup>889</sup> Blocher, Henri A.G. "Jesus Christ the Man. Toward a Systematic Theology of Definite Atonement"; In, *From Heaven He Came and Sought Her. Definite Atonement in Historical, Biblical, Theological and Pastoral Perspective*. Gibson, David and Gibson, Jonathan (eds.), Crossway, Wheaton, Illinois, 2013, p 542-543.

An apologetic approach would establish a more convincing credibility for intellectual arguments. A person tries to remove the obstacles to one's progress in faith through a personal apologetic approach so that he may confess that Jesus Christ is Lord (Phil 2:11), which is possible only by understanding the relevance of faith and how it addresses that person's whole life. Faith has its own fruitfulness. The spirit of God gives gifts to everyone and blesses their spiritual advancement so that they, in turn, might bless others. When Menschen share their faith with other, they renew their trust in the grace of God and increase the spirit of following Jesus Christ.<sup>890</sup> *If you live according to your unspiritual nature you shall die, but if by the Spirit, you, mortify the unspiritual nature you shall live. Each one, therefore, should be most conscientious in accepting the overruling of their personal wishes and opinion, and in disciplining the gratification of each of their senses.*<sup>891</sup> Understanding the credibility of faith nurtures one's faith and leads to worship, thus, people can love the Lord God with all their heart, and with all their soul, and with all their mind (Mt 22:37).

### **2.1.1.3 Missionary Promotion and Formation Among the People of God**

Both the members of the pastoral team and the members of the community of the faithful need spiritual formation if they are to focus on spiritual values and eternal life. In the time of Vincent, securing financial resources was not an easy task. Distributing these resources also demanded cooperation and understanding. An example of this is seen in the relationships between the members of the Company of the Holy Sacrament and the Confraternity at the Hôtel Dieu which began to provide aid to those who became victims of the Thirty Years War in the north-eastern provinces of France. The members of the Company of the Holy Sacrament began their assistance campaign, one of the dominant figures of the group, Charles Maignart de Bernières donated 80 thousand livres and gave 35 thousand to the Ladies of Charity. The Confraternity at the Hôtel-Dieu had many needs and they had difficulty in finding financial resources, Eventually, the Ladies of Charity were collecting more than 16 thousand livres per month. The duchess of Aiguillon remonstrated the Company members and forced them to back down, although they still gazed covetously on the women's successes. Vincent witnessed this rivalry. Respecting their pursuit for the same cause, he had to intervene and stressed the importance of formation in the spiritual life and exhorted the members to be prudent in adopting innovative tactics in carrying out charitable works.<sup>892</sup> The process of dialogue and their readiness to learn, expanded the horizons of their ministry. The achievements of the aid

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<sup>890</sup> Rouet Albert. „Örtliche Gemeinde in der Stadt“, *Op.cit.*, p 157.

<sup>891</sup> *Common Rules of the Congregation of the Mission*, Chapter II, # 8.

<sup>892</sup> Forrestal, Alison, *Op.cit.*, p. 208-210.

campaign provided a motivation for Vincent de Paul and the Lazarists, to work together with the Ladies on further projects, with the understanding of right opportunity.<sup>893</sup>

Moral and theological dimension could be negatively influenced due to three circles of behavioural patterns. First, repeated cases of neglecting errors, and despite better knowledge. Second, lapses in speaking, reading and writing. Third, repeatedly carried out erroneous actions.<sup>894</sup> According to Pope Francis, *there exists a moral deterioration that influences international action and a weakening of spiritual values and responsibility.*<sup>895</sup> According to John Paul II, spiritual formation is one of the tasks of the local church to educate people in spiritual values. This ministry must be seen not as peripheral but as central to the Christian life. John Paul states that it is necessary to transmit information through publications and audio-visual aids. He says that these play an important role in making known the life of the universal Church and in giving voice to the experiences of pastoral ministers and the local churches in which they work. This ministry of formation is entrusted to priests and their associates, to educators and teachers, and to theologians, particularly those who teach in seminaries and centres for the laity. *It is not right to give an incomplete picture of missionary activity, as if it consisted principally in helping the poor, contributing to the liberation of the oppressed, promoting development or defending human rights. The missionary Church is certainly involved on these fronts but her primary task lies elsewhere: the poor are hungry for God, not just for bread and freedom. Missionary activity must first of all bear witness to and proclaim salvation in Christ, and establish local churches which then become means of liberation in every sense.*<sup>896</sup> John Paul II, addressing on the permanent validity of the Church's missionary mandate, highlights five important reasons for the necessity of discovering new means of education.

- a. The necessity of forming people with morality: the joy of living frequently fades, lack of respect for others and violence are on the rise, and inequality is increasingly evident; the hearts of many people are gripped by fear and desperation, even in the so-called rich countries.<sup>897</sup>

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<sup>893</sup> Forrester, Alison, *Op.cit.*, p. 211.

<sup>894</sup> Freud, Sigmund. *Collected Writings. The Basis of Psychoanalytic Psychology: The Psychopathology of Everyday Life, The Theory of Sexuality, Beyond the Pleasure Principle, The Ego and the Id, The Future of an Illusion.* Pacps, USA, 2010, p 112.

<sup>895</sup> Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, # 29.

<sup>896</sup> John Paul II Encyclicals, *Redemptoris Missio*, #83.

<sup>897</sup> Pope John Paul II, *Redemptoris Missio*, #52.

- b. People find difficulty in devising a common plan which transcends individual gain and personal ambition in their daily life, therefore there is a necessity of educating how people can recognize the means and importance of subjective expression of truth.<sup>898</sup>
- c. There is a modern necessity of moral teaching in the area of moral discernment thereby people could learn the habit of critical thinking for mature moral values, because there is a danger of information driven technology which bombards to people indiscriminately with all kinds of data treated as being of equal importance.<sup>899</sup>
- d. Social change has affected youth ministry. There is necessity of creating many forums where the youth come and explain their concerns, needs, problems so that they will feel, that they are part of the structure and their problems are being addressed.<sup>900</sup>
- e. People search for deep spirituality, but the same age-old educational method may not produce expected results. There remains a need for ensuring that youth associations actively participate in the overall pastoral efforts of the church.<sup>901</sup>

In order for education and formation through sermon and catechesis to be effective, they need to produce a permanent effect in the people who participate and listen.<sup>902</sup> Pope John Paul emphasises that education and catechesis are at the service of kerygmatic growth. The centrality of the kerygma calls for stressing these elements: it should express God's saving love which precedes any moral and religious obligation on our part; it should not impose the truth but appeal to freedom; it should be marked by joy, encouragement, liveliness and a harmonious balance which does not reduce preaching to a few doctrines which are at times more philosophical than evangelical. All this demands certain attitudes which foster approachability, readiness for dialogue, patience, warmth and welcome which is non-judgmental.<sup>903</sup> *Dialogue and evangelism need not be pursued with hostility- and certainly not violence- but with patience, steadfastness, charity, and the confidence that the authentic pursuit of the truth and of the good will reach the goal of a saving knowledge and love of the living God in Jesus Christ his Son.*<sup>904</sup>

#### **2.1.1.4 Educational Approach to the Search of Truth**

The whole content of the truth in the educational approach to the Christian faith can be reduced to the dogma of the Trinitarian God and to the teaching that affirms the fact that people

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<sup>898</sup> Pope John Paul II, *Redemptoris Missio*, #61.

<sup>899</sup> Pope John Paul II, *Redemptoris Missio*, #64.

<sup>900</sup> Pope John Paul II, *Redemptoris Missio*, #105.

<sup>901</sup> Pope John Paul II, *Redemptoris Missio*, #105.

<sup>902</sup> Forrestal, Alison, *op.cit.*, p. 104.

<sup>903</sup> Pope John Paul II, *Redemptoris Missio*, #163.

<sup>904</sup> Lynch, John J. *The Logos as Reason, Word, and Love in the Theology of Joseph Ratzinger*. Yorktown, Virginia, 2014, p 106.



The goal of the spiritual life is in fact embedded in the desire of the person. This desire for the goal is naturally developed through the impressions of the mind which the senses of the person has received. A person could not be moved from a true understanding to a false one, or from a false to a true except through some change in the nature of the person.<sup>911</sup> Creating impressions for the perception of the senses is an important method of the pastoral ministry in order to help the parish community understand their faith and liturgical life.

The interpretation and teaching of revelation, based on texts contained in the New and Old Testaments, is the basic method of pastoral education in the search for truth. The relevance of this educational approach is justifiable in the context of the plurality of opinions and options, and a common tendency towards a comparative correlational method of theological interpretation, based on external criteria experienced in the present situation, to contextualise the revelation. However, without a proper internal understanding of the Catholic religion, adventuring into a pluralistic approach does not bring a healthy understanding of Christian faith and revelation. It is not enough that the preacher of the word of God has developed a proper approach in the search for truth, the preacher also needs to be grounded in the dogmas of the Catholic faith before entering into the method of education. The dogmatic thought sets the preacher free from the bondage of the mind, from the vagueness and indolence of feeling, and makes prayer clear and effective for life. But if the thought of faith is really to do justice to its task for the whole, it must introduce truth in all its fullness into personal and liturgical prayer. The individual truths of Revelation are in a certain elective affinity to certain schools of thought and to certain states of the inner life.<sup>912</sup> People are busy with the struggles of life and they may not have sufficient time to read books, develop an analytical approach, and form a proper reasoning with regard to their faith. People perceive in two ways: sense perception and rational perception. The objects of perception are presented to the senses of people with *perceptibilia* in their environment. If people are perceptive and if the appearances are not misleading, then by the exercise of their sensitive faculties, people can comprehend how things are in their perceptual field. However, people can also think and talk about elements which are not currently present to their senses. Rational perception involves thought and speech. In thought people represent to themselves and in speech people represent to others those elements which are not present.<sup>913</sup> Frequent interpretation of the basics of religion, from the administrative body in a

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<sup>911</sup> *Summa Contra Gentiles*. 1.4.95

<sup>912</sup> Guardini, Romano. *Vom Geist Der Liturgie*. Verlag Herder, Freiburg im Breisgau, 1959, p 25.

<sup>913</sup> Hacker, P.M.S. *Wittgenstein Mind and Will. Part 1: Essays, Vol.4. of an Analytical Commentary on the Philosophical Investigations*. Blackwell, Oxford UK, 2000, p 1.

parish, is a necessary part of pastoral education and its approach to the search for truth, and the foundation of knowledge can be gradually developed. In his research method to counter the Greek thinkers Dionysius and John Damascene, Thomas Aquinas carefully distinguished what belongs to earthly knowledge of God and what belongs to the knowledge of him that they will have in heaven, because both Dionysius and John Damascene held that we cannot know the *quid est* of God, whereas Aquinas explained, if God is seen only as an image, then the state is not beatitude.<sup>914</sup>

According to the auxiliary bishop of the archdiocese of Los Angeles, Robert E. Barron, science is good - but not scientism - because reducing all knowledge to a scientific form of empirical investigation, with the help of formulated hypotheses, can at times be a hindrance, and an obstacle to the approach of truth, by isolating the mind from reference to the transcendent. The aspiration of the human soul toward the search for truth is generally prevented by materialism, naturalism and scientism. They are the first impediments because the pastoral educational approach to evangelization is to speak about God, and allow the Holy Spirit to guide the human soul in its aspiration toward the search for truth. The second impediment is the culture of self-invention. Friedrich Nietzsche said, remember that we are beyond good and evil, those are just constructs, and what remains is the will power of the individual. The twentieth century version of Nietzsche is Jean Paul Sartre, who appropriated the word existentialism, (first used by French Catholic philosopher Gabriel Marcel), for his philosophy after World War II.<sup>915</sup> Sartre said existence precedes essence - a fancy philosophical way of saying my freedom comes first, and then I determine my essence, how I live, the meaning of my life. For Sartre, everything is done on the basis of individual freedom, which in the simplest terms determines the meaning of life. Benedict XVI's address in Regensburg was a critique against voluntarism, the principle of relying on one's own actions. Voluntarism is one of the great obstacles to evangelization, because to evangelize is to say your life is not about you. Your life is simply not up for you to decide. The Apostle Paul says *it is no longer I who live* (Gal 2:19). When an individual has been seized by the power of Jesus Christ, his ego-drama becomes unimportant. Therefore, to evangelize would mean to stand diametrically opposed to this culture of self-invention. The great biblical truth is 'the truth will make you free (Jn 8:32).

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<sup>914</sup> Torell, Jean Pierre. *Saint Thomas Aquinas. Spiritual Master. Volume 2*, Trans. Royal Robert, *Op.cit.*, p 29-30.

<sup>915</sup> Marcel later rejected the word existentialism after Sartre's use of it, and instead aligned himself with the thought of the 19<sup>th</sup> century philosopher Soren Kierkegaard, now regarded by some of today's existentialist philosophers, who reject Sartre's interpretations, as the true founder of existentialism.

It is not one's will that invents the truth. An individual searches for truth; it is the truth that sets one authentically free.<sup>916</sup> Educating people to search for the truth is the work of evangelisation.

*That the most certain of all beliefs is that opposite statements are not both true at the same time, .... And since the contradiction of a statement cannot be true at the same time of the same thing, it is obvious that contraries cannot apply at the same time to the same thing. For in each pair of contraries one is a privation no less than it is a contrary—a privation of substance. And privation is the negation of a predicate to some defined genus. Therefore, if it is impossible at the same time to affirm and deny a thing truly, it is also impossible for contraries to apply to a thing at the same time; either both must apply in a modified sense, or one in a modified sense and the other absolutely.<sup>917</sup>*

It is evidently necessary in pastoral ministry to say what the belief of the Church is, regarding what is and what is not fitting in the practice of a life guided by faith in Jesus Christ. This proclamation of what it is and what it is not is the right approach to education about the truth.<sup>918</sup> Christians confess in the second part of the creed, that Jesus, who was executed in Palestine around the year 30, the Christ (anointed, chosen) of God, God's own Son, is the center and the determining salvific act of God in all of human history.<sup>919</sup> One cannot specify a single approach to the truth that would teach a person profoundly about the truth and transform him into the truth. However, a right approach in the various methodologies cannot cause a contradiction within them because contradiction of an approach cannot be true and false at the same time. Moreover, truth cannot contradict truth. There are many approaches to the search for truth. Theological discussions contribute to the spiritual health of the individual who participates in a dialogue and such discussions also contribute to the common ecclesiastical good.<sup>920</sup> According to Pope Francis, in all the differences and uniqueness of each personal or ecclesiastical vocation, the search for truth is about the three elements involved in the calling from above to *hear*, to *discern*, and to *live* in Jesus Christ, the mystery of the incarnation of word of God. At the same time this call allows us to develop our talents, forms us as witnessing individuals of healing force in the world, and shows us the way to the fullness of happiness which leads us to the truth.<sup>921</sup> A definition of God and teaching about God may not make God known, but they affirm the conviction.<sup>922</sup>

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<sup>916</sup> Robert E. Barron (Auxiliary Bishop, Archdiocese of Los Angeles), "Closing Keynote Address of the Convocation of Catholic Leaders", 9:00 am, Tuesday July 4, 2017, Hyatt Regency Orlando, Florida. URL: <http://www.usccb.org/Bishop-Barron-Keynote-Address-07042017.pdf>. (Accessed on 21.07.2018).

<sup>917</sup> Aristotle. *The Metaphysics*. Trans. McMahon H. John. Dover Publications, Mineola, New York, 2017, Book 4, section 1011b25. P 35.

<sup>918</sup> Aristotle. *The Metaphysics*. Trans. McMahon H. John. *Op.cit.*, P 35.

<sup>919</sup> Ratzinger, Joseph. *Einführung in das Christentum*. *Op.cit.*, p 153.

<sup>920</sup> Forrestal, Alison, *Op.cit.*, p. 255.

<sup>921</sup> Papst Franziskus. *Botschaft von Papst Franziskus zum 55. Weltgebetstag für geistliche Berufe*. *Kirchliches Amtsblatt Für Die Diözese Münster*. Artikel 55, Nr.8, Münster, den 15. April 2018, Jahrgang CLII.

<sup>922</sup> Torell, Jean Pierre. *Saint Thomas Aquinas. Spiritual Master. Volume 2*, Trans. Royal Robert, *Op.cit.*, p 29-33.

### 2.1.1.5 Concept of Truth in the Intellect by Analogy with Things

A balanced formula of Aquinas on the equation of things and intellect intentionally leaves room for the idea that truth can be applied not only to thoughts and judgments but also to things or persons. He explains that a thought is said to be true because it conforms to reality, whereas a thing or person is said to be true because it conforms to a thought.<sup>923</sup> The deepest truth according to the Bible is God: I am the way, the truth and the life (John 14, 16). This could be disregarded by modern and contemporary analytic philosophy but would be relevant to existentialist and continental philosophy. Reinhard Feiter says, Menschen coming to faith can be predicted in the image of the conception of life, because life in the light of the Gospel is, at no point in time and in no situation merely a natural life. In general, according to the biblical belief in creation, life is a reality that God produces in unconditional freedom and that is different from him, and this produced independent reality is also unconditionally affirmed and loved by God.<sup>924</sup> Recognition of freedom of will gives scope to transcendental generation and transmission of faith in truth, which will then be practiced in life in the world as an obvious sign of this belief. Spiritual direction can change menschen. One of the examples could be the count of Rougemont who was a noble of Savoy until King Hendry annexed *Bresse* to the kingdom. One of his evil practices was duelling, which was very popular among gentlemen who proved their valour and defended their honour. Through divine grace Vincent would change him from those practices, and he began to atone for his past acts, he sold his estate for more than 30,000 thousand ecus, and started to found monasteries and also began to serve poor and sick people.<sup>925</sup>

Religious principles confirm the realities of daily life. The practical experience of religious principles involves also a process which may not be strictly within the existing religious structures and norms but rather an internal secularized experience of theological truth in the realities of life. An internal secularization of religious teachings and principles opens a new area for discussion to understand the catholic religious experience among ordinary people and their way of practicing and understanding religion. What is meant is the process in which the increasingly weaker influence of the religious system on the whole of society is more and more

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<sup>923</sup> *The Correspondence Theory of Truth*, May 28, 2015, URL: <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/truth-correspondence>.

<sup>924</sup> Feiter Reinhard. „Das Evangelium wird zur guten Nachricht“. *Op.cit.*, p 143.

<sup>925</sup> Abelly, Louis. *Op.cit.*, I: 78.

accepted from within and viewed as legitimate by the religious group itself.<sup>926</sup> A lively parish is a real presence of church, and to build the church from the grassroot level, the parish community should be a community of prayer.<sup>927</sup> That means that the whole purpose of the Christian life is to have a genuine commitment to grow in holiness, patterning ourselves, as far as possible, on the virtues which Jesus Christ taught us in what he said and did.<sup>928</sup> The extensive reform initiated by the Second Vatican Council and the renewal of Catholicism which initiated a change in the structures of church life, can be understood from this sociological perspective<sup>929</sup> and to the realities of the life of the people. Change is an opportunity<sup>930</sup> to make the ministry of the church more understandable.

As the good denotes that towards which the appetite tends,<sup>931</sup> so the appetite tends towards that to which the intellect tends. *A sure way for a Christian to grow rapidly in holiness is a conscientious effort to carry out God's will in all circumstances and at all times.*<sup>932</sup> There is a difference between the appetite and the intellect. Good is the object of desire in terms of the appetite, whereas truth in the intellect is the object of desire in the intellect itself. That is to say, the good in the appetite and the truth in the intellect have to be understood differently. Goodness passes from the desirable thing to the appetite, because the object of the appetite is good. In the same way, the thing understood is said to be true in so far as it bears some relation to the intellect, either essentially or accidentally: essentially because it depends essentially on the intellect; accidentally because it is knowable to the intellect - as one may say a house is related essentially to the intellect of the architect, but accidentally to the model of the house which came to the intellect of the architect. As a house is said to be true in relation to the form in the mind of the architect, words are said to be true in relation to signs of truth in the intellect. In the same way, natural things are said to be true in so far as they express the likeness of the species in the divine mind. The manner and motive of theological interpretation gives a clear identity of truth together with the sociological internal secularization of the religious perspective,<sup>933</sup> not only towards the social life but also towards gospel.<sup>934</sup>

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926 Theobald Christoph. „Heute ist der günstige Augenblick. Eine theologische Diagnose der Gegenwart“, in *Frei Geben. Pastoraltheologische Impulse aus Frankreich*. Feiter, Reinhard und Müller, Hadwig (eds.). Matthias Grünewald Verlag, Ostfeldern, Deutschland, 2012, p 83.

927 Rahner, Karl. *Praxis des Glaubens. Geistliches Lesebuch. op.cit.*, p 254.

928 *Common Rules of the Congregation of the Mission*, Chapter I, # 1

929 Theobald Christoph. „Heute ist der günstige Augenblick...“, *Op.cit.*, p 83.

930 Feiter Reinhard. „Das Evangelium wird zur guten Nachricht“. *Op.cit.*, p 141.

931 *ST*, I, q. 16, a. 1.

932 *Common Rules of the Congregation of the Mission*, Chapter II, # 3.

933 Theobald Christoph. „Heute ist der günstige Augenblick...“, *Op.cit.*, p 84.

934 Theobald Christoph. „Heute ist der günstige Augenblick...“, *Op.cit.*, p 86.

Truth resides primarily in the intellect, and secondarily in things according to how they are related to the intellect, in their principles. Truth is considered essentially and not accidentally; consequently, there are various definitions of truth.<sup>935</sup>

*Augustine says (De Vera Relig. xxxvi), "Truth is that whereby is made manifest that which is;" and Hilary says (De Trin. v) that "Truth makes being clear and evident" and this pertains to truth according as it is in the intellect. As to the truth of things in so far as they are related to the intellect, we have Augustine's definition (De Vera Relig. xxxvi), "Truth is a supreme likeness without any unlikeness to a principle": also, Anselm's definition (De Verit. xii), "Truth is rightness, perceptible by the mind alone"; for that is right which is in accordance with the principle; also, Avicenna's definition (Metaph. viii, 6), "The truth of each thing is a property of the essence which is immutably attached to it." The definition that "Truth is the equation of thought and thing" is applicable to it under either aspect.<sup>936</sup>*

Giving witness has a faith dimension, and the witness of faith is grounded on the intellectual understanding of a definition of faith and its experience. This elementary belief has undoubtedly been expressed in religious form since the dawn of humankind.<sup>937</sup> Vincent de Paul often stressed his conviction that pastoral leaders necessarily educate the meaning of the theological concepts in the precepts of practical theology, especially in the method for the direction of souls, because he understood the practical characteristic of theology from the stand point of zeal for souls.<sup>938</sup> The existence of the thing is the reference point to its truth in the intellect. The intellectual concept of a thing is true by reference to the fact that the thing exists, not because the thing is true.<sup>939</sup> From a pragmatic point of view, religious principles get momentum when people practice those principles in their lives. The flow of motivation is derived from the gospel, from the relation with God, and from the internalization of catholic principles. Even though this might cause a conflict of interpretation, nevertheless this will shape the entire process of the reception of the Second Vatican Council in the realities of the life of the people.<sup>940</sup> Conflicts and opposition belong to the life of the Church from both sides in faith and love, justice and self-critical caution. It doesn't do any harm if a pastoral community and its pastoral leaders do not always agree, provided that they try to resolve such differences of opinion fairly in the spirit of the lively Christian life of the community.<sup>941</sup>

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<sup>935</sup> ST, I, q. 16.

<sup>936</sup> ST, I, a. 16, a 1.

<sup>937</sup> Feiter Reinhard. „Das Evangelium wird zur guten Nachricht“. *Op.cit.*, p 143.

<sup>938</sup> Forrestal, Alison, *Op.cit.*, p. 255.

<sup>939</sup> ST, I, q. 16.

<sup>940</sup> Theobald Christoph. „Heute ist der günstige Augenblick.“ *Op.cit.*, p 86.

<sup>941</sup> Rahner, Karl. *Praxis des Glaubens. Geistliches Lesebuch. Op.cit.*, p 258.

## 2.1.2 Education and Formation

Any reason preceding the action of the higher intellect and supported by the imagination, directly excite the will of the individual's affection and desire for sensible goods, regardless of their moral value.<sup>942</sup> By giving emphasis to the formation of ideas regarding the spiritual life one can assist people in fulfilling their various responsibilities in the world and help them to find an orientation to their life. Spiritual education can nurture the memory, intellect and will of people, and only spiritual education can bring about spiritual advancement. Pastoral zeal encourages the programme of pastoral ministry, no soul should be lost.<sup>943</sup> Although Vincent de Paul often emphasised and even made it a rule to engage in meditation and contemplation on a regular basis, the practical perspective was so deep in him that he permitted the students to engage in theological study only to the extent that it would assist them in pastoral praxis, and they were not encouraged to drift into the more rarefied heights of abstract theology.<sup>944</sup> The fundamental character of the pastoral mission is to generate in people a desire to pray and to teach the people to pray. That is how Jesus trained his disciples (Lk 11:1-4). Praying and teaching others to pray is one of the fundamentals of pastoral ministry. Social ministry is not the main goal. It can take years for some people to realize that the continuation of prayer is essential to the formation of spirituality. Saint Theresa could not pray for about twenty-two years. She could not understand the necessity of prayer, but just followed the rules of the community. Although she felt distaste in prayer, she did not fail in the exercise of prayer, which gradually educated her to pray. God rewarded her perseverance with an outstanding gift of prayer.<sup>945</sup>

The core of Vincent de Paul's spirituality is understandably integrating prayer and action in the eservice of the poor.<sup>946</sup> Mental prayer is the foundation and source of spiritual education and formation and that is how an illiterate person could speak so well of God, unfolding the mysteries with more conviction and knowledge than many theologians. Because a theologian who has only theological knowledge, can speak of God only in the way of the theological field of his learning. The difference between the two arises from the fact that one speaks of God through his acquired knowledge and the other speaks of God through infused knowledge, filled with love. According to Vincent de Paul, the theologian who does not practice

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<sup>942</sup> Scheeben Mathias Joseph. *A manual of Catholic Theology*. Based on Scheeben's „dogmatik“, Volume 1, Joseph Wilhelm and Thomas B. Scannell, Kegan Paul trench Truebener & Co, London, 1906, p 423.

<sup>943</sup> Mette, Nobert. „Der aktuelle Diskurs über Bildungsgerechtigkeit in den beiden (Groß) Kirchen in Deutschland“, *Op.cit.*, p 23.

<sup>944</sup> Forrestal Alison, *Op.cit.*, p. 122.

<sup>945</sup> CCD: IX:333-334 (Conference: *Mental Prayer*, May 31, 1648).

<sup>946</sup> Maloney, Robert P., *The Way of Vincent de Paul*, *Op.cit.*, p. 12.

mental prayer is not a spiritually learned person in comparison with the illiterate person who regularly practices meditation.<sup>947</sup>

People develop thoughts and reflections through education. The fundamental difference between education and formation is that education is a process whereby people acquire some knowledge on a specific subject matter whereas formation is a process whereby people recognize the importance of the grace of God to enlighten the mind.<sup>948</sup> Vincent de Paul suggests ten golden rules for spiritual formation so that the knowledge acquired by people can guide them through a personalized effort to enlighten their mind towards God.<sup>949</sup>

- a) To be persuaded personally with high regard for the will of God
- b) To do penance when one fails in fulfilling their important duties and obligations.
- c) To love one's own vocation.
- d) To be attentive to the practice of one's spiritual duties.
- e) To be attentive to spiritual life even in the absence of other community members.
- f) To make regularly particular examination of conscience and firm resolutions.
- g) To thank God fervently and to ask for God's grace.
- h) To be faithful in keeping daily spiritual practices.
- i) To have a spiritual role model who lived an extraordinary spiritual life.
- j) To reflect the situation of lack of faithfulness to their spiritual practices.

People who work constantly at spiritual formation encourage all people towards an encounter with God. The knowledge learned and shared by people falls upon their ears without penetrating the interior self, but a single word of inspiration from God, spoken to the ear of their heart, will cause them to give up any thought of worldly life by which most people lose their merit of spiritual life towards encounter with God.<sup>950</sup> Personalized formation will give constancy to spiritual exercises and change people interiorly.<sup>951</sup>

### **2.1.2.1 Composing and Dividing in the Act of Cognition**

Menschen often speak of the concept of God. Although retrospectively, menschen bring the original of their athenatic transcendentality into a concept, a name. This raises the question of whether what is brought into a concept of essence is only something that is thought or also something real. It will be the greatest misunderstanding, if this were to be interpreted as some kind of human thought, an idea that a human mind posited as its power. This is what opens up

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<sup>947</sup> CCD: IX:332 (Conference: *Mental Prayer*, May 31, 1648).

<sup>948</sup> CCD: XI:77 (Conference: *Meditation*).

<sup>949</sup> CCD: XI:74-75 (Conference: *Observance of Rule*).

<sup>950</sup> CCD: XII:165 (Conference: *Humility*, April 18, 1659).

<sup>951</sup> Maloney, Robert P., *The Way of Vincent de Paul, Op.cit.*, p. 13.

the human mind, empowers it for the process of transcendence, which carries thought forward, and not the settings of human mind.<sup>952</sup> Human way of knowing and teaching about the essence of God is not proportional to the way in which they exist. The act of apprehension of a thing gives knowledge about it to the intellect, but this knowledge is imperfect because of the weakness of the human mind. That which is singular, diversified, and distinct is apprehended as universal and common;<sup>953</sup> therefore, the intellect must combine and separate the intellectual forms derived from a simple apprehension in order to determine what forms are in reality together, and what forms are not; this act of combining and separating is called judgement,<sup>954</sup> a process of cognition. When the intellect judges something through composition and division, it not only knows something, but knows it to a certain extent as it is experienced through the senses. Then after the act of judgement, the truth of a thing is defined by the conformity between the intellectual judgement of the thing and the thing itself; therefore, to know this conformity is to know the truth. The intellect can know the conformity with the intelligible thing, but it does not apprehend the thing by knowing the thing itself. However well it judges that a thing corresponds to the form which it apprehends, it first knows and expresses the truth, formed by composing and dividing,<sup>955</sup> as a process of judgement within the act of cognition.<sup>956</sup> Pastoral leaders have a great role in helping the faithful in composing and dividing the act of cognition, which is obvious in the words of Romano Guardini who said that in the modern era, there is a kind of the secularization of Christianity in process. This process makes indefinite and uncertain the concepts of God of creation and the guilt or sin of menschen, of redemption and salvation which emerge from the revelation. There are at times many issues in this secularization of Christianity, because the interpretation of supernatural character of salvation is being lost and taken over by natural analogies, at times the progressive improvement of cultural conditions take the place of real redemption, at times the place of grace is taken over

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952 Rahner, Karl. *Grundkurs des Glaubens. Einführung in den Begriff des Christentums*. Herder, Freiburg im Breisgau, 1976, p 69.

953 *ST*, I, q. 14, a. 6. There would be no need to compose and divide or judge a thing if by apprehending the essence of a thing we grasped that which belonged in it and what did not.

954 Thomas notes that to understand is to penetrate into the essence of a thing, since the object of the intellect is what a thing is. However, there are many different kinds of things that are hidden within. For example, under accidents are hidden the substantial reality, under words lies their meaning, under effects their causes etc. All of these things require the light of understanding to see and the stronger the light of understanding, the deeper it can penetrate into things. *ST*, II-II, q. 8, a. 1.

955 *ST*, I, q. 16, a. 2.

956 Ambadan Jaison. "Concept of Happiness in Summa Theology with Reference to Contemporary Psychological Studies", p 59.

by subjective experience, and at times the message of resurrection and eternal life is taken over by an ideal earthly state.<sup>957</sup>

Pastoral education provided by the pastoral leaders can help the pastoral community to understand the compatible elements in biblical soteriology especially in God's desire for people to be saved (1 Tim. 2: 1.7) and his intention to save only the elect (1 Tim. 4:10).<sup>958</sup> Universalistic drive in the thoughts of Saint Paul is most probably a corrective response to an exclusive elitist understanding of salvation connected with then pastoral problem. The inclusion of Gentiles alongside the Jews in salvation is the primary issue in 1 Tim. 2:4. Act of cognition is a process of composing and dividing the perceived idea or information. In this regard, pastoral leaders shoulder the responsibility of catholic Church to interpret the salvific message of Jesus Christ, so that pastoral communities can adequately understand the message of salvation in the gospel.

Vincent's temperament was by nature rather slow, and on principle he avoided most carefully all haste and precipitation either in forming a judgment or in acting upon it.<sup>959</sup> While composing and separating the intellectual forms derived from simple apprehension, the memory functions as an agent of historical and cultural contextualization. In other words, historical and cultural context strengthen received intellectual form, and help them in combining and separating, i.e., is judgement. The educational approach of the Second Vatican Council to the pastoral ministry gives importance to historical and cultural context. There is no proclamation of the Gospel of God without the involvement of the addressee, more precisely, what is going to be preached, is already at work in the addressee through historical and cultural influence, and when the preaching bridges the message with cultural context, people can freely accept it. The Second Vatican Council insists on the historical and cultural context of the addressee, i.e., the council educates on the cultural form of the revealed truth and on the inner unity of this truth, which is presented to the recipients, however, without being able to bring these two perspectives into harmony.<sup>960</sup>

Being faithful to the religious duties of one's own state in daily life, and preferring the religious values when they conflict with other relevant issues of daily life, is more difficult than

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<sup>957</sup> Guardini, Romano. *Der Blick auf das Ganze. Ausgewählte Texte zu Fragen der Zeit*. Dirks, Walter (Hrg.), Kösel Verlag München, 1985, p 22.

<sup>958</sup> Schreiner, Thomas R. "Problematic Texts for Definite Atonement in the Pastoral and General Epistles"; In, *From Heaven He Came and Sought Her. Definite Atonement in Historical, Biblical, Theological and Pastoral Perspective*. Gibson, David and Gibson, Jonathan (eds.), Crossway, Wheaton, Illinois, 2013, p 376-380.

<sup>959</sup> Wilson, R.F (ed). *The Life of St. Vincent de Paul. With an Appendix, Containing ... His Letters. Op.cit.*, 72.

<sup>960</sup> Theobald Christoph. „Heute ist der günstige Augenblick.“ *Op.cit.*, p 91.

may appear of first bounce of thought.<sup>961</sup> Composing and dividing in the act of cognition is a learned skill which has to be taught and learned in order to realize the spiritual advancement. Catholic religious education system (especially in Christian countries, where religion is taught in schools, e.g., Deutschland) must first of all become aware that religious educational injustice is an eminent issue of interest to them. Educational injustice is probably due to the core fact that the main focus within Catholic religious education system is still on religious instruction carried out in schools, and school is even the immediate context within which the religion is taught, but the issues relating to school development, school environment, and spiritual development are not being seriously considered, let alone shared responsibility of the churches and some topic of theology in education syllabus is a relevant topic for them. Religious pedagogy is involved in the public education system simply through religious instruction in schools, therefore, religious education is affected by educational injustice.<sup>962</sup>

### 2.1.2.2 Epistemological Specification of Reason and Faith

The word understanding means the faculty whereby we understand what we are thinking, and the word thinking<sup>963</sup> is more strictly that consideration of the intellect, accompanied by some kind of inquiry, which precedes the intellect's arrival at the stage of perfection, that comes with the certitude of sight.<sup>964</sup> In theology, reason not only has to provide the preambles of faith,<sup>965</sup> but also, as reason enlightened by faith, theology itself is constituted as a discursive science. Consequently, when theology reflects upon itself the role of reason will always be respected.<sup>966</sup> Translating the Holy Bible into regional languages, celebration of the liturgy in the vernacular of the local people, and development in hermeneutics have led the faithful to a deeper understanding of truth in the salvific message of Jesus Christ.<sup>967</sup> Comprehension of the theory of knowledge of God has increased the pragmatic understanding of spirituality, especially with regard to its methods, validity, and scope, and the distinction between Christian belief and the necessity of love of neighbour. Vincent de Paul used the comparison of looking at the sun in order to explain faith and reason. The more directly you look at sun the less you see. Those who more and more studied the truths of faith risked

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<sup>961</sup> Maloney P Robert. *The Way of Vincent de Paul*, New City Press, USA, 1992, p 65.

<sup>962</sup> Mette, Nobert. „Der aktuelle Diskurs über Bildungsgerechtigkeit in den beiden (Groß) Kirchen in Deutschland“, *Op.cit.*, p 34.

<sup>963</sup> “To think is not taken here for the act of the cogitative power, but for an act of the intellect”. *ST*, II-II,2,1,ad 2.

<sup>964</sup> *ST*, II-II, q. 2, a.1.

<sup>965</sup> The preambles of faith are regarded by Aquinas as the culmination of philosophy; natural theology, the highest knowledge of God that is possible on philosophical grounds alone.

<sup>966</sup> Josef Hoffer and Karl Rahner, eds. *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche*, vol.10 (Freiburg i.B.: Herder 1965), 720.

<sup>967</sup> Maloney P Robert. *The Way of Vincent de Paul*, *Op.cit.*, p 50.

understanding less and less. Vincent de Paul used to say: “It is enough, that we believe what the Church proposes to us, and submit our minds to this truth.”<sup>968</sup>

Philosophical reasoning, if rightly made use of by the wise, tends to smooth and fortify the approach to true faith, and to prepare the person for proper reception of revelation; that is why philosophical reasoning is called by ancient writers a steppingstone to the Christian faith, sometimes the prelude and help of Christianity, and other time the Gospel teacher.<sup>969</sup> The Apostle Peter advises, *in your hearts sanctify Christ as Lord. Always be ready to make your defence to anyone who demands from you an accounting for the hope that is in you* (1Pet 3: 15). Titus advocates, *one must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it* (Tit 1:9). David instructs Solomon apart from being courageous and strong, to *keep the charge of the Lord your God, walking in his ways and keeping his statutes, his commandments, his ordinances, and his testimonies, ..., so that you may prosper in all that you do and wherever you turn* (1Kgs 2:3). James steadfastly proclaims, *if any of you is lacking in wisdom, ask God...* (Jas 1:5).

Christoph Theobald explains three elements of consideration in bearing witness to the gospel. The gospel is first of all a school in human existence, but it does not take possession of this human existence. The Gospel liberates human life, without any advance performance, as an existence based on the consciousness of each individual, namely on an elementary process of belief. Secondly, one who has encountered this threshold of an entirely human faith can come to be interested in Jesus of Nazareth and even, thanks to the narratives of the Gospel and some people who live according to the school of the Nazarian Jesus, enter into a process of spiritual growth with him that can lead to identification with him, like Paul who declares in his letter to the Galatians: I live no longer, but Christ lives in me. However, it should be noted that the Church has encircled this threshold of access to faith in Jesus Christ with her sacramental acts, which transform the *Menschen* to their deepest roots. Thirdly, individuals can turn their inner openness to Christ into an axis that aligns their existence. They discover in themselves a responsibility for the messianic identity of Jesus of Nazareth in their history, and they identify with him as shepherd.<sup>970</sup>

Reason is a faculty of human beings, characterized by a transcendence that provides an inescapable reference to God, which exists even when a human being denies spiritual reference

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<sup>968</sup> Abelly, Louis. *op.cit.*, III: 15.

<sup>969</sup> Pope Leo XIII. *Aeterni Patris*. # 4. [http://w2.vatican.va/content/leo-xiii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_l-xiii\\_enc\\_04081879\\_aeterni-patris.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/leo-xiii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_04081879_aeterni-patris.html).

<sup>970</sup> Theobald Christoph. „Heute ist der günstige Augenblick.“ *Op.cit.*, p 104-108.

to God. Becoming aware of this transcendent capacity makes a person reach the highest metaphysical insights. Reason is a capacity and an essence of human beings, which can be gradually developed into consciousness by a voluntary act of the will. This rational thinking of human beings in its transcendental nature is understood not retrospectively, but as the whole breadth of one's reality, invoked in all its diversity in the aspect of one's relation to God. Transcendental cognitive understanding of God is developed in a person through many factors. It is invoked transcendently through grace; strengthened through the sensual perception of the experience of God in history, and through the proclamation of the Word of God, and through the ecclesial formation of revelation; deepened through understanding the development of faith in the Catholic church, and its discursive rationality of the scientific elements of the revelation of theology; and influenced through a positive personal conviction of faith.<sup>971</sup>

### 2.1.2.3 Specification of Form and Matter

Aquinas was in accord with Aristotle that human beings as corporeal beings had four principles: final, efficient, material and formal; and two co-principles of matter and form were primarily responsible for ontological constitution; this becomes apparent where substantial change is considered, whereby matter and form are not just present during change, but are always present in human beings, even when their presence is not obvious to an observer. If a person is not composed of these two principles prior to a substantial change, then the change did not happen; for with substantial change, matter receives new form and form which is present, is able to be replaced.<sup>972</sup> Change is a paradigm for spiritual advancement. The Second Vatican Council, in the document *Lumen Gentium* initiated a shift from the model of authority to a collegial model of function with new expectations of dialogue, shared decision making and shared responsibility.<sup>973</sup> Although dissent has become common, how far has the church opened the windows for collegial model of function, may not yet be answered on the local parish level even regarding demolishing the physical structure of the buildings.

Aquinas makes a distinction between the real good and the apparent good. The object of the will is good as intellectually apprehended. But the apprehended good can be either real or merely an apparent good. The real good of an action is, whatever is in agreement with the form, the rational soul. An apparent good is an evil, whether ontologically or moral, that is

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<sup>971</sup> Josef Hoffer and Karl Rahner, eds. *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche*, *Op.cit.*, p. 720.

<sup>972</sup> Pilsner Joseph. *The Specification of Human Actions in St Thomas Aquinas*. Oxford University Press, New York, 2006, P 31-32.

<sup>973</sup> Maloney P Robert. *The Way of Vincent de Paul*, *Op.cit.*, p 50.

erroneously judged to be in agreement with the rational form, but somehow dwindles into a notion of the good.<sup>974</sup> In the process of learning the message of the gospel and preaching the message of salvation to the people, there are three fundamental elements involved: form, matter and intention. The word of God is the form, the words and means that we use explains the matter and zeal for souls is the intention. The reaction of the people who hear the word of God could be different. All those who accept the message of the gospel may not and need not become a “baptized catholic person”, but still, they could have strong faith in Jesus Christ. Christoph Theobald observes that, a careful reading of the New Testament shows us that quite a few people who meet Jesus get access to their human existence but do not become his disciples. The gospel is first of all a school in human existence, but it does not take possession of human existence. The Gospel liberates human life, without any advance performance, as an existence based on the consciousness of each individual, namely on an elementary process of belief. Stories, such as the healing of the woman suffering from haemorrhage (Mk 5:25-35) and the encounter between Jesus and the Syrophenician woman (Mk 7:24-30) make this process of faith clear.<sup>975</sup>

Regarding the concepts of matter and form as described by Aristotle in the first book of *Physics*, a work on natural science, and concerned with things that change, in his thought Aristotle divides change into two main types, accidental change and substantial change. An example of accidental change occurs when I fall into a tub of blue paint, I will become blue, and an example for substantial change could be birth, death, or a fatal accident. Aristotle explains in ‘*Physics*’, that in any change, there must be three things: first, something which underlies and persists throughout the change; secondly, a lack of something, which is one of a pair of opposites, the other of which is the form; and thirdly, a form acquired during the course of the change.<sup>976</sup> Thus, for example, in an accidental change, the person acquires a new accidental property. As for example, when I learn to play the flute, I undergo a transition from a state of being unmusical which is the lack of the capacity, to a state of musicality (the form); but one is able to understand that there is something which has changed (musicality), there is something which remains the same throughout the change, in this case myself, who is one and the same person throughout my musical training.<sup>977</sup> I remain the same person, but my capacity

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<sup>974</sup> Bradley, J.M. Denis. *Aquinas on the Twofold Human Good*. Reason and Human Happiness in Aquinas’s Moral Science, The Catholic University of America Press, Washington, D.C, 1997, P 278; *ST*, I-II, q. 18, a.5.

<sup>975</sup> Theobald Christoph. „Heute ist der günstige Augenblick.“ *Op. cit.*, p 104.

<sup>976</sup> Barnes Jonathan. *Complete Works of Aristotle*. The Revised Oxford Translation, Vol. 1, 1991, p 13-15, (i 7, 190a13–191a22).

<sup>977</sup> <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/form-matter>.

has been changed, and I am now animated by musicality.<sup>978</sup> In the same way, before research on the concept of happiness in *Summa Theologiae* and after the research on the same topic, I remain the same person; however, my understanding of the concept of happiness is certainly raised to a higher level. The ministry of communicating the gospel opens a double perspective - empirical and normative. This is related to the fact that communication of the gospel has a diagnostic and a reforming potential in it: diagnostic insofar as the word intends to establish not only the success or failure of such communication, but also to look for the reasons according to the mission situation, and reform insofar as this urges commitment to endeavour to resolve any communication crises that have become recognizable and to shape the church in a manner that the pastoral leaders can credibly communicate the Gospel. The ministry of communicating the gospel clearly reveals the task of translating the central goal and the associated acts of responsibilities of church into contemporary language, and the ministry of preaching is more than just a question of words and concepts, but to activate *menschen* in accordance with the gospel. Traditionally, one speaks of the mission of proclaiming with a view to the Gospel or the Bible,<sup>979</sup> in order to lead the listeners to an understanding of the love of God and to differentiate spiritual and material things.

The word soul translates the Latin word *anima*, and from *anima* comes the word *animate*, which is often attributed to an active person - as opposed to an inactive person, who is inanimate and needs constant support to be animated. The word also translates the Greek *psyche*, and from this word comes the word *psychology*, which is for Aristotle and Aquinas not merely the study of the mind, but the study of that which makes the organism, which affects the entire living being.<sup>980</sup> A person is animated in his capacity of reason; the precepts and principles of the dogma of faith can animate a person, which then could be referred to as a person animated by faith. Here the person remains the same, but his capacity to understand the transcendental increases, which in turn can lead him to a new path of life, and a new form.

“Form is the cause of the matter; it is because of form that matter realizes the nature of what it is.”<sup>981</sup> While explaining the soul, Aquinas states that “there are two kinds of contact, of quantity and of power; by the former, a body can be touched only by a body, by the latter, a

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978 Ambadan Jaison. “*Concept of Happiness in Summa Theology with Reference to Contemporary Psychological Studies*”, p 230.

979 Mette Norbert. *Einführung in die katholische Praktische Theologie. Op.cit.*, p 11.

980 Feser Edward. *Aquinas A Beginner's Guide*. Oneworld Publications, London, 2009, p 133; Ambadan Jaison. “*Concept of Happiness in Summa Theology with Reference to Contemporary Psychological Studies*”, p 230.

981 Pasnau Robert. *Thomas Aquinas on Human Nature. A Philosophical Study of Summa Theologiae Ia 75-89*. Cambridge University Press, 2002, p 35.

body can be touched by an incorporeal thing, which moves that body'<sup>982</sup>. Aquinas implies that understanding and feeling can cause movement of the soul.<sup>983</sup> According to him, the soul is a force and viewed as the first source of cause or principle of life. Primarily responsible for animation, this first principle of life is not a body, but the actuality of a body, just the way that heat, the principle of heating, is not a body, but the actuality of a body.<sup>984</sup> Faith with reason becomes a principle of power, a form that moves the person. The transfiguration of Faith has its place not only in the service of the liturgy, but also something in catechetical instruction, in religious instruction, in religious or theological education, in retreats, seminars, etc.; it already begins in the family, provided parents raise their children religiously.<sup>985</sup>

#### 2.1.2.4 Bridging the Epistemological Gap

Aquinas's theory of knowledge discusses one's cognitive relations to entities, which he thinks are the logically simplistic elements, the quiddities, out of which a complex propositional knowledge is developed. Cognition of quiddities is a necessary condition of one's capacity of recognizing immediate propositions, that is, the epistemological first principles. It is not strictly epistemological, because the question of truth does not arise from this sort of cognition - since the objects of truth are not propositions. A certain cognitive power makes it possible to have a cognition of quiddities. However, there is a gap between sense perception and the cognition of universals, that is, sense perception, by its very nature, is incapable of connecting a person with the cognition of universals<sup>986</sup> because the objects of universals are extra sensory, so one needs cognitive access to intelligible objects apart from sense perception. This is a point of departure between Plato and Aristotle because Aristotelians hold that all human cognition is based on sense perception. This empiricism sees human beings as unified corporal substance, whose natural form of access to the world is through sense perception. Aquinas bridges this epistemological gap with his theory of intellective abstraction as a solution to this puzzle- that something is required to have the cognitive capacity in order to manipulate sensory data to produce intelligible universals. Aquinas understood his theory of intellective abstraction as the solution to this puzzle of a gap between sense perception and the cognition of universals.<sup>987</sup>

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<sup>982</sup> *ST*, I, q.75, a. 1, ad 3.

<sup>983</sup> *ST*, I, q. 18, a.1.

<sup>984</sup> *ST*, I, q. 75, a.1; Ambadan Jaision. "Concept of Happiness in Summa Theology with Reference to Contemporary Psychological Studies", p 231.

<sup>985</sup> Mette Norbert. Einführung in die katholische Praktische Theologie. Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, Darmstadt, Germany, 2005, p 11.

<sup>986</sup> People who hold the view of Plato consider that the universals are innate in the soul, although soul's innate cognition of them is darkened by the union with the body.

<sup>987</sup> Kretzmann, Norman and Stump, Eleonore (eds.). *The Cambridge Companion to Aquinas. Op.cit.*, p 180-182.

Regarding a cognitive arena within a parish atmosphere, abstracted phantasms of the parish situation emerge through intellectual abstraction, either individually or collectively through selection and amalgamation. The proper object of intellect is the nature of things, including material things, the body of reality that one comes across which a person knows through the senses. Humans have an intellectual cognition which helps them to arrive at conclusions from contingent states and situations. There is no better way of paying the best honour to the mysteries of God than proper devotion to and use of the sacraments,<sup>988</sup> which are a visible sign of the invisible grace of God. Teaching others what to believe about the great mysteries of God is showing a great honour to the mysteries of God by pastoral team. Failing to proclaim the incarnate word and failing to assist members of the community on intellectual abstraction on spiritual matters become spiritual voids presence of pastoral team.

### **2.1.2.5 Empowering through Prayer**

Karl Rahner explains states that faith can be viewed either as conceptually articulated and formulated or as an existentially fulfilled belief. However, these words do not mean two different things, but two different moments and aspects of one belief. These two moments are related to each other, which is not fixed and unchangeable once and for all, but changes continuously depending on the situation, age, ethnic peculiarity, personal experience, etc. of the individual believer.<sup>989</sup> Ethnic particularity of many parts of the world suggests more participation of women in the acts of faith for the pastoral community. From a sociological perspective, we learn about social, educational and economic concerns which at the same time empower women. This idea of social empowerment has an extended expectation of spiritual empowerment through their active participation in the acts of faith and prayer. Karl Rahner suggests a need to develop a new theology of prayer. He says that a theology of prayer today has to be worked out more deeply and precisely than in the previous decades, above all, if only secondarily, with regard to supplication and the invocation of the saints, since many of these forms of prayer represent a mere mythological remnant from earlier times. The style of the prayer formulas should be improved in accordance with a new theology of prayer.<sup>990</sup>

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<sup>988</sup> *Common Rules of the Congregation of the Mission*, Chapter X, # 3.

<sup>989</sup> Rahner, Karl. *Chancen des Glaubens. Fragmente einer modernen Spiritualität*. Herder-Bücherei, Verlag Herder KG Freiburg im Breisgau, 1971, p 65.

<sup>990</sup> Rahner, Karl. *Chancen des Glaubens. Fragmente einer modernen Spiritualität*. *Op.cit.*, p 71.

The question of changing the style of prayer implies examining if such a change should be restricted to only literary work or does it address the expectation of change of the gender of the person who conducts prayer for the community?

*From the whole field of writing on gender theory, there have however emerged some positions that could provide points of agreement, with a potential to yield growth in mutual understanding. For instance, educational programmes on this area often share a laudable desire to combat all expressions of unjust discrimination, a requirement that can be shared by all sides. Such pedagogical material acknowledges that there have been delays and failings in this regard. Indeed, it cannot be denied that through the centuries forms of unjust discrimination have been a sad fact of history and have also had an influence within the Church. This has brought a certain rigid status quo, delaying the necessary and progressive inculturation of the truth of Jesus' proclamation of the equal dignity of men and women, and has provoked accusations of a sort of masculinist mentality, veiled to a greater or lesser degree by religious motives.<sup>991</sup>*

Hans Küng explains that, in the concept of God an overemphasis on the male must be avoided. The application of the father's name to God must not mean any sexual differentiation in God himself: God cannot be claimed for the male sex alone. God is not the same as man. Even in the Old Testament, God has feminine and maternal traits. The address of the father is a patriarchal symbol for the trans-human, trans-sexual reality of God, which is also the origin of everything feminine and maternal. Under no circumstances may it be used for the religious justification of social paternalism.<sup>992</sup> Prayer is a means to empower the soul of menschen, and this empowerment cannot be restricted to gender related traditional elements.

### 2.1.3 Formation of Habits

The twentieth century has brought a courageous emphasis on the dignity of the menschen. *Gaudium et Spes*,<sup>993</sup> writings of popes John Paul II,<sup>994</sup> Benedict XVI<sup>995</sup> and Francis<sup>996</sup> explain the dignity of menschen.<sup>997</sup> If one looks at the history of the church in the second millennium and the traces that it has left in Europe, one can only be amazed how it has managed to make the life of so many people flourish (this includes their spiritual dimension). Expressions of this are functional and at the same time beautiful buildings, creative works of art, devotional

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<sup>991</sup> Congregation for Catholic Education. *Male and Female, He Created Them. Towards a Path of Dialogue on the Question of Gender Theory in Education*. Vatican City, Vatican Press 2019, # 15. [http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc\\_con\\_ccatheduc\\_doc\\_20190202\\_maschio-e-femmina\\_en.pdf](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_20190202_maschio-e-femmina_en.pdf) (Accessed on 10.08.2020).

<sup>992</sup> Küng, Hans. *Wegzeichen in die Zukunft. Programmatishes für eine christlichere Kirche*. Rowohlt, Verlag Benziger, 1980, p 162.

<sup>993</sup> *Gaudium et Spes* 9, 12, # 22.

<sup>994</sup> *Redemptor Homnis, passion*.

<sup>995</sup> *Message of His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI for the Celebration of the World Day of Peace*, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2009.

[http://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/messages/peace/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_mes\\_20091208\\_xliiii-world-day-peace.pdf](http://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/messages/peace/documents/hf_ben-xvi_mes_20091208_xliiii-world-day-peace.pdf). (accessed on 7.1.2020)

<sup>996</sup> *Fratelli Tutti*.

<sup>997</sup> Maloney P Robert. *The Way of Vincent de Paul, Op.cit.*, p 51.

music, a humane art of living that includes caring for the weakest, and an art of celebration. Signs and symbols accompany people's life from its beginning to its end.<sup>998</sup> Christians are influenced not only by the sacraments but also by a style of living, signs and symbols, pictures and literature, and traditions of prayer. All these elements help in the formation of habits, for example a "church building" is not simply a thing made out of bricks and cement, but belongs to the habit of the residents of the town who habitually visited and prayed in this building. People try to achieve their goal by using their God-given capacities. Their free choice is at times conditioned or limited by external factors.<sup>999</sup>

The plurality of lifestyles has relativized the system of Christian faith and values handed down from generation to generation and exposed the life of large sections of the population to their own fragility.<sup>1000</sup> Formation of spiritual habits is important to create internal space for repetition of acts of faith. Formation of habits should be one of the main pastoral objectives, so that the process of evangelization will be continued and accepted with love. Deep humility was Vincent de Paul's most striking pastoral characteristic.<sup>1001</sup> Vincent de Paul instructed his confreres that, their preaching of popular missions could hardly be carried on if they lived in utter poverty, since missions are to be given without charge; nevertheless, they should try, in the Lord, to maintain poverty as an ideal and, as far as they can, practice poverty as well.<sup>1002</sup> Regular practice of an act will lead to formation of habits.

People can develop certain habits that might appear as moral values like fortitude, sobriety, and hard work. But if the acts of the various moral virtues are to be rightly directed, one needs to take into account the extent to which they foster openness towards spiritual growth and union with others. Moral habits toward the neighbour are made possible by the charity that God infuses. Invoking charity for those associated with the ministry of the Lazarists, Vincent de Paul expected that charity would realize benefits like, enabling them to practice virtue, forming a habitual pious movement of benefactors of both the incentives and the rewards of charity, and contribution to their own salvation and that of others.<sup>1003</sup> Without charity, we may perhaps possess only apparent virtues, incapable of sustaining the spiritual life. Quoting

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<sup>998</sup> Theobald Christoph. „Evangelium und Kirche“, in *Frei Geben. Op.cit.*, p 122.

<sup>999</sup> Feinberg, John., Geisler, Norman., Reichenbach, Bruce., and Pinnock, Clark. *Predestination & Free Will. Four Views of Divine Sovereignty & Human Freedom*. Basinger, David and Basinger Randall (eds.), Inter Varsity Press. Downers Grove, Illinois, 1986, p 45.

<sup>1000</sup> Theobald Christoph. „Evangelium und Kirche“, *Op.cit.*, p 122.

<sup>1001</sup> Wilson, R.F (ed). *The Life of St. Vincent de Paul. With an Appendix, ... Some of His Letters. Op.cit.*, 73.

<sup>1002</sup> *Common Rules of the Congregation of the Mission*, Chapter III, # 2.

<sup>1003</sup> Forrestal, Alison, *Op.cit.*, p. 270.

Augustine, Thomas Aquinas says, that the temperance of a greedy person is in no way virtuous.<sup>1004</sup>

Prayer is a gift of God but prayer is congruently a habit. People have to make a voluntary human act and regularly cultivate the practice of prayer, because spirituality develops in accord with human action. Vincent said that he never celebrated holy Mass without praying to God for his company during the preparation and at the *memento*.<sup>1005</sup> Vincent's act of praying to God for his confreres developed in him an evangelic spirituality riveted with the character of being a contemplative at home and an apostle away from home. In prayer people can present to God all their problems and feelings and struggles. Prayer life involves carrying daily cross and there may be difficulties from within and from outside. As far as the difficulties from within is considered, people may lose interest in prayer and may face problem to understand the meaning and relevance of prayer. The outside difficulties are the difficulties caused by external factors, like influence of friends, influence of reading materials and other personal interests. Amidst all difficulties which adversely influence the tranquillity of mind and recurring interest in prayer, people need to motivate themselves in finding time daily for prayer and spiritual practices. At times, when people are carrying their cross for a long time, that could cause them repugnance, but they must not let the problem hold on to them, because the nature is sluggard that shrinks from pain and aims often to deprive you of the merit of suffering, then the longer the suffering is the greater the merit will be.<sup>1006</sup>

In the culpable disorder of dissolution of theological virtues, love is lost first, then hope, and last of all faith. In the order of their perfection, love holds first place, hope the second place

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<sup>1004</sup> Fratelli Tutti. # 91.

<sup>1005</sup> CCD: IV:145 (Letter: *To René Almérás, Superior in Rome*, January 13, 1651). Vincent de Paul explains that as an individual who is involved in many activities of the pastoral ministry, need to have a proper disposition in order to approach and celebrate the source and submit of spiritual life, the eucharistic celebration, which he advised to all his followers to celebrate daily. The use of the term *memento* by Vincent could mean two things. First, as a preparation to the Eucharistic celebration Vincent used to read a collection of texts of the fathers of the church and explanation of theologians, he even prayed before reading them, the act of praying before reading the text, in order to understand them properly, he probably named as *memento*. The second meaning is more reliable, which is not exactly *memento* but *memento mori*, meaning remember death and remember that you will die. During the time of Vincent de Paul many priests and sisters used to die during their ministries due to various infections. At the death of a sister or a confrere the community used to gather and pray. Reasonably, there was no possibility for a great gathering of all the confreres and sisters, but they gathered in their own communities at the news of the death of their members and well-wishers. *Memento* was an act of praying for the members of the company. Besides this, priests were allowed to take stipends for celebrating the holy mass for the intention of faithful. Vincent advised his confreres to celebrate mass also with free intentions for the intention of the faithful. During the preparation for the holy mass Vincent used to pray for the intentions as well. This act of praying for the departed souls of the members of the company and of the faithful was a *memento mori*, and Vincent prepared himself before saying the intention of *memento mori*. Vincent in a way cautions his confreres to pray seriously even without stipends. CCD: 1:329; CCD: XI: 85; CCD: V: 429; CCD: V: 266.

<sup>1006</sup> CCD: IV:145 (Letter: *To René Almérás, Superior in Rome*, January 13, 1651).

and faith the last place.<sup>1007</sup> Therefore, as far as Christian education in the pastoral ministry is concerned, it must focus on developing the habitus of love towards the Christian spirit of living. Habitus provide the whole person with capacities for action, which surpass the simple ability to exercise will power. An habituated approach tends to the optimum performance of human acts.<sup>1008</sup> Another word for human action could be human conduct, the acts constituting voluntary human conduct is human action.<sup>1009</sup>

To lead a life of faith is an invitation and a vocation. Pastoral leaders have to consider the possibility of formation regarding the spiritual growth of the people. Remarkably, the habit of prayer strengthens and preserves the vocation to the Christian life and therefore, when the habit of prayer is neglected, the strength of one's vocation will correspondingly be lessened. Different types of social responsibility of the people could possibly divert their focus on prayer, therefore, pastoral leaders need take up seriously their responsibility of spiritual formation of the faithful with regard to the continuation and renewal of the spirit of prayer.<sup>1010</sup>

The virtue of humility is like a strong foundation for spiritual life because humility is an opposing force against the evil force of pride which is the root cause of every evil. Humility is an integral part of the spirituality of pastoral ministers, and the cultivation of this virtue allows people to practice patience.<sup>1011</sup> Pride causes a person to resist God rather than to seek him. How can a person be one with God without seeking Him? *In the pride of their countenance the wicked say, God will not seek it out, all their thoughts are, there is no God.*<sup>1012</sup> A spiritual approach to pastoral ministry is fundamental to create positive dispositions. In addition to the material services rendered in the pastoral ministry, pastoral leaders should be able to contribute as best as they can towards the spiritual welfare of the poor people, by speaking kind words to them, comforting the dying, counselling those who are recovering from long sickness, and guiding those who are improving from their lack of interest in prayer, that they may progress in their spiritual life.<sup>1013</sup>

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<sup>1007</sup> Pieper Josef. *An Anthology. Op.cit.*, p 9-10.

<sup>1008</sup> Cessario Romanus. *The Moral Virtues and The Theological Ethics*. University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame, Indiana, 2013, P 42.

<sup>1009</sup> Fagothey, Austin. *Right and Reason. Ethics in Theory and Practice*. Second Edition, C.V. Mosby Company, St. Louis, Tan Books, Charlotte, North Carolina, 1959, p 87.

<sup>1010</sup> CCD: IX:327 (Conference: *Mental Prayer*, May 31, 1648).

<sup>1011</sup> CCD: IX:179 (Conference: *Pride*, June 11, 1655).

<sup>1012</sup> Psalm 10:4-5.

<sup>1013</sup> CCD: VIII:61 (Letter: *To Jean Francoise De Gondy*, November 1646).

### 2.1.3.1 Contemplation: Acquired and Infused

Contemplation is a superior spiritual generic goal to have, which stands higher than the other virtues like justice, wisdom, courage, honesty, charity, liberty, temperance, or any other virtues of that likeness. A spiritually oriented person can comparatively, and without much difficulty, attain all of the other virtues except contemplation. Contemplation is a sort of activity of the mind worthy of holiness, an appreciation of which is enriched with the grace of God. It should be considered in this context, that contemplation is not the beginning of virtuous life, rather the end of a virtuous life, that is, which means we must live a virtuous life in order to initiate contemplation, which is the highest calling an individual can have in this world.

The role of faith in the experience of an individual and fidelity to faith through the habitual human act of that person, create a calling to purify the mind, to thirst for God and to have knowledge of the presence of God. In perfect contemplation, the person is in the certitude of the presence of God and that person rejoices in serenity in the presence of God. This is a mystic contemplative experience, which is different from mysticism of action. There is a subtle difference between a mystic of contemplation and a mystic of action. The word mystic in itself is a word to illustrate contemplation, and a mystic of action would mean contemplation and action. If we understand contemplation as a normal development in prayer rather than a rare phenomenon reserved for the privileged, then we could combine both the mystic of contemplation and the mystic of action.<sup>1014</sup> The word mystic of action illustrates a complementary relationship between contemplation and action in the spirituality of Vincent de Paul.<sup>1015</sup>

Contemplation tends to contemplation of the truth. It is to be understood that the intention is an act of the will because intention is the motivating factor towards the goal, the object of the will. Intention is a volitional act in which the individual wills an end that he knows himself to be capable of attaining, in a way yet to be deliberated about and chosen, through intensive means.<sup>1016</sup> The act of contemplation is an intensive means of contemplating the truth. Regarding the essence of the contemplative action, it pertains to the intellect, but regarding the motive cause of contemplative action, it belongs to the will, The will moves all the other powers, even the intellect, to their actions.<sup>1017</sup> It is the appetitive power which encourages one to observe

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<sup>1014</sup> Maloney, Robert P. "Saint Vincent as a Mystic of Charity", in *Vincentiana* (N° 1, April-June, 2017), p 120.

<sup>1015</sup> Álvarez, Francisco Javier. "Commentary on the Final Document of the 2016 General Assembly", in *Vincentiana* (October- December, 2016, # 4), p 495.

<sup>1016</sup> Bradley. J.M. Denis. *Aquinas on the Twofold Human Good. Op.cit.*, P 345.

<sup>1017</sup> *ST*, II-II, q. 180, a. 1.

things, either with the senses or to cogitate with the intellect, that is why it is said where your treasure is there is your heart also (Mt 6:21). The contemplative life consists in the love of God because through love of God a person is enthused to see the beauty of God. When contemplation deepens, the love of God becomes more intense. Although the contemplative life consists mainly in an act of the intellect, it has its beginnings in the appetite, since it is through love that one is urged towards the contemplation of God.<sup>1018</sup>

A person can contemplate in different ways. However, prudence determines the practical reasonable way for the person, when he deliberates which means are available to him to attain knowledge of truth through contemplation. This act of personal consent to deliberation of the means whereby contemplation is attained is a volitional act. It is the application of the desire of the will to the possible methods of contemplation that the person discovers through deliberation. Which day in the week would be the best time for contemplation? How often should the person invest time in contemplation? What are the methods of intellectual enrichment the person could use for the betterment of contemplation? These types of questions are deliberated by the individual in order to facilitate contemplation. Deliberation ends in a particular judgement, what is the best way to do contemplation in order to attain the intended end, the truth. However, judgement is also followed by a choice, which is the volitional act of accepting the means that have been judged to be preferable or considered to be best. Both intention and choice differ, inasmuch as the intention focuses on the end attainable through intensive means, and the choice focuses on the rationally preferred means.<sup>1019</sup>

Vincent de Paul instructed his followers to be authentic apostles when outside the house, and at the same time to live as Carthusians, who work most earnestly at their interior holiness.<sup>1020</sup> Vincent expressed a new perspective and did not feel bound by the vision and concepts of his former spiritual director Bérulle. Vincent regarded the Bérullian language a little artificial and he could not understand how a person could work with purity of intention by simply being attentive to the gaze of God. Vincent considered purity of intention as intimately related to doing God's will and to obedience. Because of his understanding of purity of intention in

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<sup>1018</sup> *ST*, II-II, q. 180, a. 7, ad 1.

<sup>1019</sup> Bradley, J.M. Denis. *Aquinas on the Twofold Human Good*. *Op.cit.*, P 345-346; *ST*, I-II, q. 58, a. 5; *ST*, I-II, q. 15, a. 3; *ST*, I-II, q. 83, a. 3. *ST*, I, q. 83, a. 3.

<sup>1020</sup> *CCD*: XII:384; Abelly Louis, *Op.cit.*, II, p 24.

relation to charity and of course from his own lived experience, Vincent mistrusted those “desires” and “gazes” that were not translated into action.<sup>1021</sup>

Pope Pius IX advocated all Christians (in *Studiorum Duce*) to read the writings of Aquinas, especially *Summa Theologiae*, in order to deepen their spiritual life. The Pope said that a great combination of doctrine and piety, of erudition and virtue, of truth and charity, is to be found to an eminent degree in the writings of Aquinas. His writings bring the light of learning into the minds of men and women and fires their hearts and wills with virtue. God, the Source of all sanctity and wisdom, would, therefore, seem to have desired to show, in the case of Thomas Aquinas, how each of these qualities assists the other, and how the practice of virtue disposes people to a contemplation of the truth. The profound consideration of truth in turn perfects virtue. A person of pure and of upright life, whose passions are controlled by virtue, is delivered, as it were, of a heavy burden, and can much more easily raise his mind to contemplation, and penetrate more profoundly the secrets of God. If such people devote themselves to the investigation of the supernatural, they will find a powerful incentive in such a pursuit to lead a perfect life. Indeed, the learning of such sublime things, the beauty of which is a ravishing ecstasy, so far from being a solitary or sterile occupation, must be said to be, on the contrary, the most practical.<sup>1022</sup>

Thomas Merton, in the conclusion to his book on contemplative prayer, stated: *without contemplation and interior prayer, the Church cannot fulfil her mission to transform and save humankind. Without contemplation, she will be reduced to being the servant of cynical and worldly powers, no matter how hard her faithful may protest that they are fighting for the Kingdom of God. Without true, deep contemplative aspirations, without a total love for God and an uncompromising thirst for God's truth, religion tends in the end to become an opiate.*<sup>1023</sup>

Karl Rahner, one of the great 20th-century theologians, wrote extensively about spirituality. One of his most frequently cited statements of his *Theological Investigations* is, “the devout Christian of the future will either be a mystic, one who has experienced something, or he will cease to be anything at all”.<sup>1024</sup> Rahner speaks of a *mysticism of daily life*, since grace is nothing

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<sup>1021</sup> Gutiérrez, Rolando. *Two Genes of the Four-Hundred-Year-Old Charism*, in *Vincentiana* (N° 3 July-September 2017), p 352-353.

<sup>1022</sup> Pope Pius XI. *Studiorum Duce* (On St. Thomas Aquinas). Encyclical promulgated on 29 June 1923; <http://www.ewtn.com/library/encyc/p11studi.htm>, (accessed on 7 Feb. 2019).

<sup>1023</sup> Thomas Merton. *Contemplative Prayer*, New York: Doubleday, 1969, p 116.

<sup>1024</sup> Maloney, Robert. P. “Saint Vincent as a Mystic of Charity”, in *Vincentiana* (N° 2, April-June, 2017), p 113.

less than the offer of God's very own self to each of us, the human person can be described as *homo mysticus*. Being human inevitably means being bound up in the mystery of God's love.<sup>1025</sup>

The work of the active life leads one toward contemplation by quelling the interior passions, which give rise to the phantasms whereby contemplation is hindered.<sup>1026</sup> There are many ways by which the active life of a parishioner can help him to enter contemplation, through liturgical participation in a parish church. The contemplative life will move forward by understanding how the eucharist is celebrated, explaining the liturgical celebration of the sacrament, and is deepened by acknowledging the eucharist as the source and summit of the spiritual life.<sup>1027</sup> Vincent de Paul encouraged his followers to be contemplative in action and apostles in prayer.<sup>1028</sup> The contemplative life is made more competent, by training and strengthening the person's ability to have an active and conscious participation in the liturgical celebration. Above all it is the personal appreciation, which allows repetition in order to deepen the spiritual thoughts and focus the mind through recurrence of liturgical inputs. From an Aristotelian perspective, life is an action, and a person who is preoccupied with private affairs or household affairs is not fully present to be active, that is, he has not yet moved into the highest sphere of action, the exercise of practical wisdom and moral virtue.<sup>1029</sup>

The faithful in a parish are called to build their life on the cardinal virtues of prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance as well as the theological or supernatural virtues of faith, hope, and charity. Prudence denotes knowledge of reality and the realization of the good,<sup>1030</sup> justice signifies duty in relation to the other,<sup>1031</sup> fortitude means readiness to suffer and defend the truth,<sup>1032</sup> temperance symbolises serenity of the spirit which fills the innermost recesses of the human being, the seal and fruit of the inner order.<sup>1033</sup> The call to the cardinal virtuous life needs to be understood in light of the moral life of the person because the virtues are ordered to the ultimate good, which is God, who is the ultimate good of the individual and of the community. Moral teachings are comprised of what one should do and what one should not do. There is therefore a need for instructing an individual about the moral life, whereby, we instruct a person to lead a virtuous life. It is this virtuous life that leads to contemplation. The cardinal

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<sup>1025</sup> Maloney, Robert. P. "Saint Vincent as a Mystic of Charity", *Op.cit.*, p 114.

<sup>1026</sup> *ST*, II-II, q. 182, a. 3.

<sup>1027</sup> *Vatican II. Lumen gentium*, no. 11; *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 1324.

<sup>1028</sup> Maloney, Robert P. *Go ! On the Missionary Spirituality of St. Vincent de Paul. Op.cit.*, p 31.

<sup>1029</sup> Bradley, J.M. Denis. *Aquinas on the Twofold Human Good. Op.cit.*, P 391.

<sup>1030</sup> Pieper, Josef. *The Four Cardinal Virtues. Op.cit.*, p 10.

<sup>1031</sup> Pieper, Josef. *The Four Cardinal Virtues. Op.cit.*, p 54.

<sup>1032</sup> Pieper, Josef. *The Four Cardinal Virtues. Op.cit.*, p 117.

<sup>1033</sup> Pieper, Josef. *The Four Cardinal Virtues. Op.cit.*, p 147.

virtues are developed within a person through habitual virtuous living, and through God's assistance.

Understanding in a special way, about the production of habits from acts in relation to virtue, we must take note that, a person's virtue perfects in him the relation towards a good. Virtue directed towards a good, as defined by the power and rule of human reason, can be caused by human acts, inasmuch as it is by reason that the virtue (a good act) is established. On the other hand, virtue which directs man towards a good, as defined by Divine Law and not by human reason, cannot be caused by human acts (the principle of which is reason), but is produced in us by Divine operation alone.<sup>1034</sup> When a parish organizes different programmes, within pastoral ministry, in a liturgical calendar, to give insight into contemplation, it offers the provision of an experience of being closer to God, and the faithful are given an opportunity to spend time in prayer other than in liturgical services, and thereby open themselves to a prayerful acumen, and to spiritual vigilance to the promptings of the Holy Spirit. Those initiatives of a parish are a commitment to providing a wide array of opportunities for theological learning and spiritual development to individuals of all ages. The narrative of creation in the holy Bible does not just speak of the past, but is the present mode of action of elusive qualities. The word of Jesus in the Gospels is a revelation which today both challenges and enables an answer to understand God in the narration of creation. The prayer which Jesus taught his disciples is more than just a school of prayer.<sup>1035</sup>

Just like the psalmist says, the people feast on the abundance of the house of God, and the Lord gives them drink from the river of His delights; for with the Lord is the fountain of life, in His light we see light (Ps 36: 8-9). The tranquillity of the heart experienced in contemplation is an experience of spiritual rest to a parishioner, an answer to innumerable questions which usually arise in the spiritual journey of a believer. Contemplation helps parishioners to distinguish between parish ministry and personal spiritual development, while active parish ministries are usually carried out according to human needs, the contemplative life is centered on divine thoughts.<sup>1036</sup> If reason is divine compared to normal human acts, then life according to contemplation is divine compared to normal human life.<sup>1037</sup>

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<sup>1034</sup> ST, I-II, q. 63, a. 2.

<sup>1035</sup> Feiter Reinhard. „Zeit brauchen- homiletische Versuche“, in *Ach, Du Liebe Zeit, Temporalität als Herausforderung der Pastoral*. Baumhoer, Corinna und Kröger, Elisa. eds., Matthias Grünewald Verlag der Schwabenverlag AG, Ostfildern, Deutschland, 2013, p 152.

<sup>1036</sup> ST, II-II, q. 182, a. 1.

<sup>1037</sup> Aristotle. *The Nicomachean Ethics*. *Op.cit.*, p195.

### 2.1.3.2 Contemplative Charity: The Form and Motor of All Virtues and Values

As we reflect on the theological virtues (faith, hope and charity), we discover that charity is the last element in the order, but it is the greatest of the three theological virtues.<sup>1038</sup> It is often referred to as love and in the popular understanding, is often confused with the many common ways in which we use the word, love. Charity is more than a subjective feeling or an objective action of the will towards another person. Charity is supernatural (like the other two theological virtues) in the sense that God is its origin and its object. It is an infused supernatural virtue by which a person loves God above all things and loves others for God's sake. Although it is an infused virtue, nevertheless, charity, like all virtues, is an act of the will, and the exercise of charity increases our love for God and our neighbour. All theological virtues are connected to one another and without faith in God we cannot love God nor can we love our neighbour for God's sake. "Charity is superior to all the virtues. It is the first of the theological virtues."<sup>1039</sup>

Charity is the habit of choosing to act with love. Aquinas speaks of the love of charity as being like the love of friendship. This is the attitude that people should adopt toward creation and God. Creation is the ongoing continual gift of God to the world. It is the perpetual and gracious constitution of the universe through the outflowing of the divine being. Thus, the creative agent, who is God, must be present in all things at the very root of their existence. God is closer to me than I am to myself, nearer to me than that which is nearest to me.<sup>1040</sup> Aquinas says that the ultimate goal of people is to enjoy God...and charity directs people to that end.<sup>1041</sup> Therefore, it is works of charity that deepen people's desire to develop their spiritual life.

### 2.1.3.3 Discern, Embody, and Proclaim the Fruits of One's Contemplation

Aquinas echoes Aristotle in his lengthy description about the perfection of the human act, especially with regard to the description of the nature of virtue. Virtues are developed habits of human activity that are strengthened by a disposition to good acts that are subject to the rule of human reason and will. Virtue, as a developed disposition, is a kind of mean between excess and defect in the exercise of human activity. But it would be wrong to conclude that Aquinas just repeated Aristotle, because Aquinas discussed at length both particular virtues and their contrary vices,<sup>1042</sup> something that was never discussed by Aristotle. The theological depth of

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<sup>1038</sup> 1 *Corinthians* 13,13.

<sup>1039</sup> *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. 1826; 1 *Corinthians*. 13:1–8.

<sup>1040</sup> Barron Robert. *Thomas Aquinas. Spiritual Master. Op.cit.*, p 88-89.

<sup>1041</sup> *ST*, II-II, q. 23, a.7.

<sup>1042</sup> *ST*, I-II, q. 23. Aquinas explains regarding eleven essentially distinct kinds of emotion, which he sorts into two kinds, concupiscible and irascible. The six concupiscible emotions of love and hate, desire and aversion,

Aquinas's work includes reflections on those virtues which are related to perfect life and perfect happiness; From a pastoral theological perspective, virtue is a human act. The subject of happiness, as explained by Aquinas, is twofold. One is a sort of happiness which is achievable in this life through human acts that are nourished by the endowed capacity of human nature; this type of happiness he calls *felicitas*. The second type of happiness that Aquinas explains is difficult but achievable through cooperative human action that is in accord with the divine.<sup>1043</sup> This he calls *beatitudo*, wherein human beings can see God, who is perfect happiness, and an absolute delight of the will.<sup>1044</sup> Naturally a question arises from the perspective of the spiritual life in this world: what about the idea of contemplation? Contemplation in the spiritual life consists in knowing God, because contemplation is an activity of the intellect supported by the will. It is the idea of perfect *felicitas* which leads a person to seek God through His effects and the ways in which they represent Him as cause. Knowledge of perfect *felicitas* opens the door to beatitude. Aquinas believed that it is possible to have a vision of God in contemplation which is a perfect form of prayer, wherein the inner spiritual nature of a person participates in the life of the divinity, and the light of God's glory is united to the inner self of the human being.<sup>1045</sup> Contemplation gives perfect joy and is the way to know God intensively and closely.

Pope John Paul II in his apostolic exhortation *Familiaris Consortio* emphasizes the need to reach a deeper understanding of the truth. Therefore, catechesis should lead to the formation of conscience. Otherwise, the truth becomes a subjective feeling and does not become a source of life for oneself and for the community. Animated by a true apostolic spirit, men and women, with the assistance of their spirituality and united to the ecclesial community, need to develop a sense of solidarity, an effective and accessible means for transmitting to one another Christian values which are both the starting point and goal of all pastoral ministry. The formation of conscience must be appropriately founded on Christian values something which is not always in accord with the standards of public opinion.<sup>1046</sup>

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delight and distress; the five irascible emotions of hope and despair, confidence and fear, and anger (it has no contrary). The concupiscible passions are directed at objects taking into account they appear to be good or evil, whereas the irascible passions are directed at objects considering they present something good or evil that might be hard to achieve or difficult to avoid. But these are not straightforward claims. One need to go deep into more fundamental issues about passion in general to appreciate Aquinas.

<sup>1043</sup> *ST*, I-II, q. 62, a. 1.

<sup>1044</sup> *ST*, II-II, q. 11, a. 3&4.

<sup>1045</sup> *ST*, I, q. 12.

<sup>1046</sup> Pope John Paul II. *Familiaris Consortio* (November 22, 1981) No.69 & 72. [http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost\\_exhortations/documents/hf\\_jp-ii\\_exh\\_19811122\\_familiaris-consortio.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_19811122_familiaris-consortio.html)( accessed on 19.7.2019)

In the structural consideration of the practical-theological subject theory, one point should be frequently emphasized, namely, human existence is not realized monadically, but is constitutively based on relationships with others. This can be seen in a very elementary way at the beginning of human life before birth and in infancy, when the developing of a new born child is fundamentally dependent on the relationship between the baby's mother and the baby, but conversely also exerts considerable influence on this relationship. What applies to this beginning also applies to the rest of life: without a relationship with others, no individual can grow.<sup>1047</sup>

#### **2.1.3.4 Threefold Movements: Circular, Straight and Oblique**

While affirming the superiority of contemplation, Aquinas does not see it as idleness of mind. It is an active engagement of movement towards God, and in its highest stage one focuses profoundly on God. Aquinas likes to recall the attention of all his readers to the fact that the contemplative life is intimately connected to the active life. Since human life in general is not divided into active and contemplation, some division could be applied to the intellectual understanding and function of human life. Contemplation enjoys rest and bliss from the external virtuous activities. Contemplation, in itself, is a movement of the intellect, that is to say, every operation of the mind is movement,<sup>1048</sup> but contemplation is a perfect movement of the soul towards God.

Contemplation consists of the operation of the intellect,<sup>1049</sup> which is a movement of human activity towards perfection. These movements of the physical presence of people rooted in intellectual movement are of three kinds: the circular movement, by which people move uniformly around one point that is the center. Another is the straight movement, by which people go from one point to another; the third is oblique movement which remains being composed at one place while the other end moves actively. The intelligible operation of people in contemplation is compared to circular movement; the intelligible operation by which people proceeds from one point to another is compared to the straight movement; while the intelligible operation which unites people as they progress to various points is compared to the oblique movement. If the movement is according to the order of natural reason, it belongs to the straight movement; but if the movement is according to Divine enlightenment, it will belong to the

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<sup>1047</sup> Mette Norbert. *Einführung in die katholische Praktische Theologie. Op.cit.*, p 77-78.

<sup>1048</sup> *ST*, II-II, q. 179, a. 1 ad 2 & 3.

<sup>1049</sup> *ST*, II-II, q. 119, a. 1 ad 3.

oblique movement.<sup>1050</sup> All three forms of intellectual operation move the mind to the tranquillity of contemplation.<sup>1051</sup>

### 2.1.3.5 Five Significant Fruits

It is necessary to make every effort to purify one's act of cognition in order to enter into contemplation. Without that purification we cannot be united with Christ. To contemplate and to share the fruits of contemplation with others was dear to the heart of Aquinas and Vincent, and also sums up the vocation of the whole Church. The fruits of contemplation were most certainly integral elements of the early Church. Those first Christians, who were baptised into the body of Christ (Church) chose to do all that was possible in order to participate in the mystical contemplation of the Father, and in return they received the power of divine love. It was this divine love and the gifts of the Holy Spirit, supported by the various virtues, that empowered them to transform a pagan empire into a Christian movement. Many sacrificed their lives and therefore it can be rightly affirmed that the early church was built on the blood of those martyrs. Those men and women, in their profound contemplation, died to this world to attain the bliss of "a new world". Karl Rahner defines the world as the reality which is accessible to the immediate experience of *menschen*, it is the world of ordinary experience, the world of time as space.<sup>1052</sup> There are many fruits of contemplation, however the following five fruits are most significant to for the members of the Christian community.

a) **Participation in the Eucharist Celebration:** Eucharist is the summit of the spiritual life and all the sacraments are ordered to the sacrament of Eucharist.<sup>1053</sup> When we celebrate the Eucharist, the Lord's Supper, which he celebrated as the beginning of his passion, becomes present among us and for us.<sup>1054</sup> In the last Supper, Jesus gives twelve disciples his body and blood as food and drink for eternal life. He wanted this self-bringing sign of his love to remain as an expression of unity with him.<sup>1055</sup> The nature of human self (an individual person) cannot really be determined abstractly, since no self exists apart from the practices and gestures that constitute it.<sup>1056</sup> To understand the spiritual life of *menschen*, we need to be attentive to what they do and how they develop their spiritual life. The Eucharist played a central role in the

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<sup>1050</sup> *ST*, II-II, q. 180, a. 6 ad 3.

<sup>1051</sup> *ST*, II-II, q. 180, a. 1.

<sup>1052</sup> Kilby, Karen. *Karl Rahner. Theology and Philosophy*. Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, Oxon, UK, 2004, p 17.

<sup>1053</sup> Davies, Brian. *Thomas Aquinas's Summa Theologiae. Op.cit.*, p 338; *ST*, III, q. 73, a. 3.

<sup>1054</sup> Rahner, Karl. *Über die Sakramente der Kirche. Meditationen*. Verlag Herder Freiburg im Breisgau 1985,p65.

<sup>1055</sup> Rahner, Karl. *Praxis des Glaubens. Geistliches Lesebuch. Op.cit.*, p 273.

<sup>1056</sup> Barron Robert. *Exploring Catholic Theology*. Baker Academic, Michigan, USA, 2015, p 145.

spirituality of Thomas Aquinas and Vincent de Paul.<sup>1057</sup> Indeed, all the members of the catholic church belong to the mystical body of Jesus Christ. Catholics develop a special love for the eucharistic celebration because it is the sacrament of the real presence of Jesus Christ. The sacraments of the Church are intended to assist people in developing their spiritual life. The spiritual life, however, is analogous to the corporeal, for corporeal things bear a resemblance to spiritual. Generation is required for corporeal life and likewise food is required for the preservation of life. Consequently, just as corporeal life needs nourishment, so also the spiritual life needs Baptism, which is spiritual generation, and Confirmation, which is spiritual growth, and the sacrament of the Eucharist, which is spiritual food.<sup>1058</sup> Jesus is the image of the invisible God, in whom all things in heaven and on earth were created.<sup>1059</sup> The prologue to St. John's Gospel affirms that Jesus Christ is the incarnation of the Word of God, the iconic representation of the very mind of God.<sup>1060</sup>

Regular participation in the Eucharist Celebration is seen as a fruit of contemplation from a threefold perspective. (a) With regard to the past: since the Eucharist is commemorative of our Lord's Passion, which was a true sacrifice,<sup>1061</sup> it is called a *Sacrifice*. (b) With regard to the present: since the Eucharist signifies Ecclesiastical unity, in which people are gathered together as a community through this Sacrament, it is called *Communion* or *Synaxis*, because people communicate with Christ through it by partaking in the sacrament and become united to one another through it. (c) With regard to the future: since the Eucharist augurs the Divine realisation, which shall come to pass in heaven, it is called *Viaticum*, because it supplies the way of culmination. In this respect, it is also called the *Eucharist*, meaning, *good grace*, for the grace of God is life everlasting (Rm 6: 23), and it really contains real presence of Christ, who is full of grace.<sup>1062</sup> The faithful receive Jesus Christ through Eucharist as he is, they want to make him through this sacrament the innermost law of their life, so that Jesus Christ become constituent part of their evangelical vitality.<sup>1063</sup> It is the conviction of catholic people that without the Eucharist we would, in the spiritual sense, starve to death.<sup>1064</sup> Eucharist is spiritual food and spiritual refreshment to Catholics; eucharist may not be needed for basic Christian

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<sup>1057</sup> Barron Robert. *Exploring Catholic Theology. Op.cit.*, p 131.

<sup>1058</sup> ST, III, q. 73, a. 1.

<sup>1059</sup> Colossians 1,15-17.

<sup>1060</sup> Barron Robert. *Exploring Catholic Theology. Op.cit.*, p 64.

<sup>1061</sup> ST, III, q. 48, a. 3.

<sup>1062</sup> ST, III, q. 73, a. 4.

<sup>1063</sup> Rahner, Karl. *Gebete des Lebens*. Raffelt, Albert (Hg.). *Op.cit.*, p 162.

<sup>1064</sup> Barron Robert. *Exploring Catholic Theology. Op.cit.*, p 159.

living, but, eucharist signifies unity of the Christians to the mystical body of Christ, which a requisite for salvation.<sup>1065</sup>

b) **Reading the Bible:** Contemplation is an operation of the intellect, a search for truth. This movement will motivate people to read the Holy Bible as a sign of their desire for knowledge about truth. The author of Holy Scripture is God, in whose power it is to signify His meaning, not by words only, but also by the message themselves. So, whereas in every other science, things are signified by words, this science Holy Scripture has the property, that the things signified by the words have themselves also a signification. Therefore, that first signification whereby words signify things belongs to the first sense, the historical or literal. That signification whereby things signified by words of Holy Scripture have themselves also a signification is called the spiritual sense, which is based on the literal, and presupposes it. This spiritual sense has a threefold division, because The Old Testament is a figure of the New Testament (Heb 10:1) and the New Testament itself is a figure of future glory. In the New Testament, whatever Jesus has done is a type of what we ought to do. Therefore, so far as the things of the Old Law signify the things of the New Law, there is the *allegorical sense*. So far as the things done in Christ, or so far as the things which signify Christ, are types of what we ought to do, there is the *moral sense*. But so far as they signify what relates to eternal glory, there is the *anagogical sense*. Since the literal sense is that which the author intends, and since the author of Holy Bible is God, who by one act comprehends all things by His intellect, it is not unfitting, if, even according to the literal sense, one word in Holy Bible should have several senses.<sup>1066</sup> It is the fruit of contemplation to search for allegorical, moral and anagogical sense in the Holy Bible.

Manifold aspects of the gospel could be brought together by a consistent method of reading the Bible. Then revelation of the truth is also an experience of relationship. To this end Reinhard Feiter suggests four methods for a better understanding of the holy Bible. First, that the biblical texts are read with due regard to their historical character and their literary consistency, but above all in community; secondly, that they are not only read in community, but in such reading, the biblical texts turn the readers into a community; thirdly, that the texts are therefore not only intended for specific purposes, like in preparation for a divine service, but are read with a view to the promises of the life hidden in them; fourthly, that in this process,

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<sup>1065</sup> Davies, Brian. *Thomas Aquinas's Summa Theologiae. Op.cit.*, p 338; *ST*, III, q. 73, a. 1; *ST*, III, q. 73, a. 3  
<sup>1066</sup> *ST*, I, q.1, a. 10.

the biblical texts only begin to speak when a whole chapter, even a whole Gospel or even several biblical books are read.<sup>1067</sup>

The Book of Joshua 1:8 says: “Keep this book of the law on your lips. Recite it by day and by night, that you may observe carefully all that is written in it; then you will successfully attain your goal.” Book of Nehemiah says: “Standing at one end of the open place that was before the Water Gate, he read out of the book from daybreak till midday, in the presence of the men, the women, and those children old enough to understand; and all the people listened attentively to the book of the law.”<sup>1068</sup> “Faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the word of Christ” (Rm 10:17). The gospels call us to grow in confidence that the Spirit of God accompanies us in the desert, emphasize the Spirit's presence in all of life's moments, both in light and darkness.<sup>1069</sup> Faith makes it possible to walk over the sea of suffering, enables people to strike with confidence in the hand that extends towards men over the depths of suffering.<sup>1070</sup> Hence we read in the book of Isaiah 7,9: *if you do not stand firm in faith, you shall not stand at all*. Paul asks the rhetorical question, “how can they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how can they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone to preach?” (Rm 10:14) “Indeed, the word of God is living and effective, sharper than any two-edged sword, penetrating even between soul and spirit, joints and marrow, and able to discern reflections and thoughts of the heart” (Heb 4:12) The psalmist says: “Within my heart I treasure your promise, that I may not sin against you” (Ps 119:11). We read in the book of Job: “From the commands of his lips I have not departed; the words of his mouth I have treasured in my heart” (Job 23,12). Job wants to accept God's righteousness, but it appears to him to be a contradiction; he wants to believe, but he is also desperate; he wants to flee to God, but he also questions him.<sup>1071</sup> Holy Bible has a lot examples like the story of Job, which can inspire people to seek God. The readers of the Holy Bible participate in the divine being and are subject to the divine governance, and they will be through scriptural narrative illuminated.<sup>1072</sup>

**c) Listening:** Listening is a means to get information on interested topics from an external source and is to digest it internally and produce multiple fruits. People who

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<sup>1067</sup> Feiter Reinhard. „Das Evangelium wird zur guten Nachricht“. *Op.cit.*, p 145.

<sup>1068</sup> *Nehemiah* 8,3.

<sup>1069</sup> Maloney, Robert P. *Go ! On the Missionary Spirituality of St. Vincent de Paul*. *Op.cit.*, p 94.

<sup>1070</sup> Küng, Hans. *Gott und das Leid*. Benziger Verlag, Einsiedeln, 1967, p 42.

<sup>1071</sup> Küng, Hans. *Gott und das Leid*. *Op.cit.*, p 29; Job 13: 23-24: *How many are my iniquities and my sins? Make me know my transgression and my sin. Why do you hide your face, and count me as your enemy?*

<sup>1072</sup> Barron Robert. *Exploring Catholic Theology*. *Op.cit.*, p 114.

contemplate empower themselves with an earnest interest for listening because listening leads to understanding. Perhaps not everyone who hears this word *God* understands it to signify something than which nothing greater can be thought, seeing that some have believed God to be a body. Yet, granted that everyone understands that by this word *God* is signified something than which nothing greater can be thought, nevertheless, it does not therefore follow that he understands that what the word signifies exists actually, but only that it exists mentally. Nor can it be argued that it actually exists, unless it be admitted that there actually exists something than which nothing greater can be thought, and this is precisely not admitted by those who hold that God does not exist.<sup>1073</sup> In the parable of the sower, Jesus explains, as for the seed that was sown in good soil, these are the people who hear the word and understand it, who indeed bear fruit and yield, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty (Mt 13:18-23). “So, faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ” (Rm 10:17)

**d) Prayer:** Christians adore, praise and thank God, because they understand that God wants to live among them.<sup>1074</sup> Theology belongs in this circle; it belongs in the center, precisely because it articulates the truth about a creator God.<sup>1075</sup> The will of a person moves the other powers of the soul to its end,<sup>1076</sup> and therefore religion, which is in the will, directs the acts of the other powers to the reverence of God. Among the other powers of the soul, the intellect is the highest, and it is nearest to the will in its function. Consequently, the devotion of a person which belongs to the will, and prayer which belongs to the intellectual aspect are the primary the acts of religion. Through prayer religion directs man's intellect to God.<sup>1077</sup> That is why continuous prayer (1 Thes 5:17) is a fruit of contemplation. Length of prayer consists, not in praying for many things, but in the affections persisting in the desire of one thing.<sup>1078</sup>

When the disciples asked Jesus to teach them to pray, Jesus said to them, *when you pray, say: Father, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come. Give us each day our daily bread. And forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive everyone indebted to us. And do not bring us to the time of trial* (Lk 11: 2-4; Mt 6: 9-15) There is no other way to spiritual advancement than prayer. One of the fruits of contemplation is that people learn to pray constantly. Prayer interprets one's desire, as it were, before God, it is right to ask for something in the prayer when

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<sup>1073</sup> ST, I, q. 2, a.1 ad 2.

<sup>1074</sup> Rahner, Karl. *Gebete des Lebens*. Raffelt, Albert (Hg.). *Op.cit.*, p 77.

<sup>1075</sup> Barron Robert. *Exploring Catholic Theology*. *Op.cit.*, p 102.

<sup>1076</sup> ST, II-II, q. 82, a. 1 ad 1.

<sup>1077</sup> ST, II-II, q. 83, a. 3.

<sup>1078</sup> ST, II-II, q. 83, a. 14 ad 2.

it is right that one should desire it.<sup>1079</sup> Since prayer is the interpreter of desire, the order of the petitions corresponds with the order of desire or intention, where the end precedes the things that are directed to the end, and attainment of good precedes removal of evil.<sup>1080</sup>

The human mind is unable to remain aloft for long because of the weakness of nature, because human weakness weighs down the soul with inferior things. Therefore, while praying the mind ascends to God by contemplation, yet suddenly, it wanders off through weakness.<sup>1081</sup> Jesus said to his disciples in Gethsemane: “Watch and pray that you may not undergo the test. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak” (Mt 26:41). In the midst of all the various charitable activities we need people with their arms lifted up toward God in prayer, people moved by a knowledge of the truth, people filled love and charity.<sup>1082</sup>

**e) Meditation:** The teaching of meditation is as old as humanity. People have always tried to recollect themselves, to turn inward, to the essence of their own self and things, to penetrate to the whence and whither (origin and direction) of existence, in order to properly care for their life, out of the knowledge gained. The teaching of meditation thus contains experiences from the whole of human history. Christian meditation awoke at the moment when those who believe in Jesus Christ, desired to encounter him to understand him more deeply, to find answers to their questions and to find direction for their spiritual life and actions.<sup>1083</sup>

In the fifth chapter of *Lumen Gentium*, the Second Vatican Council affirmed that all of us are called to holiness. Jesus Christ is the divine teacher and model of all perfection, and he preached holiness of life to all. He Himself stands authentically as the author and consummation of this holiness. Jesus said: “Be you therefore perfect, even as your heavenly Father is perfect” (Mt 5:48). Contemplative prayer is a common vocation of all Christian life. God gives his grace to whom he wills. As believers, people strive to live the Gospel values in their daily life in order to open themselves to the graces that God continually gives to his faithful people. Thus, all the faithful are invited to strive for the holiness and perfection that is proper to their state of life. People have an obligation to strive for perfection through giving a proper direction to the deepest sentiments of their heart. They should strive to detach themselves from the things of this world and from wealth ... their hearts seek that which is eternal.<sup>1084</sup>

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<sup>1079</sup> *ST*, II-II, q. 83, a. 9.

<sup>1080</sup> *ST*, II-II, q. 83, a. 9 ad 2.

<sup>1081</sup> *ST*, II-II, q. 83, a. 13 ad 2.

<sup>1082</sup> Pope Benedict XVI. *Caritas in Veritate*. Encyclical Letter, Veritas, Dublin 1, Ireland, 2009, p 87.

<sup>1083</sup> Guardini, Romano. *Wille und Wahrheit. Geistliche Übungen*. Mathias Grunewald Verlag Mainz, 1937, p 15.

<sup>1084</sup> *Lumen Gentium*. 5, 42.

Meditation is a form of prayer powered by human act. It is a fruit of a profound understanding of the necessity of contemplation. It is a form of prayer that uses various elements: images, concepts and reasoning. In contemplative prayer one receives assistance from God because it is an infused gift of God. Because of the weakness of human nature, people experience that they are not able to achieve absolute contemplation in this world. This understanding leads to acts of prayer to commune with God, as a result, meditation is a fruit of a deeper understanding of contemplation. Through meditation people surrender themselves to God's service. There are two considerations in meditation: first, God's goodness and loving kindness,<sup>1085</sup> and second, the weakness of the human man who needs to lean on God.<sup>1086</sup> In meditation we consider those matters which awaken our love for God (the interior act of charity), and at the same time we avoid matters that might distract the mind from its intended focus.<sup>1087</sup> Meditation does not go into any particular act of the mind or heart, but takes the whole person. The whole person confronts the object. And not only in the sense that his various forces are in the act, but also, that the movement of meditation tries to unlock menschen themself and to grasp their depths further and further down.<sup>1088</sup>

## Part 2 Chapter 2

### 2.2.1 Re-encounter in Faith with God who Inspired Thomas Aquinas and Vincent de Paul

Aquinas and Vincent de Paul were no doubt prolific writers, but they were also prolific readers. Their voracious effort to read and meditate on the subjects and contemplate on the presence of God indicate that they tried their best to discover the plan of God in their life. Pinckaers commented that there are more than six thousand citations in the *Summa Theologiae* which Aquinas very often used to ground his method of question and answer as well as to illustrate his ideas on a given topic.<sup>1089</sup> The collection of correspondence, conferences and documents of Vincent de Paul amount to twelve volumes, and there are more than eight hundred biblical references in his letters and conferences. These citations simply show their profound

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<sup>1085</sup> Psalms 25, 1-7: To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul. O my God, in you I trust; do not let me be put to shame; do not let my enemies exult over me. Do not let those who wait for you be put to shame; let them be ashamed who are wantonly treacherous. Make me to know your ways, O Lord; teach me your paths. Lead me in your truth, and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation; for you I wait all day long. Be mindful of your mercy, O Lord, and of your steadfast love, for they have been from of old. Do not remember the sins of my youth or my transgressions; according to your steadfast love remember me, for your goodness' sake, O Lord!

<sup>1086</sup> ST, II-II, q. 82, a. 3.

<sup>1087</sup> ST, II-II, q. 82, a. 3 ad 1.

<sup>1088</sup> Guardini, Romano. *Wille und Wahrheit. Op.cit.*, p 16.

<sup>1089</sup> Pinckaers Servais. *the pinckaers reader. Renewing Thomistic Moral Theology*, Titus Steven Craig and Berkman John (eds.), Noble Thomas Mary and other (trans.), The Catholic University of America Press, Washington, D.C, 2005, P 4.

knowledge gained through listening to the teachings of an authority. They were well-informed persons in matters of faith. In the structure of Aquinas' dialectical disputations and arguments, his conclusions are confirmed by others. The *Summa Theologiae* would not be significant to the members of the faith community unless they were able to re-encounter the God of faith who inspired Thomas Aquinas. This encounter with God calls for great effort on the part of those individuals who wish to deepen their faith.

The theological truths of the Christian faith that are proclaimed with regard to eternal salvation (truths that exceed human reason) are, in fact, articulated by theological reasoning. Analysing the citations in *Summa Theologiae*, we can say that Aquinas had two forms of theological reasoning: first, his own reasoned inquiry; second, his eagerness to enhance his knowledge through reading which in turn, enriched his own process of reasoning. We could say that the first form of theological reasoning was his own rational theology, and the second form corresponds to dogmatic theology. His rational theology, a scientific reasoning process, was apologetical to those who were opposed to the truths of the faith. Aquinas, however, understood that rational theology was not infallible and, therefore, dogmatic (revealed) theology was also necessary. Vincent de Paul maintained through his understanding of "neighbour" that within a pastoral circle the enriching reward of pastoral works and active life of the faithful could be mainly generated and maintained by connecting the people with different activities beyond the limits of sacramental celebrations. An application of this perspective begins with an analysis of the context of the community in which a parish activity exists. His understanding of the contextualizing theology (finding context) was founded on connecting people through prayer and charity as community engagement. Vincent's idea of context was not restricted to a locality or a country.

There are many possibilities for extended activities other than the celebration of sacraments, for instance the following activities could engage people of the parish in many different ways, like organizing the meeting of youth, forming children for the sacrament of Eucharist and Confirmation, trimonthly altar servers meeting, meeting with the parents of the school children, meeting with the parents who baptized their children during the year, meeting with newly-wed couples, meeting with people of a specific age group, e.g. the elderly, and meetings with the members of various parish organizations. Jesus declares in the Gospel that the word of God is like the seed the farmer sows in his field. The seed which falls on good ground, finds good soil, and springs up, takes root, increases, and multiplies in such a way that

one grain yields a hundredfold, another sixty.<sup>1090</sup> Some of the parish activities might flourish and others might fail, but if one or two activities create enthusiasm among people of a community, that would be a great pastoral achievement. According to Vincent de Paul, in order to animate the people, pastoral leaders should constantly pray to be filled with grace of God and works of virtue, and *just as we see that the sun communicates the fullness of its brightness to other stars, they must be like salt, preventing corruption from slipping into the flock of which they are the shepherd.*<sup>1091</sup> Pope Paul VI says that, *the Church must look with penetrating eyes within itself, ponder the mystery of its own being, and draw enlightenment and inspiration from a deeper scrutiny of the doctrine of its own origin, nature, mission, and destiny. The doctrine is already known; it has been developed and popularized in the course of this century. But it can never claim to be sufficiently investigated and understood, for it contains the publication of a mystery, kept hidden from the beginning of time in the all-creating mind of God.*<sup>1092</sup>

### 2.2.1.1 Spiritual cognition

Spiritual cognition is not self-evident to our minds. This means that imminently, the object of our intellectual cognition is rarely the idea, the concept, or the universal. The reality, that a person faces and knows through the senses, has imminent potential for transformation, and can be used as the very object of intellectual cognition. In this regard, the first universal principles that Aquinas speaks of, in his *Commentary on the Posterior Analytics of Aristotle* II.20.14, must not be confused with the principles that ground his theory of demonstration. These first universal principles are not any propositions, but the universal nature to which the propositions refer. They are the principles or fundamental elements of propositions. Secondly when Aquinas says that we recognize these universal principles by means of induction, he is not making a point about our epistemological justification for holding them. He does not mean that we are inferentially justified in holding these universal principles on the basis of inductive generalizations. These universal principles are not any propositions, and only propositions can be justified by inductive inference.<sup>1093</sup>

It is obvious that sensing an event is properly and *per se* singular, however there exists even in this a sensing of the universal. For sense knows Jaison not only as this person Jaison, but also, Jaison is understood as a specific person; and similarly, Thomas, is another specific

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<sup>1090</sup> CCD: IX:312; Matthew 13: 1-9

<sup>1091</sup> CCD: XI: 315 (Document, *Advice to Antoine Durand, named Superior of the Agde Seminary, 1656*).

<sup>1092</sup> Pope Paul VI, *Ecclesiam Suam*, # 9.

<sup>1093</sup> Kretzmann, Norman and Stump, Eleonore (eds.). *The Cambridge Companion to Aquinas*. *Op.cit.*, p 183.

individual. As a result of such an attainment, pre-existing in the sense, the intelligent soul can consider a person as a specific individual and differentiated from others. But if it were in our nature that our senses could only apprehend that which pertains to particularity, then it would be impossible for universal knowledge to be apprehended in us from sense-apprehension. The mind of a person lingers in its thoughts, until it attains to something indivisible in them, that which is universal. We arrive at general terms, from some higher genus, gradually, by understanding and differentiating. Then we take knowledge of the universals from singulars, and it is obviously necessary to acquire the first universal principle by induction. By way of induction, the senses introduce the universal into the mind, inasmuch as all the singulars are considered.<sup>1094</sup>

There is a difference between the sensory cognition of a parish situation, and the intellectual cognition of this concept - in the first case the object is always a parish situation, while in the second, the object is always the universal church and her teachings. That is to say, our way of thinking about parish reality could be different depending on the way in which this reality is perceived through our senses. In answer to the question, how do we strike a balance between understanding the universals, while still giving significance to the parish situation, shows the relevance of spiritual cognition.

Every so often, the universal church remains as an idea. Because of its abstract form, a person needs to constantly refresh oneself by corresponding with the universal teachings of the church that one has in one's mind, and by which one thinks before every pastoral action. It may be said that universal church is reflected somehow through any specific service of a parish. Then spiritual cognition raises the question: how is this happening? In a conflicting situation it may be protested, it may be denied that the universal teaching of the church exists in the parish, when the parish has particular traditions of its own. Then spiritual cognition asks two questions: if the idea of the church does not come from the teachings of the universal church, where does it come from? Secondly, if the intellectual cognition of the church does not come through the senses, in what reasonable way do you know the teachings of the universal church?

Holy Scripture has a many metaphors which could be considered as divine rays to enlighten human beings, proposed to all without distinction, whereby spiritual truth is expounded by means of figures taken from corporeal things, in order that even the uneducated who are unable by themselves to grasp speculative intellectual things may be able to understand

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<sup>1094</sup> Aquinas Thomas. *Commentary on the Posterior Analytics of Aristotle*. trans. Fabian R. Larcher: <https://dhspriority.org/thomas/english/PostAnalytica.htm> (accessed on 28.01.2019).

it.<sup>1095</sup> *I am a debtor both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish* (Rom 1:14). *The inner rapprochement between biblical faith and Greek philosophical inquiry was an event of decisive importance not only from the standpoint of the history of religion, but also from that of world history, it is an event which concerns us even today.*<sup>1096</sup> The part of truth that belongs to individualism appears in the theological meaning which the Vatican Council II ascribes to conscience: the hidden center and sanctuary in Menschen, where he is alone with God, whose voice can be heard in this inner being.<sup>1097</sup>

Intellectual cognition of a pastoral act is based on another reality, that of a universal, immaterial and unchangeable idea. The service of a parish reflects the intellectual knowledge of an idea not seen as one sees in the world - an idea fundamental to life. The real action in a parish always embraces such an idea. A change in the ministry of a parish is possible by cognition, through forms of abstraction from the various signs in a pastoral situation. The universal church cannot exist in itself, but it exists in the intellect, as a logical object for ministry. Hence, the object of the intellect is the universal, and it is actualized in the ministry of the parish. The laity abstracts the universal form of the parish church from the particular ministry of the parish, that is, they make universals relevant through sensual objects, and in a second stage, receive them in a passive way. Members of a parish experiences the ministry through their senses, and at the beginning of their intellectual cognition, they may not recognize the ideas of the teachings of the universal church, but only the ministries in their parish.

In a parish there are two specific causes of forces: one which is unchanging and another which is moving and constantly changeable. Teachings of the universal church are constantly unchangeable, whereas the various ministries of the parish are a moving and constantly changeable force. Scientific knowledge cannot be founded upon a moving force, but only on an unchangeable idea or force. Although sensual information can illumine intellectual cognition, formation of concepts through intellectual cognition depends largely on universal teachings. Parochial ministries can be understood as a material cause, and the universal teachings of the church as an immaterial cause. Spiritual cognition tries to bring into harmony these material and immaterial causes of parish ministries. Logically a parish priest depends on the universal teachings of the church for any assertions in an actual parish situation, but he cannot completely ignore the actual parish situation and act like a stranger. Spiritual cognition tries to coordinate

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<sup>1095</sup> ST, I, q. 1, a. 9

<sup>1096</sup> Lynch, John J. *The Logos as Reason, Word, and Love in the Theology of Joseph Ratzinger*. Yorktown, Virginia, 2014, p 25.

<sup>1097</sup> Theobald Christoph. „Heute ist der günstige Augenblick.“ *Op.cit.*, p 97; *Gaudium et spes*, 16.

the material cause of parish ministries, and appeal to the other entities of the universal church, which could be essentially different from the actual reality of the parish. Differences between the immaterial cause and the material cause must be worked out through spiritual cognition.

As per the Platonic understanding, to parishioners the truth would be merely what they see in the ministries of ministers in the parish, because Plato thought that human intellect could know and judge only by its own impressions of reality. Spiritual development orientates individuals from what they see with a bodily eye to what they could see with a spiritual eye. Spiritual cognition educates a person about the truth existing outside his own being, existing in unchangeable Being. If possibilities of seeing and hearing are equally available to people, if they have a choice, then they will choose knowledge based on seeing, and not knowledge based on hearing.<sup>1098</sup> That is why it is very important to participate in the liturgical ministries in order to see and experience, then to understand and increase spiritual knowledge.

If you think the parish is not a cause of intellectual knowledge, and intellectual knowledge is not derived from sensual observation in the reality of a parish, you will never be able to recognize the reality of a parish ministry. Spiritual cognition is a scientific cognition, which does not primary rely on empirical observation, and thereby on the logical induction of reality, but rather orients the person in inventing new methods of interpreting reality in the light of the scientific knowledge of the universal church. The problem of verification, and a danger of falsification, are two fundamental dangers in empirical observation, for the understanding of and invention of new meaning based on universal teachings. Actual happenings within a particular parish do not cause universal scientific propositions, therefore those events that happen within a parish cannot alone help to decide on the truth or falsity of the universal teachings of the church. Understanding the specific situation of a parish in the light of the universal scientific teachings of the church is a transition from theory to practice and vice versa, motivated by spiritual cognition, and it can lead towards a religious revolution, for the benefit of the faithful and of the church.

The concepts of the catholic church are not only basic to the knowledge of faith formation. The nuances of the theories can be understood differently, by people from different cultures and traditions. Spiritual cognition necessarily advocates the building up of relationships between the faithful of a parish and the way of life of the faithful, according to the measure and degree of the teachings of the church as a potential force for motivation towards

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<sup>1098</sup> Pieper Josef. *An Anthology. Op.cit.*, P 13.

holiness. The teachings of the church are intentional, and it always intends towards practicing the faith, a constant product of experiencing theology in the daily activities of life in this world. Theology is exercised in pastoral administration. Therefore, Christian education needs to be repeated so the faithful may master the concepts and bring out the fruits of their qualified experience into the world. Christian education also calls for the improvement of the intellectual knowledge of the faith and the act of the faithful as witnesses to the word of God in the world.

### **2.2.1.2 Cognitive method of Renewal**

Attentive rereading of the ordinary and extraordinary events in our life in connection with the reading of the scriptures imperceptibly changes our idea of our personal life, of the society, of the church and of God. It is important to become aware of what is happening in you and to find the right words to say it to yourself or to another. The task is to give life its place gently and simply, especially when it is disturbed, and to allow God to realign the inner compass. Peace and joy that one finds in contemplation, which no one can steal, is the surest guide on this path of spiritual advancement.<sup>1099</sup>

The constant process of the development of science and technologies of the world progress consistently towards new horizons. As the living environment of Menschen changes, the thinking mentality of them changes too, because they are being influenced through various contrasting factors in daily life. How can we convince them about the relevance of the gospel and explain to them about the hidden God is an in-going challenge? Witnessing (begetting) pastoral care has acquired new connotations with reference to practical parish activities. Pastoral teams must become involved in giving a witness of life after the manner of faith lived by the disciples of Jesus. This is the original spirit of pastoral care. There is a sense of constituted relationship with the members of the pastoral community, there is a sense of relationship based on biblical text, and there is a sense of relationship between non-Christians and society. All these pastoral relationships express a willingness to learn from oneself and others. Above all, there is a necessity to achieve one essential goal, namely, to give God the opportunity to work through human instrumentality.<sup>1100</sup> People began to think about goodness in human character and those exemplary behaviour patterns that reveal high moral standards as virtues.

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<sup>1099</sup> Theobald Christoph. „Evangelium und Kirche“, *Op.cit.*, p 133.

<sup>1100</sup> Theobald Christoph. „Evangelium und Kirche“, *Op.cit.*, p 136.

Hans Küng explains that the virtue systems were subject to fundamental changes. We could compare the differences in the approaches taken by Socrates, who converted the aristocratic virtues into the moral virtues of the citizen, recognized by the polis. Plato based on his trichotomic theory of the soul explained virtue in the doctrine of the state, as four virtues, that have been since the time of Ambrose been called cardinal virtues: temperance, bravery, wisdom and justice. Aristotle empirically established an open system of over a dozen ethical and intellectual virtues, each virtue being the middle between two extremes, one too much and one too little. Stoics melt all virtues into a single one: *apatheia* i.e., dispassion. Neo-Platonism of Plotinus or Porphyry worked out a system of ascent, and graded virtues according to civil, purifying, contemplative and exemplary. Augustine, Gregor, Petrus Lombardus, Radulfus Ardens and Thomas Aquinas put together Platonic, Aristotelian, Stoic and Neoplatonic elements, to form a closed system of natural and supernatural, theological and moral virtues. Arnold Geulincx in the 17th century named modern variations of the traditional four virtue: diligence, obedience, justice, humility, and Schleiermacher in the 19th century named them: wisdom, love, prudence, bravery.<sup>1101</sup>

The thought of giving God the opportunity to work enables Menschen to pray, and constant prayer leads to a sort of spiritual cognition, and cognition and meditation lead to contemplation. The process of spiritual cognition creates an awareness that the heart and the mind is palpable, and contemplation forms Menschen to practice a reversal of their gaze towards Gott out of the perspective of this world.

### 2.2.1.3 Apostolic Reflection

Apostolic reflection on pastoral ministry is a method that imitates the example of apostles, who, after returning from the ministry, reflected with Jesus Christ their master, on what happened during their ministry. Vincent used to ask: what did you think my sister and my brother? He asked them simple questions to initiate the sharing and to know the meaning they had discovered in carrying out their assigned ministry. Apostolic reflection is thus a form of reflecting together on the ministry that is done. Vincentian apostolic reflection is a free and voluntary sharing of one's relationship with God and one's relationship and ministry with people who are poor. Apostolic reflection is for the purpose of revitalizing that ministry.<sup>1102</sup> In the sharing each member tries to discover the presence of God in the events that surround their

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<sup>1101</sup> Küng, Hans. *Wahrhaftigkeit. Zur Zukunft der Kirche*. Verlag Herder KG, Freiburg im Breisgau, 1968, p 94.  
<sup>1102</sup> Renouard, John-Pierre. *Op.cit.*, p. 118.

interaction with people who are poor.<sup>1103</sup> According to Vincent, God is found first and foremost in the poor people. The mission of God is revealed to us through the situation of people in poverty. The sharing of each member of the team encourages to reflect on what God is trying to teach through ministry to poor, sick, old and homeless men and women.<sup>1104</sup>

There are five Vincentian elements of apostolic reflection, which can help people in sharing their reflections.<sup>1105</sup>

- a) Remember that you are in the presence of God, because you are doing an evangelical work, therefore, invoke God's blessings.
- b) Describe an experience.
- c) Share the impact of this experience, that is, your reactions and feelings.
- d) Speak about the gospel values that are at stake in the situation.
- e) Communicate personal insights that were derived from reflection on these events.

There could be many motivating personal questions that each member could ask in the silence of their heart for their own spiritual education and development. Some of them could be the following. Have I honoured people during my pastoral ministry? Did I respect the poor people in my dealings and communication with them? Did I meet Christ in these poor men and women? How would Jesus have acted in that situation? What is God saying to me through these events? How did Jesus reveal himself to me? What Gospel value(s) were at stake deep down in my heart?

Apostolic reflection is a sharing of the experience of joys and sorrows, success and failures, encouragements and disappointments, ideas and vision. This is a method that should be engaged in by the members of a pastoral teams (both lay and clerical members), even though the clerical and lay members have different functions and responsibilities in the evangelization process. At times the work of the lay members is compared to the dedication of Martha in the Gospel, but that is not to disdain the importance of their involvement but describes the significance, character and nature of their responsibility.<sup>1106</sup>

#### **2.2.1.4 Hylomorphic Nature of Cognition**

The principle of the operation of cognition is in the substantial form of the human being, the soul, which is metaphysically explained in the anthropological understanding of Aquinas.

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<sup>1103</sup> CCD: IX:199 (Conference: *Love of Vocation and Assistance to the Poor*, February 13, 1646).

<sup>1104</sup> Agostino, Joseph V. *The 400th Anniversary of the Birth of the Vincentian Charism: Celebrations, Projects, and Dreams*, in *Vincentiana* (July-September 2017, # 3), p 397-403.

<sup>1105</sup> CCD: IX:191-200 (Conference" *Love of Vocation and Assistance to the Poor*, February 13, 1646).

<sup>1106</sup> Common Rules, I:2.

The soul intentionally possesses realities owing to the hylomorphic nature of the union of soul and body, which has the potentiality of vital operation depending on the purpose of such actions.<sup>1107</sup> Indeed, all created beings would seem, in a way, to be purposeless, if they lacked an operation proper to them since the purpose of everything is its operation. The less perfect is always for the sake of the more perfect and consequently, as matter is for the sake of form, so form which is the first act, is for the sake of operation, which is the second act. Thus, in the operation of the second act is the end for the creature.<sup>1108</sup> It may happen that what is in itself the more certain, may seem to us the less certain because of the weakness of our intelligence, which is dazzled by the clearest objects of nature (like the owl who is dazzled by the light of the sun). Therefore, the fact some people happen to doubt the articles of faith is not due to the uncertain nature of universal truths, but due to the weakness of human intelligence. However, the slightest knowledge that may be obtained of the highest things is more desirable than the most certain knowledge of lesser things.<sup>1109</sup>

The search for the truth is an operation of human beings, and this operation is a second act, a prolongation of the act from which a human being exists.<sup>1110</sup> In fact, the very being is act, by being they are made actual, for nothing has actuality except in so far as it exists.<sup>1111</sup> It is the very nature of act to be in action, because act is properly the actuality of human power just as being is the actuality of substance. The search for truth, an act of human beings, is the very act which shows a person exists in actuality.<sup>1112</sup> Anything understood is immaterial to the one who understands, according to the mode of the intellect, (not materially, according to the mode of a material thing). This means that knowledge is immanent, for an action that remains within the individual.<sup>1113</sup> In the hylomorphic substantial union of human being, the intellectual soul is formed in accord with the material of the body, form and body unite together in human nature.<sup>1114</sup> This union continues in the hylomorphic nature of cognition. The operation of knowledge is a process wherein sense (matter) and intelligence (form) act together and cooperate with and condition each other. Hence, the cognitive operations of the faithful are acts, that are proper accidents generated by the powers of human beings.<sup>1115</sup> Since the operation of

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<sup>1107</sup> William J. Slattery. *The Logic of Truth. St. Thomas Aquinas' Epistemology and Antonio Livi's Alethic Logic*, Epistemology no.1, Casa Editrice Leonardo da Vinci, Roma 2015, p 254.

<sup>1108</sup> *ST*, I, q. 105, a. 5.

<sup>1109</sup> *ST*, I, q. 48, a. 5, ad 1.

<sup>1110</sup> *ST*, I, q. 48, a. 5.

<sup>1111</sup> *ST*, I, q. 4, a. 1; William J. Slattery. *The Logic of Truth. Op.cit.*, p 254.

<sup>1112</sup> *ST*, I, q. 54, a.1

<sup>1113</sup> *ST*, I-II, q.85, a. 1.

<sup>1114</sup> *ST*, III, q. 60, a. 3 ad 1.

<sup>1115</sup> William J. Slattery. *The Logic of Truth. Op.cit.*, p 255-256.

knowledge is a process, a proper educational guidance strengthens an individual towards a spiritual orientation, not by a quantitative juxtaposition, but by a type of emanation of certain consequence.

Substantial form is that which makes a thing exist absolutely, and it is subject and at the same time is something of pure potential. However, the accidental form of a human being does not make it exist absolutely, but to be such and such, or so great, or in some particular condition - for its subject is a living person. Furthermore, Aquinas says: substantial and accidental forms differ, because, since that which is the less principal exists for the sake of that which is the more principal, therefore matter exists on account of its substantial form; while on the contrary, its accidental form exists on account of the completeness of the subject.<sup>1116</sup> The role of education is the all-round development of the pupil, a formation towards the completeness of the individual. If a person is expected to perform spiritual acts, either the person has to learn it by himself or someone has to teach him those acts. In other words, it is foolish to expect spiritual development without formation. Spiritual guidance and education of a child or a person is necessary because in our life, we cannot make samples of ourselves first and then try to live; we cannot have a type of practice of life before living it; what in our life generally suits well, goes well. What is recurring in us, mostly works with life itself.<sup>1117</sup>

As far as the proper accident is concerned, the subject, the person, is both the final cause, and in a way the active cause. The person is also, as it were, the material cause, inasmuch as he is receptive of the accident. From this we may gather that the essence of the soul is the cause of all its powers, as their end, and as their active principle; and for some their receptive principle.<sup>1118</sup> Spiritual education aims at the formation of the essence of the soul.

### **2.2.1.5 Intentional Nature of Cognition**

Knowledge of the human intellect is in a manner caused by external things, that is, that which is the knowable thing represents the measure of human knowledge because something that is judged to be relevant by the intellect is true to it. In the case of the cognition of a person, the operation of his intellect naturally depends on his senses, which in turn are dependent on his physical reality. It is the physical object, apprehended by the power of the soul, and not the presence of innate ideas, that empowers one's cognition, enabling the person to transcend

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<sup>1116</sup> *ST*, I, q. 77, a. 6.

<sup>1117</sup> Feiter Reinhard. „Zeit brauchen- homiletische Versuche“, *Op.cit.*, p 153.

<sup>1118</sup> *ST*, I, q. 77, a. 6, ad 2.

towards the now known reality.<sup>1119</sup> When a matter was under discussion, Vincent readily listened to others, and never interrupted anyone. On the other hand, if he was himself interrupted, he stopped short at once, as if it were the most natural, and waited in silence till the other person had finished speaking before he continued to speak.<sup>1120</sup>

The formal principle, the object to be determined, provides the basic form to specify the passive, undetermined, efficient principle of the sensorial power, and thereby the intellectual power, that is to say, external realities act as agents, presenting their matter and form to the senses and the intellectual soul of the individual. Accordingly, we understand that the act of cognition is a relationship between the intellectual soul and external objects, a real relation with two correlatives. This true idea of relation is not taken from that which it is, but from something external.<sup>1121</sup> As a matter of fact, whenever the two components of a relation are not of one order, as occurs where cognitive powers of an immaterial order relate to the order of nature, a real relation exists because they are ordered either to the sensible perceptions of things, or to things looked in themselves outside of this order. Therefore, cognition needs to be understood as the immanent operation of a power of the intellectual soul, an accidental power. In order, however, that its operation is not predetermined, it must be comprehended in relation to the object that it determines - an intentional cognition, resulting in the presence of an intentional object.<sup>1122</sup>

Cognition, as an operation in which the mind goes from potency to act, can be understood through motion, but because it is a movement which does not transit to the external senses but remains within the person, perfecting him, this can only be said metaphorically.<sup>1123</sup> Any kind of work in which an individual takes delight, to which his inclination tends, the time spent in it, and his whole life ordered with a view to it, could be said to be the life of that individual. Hence some persons are said to lead a life of self-indulgence, others a life of virtue. In this way the contemplative life is distinguished from the active, and thus to know God is said to be life eternal.<sup>1124</sup> Knowing remains immanent to an individual and it involves a process of creating a peculiar type of union between the knower, the person, and what is known. Strengthening the capacity to know enables an individual to transcend his own identity, and thereby possess the knowledge, the intellectual form, of another reality. When Christian education strives to strengthen the capacity to know, it thereby helps an individual to transcend

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<sup>1119</sup> *ST*, I, q. 84, a. 3.

<sup>1120</sup> Wilson, R.F (ed). *The Life of St. Vincent de Paul. Op.cit.*, p 71.

<sup>1121</sup> *ST*, I, q. 28, a. 2 ad 3.

<sup>1122</sup> William J. Slattery. *The Logic of Truth. Op.cit.*, p 268.; *ST*, I, q.1, a. 13;

<sup>1123</sup> William J. Slattery. *The Logic of Truth. Op.cit.*, p 261.

<sup>1124</sup> *ST*, I, q. 18, a. 3.

his reality. There is an immaterial dimension of the object existing in the person who has recognized the object. This immaterial dimension is something like a quiddity of the physical object which creates an immaterial intellectual form in the knower. This immaterial form is the radical principle whereby an individual is opened to being informed. One is able to transcend the real difference between himself and everything else that exists in the environment around him, in order to become, to a certain extent, the other that can be intentionally known.<sup>1125</sup>

### 2.2.2 Stimulate Broad Participation

Hans Küng envisages a new broad perspective for pastoral theology. He says that the Church today needs good practical theology: which is at the same time opens the mind and does constructive critical research into the essential ways in which the church works and how contemporary preaching of the gospel, administration of the sacraments and pastoral care is being carried out. What is required today is a pastoral theology that does not suffocate in psychology, sociology and pedagogy, that does not grow wild in the periphery and degenerate into a theologically hollow pastoral prudence and pastoral technique, despite all attention to the world at this time, that does not adhere to pragmatic points of view, but we need a pastoral theology which adheres to the Gospel, which the Church has to serve in all areas of her pastoral care. What is required is a catechetics and homiletics that are not primarily interested in methodical-didactic craftsmanship, which is not only aimed at intellectual or moralizing knowledge, but always, material-kerygmatic oriented, the proclamation of the word in sermon and teaching of the service of the faith again centered on the Word of God. What is required is a liturgy that does not indulge in rubricism, ritualism, aestheticism and historicism, but which, in reflection on scripture and in view of the historical development, reveals the actual meaning of the entire divine service in its various forms with regard to active participation.<sup>1126</sup> Although liturgical prayer is general and objective in comparison to personal prayer of an individual, personal prayer is more specific to an individual than the liturgical prayer life with the church. In personal prayer the individual need for edification comes to the fore much more strongly. Pastoral leaders should understand that there will always be those forms of individual popular piety alongside the liturgical forms of life, and the individual forms of prayer will be shaped as the changing historical, popular, social and local circumstances require.<sup>1127</sup>

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<sup>1125</sup> ST, I, q. 1, a. 14; William J. Slattery. *The Logic of Truth. Op.cit.*, p 268.

<sup>1126</sup> Küng, Hans. *Theologie and Kirche. Op.cit.*, p 19-20.

<sup>1127</sup> Guardini, Romano. *Vom Geist Der Liturgie. Op.cit.*, p 21.

Discovering the plan of God in one's life involves stimulating broad participation in the community's activities, enabling one with reflections based on the Bible and theological writing, testing and evaluating personal visions, creating space and opportunity for the expression of faith and practicing contemplative charity through virtues and formation of habits. Aquinas explains that the essence of virtue lies more in the good than in the difficulty of the act of good. Therefore, everything that is more difficult must not also be more meritorious, but it must be difficult that it is at the same time good in a higher way. The Middle Ages said something about virtue that the compatriots of Kant find difficult: virtue enables menschen to master their natural inclination? No, that is how Kant would put it and this idea is close to many people. No, Thomas Aquinas says: virtue perfects us to follow our natural inclination in the right way. Indeed, the highest realizations of the morally good are characterized by the fact that they arrive effortlessly, because it is part of their essence to emerge from love. But even as far as the concept of love is concerned, that overvaluation of effort and difficulty is still effective.<sup>1128</sup> By stimulating broad participation, pastoral leadership help the community to develop a healthy approach towards virtue founded on faith.

### **2.2.2.1 Act of Faith and Knowledge**

The word faith is often used to refer to belief in the existence of God. For many people, religious faith, religious belief and belief in God's existence are different expressions of the same reality and are used interchangeably. Aquinas, however, views faith as a virtue of wanting and attaining God, the ultimate good, the One who revealed himself to humankind in the person of Jesus Christ. Aquinas understands that belief in the existence of God does not constitute faith but rather presupposes faith. Aquinas explains faith as something which distinguishes Christians from others who acknowledge the existence of God, like teaching of Christian creed laid down by the council of Nicaea and the articles of Catholic faith. The vision of Christian creed will be one's blessedness in eternal life and through the help of which we will attain ultimate good.<sup>1129</sup>

*Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen (Heb 11:1).* Faith is an intellectual act which has a subjective and objective element. Subjectively it is a personal assent, an act of the will directed toward that which is not seen. The objective element of faith is truth. Faith, as a theological virtue, needs the constant assistance of the grace of God. Individuals, however, should not think that God will give them sufficient grace in order to grow

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<sup>1128</sup> Pieper, Josef. *Musse und Kult*. Verlag Jacob Hegner GmbH, München, 1948, p 33-34.

<sup>1129</sup> Davies Brian. *The Thought of Thomas Aquinas*. *Op.cit.*, p 275.

in the virtue of faith (without any effort on their part). In the analogy of faith, Thomas Aquinas moves from human faith to divine faith because in both cases assent is commanded by the will moved by some good. Human faith is not a virtue, but divine faith is one of the three theological virtues, because the theological virtues have God for their object and orders the person having them rightly to God. An analogy with human faith enabled Thomas Aquinas to describe divine faith and his notion of natural virtue provides a bridge to speak of faith as virtue. His definition of virtue reflects the idea of Nicomachean Ethics where a moral virtue is understood to be an act of the good person and makes the activity of the person good. In the further explanation of the human virtue, the word virtue is extended to encompass the habits of speculative and practical intellect, which explains the role of intellect and will. Speculative intellect gives ability to do certain acts well, but the appetitive disposition brings that ability to act, therefore those habits having appetite will become in a practical sense a virtue.<sup>1130</sup> One of the primary roles of pastoral formation is to increase the appetite of the will towards spiritual habits. Those thinking, which reduces personal responsibility, reveals a misunderstanding of faith. When faith results in good works, then faith is a meritorious act, a virtuous habit. In other words, such faith is the meritorious effect of the virtuous act of the believer which increases knowledge. Knowledge without clarity indicates imperfection, but then imperfect knowledge is the very essence of faith.<sup>1131</sup> Yet the believer's knowledge is not completed by a clear vision, and he is like one who is having a doubt, a suspicion and an opinion.<sup>1132</sup>

Growing in knowledge is a gradual process. When people assent to truth in faith, they simultaneously accept the testimony of another (a testimony which naturally influenced them). When people reflect on their knowledge through faith, they ask the question: what is believed? That question is the objective consideration of the elements of what is believed. Aquinas distinguished two objective aspects of what is believed: preamble of faith and article of faith.<sup>1133</sup> An article of faith rests on divine testimony alone, and the believer should comprehensively accept an article of faith. A preamble of faith is established by philosophical and theological principles, for example, proof of God's existence. Demonstration of a preamble of faith involves arguments and expiations linking one word to another with intermediate points between them based on definitions. In accordance with the pastoral situation, a preamble of

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<sup>1130</sup> McNerny, Ralph. *Praeambula fidei. Thomism and the God of the Philosophers*. Catholic University of America Press, Washington D.C, 2006, p 20-21.

<sup>1131</sup> Davies Brian. *The Thought of Thomas Aquinas*. *Op.cit.*, p 278; *ST*, I-II, q. 67, a. 3.

<sup>1132</sup> *Ibid.* p 279; *ST*, II-II, q. 1.

<sup>1133</sup> *ST*, II-II, q. 2.

faith opens various windows for an educational approach in order to enrich the faithful in the knowledge of what they believe.

### 2.2.2.2 Teaching People to Pray

Education provides people with an opportunity to begin their life anew. Teaching people to pray is a necessary element of spiritual formation. Spiritual formation has to be imparted through pastoral leaders in a manner that enables men and women to develop themselves and become more aware of different situations that surround them.<sup>1134</sup> Vincent de Paul was a formator in the area of spiritual development, and he collaborated with lay people in carrying out the spiritual ministry. Louise de Marillac and the members of the Confraternity of Charity prepared the sick and homeless people to make their confession and this reveals that the active ministry of lay people was a necessary dimension of Vincent's mission. In teaching people to pray, lay people are the subject and object of this ministry. *God imparts many excellent inspirations to his servant. In prayer he enlightens their understanding of many truths incomprehensible to everyone else but those who devote themselves to prayer; it is there that he inflames the will; it is in prayer that he takes total possession of hearts and souls.*<sup>1135</sup>

Vincent de Paul wanted the members of his Congregation to be persons of prayer. This was not only necessary for their spiritual development but also necessary for effective ministry on behalf of others. He often encouraged his confreres to progress in the practice of prayer. *Give me a man of prayer and he will be ready for anything.*<sup>1136</sup> According to Vincent de Paul, prayer is the living source of the spiritual life of a missionary. Through prayer, a missionary person puts on Christ, becomes steeped in the teachings of the gospel, discerns events through the eyes of God, and remains always in God's love and mercy. In this way, the Spirit of Christ will always make their words and actions effective.<sup>1137</sup> Pastoral leaders form their parishioners in the habit of prayer. Prayer leads people to grow in the grace of God. *For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who in every respect has been tested as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need* (Heb 4: 15-16). The eternal wisdom of God grants sufficient grace to people and uplifts the people from

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<sup>1134</sup> Poggioli, Mizaël Donizetti. "Communication for Mobilization" in *Vincentiana*, (Oct-Dec 2017, # 4), p 506.

<sup>1135</sup> CCD:X:330.

<sup>1136</sup> Abelly Louis. *Op.cit.*, III:7, p 61; CCD: XI: (Conference, Meditation # 67), p 76.

<sup>1137</sup> Constitutions and Statutes of the Congregation of the Mission, #41.

their spiritual poverty. God sanctifies all the sufferings to which people are subjected.<sup>1138</sup>

Vincent de Paul highlights five fundamental reasons as necessity for Christian spirituality.<sup>1139</sup>

- a) Jesus said that his house is a house of prayer. Since Jesus has called us and given his grace, we must be faithful to prayer so as not to act contrary to what should be done in his house.
- b) Prayer is the food of the soul; people who fail to make prayer, put their soul in danger of becoming weak, just like the growth of body suffers due to malnutrition.
- c) Practicing meditation is something like doing what the angels and saints in heaven do because in prayer, a soul communicates with God and without prayer the soul has no opportunity to speak with God.
- d) Prayer withdraws people from committing sin. When the habit of prayer exists the possibility of co-existence with sin is little to none. The grace of God, received during prayer, enlightens the mind to recognize sin and to resist the inclinations to sin in order to grow in the virtue of prayer.
- e) God gives people sufficient grace to work at their spiritual development and to help them to choose what is suitable and to avoid what is inappropriate.

### 2.2.2.3 Communitarian Expression of the Covenant

Typological structures, namely, the typological pattern of priesthood and the priesthood placed within the old and new biblical covenants are one of the crucial ways Scripture unpacks Christology throughout the Bible and grounds the uniqueness of the fulfilment era associated with the great high priest Jesus Christ's inauguration of the new covenant which provides and secures everything necessary for the salvation of those in the covenant.<sup>1140</sup> The Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches that *in the New Covenant, prayer is the living relationship of the children of God with their Father who is good beyond measure, with his Son Jesus Christ and with the Holy Spirit. The grace of the Kingdom is the union of the entire holy and royal Trinity . . . with the whole human spirit.*<sup>1141</sup> To the Christian faithful prayer is the habit of being in the presence of the trinitarian God and living in communion with him. This communion with God is initiated through Baptism (Rm 6: 4-7). Indeed, by means of the sacraments people have become united in covenant with Jesus Christ. Therefore, prayer express the communion with Jesus Christ, which is extended throughout the Church, his Body.<sup>1142</sup> As the pastoral leaders

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<sup>1138</sup> CCD: XI:19.

<sup>1139</sup> CCD: IX: 322 (Conference, Mental Prayer, # 37, May 31, 1648).

<sup>1140</sup> Wellum, Stephen J. "The New Covenant Work of Christ"; In, *From Heaven He Came and Sought Her. Definite Atonement in Historical, Biblical, Theological and Pastoral Perspective*. Gibson, David and Gibson, Jonathan (eds.), Crossway, Wheaton, Illinois, 2013, p 519-521.

<sup>1141</sup> *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, #2565.

<sup>1142</sup> *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, #2565.

form people in the habits of prayer, the faithful will learn to express the elements of Christian prayer. *Christian prayer is a covenant relationship between God and human person in Christ.*<sup>1143</sup> Understanding this covenant relationship enable people to collaborate with other individuals and groups that share similar spiritual goals because through collaboration many sustainable social activities can be undertaken.<sup>1144</sup> Guidance in living a spiritual life enables the faithful to practice this communitarian expression of the covenant in Christian prayer. To this end the local pastoral plan should envision building up of a living community which leads the people to active participation.<sup>1145</sup>

#### 2.2.2.4 Faith, more than Philosophical Reason

Aquinas developed a number of philosophical arguments for the existence of God in Aristotelian philosophical categories,<sup>1146</sup> rather than in the method of ontological argument of Anselm. Aquinas preferred cosmological arguments to ontological arguments. Philosophical proofs derived from argumentation are neither a substitute for, nor a basis for faith, and they will not give an adequate knowledge of God, even though such theistic proofs and arguments are used as a defence against atheism. The knowledge that people have about a thing is based on their understanding of its substance, which means, the way the substance of a thing is understood must determine what is known about it. Therefore, human reason cannot achieve an understanding of God because the human intellect cannot comprehend the substance of God through reason alone.<sup>1147</sup>

Aquinas puts forth five ways or five arguments to prove the existence of God<sup>1148</sup>. The first way is *the argument from motion*. Things are in motion and God is the first mover and He is put in motion by no other. The second way is *the nature of the efficient cause*. We find an order of efficient causes. There is no case known in the world in which a thing is found to be the efficient cause of itself, for if so, it would be prior to itself which is impossible, and so the first efficient cause is God. The third way is *the possibility and necessity*. We find in nature things that are possible to be and not to be, since they are found to be generated, and to be

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1143 *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. # 2564.

1144 Poggioli, Mizaël Donizetti. "Communication for Mobilization" in *Vincentiana*, (Oct-Dec 2017, # 4), p 507.

1145 Maloney, Robert.P. *He Hears the Cry of the Poor*. *Op.cit.*, p. 141.

1146 Aristotle explains four general account of causes, which can be used to explain everything in a broad sense, in his works *Physics* II 3, and *Metaphysics* V2. 1)The material cause: it is that out of which somethings is made, 2) The formal cause: the form of an entity ,3) The efficient cause: the primary source owing to which the change happened; 4) The final cause: the end, for the sake of which it is done. Aristotle. *The Metaphysics*. Trans. John H. McMahon, Dover Thrift Editions, Mineola, New York, 2017, Book V 2, p 90.

1147 \_\_\_ *St. Thomas Aquinas On Politics and Ethics*. Trans. Sigmund, Paul E., A Norton Critical Edition, W.W. Norton & Company, New York, 1998, p3.

1148 *ST*, I, q. 2, a. 3.

corrupt. Nevertheless, it is impossible for these things to always exist and not to exist at the same time. Therefore, if everything is possible not to be, then at one time there would have been nothing in existence. If at one time nothing was in existence, it would have been impossible for anything to have begun to exist - but something does exist, and so a prior existence is necessary. This is the source of all existence, which causes all things, and this is God. The fourth way is *the gradation to be found in things*. Some things are better than some other things which are less good. There is something which is most true, something best, something which is utmost being. There must also be something, which is to all beings the cause of their being, goodness, and every other perfection, and this Aquinas calls God. The fifth way is *the governance of the world*. We see that things which lack intelligence, act almost the same way so as to obtain the best result. Whatever lacks intelligence cannot move towards an end, unless it is directed by some being that is endowed with knowledge and intelligence. Therefore, some intelligent being exists by whom all-natural things are directed to their end, and this intelligent being is called God. Aquinas uses these five ways, as philosophical arguments or as theological reasons in order to demonstrate that God exists.<sup>1149</sup>

This theological reason in the *Summa Theologiae*, concerned with the defense of Aquinas to prove that God exists, is continued until 1a, q 45. The five ways explained in 1a, q2 just begin to develop his classical explanation, which is even used against atheism, which was not a problem in his time<sup>1150</sup>. *Jesus Christ's teaching will never let us down, while worldly wisdom always will. Christ himself said this sort of wisdom was like a house with nothing but sand as its foundation, while his own was like a building with solid rock as its foundation.*<sup>1151</sup>

The main objective of the different types of pastoral engagement should be to help members of the pastoral community to pray.<sup>1152</sup> Comprehension of some of the explanations lead to intellectual engagement and acts. Faith has an aspect of abiding in Gott, for Jesus said (John 15:4): *abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me.* That was the experience of Paul when he said (Gal. 2,20): *it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.*<sup>1153</sup>

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<sup>1149</sup> ST, I, q.2, a.3; Davies Brian. *Thomas Aquinas Summa Theologiae. A Guide and Commentary*, Oxford University Press, New York, 2014, p33.

<sup>1150</sup> Davies Brian. *Thomas Aquinas Summa Theologiae. op.cit.*, p35; Ambadan Jaison. *Concept of Happiness in Summa Theology with Reference to Contemporary Psychological Studies*, p 27-28.

<sup>1151</sup> *Common Rules of the Congregation of the Mission*, Chapter II, # 1.

<sup>1152</sup> Rouet Albert. „Örtliche Gemeinde in der Stadt“, *Op.cit.*, p 166.

<sup>1153</sup> Theobald Christoph. „Evangelium und Kirche“, *Op.cit.*, p 120.

“But sacred doctrine makes use even of human reason, not, indeed, to prove faith (for thereby the merit of faith would come to an end), but to make clear other things that are put forward in this doctrine”.<sup>1154</sup> Theology is committed to reason, but the foundation of theology is revealed doctrine.<sup>1155</sup>

*Our Lord came into the world to re-establish the reign of his Father in all persons. He won them back from the devil who had led them astray by the cunning deceit of a greedy desire for wealth, honour, and pleasure.*<sup>1156</sup> God bestows twofold graces: first, there is sanctifying grace whereby a person becomes united to God. The other is gratuitous grace, whereby a person cooperates with another person in leading him to God so that he, in turn, may cooperate in the justification of another. It is bestowed on a person beyond the capability of nature, and beyond his merit. Grace may be understood as a habitual gift bestowed on the person and as a divine help whereby God moves the person to will and to act. As far as the intellectual faculty of the person is concerned, it will be operating and cooperating. Sanctifying grace will be operating within the person. This effect in which the mind is moved, is not attributed to the person but to God because God is the sole mover. Sanctifying grace unites a person to God, raises him up to participate in the Divine nature, and gives him a share in God’s own life.<sup>1157</sup> When the bestowed grace moves the mind, it is not only attributed to God but also to the soul and it is in this way that we understand cooperating grace. With regard to cooperating grace, there is an interior act of the will, where God moves the human mind to act. This is operating grace, an interior act of the person wherein God is the mover. There is also an exterior act commanded by the will, in which God assists and strengthens the will in order to increase the capacity of operating, this is cooperating grace.<sup>1158</sup>

Faith precedes all other virtues in a person. It is by virtue that a human act is considered good, any habit of good acts as virtue, for instance a habit of living faith, which could also be understood as cooperating grace. However, lifeless faith is not a virtue, though the act of lifeless faith is duly perfect in the intellect, it has no perfection as regards the will. The act of faith requires an act of the will, and an act of the intellect.<sup>1159</sup> *As the act of faith proceeds from the free-will, moved with grace by God, the act of faith can be meritorious,*<sup>1160</sup> it always involves

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<sup>1154</sup> ST, I, q.1, a. 8 ad 2.

<sup>1155</sup> Bradley, J.M. Denis. *Aquinas on the Twofold Human Good. Op.cit.*, P 51.

<sup>1156</sup> *Common Rules of the Congregation of the Mission*, Chapter II, # 18.

<sup>1157</sup> Lombardo, E. Nicholas. *The Logic of Desire*. Aquinas on Emotion. Aquinas on Emotion. The Catholic University Press, Washington D.C, 2011, P 119.

<sup>1158</sup> ST, I-II, q.111.

<sup>1159</sup> ST, II-II, q. 4, a. 5.

<sup>1160</sup> ST, II-II, q. 2, a. 9.

the assistance of God's grace. Grace is an entitative habitus, meaning that it is not located in any particular power of the soul, but rather is a quality of its essence.<sup>1161</sup>

### 2.2.2.5 Faith and the Act of Deliberating Intellect

Aquinas views the process of thinking in three ways: an actual consideration of the intellect, an act of deliberating intellect, and an act of the cogitative power. In general, any kind of actual consideration of the intellect is a process of thinking, that is, what an individual understands by thinking. A specific consideration of the process of thinking enlightens the process. Therefore, when we reflect on the act of intellect, we are engaged in a form of inquiry into the process of thinking which also enables the act of intellect to achieve a convincing answer. In this way, the movement of the mind is a deliberate movement either of universal notions in the intellectual faculty or of the particular matters which belong to the sensitive faculty of the person, therefore, as far as faith is concerned to think is a deliberate act of the intellect. Those who make a deliberate act of faith are attracted to God as they hear the Christian preaching, then God has spoken to humankind, and some people can hear Him and be drawn to Him in the light of what He has said.<sup>1162</sup>

Belief has a scientific understanding yet the knowledge of belief does not attain the perfection of vision wherein there is no doubt, suspicion or opinion. In the faith formation one has to understand the word "to think" not for the act of the cogitative power, but for an act of the intellect. Educative role of faith formation is an engagement with the thinking process of an individual. Pastoral situation needs to give different types of thinking possibilities to the faithful in order to develop within themselves the habit of the virtue faith; as people have different taste and preference, liturgical possibilities also need to be different in colour and taste. The intellect of the believer is determined to one object, not by the reason, but by the will, hence assent is understood as an act of the intellect as determined to one object by the will.<sup>1163</sup> Here one single question has to be always in the mind of the pastoral administrators: what are the faith motivating factors being given to the people?

Many people may think that faith is enough and that the regular practice of faith in the form of prayer is not needed, because God knows the people who love him. This perception is wrong because the liturgical prayers connect the life of the faithful to Christ in the Holy Spirit to the glory of God the Father. Furthermore, as people live their faith in the form of prayer they

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<sup>1161</sup> Lombardo. E. Nicholas. *The Logic of Desire*. Aquinas on Emotion. *Op.cit.*, P 119.

<sup>1162</sup> Davies Brian. *The Thought of Thomas Aquinas*. *Op.cit.*, p 280.

<sup>1163</sup> *ST*, II-II, q. 2.

are able to deepen their personal relationship with the living and true God.<sup>1164</sup> The inclination to sin is weakened only by prayer and fasting.<sup>1165</sup> Prayer is a vital necessity which allows the Holy Spirit to guide people in living their faith.<sup>1166</sup> Those who pray are certainly saved, and those who do not pray threaten both their faith and their spiritual life.<sup>1167</sup> Prayer allows the Holy Spirit to guide people in confronting the inclinations of the flesh and in strengthening their spiritual inclinations. Thus, if people are led by the Spirit, they are not subject to the inclinations of the flesh (Gal 5:18). Therefore, prayer and faith are interconnected: *There is an urgent need, then, to see once again that faith is a light, for once the flame of faith dies out, all other lights begin to dim. The light of faith is unique, since it is capable of illuminating every aspect of human existence.*<sup>1168</sup> Vincent stated that the Congregation of the Mission will survive as long as the members are faithful to the practice of meditation.<sup>1169</sup> Meditation increases the faith, and *meditation is a sermon we preach to ourselves to convince us of the need we have to turn to God and to cooperate with His grace in order to uproot vices from our soul and implant virtues in it.*<sup>1170</sup> Instilling virtue occurs when people strive to do the will of God. The perfect love of God does not consist in ecstasies but in fulfilling the will of God.<sup>1171</sup> Faith and prayer are two sides of the same coin. Prayer detached from the heart cannot bear fruits of faith. Many of the thoughts and inclinations that incessantly arise within a person may appear to be good, but may not be coming from God. Prudence would suggest that people should discern and discriminate, seek counsel, accept advice, pray for the grace of God, proceed slowly and never anticipate providence.<sup>1172</sup>

### 2.2.3 Insufficiency of Natural Reason for the Knowledge of Divine Matters

An individual needs to accept by faith both the matters which could be known by reason and the matters that are above reason. He cites three reasons for this. First, an individual can more quickly arrive at the knowledge of divine truth because the science that proves the existence of God presupposes many other sciences and lends itself to research so that one who searches for truth would arrive at the knowledge of God. Second, faith is necessary to understand the knowledge of God because many are unable to make progress in the search of

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<sup>1164</sup> *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, #2558.

<sup>1165</sup> CCD:X:57.

<sup>1166</sup> *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, #2744.

<sup>1167</sup> *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, #2744.

<sup>1168</sup> Pope Francis, *Lumen Fidei*, #4.

<sup>1169</sup> CCD: XI:76.

<sup>1170</sup> CCD: XI:76.

<sup>1171</sup> Melito, Jack. *Op.cit.*, p 55.

<sup>1172</sup> Melito, Jack, *Op.cit.*, 56.

truth either because of a lack of concentration and interest or because they are engaged in a number of occupations and daily commitments. Therefore, unless divine matters are brought to one's knowledge under the guise of faith that person will probably be deprived of knowledge of God. Third, faith is necessary for a certitude in the science of theological reasoning because of the deficiency of human reason to measure the things concerning God. As a result, one's reasoning could fall into fallacy or error and could disagree among themselves, therefore in order that people might have knowledge of God with certitude it is necessary that the elements of faith are taught to them by pastoral leaders with the help of the grace of God.<sup>1173</sup>

Knowledge and faith could be derived from the same object, that means, an object of knowledge could be an object of faith as well for another; for example, for a building contractor a fixed altar is an object of knowledge as far as his know-how of the construction of this altar is concerned, but for a priest it is an object of faith, then to him a fixed altar in the church signifies Jesus Christ, the Living Stone.<sup>1174</sup> Reason with faith help menschen to understand what does faith mean. Menschen could draw knowledge from the words of Jesus Christ, from his life, and through the power of the grace of his redeeming death and resurrection, to be convinced of fact that the world is not as it appears to be. I don't say that the appearance is an illusion, but the world is at the same time more than its appearance. The world is not sealed in its appearance, but through redemption, a new beginning has been opened in it.<sup>1175</sup>

### 2.2.3.1 Speculative and Practical

Just as philosophical reasoning is speculative and practical, faith too is both speculative and practical. In a broad sense, faith is speculative because it is more concerned with divine things. Faith, however, needs human acts in order to perfect the human person's knowledge of God,<sup>1176</sup> Since every action has a reaction, good speculation needs to have a virtuous practical reaction. Faith is the substance of things to be hoped for and evidence of things that have not appeared. In other words, faith is a habit of the mind that allows eternal life to take root in the believer and brings the mind to assent to things that do not appear to the mind.<sup>1177</sup> Karl Rahner was asked: what should be important when designing the content of theological studies? He said that the subjects in which theology is to be taught are determined in advance, so that only

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<sup>1173</sup> *ST*, I-II, q. 2, a. 4.

<sup>1174</sup> 1 *Peter* 2:4; *Ephesians* 2:10

<sup>1175</sup> Guardini, Romano. *Wille und Wahrheit*. *Op.cit.*, p 154.

<sup>1176</sup> *ST*, I, q. 1, a. 4.

<sup>1177</sup> Davies Brian. *The Thought of Thomas Aquinas*. *Op.cit.*, p 282; *ST*, II-II, q. 4, a.1.

the question arises, how to distribute these factually fixed subjects.<sup>1178</sup> His opinion is a relevant constructive thinking also in the field of pastoral educational approach for spiritual advancement, because the pastoral team should systematically plan out an apt method of education in selecting various themes of Christian faith in order to strengthen the understanding of the faith.

Origin understands the teaching of Christ not only from what has been narrated of the historical Jesus, but also from the teaching of the prophets, whose words he interprets as the words of Christ in a combination of Platonic logos speculation and prosopographical exegesis, who was present as the divine word in Moses and the prophets.<sup>1179</sup> Faith, then, takes a middle ground between speculative and practical reasoning. Pastoral administration needs to be creative and innovative in inventing corresponding methods to motivate the faithful towards human acts of faith. This practical aspect of faith is what gives dynamism to faith. Jesus Christ comes in menschen through faith, through Baptism, through the Eucharist. With baptism he comes once and for all. He comes again and again through faith and the Eucharist. And over and over again through every elevation of the heart; we could say that through prayer Christ lives in menschen.<sup>1180</sup>

On one occasion, Vincent de Paul said to his confreres who were conducting a retreat for the candidates for ordination: *Now that we have an ordination retreat about to begin, we must pray that God give his Spirit to those who address the candidates in the conferences and the discussions. Above all, be attentive to act with humility and modesty. Our learning will not make us successful, nor will the brilliant things we say to them. They are much more learned than we are. Several have their bachelor's degree, others have the licentiate in sacred theology, some are doctors in the law, and only a few do not know philosophy and perhaps theology as well. They are used to disputations. Practically nothing we could say to them is new or what they have not heard before. They themselves say that these things do not impress them here, but what does impress them is the virtues they see practiced here.*<sup>1181</sup> Practicing virtue is one of the important practical aspects of faith in daily life, which will be more convincing to the members of the community in a tangible manner, consequently, virtue will give dynamism to faith. *An effect is better known to us than its cause, from the effect we proceed to the knowledge of the*

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<sup>1178</sup> Rahner, Karl. *Im Gespräch*. Imhof, Paul und Biallowons, Hubert (Hrsg.), Band 1: 1964-1977, Kösel Verlag München, 1982, p 58.

<sup>1179</sup> Seewald Michael. *Dogma im Wandel. Wie Glaubenslehren sich entwickeln*. *Op.cit.*, p 109.

<sup>1180</sup> Guardini, Romano. *Wille und Wahrheit*. *Op.cit.*, p 131.

<sup>1181</sup> Abelly, Louis. *Op.cit.*, II:195-196.

*cause*.<sup>1182</sup> As far as faith and its practices are concerned, *a posteriori* is more convincing to people than *a priori*.

In a broad sense virtue means the realization of the good. Virtue may presuppose moral exertion, but it is not exhausted in being moral exertion. Knowing means that the reality of a thing is being attained. Thus, knowledge is not limited to being a painstaking thought, an intellectual work.<sup>1183</sup> If virtue means the realization of good, then the realization of good is a process of knowing, and knowledge leads to action. Pastoral education and liturgical services help the community to know God more and more. When an individual attains some knowledge of God, the fruit of the knowledge will flow in the form of charity. When Jesus taught about his own resurrection, his disciples did not understand the meaning of resurrection, but after the resurrection of Jesus, the disciples understood the meaning of resurrection, thereby they attained knowledge of eternal life. Through such knowledge those disciples were ready even to die for Jesus Christ. Knowledge of God is necessary to engage in prayer. Therefore, the fundamental role of pastoral education is to increase the knowledge of the community regarding their faith. Through pastoral education, pastoral leaders have to constantly try to animate the faithful using the biblical, theological and liturgical resources so that the members of the community engage themselves intellectually about their spiritual life.

### 2.2.3.2 A Call Within a Call

The expression, call within a call, has different meaning according to the field of competence. Politicians, actors, business people, scientists, researchers, professors, teachers, physicians, lawyers, engineers, rich and poor people, will understand the phrase “call within a call” in a different manner.<sup>1184</sup> Vincentian spirituality understands call within a call from a vertical and horizontal perspective of spiritual life as developed by an individual and the community. People are called to understand God and grow in their love of God, which is a vertical internal activity. This spiritual orientation has to be necessarily lived by people with whom they come in contact, which is horizontal expression of love. Today, Vincent de Paul would pose the following questions to all the leaders who are engaged in parish activities: can you live what you pray and pray what you live? The answer to this question is the meaning of call within a call from the perspective of Vincentian spirituality. When people are able to live what they pray, they transcend their internal experience of God, and when people are able to

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<sup>1182</sup> *ST*, I, q 1, a. 2.

<sup>1183</sup> Pieper, Josef. *Musse und Kult. Op.cit.*, 1948, p 37.

<sup>1184</sup> Poggioli, Mizaël Donizetti. “Communication for Mobilization” in *Vincentiana*, (Oct-Dec 2017, # 4), p 509.

pray what they live, they come to understand the meaning of life and become more involved in humanitarian activities as they follow Jesus Christ, the evangelizer of the poor. Becoming Involved in the humanitarian activities is not only helping people materially but also helping people in their spiritual development. Encouraging people to explore the means of spiritual development begins with teaching them to pray. Prayer is the weapon against those inclinations that drive people in the opposite direction of spiritual development. *Temptation will never be lacking to souls who are trying to serve God; it wasn't lacking even to the Apostles and to Our Lord; all those who try to live a holy life will suffer persecution, that is, will be tempted and afflicted.*<sup>1185</sup> Vincent stated that given the reality of human inadequacy, there is a need to pray continually, and offer our mortifications for the intention of communion with God.<sup>1186</sup> *Catholic educators are called to go beyond all ideological reductionism or homologizing relativism by remaining faithful to their own gospel-based identity, in order to transform positively the challenges of their times into opportunities by following the path of listening, reasoning and proposing the Christian vision, while giving witness by their very presence, and by the consistency of their words and deeds.*<sup>1187</sup>

### 2.2.3.3 Understanding has a Form

Human beings, created by God, have the power to act in a manner that bears fruit in proportion to the individual's ability. Anything beyond the ability of the person is outside that person's grasp and leaves the person powerless. Just as water can be heated by fire, a particular ability of the person can be helped and assisted. Therefore, an individual's understanding has a form, which helps him to know things that are intelligible to him. Here we are talking about knowledge perceived through senses. One cannot know higher intelligible things with one's own intellectual abilities, unless he is illumined by light of grace. A person needs divine help to know transcendental knowledge- the knowledge of truth. The intellect of the person is moved by God in order to transcend his own intellectual abilities. In other words, God, by his grace, enlightens the mind so that the person can understand things beyond his/her intellect.<sup>1188</sup> In contemplation, menschen bring themselves to rest, outwardly as inwardly, deeper and deeper down into the inside. They emerge from the dispersion in which they always live, become present before God. In this calm and serenity, they take up the object of which it is concerned;

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<sup>1185</sup> CCD: IX:541.

<sup>1186</sup> CCD: XI:281.

<sup>1187</sup> Congregation for Catholic Education. *Male and Female, He Created Them. Towards a Path of Dialogue on the Question of Gender Theory in Education*, # 54.

<sup>1188</sup> ST, I-II, q.109, a. 1.

lets themselves get close to God, and their thoughts of God penetrate deep down in the heart. They do not look at this experience in an uninvolved objectivity, but they know themselves what this meant to be. However, menschen contemplate not in an independent effort, but together with God.<sup>1189</sup>

Pastoral ministry, which has a prophetic role in the process of evangelization and proclaiming the word of God, attempts to help people open the minds to the light of faith. In this way their own intellectual abilities will be strengthened and better able to understand things higher in the sphere of their intellect. The ministries of the church, through the participation of the Holy Spirit, enlighten the minds of people in order to help understand that truth is a habitual gift. Habitual gift is different form sanctifying grace which is a supernatural gift of God that disposes the person to eternal salvation which consists of an intuitive knowledge of God. Regular participation of Sunday liturgical celebration of Holy Eucharist helps the Catholics to understand the truth of salvific redemption in a habitual manner through the grace of God. During the great autumn festivities in Bengal in India, Josef Pieper asked quite a few people whether they knew what is the reason for the joy of the festivities at present. The answer from one Orthodox Hindu was: There is the joy of being a creature that God created out of joy. Exactly the same thing, the gift of being created, *beneficium creationis*, the first and most noble of all divine gifts, as Thomas says, is celebrated on Sunday, which is thus truly interpreted as a paradigm of all festive celebrations.<sup>1190</sup>

#### 2.2.3.4 Interior Participation

Active participation of the community in the eucharistic celebration emphasizes the internal participation of the gathered to commemorate the mystery of Jesus Christ's sacrificial love, rather than external acts of doing something. We read in the gospel of Mark that, *you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.*<sup>1191</sup> An acknowledgement of the phrase *with all your strength* explains the importance of the exterior act in the active participation like, bodily gestures, saying the responses, praying, silence and singing. These exterior and interior acts illustrate the dual nature of the human person, body and soul. Relationship between body and soul is understood in the comprehension of interior and exterior participation, whereby active involvement and conscious presence of the whole human person in union with the gathered community is

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<sup>1189</sup> Guardini, Romano. *Wille und Wahrheit. Op.cit.*, p 177.

<sup>1190</sup> Pieper, Josef. *Zustimmung Zur Welt. Eine Theorie des Festes.* Kösel -Verlag KG, München, 1963, p 76.

<sup>1191</sup> Mark 12:30; CCD: IX: 365, (Conference, *The Love of God*, # 41, September 19, 1649); *Matthew* 22: 37.

advocated in the participation in the liturgy. Interior and exterior active participation forms people in an openness to receive the grace of God. In explaining the meaning of participation, pastoral leaders need to make clear that *the word participation does not refer to mere external activity during the celebration. In fact, the active participation called for by the Council must be understood in more substantial terms, on the basis of a greater awareness of the mystery being celebrated and its relationship to daily life.*<sup>1192</sup> After the celebration of the eucharist, all the participants return to their daily life, and all are called to live out their vocation in a creative manner in the midst of a world filled with so much unbelief, filled with people who do not know Jesus Christ, filled with so many people living in dire situations.<sup>1193</sup> Interior participation in the eucharistic celebration transforms people and strengthens them as missionaries to live in the spirit of Jesus: meekness, simplicity and humility.<sup>1194</sup> In the daily life of an individual, the act of faith encompasses the thinking and decision making process. Vincent de Paul advocated that people who are involved in mission should practice the virtues of meditation, humility and charity,<sup>1195</sup> in order to bring forth the interior growth of spiritual experience in a simple and dignified manner to the people of God.<sup>1196</sup> *Jesus said that whoever remains in me and I in them will bear much fruit. (John 15:5) This is the objective of the Eucharist and the secret of the spiritual fruitfulness of our life and our apostolate.*<sup>1197</sup>

Then, there necessarily arises a question about the manner in which God moves the will of individuals so that they can assent to the faith. Pope Francis states that Christians are at times the people who, on the one hand want to listen to Jesus, but on the other hand, at times, like to find a stick to beat others with, to condemn others. Jesus has a special message for us: mercy. Mercy is one of the essential characteristics of God, thus we read in psalm 86:15 “God of Mercy and Pity”. There are two Hebrew words denoting to mercy: *Rahamim*, which more properly refers to mercy, and, used in the Bible more frequently, ‘*Hésed*, which refers to mercy, but emphasises to love in general, and ‘*Hésed* is a quasi-visceral feeling which urges one to love, assist, help from the depths of the heart.<sup>1198</sup> Pope Francis states with all humility, that the virtue

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<sup>1192</sup> Pope Benedict XVI, *Sacramentum Caritatis*, # 52.

<sup>1193</sup> Mavric Tomaz. “Celebration of the Eucharist in Thanksgiving for the Beatification of the Vincentian Martyrs”, trans. Plock T. Charles, in *Vincentiana* (October-December 2017, # 4), p 471.

<sup>1194</sup> CCD: I:518.

<sup>1195</sup> CCD: III, 279-281, (Letter, TO Charles Nacquart, In Richelieu, March 22, 1648).

<sup>1196</sup> Urrizburu, Carmen. “Passion for Making the Kingdom Present. Vincent de Paul and Louise de Marillac: A Relationship that Promoted Bold and Creative Fidelity”, in *Vincentiana*, (September-October, N°5, 2009), 387.

<sup>1197</sup> Mavric Tomaz. “Advent Letter 2017”, in *Vincentiana* (October-December 2017, # 4), p 458.

<sup>1198</sup> Koch, Bernard. “Mercy in Our Vincentian Being: Monsieur Vincent, Apostle of Mercy,” in *Vincentiana* (January-March, 2016, # 1), p 77.

of mercy is the Lord's most powerful message to us, and Jesus himself said: "I have come to call not the righteous but sinners to repentance" (Luke 5:32).<sup>1199</sup>

### 2.2.3.5 Educating Oneself and Discerning the Will of God

Pope John Paul II in his apostolic exhortation *Familiaris Consortio* (Christian Family) says that it is a necessity on the part of all Catholics to improve a consciousness of the primacy of moral values, which are the values of the human person. The great undertaking that has to be confronted today for the renewal of society is that of evoking the ultimate meaning of life and its fundamental values. Only an understanding of the importance of these values empowers people to use the immense possibilities given to them by various disciplines of science to bring about the true advancement of the human person in whole truth, in freedom and dignity. The following advice of the *Second Vatican Council* can therefore be applied to the actual situation of the ecclesial community that "our era needs such wisdom more than bygone ages if the discoveries made by people are to be further humanized. For the future of the world stands in peril unless wiser people are forthcoming."<sup>1200</sup> Therefore it is necessary to form our moral conscience, which makes every human being capable of judging and of discerning the proper ways to achieve self-realization in accordance with original truth. Our modern culture needs to be led to a more profound restoration of the covenant with divine Wisdom. Every person is given a share in such Wisdom through the creative action of God. It is only in faithfulness to this covenant that the members of the ecclesial community will be in a position to influence, in a positive manner, the building up of a more just and fraternal world.<sup>1201</sup>

One of the primary benefits of reading the *Summa theologiae* is that the explanation of Aquinas strengthens people's love for God and they will learn to live with a greater longing for eternal life. The structure of the *Summa theologiae* could be viewed as helpful framework for Christian theology. I would like to call the work of *Summa theologiae* a circular method of illustration because this work is composed of seven circles that are helpful in educating oneself and learning to live a spiritual life. I understand the *Summa theologiae* as a Christian theological syllabus of spirituality that is grounded on Aquinas' intention of helping people return to God.

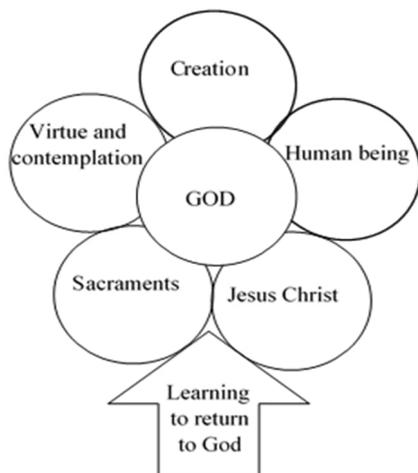
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<sup>1199</sup> Pope Francis. „Die Stärkste Botschaft des Herrn: Die Barmherzigkeit. Predigt in der Eucharistiefeyer der Gemeinde, Pfarrkirche Sant' Anna im Vatikan, 17. März 2013.“ In *Und jetzt beginnen wir diesen Weg. Die ersten Botschaften des Pontifikats*. Herder, Freiburg im Breisgau, 2013, p 33-34.

<sup>1200</sup> Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et spes*, 15.

<sup>1201</sup> Pope John Paul II. *Familiaris Consortio* (November 22, 1981) No.8. *Op.cit.*

The *Summa theologiae* begins with treaties on God, and the discussion of God is a uniting element in the entire work, making all other developments of concepts connected circles to the pivotal circle which is God. All beings that we find on earth owe their existence to God.<sup>1202</sup> All people act for a purpose and divine goodness is the purpose of all people.<sup>1203</sup> All people desire God as their end, when they desire some good thing, whether this desire be intellectual or sensible, or natural, i.e., without knowledge; because nothing is good and desirable except inasmuch as it participates in the likeness to God."<sup>1204</sup>



The first part of *Summa theologiae* explains the premise that God created the world and governs the created world as the universal first cause. Creation signified actively means the divine action, which is God's essence, with a relation to the creature. But in God relation to the creature is not a real relation, but only a relation of reason; whereas the relation of the creature to God is a real relation.<sup>1205</sup> God is outside the

whole order of creation, and all creatures are ordered to Him. Creatures are really related to God Himself, whereas in God there is no real relation to creatures, but a relation only in idea, inasmuch as creatures are referred to Him. Thus, there is nothing to prevent these names which import relation to the creature from being predicated of God temporally, not by reason of any change in Him, but by reason of the change of the creature.<sup>1206</sup> The operation of the intellect and the will is in the operator, therefore names of relations following upon the action of the intellect or will, are applied to God from eternity; whereas those following upon the actions proceeding according to our mode of thinking to external effects are applied to God temporally, as *Saviour*, *Creator*, and the like.<sup>1207</sup>

“God is not known to us in His nature, but is made known to us from His operations or effects; hence the name "God" is a name of operation so far as it relates to the source of its meaning.”<sup>1208</sup> Through grace, God influences the intellect of people, and gives them power to know the good. To will is to have an inclination towards the object of *volition*. The will is

<sup>1202</sup> *ST*, I, q. 44, a. 1.

<sup>1203</sup> *ST*, I, q. 44, a. 4.

<sup>1204</sup> *ST*, I, q. 44, a. 4 ad 3.

<sup>1205</sup> *ST*, I, q. 45, a. 3 ad 1.

<sup>1206</sup> *ST*, I, q. 13, a. 7.

<sup>1207</sup> *ST*, I, q. 13, a. 7 ad 3.

<sup>1208</sup> *ST*, I, q. 13, a. 8.

referred both to good and evil: to good by desiring it, and to evil, by shunning it. The actual desire of good is called *volition* whereas the shunning of evil is described as *nolition*.<sup>1209</sup> People are endowed with free will, therefore the power to recognise the good is a potentiality which need to be realized through *volition* of the free will, in order that the potentiality will be actualized.

The striving of human beings for the highest end of life (*beatitudo*) is discussed in the second part of *Summa theologiae*. Aquinas develops the way in which people strive towards perfection in terms of the Aristotelian system of ethics of human acts<sup>1210</sup> which is meritorious in so far as they promote human purpose and the honour of God. People receive from God the theological virtues as dispositions. Those three virtues will be actualized though the repetition of good acts, otherwise they remain as potentiality. “The first cause of the defect of grace is on our part; but the first cause of the bestowal of grace is on God’s.”<sup>1211</sup> Virtue is not a precarious self-restraint but it is attuning one’s desire to harmonise with what is truly good for the person.<sup>1212</sup> Acts which deviate from divine law become sin, and acts which confirm divine law become virtue; both have their origin in the will. “The law implies order to the end actively but not passively, that is to say, the law itself is not ordained to the end, except accidentally.”<sup>1213</sup> As contemplation promotes harmony of will and reason, and helps to perfect knowledge, memory and imagination, contemplation is the perfect way of strengthening the inclination of the will to God.

Contemplation maintains harmony whereas disorder of human nature is maintained through ignorance, malice, moral weakness and concupiscence; disharmony is a certain proneness of the will to evil.<sup>1214</sup> However, the passion of concupiscence, in its distinctively human form, is not caused simply by an act of the senses, rather it is activated by an apprehension involving both rational and sensible elements.<sup>1215</sup> The negative state of disorder which effects impairment and perversion of human nature is the essence of original sin. Therefore, Aquinas sees contemplation as a method against disorder, that means, contemplation attempts to maintain the harmony of human action so that people are able to move toward perfection and *beatitudo*. The intellect apprehends the end before the will does, yet motion

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<sup>1209</sup> *ST*, I, q. 8, a. 1.

<sup>1210</sup> *ST*, I-II, q. 18.

<sup>1211</sup> *ST*, I-II, q. 112, a. 3 ad 2.

<sup>1212</sup> Cessario Romanus, Titus Steven Craig and Vitz C Paul (eds.). *Philosophical Virtues and Psychological Strengths. Building the Bridge*, Sophia Institute Press, Manchester, New Hampshire, USA, 2013, P 242.

<sup>1213</sup> *ST*, I-II, q. 91, a. 1 ad 3.

<sup>1214</sup> *ST*, I-II, q. 85, Art. 3.

<sup>1215</sup> Miner Robert. *Thomas Aquinas on the Passions*. Cambridge University Press, The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge, UK, 2009, p 150.

towards the end begins in the will. Therefore, to the will belongs that which is last of all, the attainment of the end, delight and enjoyment.<sup>1216</sup> Consequently, in that state of happiness, the mind will be united to God by one, continual, everlasting operation. But in the present life, in as far as we fall short of the unity and continuity of the operation of the mind and will, we fall short of perfect happiness. Nevertheless, unity of our mind and will with God is a participation of happiness, so much the greater, can the operation be more continuous. Consequently, the active life, which is busy with many things, has less happiness than the contemplative life, which is busied with one thing, i.e., the contemplation of truth.<sup>1217</sup>

Learning to return to God could be explained as a participation of people's reasoning in the eternal reason. People have a natural participation in the eternal law, according to certain general principles, but not as regards the particular determinations of individual cases, which are, however, contained in the eternal law. Hence there is a motive for human reason to pursue further learning.<sup>1218</sup> Divine law is divided into the old law and the new law.<sup>1219</sup> The Apostle Paul compares the state of people under the Old Law to that of a child under a mentor; but the state under the New Law, to that of a adult grown person, who is no longer under a mentor.<sup>1220</sup> Divine law give appropriate strength to the will of the people to participate in the eternal reason. Characteristics of old law are universally valid moral laws. The new law is the grace within the people. This law is given to the people as a gift of God which remains within the person, and this is not a written law ... rather people receive the new law as sacramental grace. The new law is primarily the grace itself of the Holy Spirit, which is given to those who believe in Christ.<sup>1221</sup>

The creative act of God in sacramental grace helps people in the transmutation of the soul corresponding to the spiritual nature of the person by influencing free will towards God. Thus, the grace of God is the beginning of meritorious works. The light of faith makes people see what they believe. For just as by the habits of the other virtues, people see what is becoming to them in respect of a particular habit, so, by the habit of faith, the human mind is directed to assent to such things as are becoming to them in respect of a right faith.<sup>1222</sup> Thus the concepts

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<sup>1216</sup> *ST*, I-II, q. 3, a.4 ad 3.

<sup>1217</sup> *ST*, I-II, q. 3, a.2 ad 4.

<sup>1218</sup> *ST*, I-II, q. 91, a.3 ad 1.

<sup>1219</sup> *ST*, I-II, q. 91.

<sup>1220</sup> *Galatians* 3:24-25: "Therefore, the law was our disciplinarian until Christ came, so that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer subject to a disciplinarian, for in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith. As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ."

<sup>1221</sup> *ST*, I-II, q. 106, a.1.

<sup>1222</sup> *ST*, II-II, q. 1, a.4 ad 3.

of the theological virtues faith, hope and love are of much significance to Aquinas towards getting into the highest good, because knowledge of the end to be loved must precede the act of love, while the will cannot strive after God in perfect love unless the intellect has some knowledge of God and faith in God. Unbelievers are ignorant of things of faith, because they neither see or know the elements of faith in themselves, nor do they know the precepts of faith to be credible. The faithful, on the other hand, know them, not by demonstration, but by the light of faith which makes them see that they ought to believe them.<sup>1223</sup>

“The truth of faith is sufficiently explicit in the teaching of Christ and the apostles.”<sup>1224</sup> The ultimate consummation of grace was caused by Jesus Christ, because the time of His coming is called the time of fulness (Gal 4:4). Hence those who were nearest to Christ, like John the Baptist and the apostles, had a fuller knowledge of the mysteries of faith.<sup>1225</sup> Jesus Christ, at the very beginning of His preaching, invited people to the kingdom of heaven, saying: “repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near” (Mt 4:17). Here we find a difference in the promise of temporal goods contained in the Old Testament, for which reason it is called old while the promise of eternal life belongs to the New Testament.<sup>1226</sup> The salvation of the human person could not be achieved otherwise than through Jesus Christ, thus we read in *acts of the apostles* “there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among mortals by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12). Subsequently, the law that brings all to salvation could not be given until after the coming of Christ. But before the coming of Jesus, there was a necessity to give to the people, a law containing certain rudiments of righteousness leading to salvation, in order to prepare them to receive Jesus Christ.<sup>1227</sup> This reminds us of the necessity of offering people a moral education in order to guide them in returning to God by knowing, loving and adoring Him.<sup>1228</sup> There is a universalism in the scope of the grace of redemption through Jesus Christ, since no mensch is excluded from God’s offer of salvation, however, there is a particularity in the application of redemption, because there is a necessity of appropriate

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<sup>1223</sup> *ST*, II-II, q. 1, a.5.

<sup>1224</sup> *ST*, II-II, q. 1, a.10 ad 1.

<sup>1225</sup> *ST*, II-II, q. 1, a.7 ad 4.

<sup>1226</sup> *ST*, I-II, q. 91, a.5.

<sup>1227</sup> *ST*, I-II, q. 91, a.5 ad 2.

<sup>1228</sup> “Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love”: 1 *John* 4:8. “Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love”: 1 *John* 4:7-8. “It is written, Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him”: *Luke* 4:8. “you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength”: *Mark* 12:30. “If you love me, you will keep my commandments”: *John* 14:15.

acts to receive the benefits potentially afforded by Jesus Christ's universally offered salvation.<sup>1229</sup>

## 2.2.4 Ministry of Reconciliation and Rehabilitation of Affection

I would like to call the ministry of reconciliation a rehabilitation of affection, because affection can be positively guided through proper inputs about the subject matter. The affection of the people towards pastoral ministry makes most pastoral ministries energetic and acceptable. In a pastoral situation affection of the people can be properly guided only through proper interpretation of the pastoral ministries. When the affection of the people towards pastoral ministries is being reduced in the daily life, then the pastoral leaders need to reorient the people with pastoral guidance and interpretation in order to animate the affection of the people founded on reason.

Karl Rahner is of the opinion that in the past, in good, old, somewhat naive times, people believed they knew too clearly - also purely theoretically and objectively - what is morally good and what is morally bad. Even in this theoretical sphere, this matter is extremely difficult and obscure today, if you do get a little more concrete. But it was even more so in the past that the opinion was formed too naturally and simply that in the case of the concrete individuals in their concrete acts - if they are not precisely insane in the forensic sense - one knew precisely that this was morally good or morally bad, and this can be determined in a clear way. Basically, they had the impression that one could anticipate God's judgment themselves. Today the psychology of the most diverse varieties and the most diverse directions teaches us how incredibly difficult it is to recognize freedom, guilt, or innocence in a specific individual case. Moreover, I am a Christian who is not allowed to judge, and I have to say with Paul (1 Cor. 4:4) *I am not aware of anything against myself, but I am not thereby acquitted. It is the Lord who judges me.*<sup>1230</sup>

Aquinas reflects extensively on the problem of the fallen mind, because the human mind could be negatively affected by the power of sin, which would prevent the natural spiritual process of having a vision of God in contemplation. A fallen mind contemplates the riches of this world rather than focusing on eternal life. This is an inordinate love of the created being

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<sup>1229</sup> Gibson, Jonathan. "For Whom Did Christ Die? Particularism and Universalism in the Pauline Epistles"; In, *From Heaven He Came and Sought Her. Definite Atonement in Historical, Biblical, Theological and Pastoral Perspective*. Gibson, David and Gibson, Jonathan (eds.), Crossway, Wheaton, Illinois, 2013, p 295-302.

<sup>1230</sup> Rahner, Karl. *Im Gespräch*. Band 2: 1978-1982, Imhof, Paul und Biallowons, Hubert (Hrsg.), Kösel Verlag, München, 1983, p 99.

whose thoughts are fixed on earthly things, and they are mired in the spiritual advancement with profound worldly concerns of daily experience. A fallen mind has distanced itself from God by turning away from the light of God's self-disclosure.<sup>1231</sup>

It may well happen that, what is in itself the more certain to someone may seem to another person the less certain. This occurs because of the weakness of the intelligence which is dazzled by the clearest objects of nature just like an owl is dazzled by the light of the sun. Therefore, the ostensible problem that some people happen to doubt about the articles of faith is not due to the uncertain nature of the truth, but to the weakness of human intelligence. Nevertheless, knowledge that may be obtained of the highest things of the transcendental realm is more desirable than the most certain knowledge obtained of lesser things.<sup>1232</sup>

In order to understand the revealed word of God, the human mind needs to be strengthened so as to be capable of being enlightened by the grace of God. The inherent free will of the human mind, when perverted by the clutches of sin, becomes weak in its capacity to turn towards God. In the ecclesial community, those weak minds need help in terms of wisdom and guidance from pastoral leaders who will be able to offer people knowledge of God based on their own experience. In their attempts to see the divine, they are handmaids of theology and servants of the divine science.<sup>1233</sup>

#### **2.2.4.1 Revitalizing the New Law of Christ**

Revitalizing the new law of Christ refers to dedicated efforts through certain act of priorities in life with love for Christ to understand the purpose of life. The grace of God received through sacraments revive one's inner life, but people have the responsibility to revitalize their life through voluntary decisions for the love of Jesus Christ. Indeed, spiritual development and revitalization take place simultaneously. According to Michael Seewald, the word development means the unstable simultaneity of continuity and discontinuity. If something develops, it does not jump in leaps and bounds, but glides over from one state to the other. The beginning is not only constitutive of being for the provisional end (no beginning, no end), but also relevant to understanding, because the provisional end can only be explained by reference to the beginning according to its origin. Whether the end is already completely laid out in the beginning, in the Aristotelian sense, every act must be founded in an enabling ability - *potentialiter*, not yet *actualiter* - is much more difficult to answer. If this is completely the case, then a development

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<sup>1231</sup> Barron Robert. *Thomas Aquinas. Spiritual Master. Op.cit.*, p 37.

<sup>1232</sup> *ST*, I, q. I, a.5 ad 1.

<sup>1233</sup> Barron Robert. *Thomas Aquinas. Spiritual Master. Op.cit.*, p 37.

process would only be the sequence of a program that I constantly run myself regardless of external factors. With regard to the development of the doctrine of the faith, from a Christian point of view, this would mean that I unfold a greatness once founded by God through Revelation in accordance with its inner theology, unaffected by all contingency factors such as those represented by human freedom in the realm of history. If one takes Schilling's dictum that "in the process there is mere necessity, in history there is freedom", the teleologically determined development in the doctrine of the faith would be a mere process, a movement of the natural itself carried out in history but not affected by it abandoned consciousness which, once given, has no free cause other than to influence consciousness.<sup>1234</sup>

Aquinas describes his entire theological and spiritual project as a response to the unexpected and tremendous act of God's self-disclosure. Theology begins with wonder at the revealing power of God and ends with rapture of the vision of God. The catholic theologian, as spiritual master, explores and explains the mystery of salvation in order to guide and motivate others in attainment of salvation.<sup>1235</sup> Taking responsibility for the pastoral education of the people, pastoral leaders need to renew the faithful through their homilies, seminars, writings and through other projects in the parish about the economy of salvation extended to humanity through the love of God, through the grace of Jesus Christ and through the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. The Gospel writings contain matters pertaining to the grace of the holy Spirit that can dispose us to the grace of Jesus Christ by directing our intellectual engagement about the word of God. Thus, we will be able to understand the manifestation of the love of Jesus Christ, that is, the revelation of the new law to humanity.<sup>1236</sup> The new law of spiritual grace consists in the works of virtue to which the writings of New Testament exhort people in diverse way.<sup>1237</sup> Thus, an individual learns to practice the virtue of love with an understanding of a virtue applied to all in common.<sup>1238</sup> The practical thinking of Vincent de Paul was reflected in his warning that individuals must be aware of the limitations of their strength in order to be able to serve the poor in the most effective way. Therefore, zeal for souls does not mean that individuals wear themselves out in relentless activism, but rather they must allow themselves to be filled with the spirit of Christ.<sup>1239</sup>

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<sup>1234</sup> Seewald Michael. *Dogma im Wandel. Wie Glaubenslehren sich entwickeln. Op.cit.*, p 52.

<sup>1235</sup> Barron Robert. *Thomas Aquinas. Spiritual Master. Op.cit.*, p 39.

<sup>1236</sup> *ST*, I-II, q.106, a. 1 ad 1.

<sup>1237</sup> *ST*, I-II, q.106, a. 1 ad 1.

<sup>1238</sup> Aquinas Thomas. *On Love and Charity. ... Sentences of Peter Lombard. Op.cit.*, p 131. (III Sent. d.27, q.1.a.2)

<sup>1239</sup> Antonello, Erminio. "Monsieur Jean Martin and Saint Vincent", Trans. Plock, Charles T., In, *Vincentiana*, (April-June, 2011, N° 2) p 181.

### 2.2.4.2 Transforming and Transfiguring the Health of the Soul

In the spiritual emphasis of the pedagogical discussion Aquinas focuses on the view that God's self-disclosure was necessary for human salvation. God did not reveal Himself in order to illumine our minds or satisfy our curiosity, rather, God revealed Himself in order to move us, to drive us beyond ourselves in order that we might be saved. Understanding the revelation of God through Jesus Christ gives us a spiritual wake up, a radical orientation with regard to our purpose in life, touching deep down within oneself, so that this experience becomes a spiritual habit. Hence, theology cannot be seen as a mere academic discipline. It is, rather, a description of God's salvific act in the history of humankind, a matter of spiritual life and death, a guidance to the way of life which leads human beings to their final destiny.<sup>1240</sup>

Aquinas uses the Latin word *salvus* to explain the idea of salvation. Commonly *salvus* means health. People used to greet one another saying the word *salve*, meaning good health to you. Then salvation could be understood as health of the soul. Analogically we designate Jesus as healer, that is, he is someone who gives good health to the soul. What we experience in Jesus, in the revelation of God, is the healing power of God. Jesus heals our soul in order to make possible the journey toward God as we overcome the struggles and dilemmas of worldly life.<sup>1241</sup>

The existential feature of theology becomes complicated to understand in the practical pastoral life because the apparent explanation of the self-disclosure of God is often reduced to principles and formulas. Science of God is not only an intellectual discipline but this can also be an experiential type of knowing. Sacred doctrine includes both speculative and practical. It is speculative in as much as it is more concerned with divine things than with human acts, and it is practical inasmuch as human beings are ordered by sacred doctrine to the perfect knowledge of God.<sup>1242</sup> Intellectual expression of principles and formulas are in fact drawn from the personal experience and conviction, that is to say, the science of God is an expression of a participation in the inner experience of God. Therefore, the ultimate orientation of theology is the transforming and transfiguring of the health of the soul in order to draw a person to God.<sup>1243</sup> This renovation and metamorphosing of one's soul is strengthened by the experience of God, when being formulated into principles and formulas, this experience becomes an expression of the habitual orientation of life. There is a necessity to explain those principles and formulas to

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<sup>1240</sup> Barron Robert. *Thomas Aquinas. Spiritual Master. Op.cit.*, p 34.

<sup>1241</sup> Barron Robert. *Thomas Aquinas. Spiritual Master. Op.cit.*, p 34.

<sup>1242</sup> *ST*, I, q. 1, a. 4.

<sup>1243</sup> Barron Robert. *Thomas Aquinas. Spiritual Master. Op.cit.*, p 35.

the people, because it can happen that people, without practical experience of God, try to begin understanding God through principles and formulas, then these formulas would not easily digest into them as intelligible quiddity. Therefore, it can be affirmed that we need to educate people in catholic spirituality, helping them to understand the marvellous works of our saviour Jesus Christ.

### 2.2.4.3 Four Circles of Interior Senses

Aquinas refers to four circles of interior senses: commonsense, imagination, cogitative power and memory power. These four interior senses support one another as per the object of orientation in a manner of a circular movement. The interior sense circle called common sense is the common root and principle of the exterior senses. It enables a person to make possible relatively complex sensory impressions helping the person to discern sensible qualities of multiple kinds so that an object can be understood with its specific characters like white, sweet, soft, and fragrant, and all at the same time.<sup>1244</sup> The interior sense circle called imagination is the power that enables a person to retain and preserve sensible forms of objects, which could also be called the store house of forms received through senses.<sup>1245</sup> By this power of imagination, a person can understand a sensible object not only at the actual time of sensation, but also when it is absent.<sup>1246</sup>

Although estimative power and cogitative power have a similar character, they are different in their genre. Aquinas observes that, as to sensible forms, there is no difference between human being and animals, for they are similarly influenced by the extrinsic sensible objects. There is, however, a difference with regard to their intentions, for animals perceive these intentions only by some natural instinct, while human beings perceive them by means of a coalition of ideas. Therefore, Aquinas calls this power in animals estimative, and in human beings, cogitative power, a power through which people discover the intentions<sup>1247</sup> as per their orientation. Aquinas would say that a human person is by nature a rational being who develops new habits through innovative orientation. The sensitive power is at its highest in a person when sensitivity is joined to intelligence, in other words, when the emotional orientation is joined to the intellectual orientation. Consequently, the person develops an object-oriented movement supported by intellect. Even the basic sensory judgments of a person ordinarily reflect the

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<sup>1244</sup> *ST*, I, q.78, a.4, ad 1&2.

<sup>1245</sup> *ST*, I, q.78, a.4, ad 1&2.

<sup>1246</sup> Fritz Cates Diana. *Aquinas on The Emotions. A Religious Ethical Inquiry. A Religious Ethical Inquiry.* Georgetown University Press, Washington, D.C., 2009, p 113.

<sup>1247</sup> *ST*, I, q.78, a.4.

influence of the intellect to some degree.<sup>1248</sup> That is why the visible actions undertaken by the leaders of the parish have a significant role in influencing the intellectual thinking of the parishioners.

The interior sense circle called commemorative power is a store house of intentions that are perceived through the exercise of the cogitative power within the environment in which the person lives. People not only have memory, but they also have able reminisce syllogistically, as though, seeking to recall the past by the application of specific intentions.<sup>1249</sup> By virtue of reminiscence, it is possible for one activity to seek out a range of sensory judgements that the person made in the past, so that one can judge the suitability or unsuitability of a particular element, in the present.<sup>1250</sup> Repetition of pastoral actions and events automatically create impressions in the mind of the faithful. Spiritual orientation extended to the parish community depends on how the pastoral leaders explore various opportunities to create pastoral activities.

#### **2.2.4.4 Love as a Way of Knowing**

Knowledge of God is perfected by the person being united to God. The effect of loving God is that the person becomes united to God, whom he loves whole heartedly. Consequently, the union caused by love of the person towards God is closer than that caused by knowledge. The union of love produces threefold relationships: first, a substantial union, caused by the love of the person; secondly, essential union, caused by the bond of affection wherein the person who loves, understands the object of his love; thirdly real union, caused by the act of seeking union with God whom the person loves.<sup>1251</sup>

Love is the first of the affections, just as love is the first of the passions, since the first movement of the will, and of any appetitive power, is love. As with the passions of the soul, the affections of the will respond with a cognition, and in the case of the affection of love, the apprehension is of a good. The affection of desire occurs when a good is absent, pleasure occurs when a good is present, and then the will can rest in it.<sup>1252</sup> Understanding the relation between the life of Menschen and faith is a constituent part of pastoral activity. If we are entrusted with generating life to others, we must not forget, that this life in what its unavailable punchline is, cannot be passed on. We awaken faith, but at the same time, the faith can only arise freely from

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<sup>1248</sup> Fritz Cates Diana. *Aquinas on The Emotions. A Religious Ethical Inquiry. Op.cit.*, p116.

<sup>1249</sup> *ST*, I, q.78, a.4.

<sup>1250</sup> Fritz Cates Diana. *Aquinas on The Emotions. A Religious Ethical Inquiry. Op.cit.*, p117.

<sup>1251</sup> *ST*, I-II, q. 28, a. 1 ad 2.

<sup>1252</sup> Lombardo. E. Nicholas. *The Logic of Desire. Op.cit.*, P 78; *ST*, Part I-II, Q 31, Art 3 ad 2.

the within of the other self.<sup>1253</sup> This has decisive consequences in the proclamation of word of God, because the love will remain the key to the way of knowing God, and the relevance of pastoral question, how do we generate love of God, will remain forever. In the book of Jeremiah, we read about the establishment of a new covenant: *I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. No longer shall they teach one another, or say to each other, "know the Lord," for they shall all know me, ...; for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more* (Jer 31: 32-34). Love has emotion of affection, however, the shared sympathies involved in the act of love may not ensure invariably that all projects will go on smoothly and will be successfully implemented, but despite delay and temporary setbacks projects founded on love of God and love of neighbour inspire associated people to cooperate in attaining religious goals with collective acts.<sup>1254</sup> Love invents ways for connecting people together.

Aquinas's basic epistemological concept, cognition, is clearly not knowledge, for he understands that one can have false cognition.<sup>1255</sup> Moreover, Aquinas seems to allow that not only our relatively sophisticated conceptual assimilation of reality can constitute cognition, but that also our more primitive assimilation, the possession of raw sensory data, can constitute cognition. Aquinas's understanding of cognition is broader than knowledge. Some commentators use his notion of *scientia* to explain his concept of knowledge. *Scientia* is a type of cognition, understood as a complete and certain cognition of truth and therefore, *scientia* is narrower than cognition and knowledge. It must be understood that Aquinas has no word that corresponds precisely with the English word "knowledge", however, in general his concept of "cognition" can be seen as defining a space in his framework that corresponds to our notion of knowledge.<sup>1256</sup>

Sense of loss of sin has become a serious issue in the world. When the moral behaviour changes, interests and habits of a mensch will also change. *The moral attitudes towards sexual behaviour have changed very significantly since the seventeenth century. In many societies, divorce is now widely accepted as a way of terminating marital commitment. Birth control and premarital sex are engaged in extensively and frequently, accepted as morally legitimate. Beyond efforts at eliminating prejudice against homosexuals, there is considerable agitation to*

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<sup>1253</sup> Theobald Christoph. „Evangelium und Kirche“, *Op.cit.*, p 127.

<sup>1254</sup> Forrestal, Alison, *Op.cit.*, p. 271.

<sup>1255</sup> *ST*, Part I, Q 17, Art 1.

<sup>1256</sup> Kretzmann, Norman and Stump Eleonore (eds.). *The Cambridge Companion to Aquinas*. Cambridge University Press, USA, 1999, p 162.

*accept the homosexual lifestyle as an alternative one.*<sup>1257</sup> Many countries in the world have legally permitted prostitution, and they are allowed to function as established companies and also allowed to advertise “their services”. Answer to the question of creating a moral foundation among the youths and adults is being obliqued towards compromising attitude. Pious youth talk about their problems that are happening in the youth summer camps. A habit of epicureanism cannot have any moral values of spiritual credibility. God has created menschen in his image and likeness. Teachers, who have the challenging task of training children and youth in schools or other settings, should be conscious that their responsibility extends also to the moral, spiritual and social aspects of life. A holistic approach towards advocating the dignity of the human person has an intrinsic spiritual nature and spiritual advancement, and not just a financial and social perspective.<sup>1258</sup>

Aquinas holds that the intellectual power, unlike other cognitive powers, is self-reflexive with respect to its activities, including the act of cognition, seeing them as objects of thought and judgement.<sup>1259</sup> The epistemological significance of this capacity makes it possible for a person not only to accept or hold propositions, but also to have grounds or reasons for holding them.<sup>1260</sup> Evaluating and governing one’s own judgements and thought processes, the reflexive capacity of the intellect, creates grounds to recognize the truth of one’s cognitions, and so to love what is recognized. Lack of faith and unfaithfulness to the law of God become a hinderance to moral habits,<sup>1261</sup> therefore, when the pastoral team becomes involved in educating people about the importance of faith in God, they are, at the same time, promoting good moral habits.

#### **2.2.4.5 The Healing Power of Repentance and Forgiveness**

According to Karl Rahner, people who have ever had the experience of responsibility, true love, the inability to escape responsibility, etc., have had, whether they reflect on it or not, a religious experience of God.<sup>1262</sup> Repentance and forgiveness lead a person to be a new creation. The faithful as sons and daughters of God have become a new creation in Jesus Christ. “Anyone who believes in Jesus is a new creation. The old has passed, behold, the new has become” (2

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<sup>1257</sup> Maloney P Robert. *The Way of Vincent de Paul*, *Op.cit.*, p 51.

<sup>1258</sup> *Fratelli Tutti*, # 114.

<sup>1259</sup> ST, Part I, Q 17 Art 3.

<sup>1260</sup> Kretzmann, Norman and Stump, Eleonore (eds.). *The Cambridge Companion to Aquinas*. Cambridge University Press, USA, 1999, p 163.

<sup>1261</sup> *The Aquinas Catechism. A Simple Explanation of the Catholic Faith by the Church’s Greatest Theologian*. Sophia Institute Press, Manchester, New Hampshire, 2000, p 221.

<sup>1262</sup> Rahner, Karl. *Im Gespräch*. Imhof, Paul und Biallowons, Hubert (Hrsg.), Band 1: 1964-1977, *Op.cit.*, p 58.

Cor 5, 17). The Christian face of this new creation is the reflection of Christian heart through repentance and forgiveness, which enable the faithful for a worthy celebration of the paschal mystery. Repentance and forgiveness lead to conversion of the person, the old self to a new being, a new creation, a child of God. All are invited to this freedom of children of God “From the bondage of transience to freedom and Glory of the children of God” (Romans 8:21).

Usually, people prefer to think in terms of static dualism than of dynamic union of humanity and divinity. It is the inner stillness of contemplative prayer that enables a person to absorb and comprehend the paradoxes of seeming contradictions and artificial separateness in order to understand that the presence of God already dwells in a person. Therefore, we read in the letter of James 5,16: confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed.<sup>1263</sup> A threefold change take place in the process of reconciliation. The first is by rebirth to new life, which is the concern of the type repentance preceding Baptism. Second is by reforming after a life that has been ruined by sin, which is the objective of repentance for mortal sins committed after baptism. Third is change towards living a more holy life, this engages the repentance for venial sins, which are pardoned through any fervent act of charity.<sup>1264</sup>

In the yearly liturgical pastoral programme, Lent is an Invitation to be a New Creation. Lent is an invitation, the sacramental sign of conversion of the person’s old self to new being, to become a new creation. It is an opportunity, a call to all Christians to do that Paschal mystery stronger in their personal, family and social life, to become concrete in the approach to spiritual life, especially through fasting, prayer and almsgiving. (i)Fasting means learning to change one’s attitude towards the other fellow persons and to the community from the temptation to devour everything to satisfy one’s desires, to enrich the ability to suffer for love, which can fill the emptiness of one’s heart. (ii) Prayer teaches to renounce the idolatry and the self-sufficiency of our ego, so that we learn and admit that we belong to the Lord and we need his mercy. (iii) Almsgiving teaches us to leave the folly behind, only to live for us and to accumulate everything for us in the illusion of securing such a future, that does not belong to us. In almsgiving we find the joy in the plan God, which the creator imprinted on our hearts: to love him, our brothers and sisters and the whole the world, and to find in this love the true happiness.<sup>1265</sup>

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<sup>1263</sup> Davies, Brian. *Thomas Aquinas’s Summa Theologiae. A Guide and Commentary. Op.cit.*, p 343.

<sup>1264</sup> Davies, Brian. *Thomas Aquinas’s Summa Theologiae. A Guide and Commentary. Op.cit.*, p 345.

<sup>1265</sup> Papst Franziskus. Botschaft von Papst Franziskus zur Fastenzeit 2019. *Kirchliches Amtsblatt Für Die Diözese Münster*. Artikel 40, Nr.5, Münster, den 1. März 2019, Jahrgang CLIII, 46.

## Part 2 Chapter 3

### 2.3.1 Offer Processes which Create the Space, Time, and Opportunity

The medieval understanding of the human being was that men and women were part of a vast organic cosmos of seen and unseen beings, like angels and demons. Modern rationalism scarcely understands such ideas, consequently, it diminished the power of imagination and tried to eliminate the hidden forces of nature. But Aquinas and his scholastic contemporaries set in motion the transformation of philosophical thinking with regard to theological knowledge. Aquinas' understanding of the human mind is different from a psychoanalytic explanation of consciousness and unconsciousness. Aquinas had an optimistic view of the intellect, that is, he understood the intellect as transforming knowledge into wisdom as one is drawn to the goodness and beauty of God by the diverse good elements of the world and by the intellect that enables one to choose the good that best expresses a desire for the ultimate good. However, the human mind, which can be motivated only by good, can be vulnerably influenced by the craving of emotion. Thus, the absence of good and wrong interpretation of good can prevent the ultimate happiness of union with God. A healthy pastoral education method creates space, time and opportunity to know the mind, so that the members of the community will be positively motivated.

According to Aquinas the good of human nature is threefold: first, the principles on which human nature is constituted, and the properties that flow from them, such as the powers of the soul. Second, the inclination to virtue which is a good of nature. Third, the gift of original justice, conferred on the whole of human nature in the person of the first mensch, may be called a good of nature.<sup>1266</sup> Aquinas's explanation of the mind illustrates theories of intellect and of will, the cognitive and appetite faculties of the soul. With regard to knowing the mind I will focus on the intellect.

Pastoral education can help people to move from passivity to potential activity. We could also understand passivity in another sense, that is, passivity also happens when something is taken away. If pastoral ministry tries to remove the evils that are opposed to the spirituality of the catholic faith, then the concerned person can become passive from the point of view of evil in order to become spiritually activated. The efforts of the pastoral theology need to discover practical means and methods to diminish any activity that opposes faith and love of

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<sup>1266</sup> *ST*, I-II, q. 85, a. 1.

God. Thus, there is a passivity created because something is taken away, and this passivity could be spiritually activated through relevant thoughts by inspired pastoral education.

Since the end result of the process of sensation is an intentional form in the intellect, change is possible only through an individual's decision and Christian evangelization attempts to assist people in their decision making. In the activity of the intellect, individuals perceive the quiddity<sup>1267</sup> of the object suitable to them which has to be abstracted in order to arrive at the intelligible species that could be impressed upon and retained in the passive intellect of these persons. Christian evangelization, by creating a pastoral environment, functions as an intellectual agent which is a nobler force than any individual perception, for the spiritual development of the people. Pastoral ministry, as an intellectual agent, proclaims the word of God in order to make the intellect active towards God. Intellect becomes active through synderesis but only with voluntary human act. It is God, the creator of the soul,<sup>1268</sup> who moves one's active intellect to the act of illuminating the phantasms with His grace.<sup>1269</sup> As the psalmist says: *the light of Thy countenance, O Lord, is signed upon us* (Ps 4:7). One of the intellectual activities which can spiritually motivate pastoral leaders and parish community is the thought "do not forget the poor".<sup>1270</sup> At the centre of missionary fraternity is the spirit of missionary zeal that leads a person outward to proclaim Jesus Christ to people who are poor, and affirm the presence of God.<sup>1271</sup>

### 2.3.1.1 Circular Movement in Parochial Life

In a parochial situation, circular movement is the best option which leads to perfection of parochial life while guiding the spiritual movement towards perfection. In the circular movement people try to acquire perfection of knowledge from the variety of parochial events. They try to understand truth with discursive reason which creates space for dialogue with people who hold a different opinion. This circular movement has neither beginning nor end, and therefore, reflects the truth that life is from God<sup>1272</sup> and the soul of people searches for the nearness of God.<sup>1273</sup> At the end of human life, the soul finds eternal rest in God's abiding

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<sup>1267</sup> *ST*, I, q. 85, a. 1.

<sup>1268</sup> "It has been proved that the rational soul cannot be produced except by creation. Now, God alone can create; for the first agent alone can act without presupposing the existence of anything; while the second cause always presupposes something derived from the first cause". *ST*, I, q. 90, a. 3.

<sup>1269</sup> *ST*, I, q. 79, a. 4.

<sup>1270</sup> Pope Francis. „Vergiss die Armen nicht. Ansprache in der Audienz für Medienvertreter. Aula Paolo VI, 16. März 2013.“ In *Und jetzt beginnen wir diesen Weg. Die ersten Botschaften des Pontifikats*. Herder, Freiburg im Breisgau, 2013, p 30.

<sup>1271</sup> Antonello, Erminio. "Monsieur Jean Martin and Saint Vincent", Trans. Plock, Charles T., *Op.cit.*, p 194.

<sup>1272</sup> Romans 5, 4; "God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us."

<sup>1273</sup> The emphasis is on laying up treasure in heaven, not on earth; Matthew 6:19-21.

presence.<sup>1274</sup> Even though this circular movement has no beginning and end, it takes place within the environment in which the people live.<sup>1275</sup> Special care has to be taken to avoid error of two types in the circle movement. First error in the circular movement which could take place is that of a paradigm shift of focus from spiritual existence to material existence<sup>1276</sup>... people must withdraw from material objects.<sup>1277</sup> The second error is lack of uniformity of the mind<sup>1278</sup> in order to strengthen the intention, because incorruptible substances survive, not only in the species, but also in the individual.<sup>1279</sup> This problem can be avoided through discursive reasoning<sup>1280</sup> which directs the operation of the soul to the contemplation of intelligible truth whereby soul's gaze is fixed on contemplation of truth.<sup>1281</sup> The circular movement is described as a movement of serenity or peacefulness or immobility.<sup>1282</sup>

### 2.3.1.2 Imperfect Image of God

The sermons at the Eucharist should deal with the image of God as it appears to us in the Scriptures. The image of God is infinite and inexhaustible. Not suddenly did he reveal his reality to us. If we examine the various books of Scripture, we see how one image opens up another image of God.<sup>1283</sup> The worth of any image exists in its likeness, but all likenesses cannot necessarily have the image, however, it can be said that a likeness is essential to an image. Likeness is essential to the image of God in the human being. The essence of this image of God does not mean equality, as though a person's image reflected in a mirror that which is a perfect image (there is nothing wanting to be found in that image with equality). In human beings there is likeness to God but it is an imperfect likeness, that is to say, human beings are created in God's likeness. God created a spiritual image in the human being. Discovering this spiritual image will lead to spiritual enlightenment, an internal unity with God. Since unity means an absence of division,<sup>1284</sup> in the spiritual journey of men and women, they try to reduce the division

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<sup>1274</sup> Matthew 25, 34; 34 "... come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom ..."

<sup>1275</sup> John 10,9; "I am the gate. Whoever enters by me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture."

<sup>1276</sup> Ephesians 4,4-6; "There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling..."

<sup>1277</sup> Matthew 6, 19- 21 "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume ...."

<sup>1278</sup> Philippians 2, 5. "Let the same mind be in you that was[a] in Christ Jesus..."

<sup>1279</sup> ST, I, q. 98, a. 1.

<sup>1280</sup> *Sciences are differentiated according to the various means through which knowledge is obtained. For the astronomer and the physicist both may prove the same conclusion: that the earth, for instance, is round: the astronomer by means of mathematics, that is, abstracting from matter, but the physicist by means of matter itself. Hence there is no reason why those things which may be learned from philosophical science, so far as they can be known by natural reason, may not also be taught us by another science so far as they fall within revelation. Hence theology included in sacred doctrine differs in kind from that theology which is part of philosophy.* ST, I, q. 1, a. 1 ad 2.

<sup>1281</sup> ST, II-II, q. 180, a. 6. ad 2.

<sup>1282</sup> ST, II-II, q. 180, a. 6.

<sup>1283</sup> Guardini, Romano. *Wille und Wahrheit. Geistliche Übungen.* Mathias Grunewald Verlag Mainz, 1937, p 40.

<sup>1284</sup> ST, I, q. 93, a. 1.

between themselves and God, in order to have, as far as possible, perfect union with God. Thereby, day by day people can perfect the image of God. Since the first principle of life is not a body but the actuality of the body,<sup>1285</sup> so too the image of God is not a body, it is a spiritual image which needs to become actual in life. Pastoral ministry helps people to interpret theology in order to reduce their separation from God and in order to deepen their relationship with God ... thus becoming clearer images of their God.

Individuals bear the image of God in so far as it is proper to them, and reflect that image in so far as they are endowed with a mind which consists of knowledge and love. We know that the strength of mind is measured by its threefold capacity, namely, memory, understanding and will. Because of these three distinct strengths of mind, people understand in varying degrees. As a result, active knowledge is not equally proportional to all, (some will be deficient in comparison with others). The role of Christian education is to help people to know and to love God whose image they bear. When something is not in actual consideration, it will be simply an object of the memory, and such habitual retention of knowledge will generate an absolute passive state wherein one can scarcely see any spark of a voluntary act of love. When I state that pastoral education helps a person to know God, I mean that people are motivated to engage with actual thoughts of God. Love, an act of the will, can be generated only through knowledge.<sup>1286</sup>

### 2.3.1.3 Creating Pastoral Relationships

The purpose of creating pastoral relationship with leaders and members of pastoral associations and also with non-Christian organization is to discuss the vision of the parish with the people of the community in order to create physical rapport in an environment of prayer and spiritual service. In his letter to Ephesians St. Paul wrote: *speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body's growth in building itself up in love* (Eph 4: 15-16). Showing love and remaining is a characteristic of people who engage in pastoral activities. At times, some people would say that the good Samaritan showed compassionate love to the wounded Jewish person who was a stranger to him. We read in the gospel of Luke that *he went to him and bandaged his wounds, ... brought him to an inn, ... The next day he gave two denarii to the innkeeper, and said, take care of him; and ... I will repay you whatever more you spend* (Lk 10: 35-36). The

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<sup>1285</sup> Pasnau Robert. *Thomas Aquinas on Human Nature. Op.cit.*, p 35.

<sup>1286</sup> *ST*, I, q. 93, a. 7 ad 1-3.

act of requesting the inn keeper to take care of the wounded person and promising to pay back whatever costs might be involved in such care, is an aspect of establishing a new relationship resulting from compassionate love. Vincent de Paul said that *we have to try to stir up our hearts to pity, make our hearts sensitive to the sufferings and miseries of our neighbour.*<sup>1287</sup>

**a) Concentric Circles in Pastoral Relationships:** Concentric circles in pastoral relationships denotes establishing personal relationships with two or more pastoral circles which have the same centre point, the structural and spiritual vision of the parish. We could take the example of Jesus to understand concentric circles of pastoral relationships. Jesus was open to all people and he reached out to everyone. However, there were a good number of people who were always on the move with Jesus and who desired to learn more from him. In order to form a specific circle of relationship, Jesus selected twelve persons (Mt 10:1-4; Lk 6:12-16; Mk 3:14; Joh 6:67-71; Rev 21:14). of which some of them were quite new to the group of his followers. After experiencing the success story of the selected twelve apostles, and subsequently also experiencing the refusal of a Samaritan village (Lk 9:53) Jesus formed another circle of relationships as he sent forth some seventy others (Lk 10:1) to the towns and cities where Jesus intended to go. Jesus had relationships with another group, with three apostles, namely, Peter, James and John. They had a more intimate relationship with Jesus because they were with him at the time of the transfiguration, (Lk 9:28) at the miracle of raising little daughter of Jairus, (Mk 5:41) and when, after eating his last meal with the disciple he went to the Garden of Gethsemane to pray (Mt 26:37). Jesus had a still more personal relationship with John because John is named four times as the disciple whom Jesus loved (Joh 19:26; 20:2; 21:7,20). Thus Jesus had for the same centre point of proclaiming good news to the poor many concentred circles of personal relationships. Vincent de Paul advices to strive for a warm, cordial friendship with all the people in the community, and should something happen that we have an aversion to someone, say nothing about this matter to anyone but to the superior and try every means to overcome from the aversion in order to strengthen cordial relationship.<sup>1288</sup>

**b) Horizontal and Vertical Circle Relationship:** Horizontal and Vertical Circle Relationship is a type of geometrical impossibility, because people can usually talk about vertical relationship, horizontal relationship, and circular. In this dream concept, indeed I see a horizontal and vertical relationship, but I would like to inculcate the word circle into this relationship because there is an aspect of receiving back the fruit of the acts and involvement

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<sup>1287</sup> CCD:XI:308.

<sup>1288</sup> CCD:XI:92.

of various groups of people in both horizontal and vertical relationship. Horizontal circle denotes all of the earthly engagements that the pastoral team is carrying out together with the material administration of the parish buildings and physical administration of the different pastoral organizations and activities. Vertical circle of relationship denotes the relationship with God, the way pastoral leaders understand and interpret God and religion. This also involves the liturgical services which draw people closer to God. Both are circle relationships because they consist many interconnected activities which are very often repeated. When pastoral leaders are able to understand and teach about the necessity of unity in the horizontal and vertical circle of relationship, there will be deeper understanding of the presence of God and the spirit of prayer will connect the activities in the horizontal circle with that of the vertical circle. The vertical relationship is the greatest commandment, Jesus explained the greatest commandment to Pharisees, *you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind* (Mt 22: 37). The second greatest commandment is the horizontal relationship, which Jesus explained, *you shall love your neighbour as yourself* (Mt 22: 39). The horizontal and the vertical circle relationship consist in these two commandments. Of which one circle alone do not make Christian spirituality. *Without the intention of encountering God in daily activities, pastoral and missionary activity become nothing more than some form of activism.*<sup>1289</sup>

All Christians are called in a more particular manner to love God with all their heart, with all their mind and with all their understanding. God's goodness empowers people to make every effort to clothe themselves in virtue because God is infinitely good. One of the most authentic signs that people love God is to submit their willingness to his commands. The theological virtue of charity creates dispositions of love of God and as people reach out in love to their neighbour, they also grow in their love of God<sup>1290</sup>

#### **2.3.1.4 Faith Fostering Relationships**

The Christian vocation is a call to lead a life of faith and to help one another to grow in faith. *Believing is possible only by grace and the interior helps of the Holy Spirit. But it is no less true that believing is an authentically human act.*<sup>1291</sup> Men and women need to persevere in performing acts of faith because although faith is a grace of God, the very nature of the act of

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<sup>1289</sup> Alvarez, Francisco Javier, *op.cit.*, p. 500.

<sup>1290</sup> CCD: IX: 365-367 (Conference, *Love of God*, September 19, 1649).

<sup>1291</sup> CCC. #154.

faith is a free act,<sup>1292</sup> and therefore, the human response to God must be a free act.<sup>1293</sup> Witnessing the values of faith and living the Christian faith through the development of one's sacramental life is the best means of strengthening relationships with both God and with the extended Christian community. People notice what the pastoral leaders do: how they speak, how they relate with people, and how they practice and live their faith. We read in the letter to Hebrews, *take care, brothers and sisters, ... exhort one another every day, as long as it is called today, so that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin* (Heb 3: 12-13). Each opportunity of faith fostering relationship, is very often supportive in nature and is a chance to glorify God through pastoral activity. Trusting in the providence of God, pastoral leaders should be able to carry out and grow in pastoral relationship for the glory of God. Faith fostering relationship requires to have a great desire to attain perfection and in order to do this try to encourage one another in the conversations regarding the spiritual experiences and events,<sup>1294</sup> always praising virtues and mortification.<sup>1295</sup>

Poor people may not be able to express themselves in the same way as educated persons but people can see, by the light of faith that Jesus, who willed to be poor, is represented to his followers by these poor people (and Jesus described himself as the evangelizer of the poor Lk 4:18). In reaching out to the poor people pastoral leaders are called to consider them in God and with an esteem in which Jesus Christ held them.<sup>1296</sup> The poor are the source of the vitality and a constant inspiration for the Congregation of the Mission, because through ministry, encounter and dialogue with those who are poor, a prophetic and mystical dimension is revealed, which enable people to know that Jesus Christ is not far away from them but is revealed in those people who wish to share in their lives and in their concerns.<sup>1297</sup> Faith fostering relationship and spiritual growth is both personal commitment and pastoral responsibility that the members of the Church need to have a clearer realization of their duty to correct their faults, strive for perfection, and make a wise choice of the means necessary for achieving the renewal of their faith and spiritual life.<sup>1298</sup>

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<sup>1292</sup> CIC, can. 748 § 2.

<sup>1293</sup> CCC. #160.

<sup>1294</sup> O'Donnell, Hugh. "Formation, a Life Process" in *Vincentiana* (May-June 2007, # 3), p 195.

<sup>1295</sup> CCD: XI:93 (Conference: *Retreat Recommendations*, 1632).

<sup>1296</sup> CCD: XI: 26 (Conference, *The Spirit of Faith*).

<sup>1297</sup> Alvarez, Francisco Javier, *op.cit.*, p. 501.

<sup>1298</sup> Pope Paul VI, *Ecclesiam Suam*. August 6, 1964. # 11.

### 2.3.1.5 Adapt Educative Methods of Contemplative Charity Parochially

The principles or laws at work in the universe and in human beings themselves determine, to a certain extent, the forms that emotions can take, the manner in which emotions are expressed, and above all, how human activity can benefit (in a positive manner) from emotion. In order to access one's emotion, there is need for a preliminary understanding of that individual's situation (what is going on within that person and the impact of the environment on that person). That understanding can help the person to enhance the inner movement towards the desirable end.<sup>1299</sup>

The ways in which people view the world, other human persons, and God are intimately intertwined and affect our view of spiritual life.<sup>1300</sup> Vincentian spirituality yearn for wholeness, for meaning in life and transcendence. The invitation of Jesus Christ to love your neighbour as yourself gives all those who follow him a captivating vision to integrate their life in the world with holistic spirituality and share their life and livelihood with vibrant spirituality.<sup>1301</sup> The spirit of charity may be increased or diminished in menschen just as the presence of Holy Spirit can be creased or diminished in menschen.<sup>1302</sup> In an individual or in a group of people increase of charity occur as though the act of charity were intended to arrive at boundless charity. *In the increase of charity, the Holy Spirit is invisibly sent. But the Holy Spirit is not invisibly sent unless some new gift is given. Therefore charity's increase happens by means of the infusion of new charity.*<sup>1303</sup> Human being knows the state of their spirit within them (1 Cor. 2:11). Therefore, one can say that people know whether they have the spirit of Charity.<sup>1304</sup> The awareness of lack of charity is a call within an individual to learn new ways of practicing charity.

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<sup>1299</sup> Cates, Diana Fritz. *Aquinas On The Emotion. A Religious Ethical Inquiry*. Georgetown University Press, Washington D.C, 2009, p 241.

<sup>1300</sup> Maloney, Robert P. *He Hears the Cry of the Poor*. *Op.cit.*, p 62.

<sup>1301</sup> Maloney, Robert P. *Go ! On the Missionary Spirituality of St. Vincent de Paul*. *Op.cit.*, p 127.

<sup>1302</sup> Aquinas Thomas. *On Love and Charity. Reading from the Commentary on the Sentences of Peter Lombard*. Trans. Kwasniewski A. Peter, Bolin Thomas and Bolin Joseph. *Op.cit.*, p 7.

<sup>1303</sup> Aquinas Thomas. *On Love and Charity. Reading from the Commentary on the Sentences of Peter Lombard*. Trans. Kwasniewski A. Peter, Bolin Thomas and Bolin Joseph. *Op.cit.*, p 72-73.

<sup>1304</sup> Aquinas Thomas. *On Love and Charity. Reading from the Commentary on the Sentences of Peter Lombard*. Trans. Kwasniewski A. Peter, Bolin Thomas and Bolin Joseph. *Op.cit.*, p 64-65.

## 2. 3.2 Formative Principles of Parochial Transformation

Pope Francis invites all the faithful in his apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* to be missionary disciples, thereby through the friendship with Jesus Christ we are called to personal involvement in the process of evangelization. *Every Christian is a missionary to the extent that he or she has encountered the love of God in Christ Jesus: we no longer say that we are “disciples” and “missionaries”, but rather that we are always “missionary disciples”.*<sup>1305</sup> This is an invitation to missionary transformation. Pope Francis desires to serve the gospel with renewed love, helping the Church to become increasingly, in Christ and with Christ, the fruitful vine of the Lord, and he exhorted the people, inspired by the celebration of the Year of Faith, all of us together, pastors and members of the faithful, will strive to respond faithfully to the Church’s perennial mission: to bring Jesus Christ to humankind and to lead humankind to an encounter with Jesus Christ, the Way, the Truth and the Life, truly present in the Church and also in every person.<sup>1306</sup>

Michael Seewald explains that, with the temporal distance from historical Jesus, there was not only the need to reflect more on the preservation of tradition, but also to think about making it more dynamic, so that the Christian community could adapt to changing political, cultural, and geographical conditions. From this endeavour to understand the fullness expressed in the person Jesus not only as the conclusion but also as the disclosure of a revelation, then Jesus said: *I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever. This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you.*<sup>1307</sup> The disclosure of the revelation of Jesus is indeed an invitation to transformation in the Spirit of truth.

The spiritual journey from potentiality to actuality necessarily explains and illustrates the scope of formative principles for parochial life... principles that are necessary in order to realize the possibility of actualizing potentiality. Any principles that we discover as formative principles are in fact educational principles that could change the life of the people within their inner personal circle and effect a relevant change in their circle of social relations. Formative principles of parochial life are mostly personalized spiritual principles which people derive from the teaching of the church and from reading the Scriptures and other spiritual books. This

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<sup>1305</sup> *Evangelii Gaudium*. # 120.

<sup>1306</sup> Pope Francis. „Nur Mut. Ansprache in der Audienz für die Kardinale. Sala Clementina, 15. März 2013.“ In *Und jetzt beginnen wir diesen Weg. Die ersten Botschaften des Pontifikats*. Herder, Freiburg im Breisgau, 2013, p 23-24.

<sup>1307</sup> Seewald Michael. *Dogma im Wandel. Wie Glaubenslehren sich entwickeln*. *Op.cit.*, p 25; John 14:16-17.

is a spiritual exercise of powers of the intellect and the will which, in the light of Gospel values, can enrich and transform life. According to Aquinas formative principles of Christian spiritual life that involve knowledge and movement<sup>1308</sup> are operations of memory, affect, imagination,<sup>1309</sup> understanding, judgement and decision making and are interrelated and empower spiritual development. Connecting the acts of life in the world with spiritual precepts and convictions creates in the mind formative principles which forms habits. Regarding the question of how to connect prayer life with various activities in the world, Vincent de Paul said: *The life of Missionaries ought to be the life of a Carthusian in the house, and an apostle in the countryside. The more they care for their own interior development the more their labours for the spiritual good of others will prosper.*<sup>1310</sup>

The *Summa theologiae* is a pedagogy of theological interpretation with an emphasis on wisdom and holiness<sup>1311</sup> in order to address the spiritual, the social and the cultural transformation of the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, and the spiritual crisis that arose in the Church. Therefore, the *Summa theologiae*, a new pastoral agent for beginners in the spiritual life,<sup>1312</sup> is a pedagogy of spiritual instruction and interpretation about the formative principles of life. To this end we could find in *Summa theologiae* five circles of discussions. The first circle explains sacred doctrine, the one God, the blessed Trinity, creation, the angels, the six days of creation, the human person, and the government of creatures.<sup>1313</sup> The second circle explains the ultimate end of the human person, human acts, passions, habits, vice and sin, law and grace.<sup>1314</sup> The third circle discusses faith, hope, charity, prudence, justice, fortitude, temperance and acts which pertain to certain people.<sup>1315</sup> The fourth circle instructs people about the incarnation, the life of Christ, the sacraments, baptism, confirmation, the Holy Eucharist and penance.<sup>1316</sup> In the fifth circle we find supplements, that is, further explanations of penance, extreme unction, holy orders, matrimony, the resurrection ... and concludes with some appendices.

*While the Church fathers did not develop a clear doctrine of the sacraments, medieval Scholasticism elaborated on the sacraments in great detail. This medieval consensus*

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<sup>1308</sup> *ST*, I, q. 75, a.1.

<sup>1309</sup> *ST*, I, q. 78, a. 4.

<sup>1310</sup> Abelly, Louis. *Op.cit.*, II: 24.

<sup>1311</sup> Wisdom is a gift of the Holy Spirit, holiness is attained by human effort; *ST*, II-II, q 45, a.1 ad 2.

<sup>1312</sup> *ST*, Prologue.

<sup>1313</sup> *ST*, I.

<sup>1314</sup> *ST*, I-II.

<sup>1315</sup> *ST*, II-II.

<sup>1316</sup> *ST*, III.

established that Christ instituted seven sacraments in the new covenant.<sup>1317</sup> Aquinas elaborated the sacraments in detail and explained the doctrine of sacraments in accordance with the Scripture. Aquinas dreamed of pastoral leaders who would understand the work of the *Summa theologiae* and become preachers of the word of God to communicate to people the gospel values which would enable people to develop new spiritual habits. Word of God is a means of grace par excellence.<sup>1318</sup> The *Old Law* is a figure of the *New Law*, and the *New Law* is a figure of the glory to come, and in the *New Law* the things that are done are signs of what we ourselves should do.<sup>1319</sup>

Thirteen epistles of the New Testament are attributed to Paul the Apostle, they are foundational texts for both Christian theology and ethics. Paul enlightened the early Christians through his epistles. According to Michael Seewald, Paul writes in his first letter to the Corinthians (1cor 15, 1-5) a two-way scheme of cross and resurrection or a three-way scheme of death, burial and resurrection of Jesus as the central content of the gospel, that he himself had already received and passed on to the community. This model, centered around death and resurrection, was expanded in two directions in the course of early Christian creed formation: backwards in the direction of an eschatology or a continuity-preserving church theology, and forward in the direction of a pre-existence Christology.<sup>1320</sup> Aquinas's Christological pinnacles explain communion with God and encountering God in Jesus Christ. In Christ's humanity, the Divine power (being the principal agent) causes our salvation by grace. Likewise, in the sacraments of the *New Law*, which are derived from Christ, grace is instrumentally caused by the sacraments, and principally by the power of the Holy Spirit working in the sacraments.<sup>1321</sup> Aquinas envisages a transformed reader of *Summa theologiae*, a student, a pastoral leader and an agent of Divine Wisdom in the world to be a guiding force who ignites the minds of people and leads them toward God.

### 2.3.2.1 A Community of Spiritual Activities

Catholic Church administers the sacraments which are intended to help people in the development of their spiritual life. The spiritual life of the people is analogous to their life in the world, and worldly things bear a resemblance to spiritual realities. The physical development of a human person needs physical generation, which is a gradual process of

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<sup>1317</sup> Bavinck, Herman. *Reformed Dogmatics. Holy Spirit, Church, and New Creation. Op.cit.*, p 461.

<sup>1318</sup> Bavinck, Herman. *Reformed Dogmatics. Holy Spirit, Church, and New Creation. Op.cit.*, p 444.

<sup>1319</sup> *ST*, I, q. 1, a. 10.

<sup>1320</sup> Seewald Michael. *Dogma im Wandel. Wie Glaubenslehren sich entwickeln. Op.cit.*, p 98.

<sup>1321</sup> *ST*, I-II, q. 112, a. 1.

physical growth and maturity. Food is required for the preservation of life in the world. Likewise, baptism is necessary for the spiritual life (spiritual regeneration) as is Confirmation (spiritual growth) and the sacrament of the Eucharist (spiritual food).<sup>1322</sup> Biological life and the spiritual life are analogous. Just as the human person needs both conception and food for biological life, so also that same individual needs both for the spiritual life. In this analogy if anybody thinks that initiation into the spiritual life is more important than the eucharist, then those individuals deny the necessity of food for the spiritual life ... food that is necessary for spiritual growth and spiritual existence.<sup>1323</sup> Vincent de Paul considered that the most Holy Eucharist was not only as a sacrifice of Jesus, but also as sacrament, under the species by which the Son of God becomes truly present in our churches, and accomplishes in a true and marvellous manner what he had promised, to remain with us to the end of time.<sup>1324</sup>

### 2.3.2.2 On Being Faithful to Prayer

Clement of Rome wrote in one of his letters to the Church at Corinth (his letter to the Church at Corinth is one of the oldest Christian texts after the canonical writings of the New Testament): *Love knows nothing of division, love does not foment rebellion, love does everything in harmony; in love all the elect of God are made perfect; without love nothing is pleasing to God. In love the Master received us; because of the love he had towards us, our Lord Jesus Christ gave his blood for us in accord with the will of God: his flesh for the sake of our flesh, his life for our lives.*<sup>1325</sup> The more we understand the love of Jesus, the greater will we be faithful to prayer<sup>1326</sup>

When faith is rooted in menschen, faith affects all their capacities and powers, gives them direction and guidance, controls their intellect and heart, their thinking and activity, their life and conduct.<sup>1327</sup> Intellect is a higher level of life, because intellect can reflect upon itself and understand itself.<sup>1328</sup> When intellect is animated by faith, then a transcendental level of prayer is possible. A special highlight of the celebration of the holy Eucharist should be that which we profess in the last sentence of the Creed: *I believe ...in the resurrection of the body, and the life*

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<sup>1322</sup> ST, III, q. 73, a. 1.

<sup>1323</sup> Kreeft Peter. *Practical Theology. Spiritual Direction From St. Thomas Aquinas*. Ignatius Press San Francisco, Benziger Brothers, New York, 1947, p 264.

<sup>1324</sup> Abelly, Louis. *Op.cit.*, III: 77.

<sup>1325</sup> Haykin, Michael A.G. "We Trust in the Saving Blood"; In, *From Heaven He Came and Sought Her. Definite Atonement in Historical, Biblical, Theological and Pastoral Perspective*. Gibson, David and Gibson, Jonathan (eds.), Crossway, Wheaton, Illinois, 2013, p 60.

<sup>1326</sup> Bavinck, Herman. *Reformed Dogmatics. Holy Spirit, Church, and New Creation. Op.cit.*, p 119.

<sup>1327</sup> Bavinck, Herman. *Reformed Dogmatics. Holy Spirit, Church, and New Creation. Op.cit.*, p 122.

<sup>1328</sup> \_\_\_ Thomas Aquinas *Selected Philosophical Writings. Op.cit.*, p 116.

*everlasting*. The celebration of the eucharist is also a proclamation because “both Scripture and Tradition must be accepted and honoured with equal sentiments of devotion and reverence.”<sup>1329</sup> In this sacrament we celebrate the death and the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. As the Apostle Paul says: for this purpose, God called you through our proclamation of the good news, so that you may obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ; then, stand firm and hold fast to the traditions that were taught by us, either by word of mouth or by our letter (2 Thess 2: 14-16). The celebration of the sacrament of the eucharist gives the faithful a firm hope and confidence that this mystery of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ will affect them as well, and they are called to eternal life (Lk 20: 35-36).

Being faithful to prayer gives importance to practical life. Act of prayer enables menschen to live faith in their environment of life. In the daily life of a Christian faith is not just a responsibility and burden that weighs down on the faithful, rather faith is a light that brings them counsel, gives them a path to follow and gives them meaning.<sup>1330</sup> This progressive importance of practice in daily life does not mean, however, that the theology of the old church would be fruitless from today's point of view when it comes to a theory development.<sup>1331</sup> The bible and the teachings of the fathers of the church are relevant sources of inspiration for catholic spirituality. They are the fulcrum upon which our spirituality is being founded, which means, in leading a catholic spirituality, we cannot separate ourselves from the Holy Bible and the teachings of the fathers of Church. The words addressed to the Thessalonians are also quite relevant today: *now may our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and through grace gave us eternal comfort and good hope, comfort your hearts and strengthen them in every good work and word* (2 Thess 2: 16-17). The belief in the resurrection of the dead is not only an invention of Jesus Christ, but was already proclaimed in the Old Testament.<sup>1332</sup> In answer to a question about the resurrection Jesus said: “the fact that the dead are raised, Moses himself showed, in the story about the bush, where he speaks of the Lord as the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. God is not of the dead, but of the living; for to him all of them are alive.”<sup>1333</sup> Jesus recalls the burning bush and thus the central event of the Old Covenant in which God reveals his name and his promise to leads his people out of bondage

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<sup>1329</sup> CCC .82

<sup>1330</sup> Ratzinger, Joseph. *What It Means to Be a Christian. Three Sermons*. Trans. Taylor, Henry. Ignatius Press, San Francisco, 2006, p 48.

<sup>1331</sup> Seewald Michael. *Dogma im Wandel. Wie Glaubenslehren sich entwickeln*. *Op.cit.*, p 107.

<sup>1332</sup> Job 19, 23-27; *Wisdom* 3, 1-9; *Wisdom* 4, 7-15; Isaiah 25, 6-9.

*Ezekiel* 37, 1-14; *Daniel* 12, 1-3; 2.

<sup>1333</sup> Luke 20: 37-38; *Exodus* 3:6.

into the land of freedom.<sup>1334</sup> God proves his existence in an act of liberation, and the Exodus - the Exodus from Egypt - becomes the Old Testament's forerunner<sup>1335</sup> to a concept of death and resurrection (moving through the parted waters becomes a symbol of baptism).<sup>1336</sup>

In the book of the Maccabees, seven brothers give witness to their faith in the resurrection (2 Macc 7). The words that the second brother spoke to the henchman are probably the highlight of this narrative: *You take this life from us; but the king of the world will raise us to a new, eternal life* (2 Macc 7:9). Furthermore, the fourth brother stated before dying: *God has given us the hope that he will raise us again* (2 Macc 7:14). This profession does not come from a Pauline letter, but rather is found in the Old Testament ... and yet it is a testimony that corresponds to a faith in Christ.<sup>1337</sup> Scripture binds us with historical Christ, and at the same time lifts us up to the invisible world and causes us to live in communion with the Lord in heaven.<sup>1338</sup>

The Gospel makes us hope confidently and strengthens us in the certainty (Rm 8:28) of the resurrection of the dead (Lk 20:32). When the Gospel speaks of the children of God (Lk 20:36), it is referring to us in special way, because through baptism we are children of God and we already have a share in eternal life.<sup>1339</sup> We live in the certainty that God has given us eternal life. This belief still has to be kept alive, namely, that we will see God as he is, (1Joh 3:2) face to face (1 Cor 13:12). What was said in the sketches of the New Testament also shaped the thinking of Christian authors of the first centuries. The Christian community was convinced, that in Jesus Christ the truth of God was expressed in its fullness and in an unsurpassable way. Therefore, they were convinced of the importance to maintain continuity of the origin, the teaching of Jesus Christ.<sup>1340</sup>

Of course, we can ask ourselves some questions about keeping faith alive, corresponding to the various situations of daily life. A transcendental advancement of spirituality helps us to understand the difference between God and the devil is that the devil does not want people believe in the resurrection. Basically, almost every theory of the virtues begins with a particular view of life after death. Therefore, the devil will always try to develop opposition against belief in resurrection. We must be firm in our belief lest we lose sight of centrality of belief in the resurrection. Isn't it wonderful that we as a community can celebrate

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<sup>1334</sup> Exodus 2: 23; 3: 17; 6: 2-8; Deuteronomy 5: 6.

<sup>1335</sup> CCC: 1217-1223.

<sup>1336</sup> CCC: 117; 1094; 1217-1222

<sup>1337</sup> Romans 5: 1-11; 8: 18-30; Philippians 3: 20; 1 Thessalonians 4: 13-18; 2 Timothy 2: 8-13; Titus 3: 3-7.

<sup>1338</sup> Bavinck, Herman. *Reformed Dogmatics. Holy Spirit, Church, and New Creation. Op.cit.*, p 121.

<sup>1339</sup> Romans 6: 3-9; 8: 14-17; Galatians 4: 4-7; Colossians 2: 12; 3: 1.

<sup>1340</sup> Seewald Michael. *Dogma im Wandel. Wie Glaubenslehren sich entwickeln. Op.cit.*, p 108.

the feast of resurrection together? It is also good that we can come together at least for one hour a week in order to celebrate our belief in eternal life. We celebrate the death and resurrection of the Lord in the Eucharist and do so with the confident hope that this event will affect us as we go about our daily lives. Being faithful to prayer could be explained as a daily living of one's faith in the resurrection.

### 2.3.2.3 Governing Parish Activities and Utilizing God's Gift

The presence of the permanent representative of laity testifies above all, that the Church is not reduced to the priests only, but that the church is a community of all the baptized people, and the community is not always necessarily organized around the presence of a priest.<sup>1341</sup> Governing parish activity is community-oriented activity; therefore, the leaders of the parish community have to allow the participation of the whole community in the day-to-day activities and decision-making process.

Philosophical analysis also demonstrates that sexual difference between male and female is constitutive of human identity. Greek and Roman thinkers posit essence as the aspect of being that transcends, brings together and harmonizes male-female difference within the unity of the human person. Within the tradition of hermeneutical and phenomenological philosophy, both sexual distinction and complementarity are interpreted in symbolic and metaphorical terms. Sexual difference in relationships is seen as constitutive of personal identity, whether this be at the level of the horizontal (in the dyad "man-woman") or vertical (in the triad "man-woman-God"). This applies equally to interpersonal "I-You" male-female relationships and to family relationships (You-I-We).<sup>1342</sup>

The sort of argument that Aquinas would wish to present is in accord with that of efficient cause.<sup>1343</sup> In other words, just as the plants of the earth need the presence of sunlight and water for their growth, so also the faithful need animated leadership ... plants depend on sunlight and water and the people depend on effective leadership. Leadership in a parish is important because as per the nature of the leadership in a parish, the participatory action of the people will be different. Leaders of a parish community, as normal human beings, will not always be able to abstain from the temporal needs of life in the world. Although the heart of people cannot be occupied at the same time with many things, constant effort must be regularly carried out to set the heart at the love of God, and to view leadership as a vocation to serve people for the love of God.<sup>1344</sup> "Life is a road. The most important thing about a road is its end, where it goes. If the road of life has no real end and goal, it is meaningless. It is a swamp and

<sup>1341</sup> Mette Norbert. *Einführung in die katholische Praktische Theologie. Op.cit.*, p 143.

<sup>1342</sup> Congregation for Catholic Education. *Male and Female, He Created Them.* # 26. *Op.cit.*

<sup>1343</sup> *ST*, I, q. 2, a. 3. (There must be a first efficient cause to which everyone gives the name God.)

<sup>1344</sup> Aquinas Thomas. *On Love and Charity. ... Sentences of Peter Lombard. Op.cit.*, p 179. (III Sent. d.27, q.2.a.4)

wilderness but not a road.”<sup>1345</sup> Prudent enacting of ideas taking into account the feasibility of the practical dimension which can always motivate the faithful for concurrent activities of various missions in a parish. The natural law of reason is a participation in the eternal law of God.<sup>1346</sup> Thus, people could experience real sharing and the real presence of God because reason is God’s voice, that is, his interior prophet in our souls.<sup>1347</sup> In the spiritual life, the habit of understanding God in practical intellect is called synderesis. This habit allows the people to know, without discursive reasoning, the principles of practical reason, and those people are able to combine and separate the apprehended intellectual species and decide the good to be done and perused.<sup>1348</sup>

Aquinas distinguished four kinds of law in his treatise on law: eternal, natural, human, and divine. Eternal law is the decree of God which governs all creation. The natural law is the human participation in the eternal law, this is discovered by reason. While the role of reason is needed to discover the eternal law, yet in a pastoral context, people need to be guided with spiritual motivation and explanation of spiritual life in order to develop their faith with reason, because strong faith is founded on reason than emotion. The positive nature of human law applied by parish leaders can always animate the inner social life within the parish, “because human law is framed not only for the community but even more for the individual,”<sup>1349</sup> thereby each person is called to renewal and orientation towards growth in the spiritual life. This pastoral animation of the people is based on divine law founded in Old Testament and New Testament. Different elements of human behaviour in pastoral circumstance are to be directed and oriented in the light of the Christian values. This calls for the importance of interpretation of both divine laws. The spiritual experience of the interpretation of the divine laws with an attitude of humility, apostolic zeal, unity among the missionaries, joy in the pastoral work, allowing oneself to be guided by providence and the art of team leadership, will mould the members of the team into an apostolic group.<sup>1350</sup> A coherent animation of people is needed to stabilize spiritual activities and to develop pastoral harmony.

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<sup>1345</sup> Kreeft Peter. *Practical Theology. Spiritual Direction From St. Thomas Aquinas. Op.cit.*, p 8.

<sup>1346</sup> ST, I-II, q. 91, a. 2.

<sup>1347</sup> Kreeft Peter. *Practical Theology. Spiritual Direction From St. Thomas Aquinas. op.cit.*, p 87. Thomas Aquinas used two terms for this explanation: synderesis was the awareness of its reality, truth, authority and rules, and conscience was the application of it. In modern communicative expression we use the word conscience for both.

<sup>1348</sup> Rziha John. *Perfecting Human Actions. St. Thomas Aquinas on Human Participation in Eternal Law. The Catholic University of America Press, Washington, D.C, 2009, p 223; ST, I, q. 79, a. 12.*

<sup>1349</sup> Budziszewski J. *Commentary on Thomas Aquinas’s Treatise on Law. Cambridge University Press, USA, 2014, P 350.*

<sup>1350</sup> Antonello, Erminio. “Monsieur Jean Martin and Saint Vincent”, *Op.cit.*, p 180.

Pope Francis exhorts people to take up a journey with the reference points of fighting poverty, both material and spiritual, building peace and constructing bridges among people. He knows that this will be a difficult journey if we do not learn to grow in love for this world of ours.<sup>1351</sup> The opportunities for private charity, the direct assistance of individuals by individuals, still exist and will continue to become even greater as a result of the influence of Christian morals. This form of charity has always been encouraged by the Church, and it has advantages and promotes mutual understanding and mutual sympathy which are especially necessary in our day.<sup>1352</sup> The pastoral community must make its charity credible through its socio-political and critical engagement.<sup>1353</sup> Vincent displayed considerable political acuity in navigating his way, because he was able to employ his nature of humility, shrewdness and pragmatism.<sup>1354</sup> Faith demands political action and at the same time is a motive for political action, because: faith itself is deprived of its full power of realization if one negates its relation to political reality. Today this relevance is an essential part of the Christian understanding and relationship to the world.<sup>1355</sup>

Parish administration is often associated with charitable works, and the leaders of the parish administration need to consider that the act of charity does not essentially all of a sudden increase, but is said to increase, insofar as the concept of charity is more firmly established in the people. When the act of charity is part of the daily life of the people and firmly established in the minds of people, the result could be considered as a victory for a particular cause. The increase of pastoral victory redounds into an increase of authority, and consequently into an increase of essence of spiritual life, because the spiritual authority commensurate with the essence of spiritual life of the people with a proximate cause.<sup>1356</sup>

According to Aquinas the common good is not one dimensional because all the many persons, matters, and times are related to the common good in different ways. Each person and each act contribute to the common good in a different manner and each age presents the common good with a different set of challenges.<sup>1357</sup> Aquinas would answer the economy of pastoral spiritual questions within the framework of justice, which he viewed as a great virtue

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<sup>1351</sup> Pope Francis. „Armut bekämpfen, Frieden schaffen und Brücken bauen. Ansprache in der Audienz für das am Heiligen Stuhl akkreditierte Diplomatische Korps, Sala Regia, 22. März 2013.“ In *Und jetzt beginnen wir diesen Weg. Die ersten Botschaften des Pontifikats*. Herder, Freiburg im Breisgau, 2013, p 33-34.

<sup>1352</sup> *Catholic Encyclopaedia*. Charity and Charities. <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/03592a.htm>. (Accessed on 25.7.2019)

<sup>1353</sup> Rahner, Karl. *Praxis des Glaubens. Geistliches Lesebuch*. *Op.cit.*, p 37.

<sup>1354</sup> Forrestal, Alison, *Op.cit.*, p. 274.

<sup>1355</sup> Könemann, Judith and Mette, Norbert. *Bildung und Gerechtigkeit... Bildung politisch sein muss*. *Op.cit.*,p 14.

<sup>1356</sup> Aquinas Thomas. *On Love and Charity. ... the Sentences of Peter Lombard*. *Op.cit.*, p 33. (I Sent. d.17, q.2.a.1)

<sup>1357</sup> Budziszewski J. *Commentary on Thomas Aquinas's Treatise on Law*. *Op.cit.*, P 353.

in the Christian spiritual life. Aquinas says that justice is a habit whereby people render to each their due by a constant and perpetual will.<sup>1358</sup> Pastoral habits, especially liturgical habits, are formed with effective leadership. Thus, a habit is formed through the repetition of acts ... and the people love to repeat what they find as good.

“Those things that are of God are well ordered. Now the order of things consists in this, that things are led to God by other things. And since grace is ordained to lead people to God, this takes place in a certain order, so that some are led to God by others.”<sup>1359</sup> A parish has many activities, which have to be arranged in a circular form, in which, God is the central point. Parish leadership exists to lead the people to God. When the parish leadership exists for other intentions than leading people to God, they divert from the central point of leading people to God, thereby they are not helping the people in their faith formation. The leaders must be able to present to their parishioners the content of their faith.<sup>1360</sup>

Nature of astuteness differs from person to person. According to Aquinas achieving the highest and the lowest place can be understood in three circles. First, in a general understanding no one comes to the summit suddenly, since every individual who leads a right life, progresses during the whole course of his life, so as to arrive at the perfection. Secondly, some people who desire to reach to a higher state need not begin from a lower state: for instance, if a man wishes to be a cleric, he need not first of all be practiced in the life of a layman. Thirdly, some people could begin straightway not only from a higher state, but even from a higher degree of holiness, than the highest degree to which other people could attain throughout their whole life.<sup>1361</sup> Hence parish administrators need to develop an all-inclusive circle which encompasses the three different categories of people and diligently carry out their leadership activities through various programmes in the parish. Since the creator endows each natural thing with as much natural love for something as the creature needs in order to carry out appropriate actions in regard to it, divine law commands an order of affection that corresponds to the gradation- a gradation we must respect and abide by in our actions.<sup>1362</sup>

Pastoral activity gives delight to the leadership and to the community in manifold ways; pastoral activity is means of converting the spiritual delight experienced in the prayer life.<sup>1363</sup>

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<sup>1358</sup> *ST*, II-II, q. 58, a. 1.

<sup>1359</sup> *ST*, III, q.1, a. 1.

<sup>1360</sup> *ST*, III, q. 1, a. 4.

<sup>1361</sup> *ST*, II-II, q. 189, a. 1.

<sup>1362</sup> Aquinas Thomas. *On Love and Charity. ... Sentences of Peter Lombard. Op.cit.*, p 209. (III Sent. d.29, a.2)

<sup>1363</sup> *Ibid.*, p 95. (II Sent. d.38, a.2)

“But faith needs the community of believers. It is only within the context of the faith of the Church that each of the faithful can believe. The faith required for Baptism is not a perfect and mature faith, but a beginning that is called to develop”<sup>1364</sup> The multitude of human acts of a baptized person procure the common good of the community in a multitude of ways.<sup>1365</sup>

#### 2.3.2.4 Paying Parochial Spiritual Attention

The four circles of pastoral ministry could be named as: Everyday Prayer, Spiritual Resilience, Spiritual integrity, and Spiritual Flourishing.



Every day prayer is obviously the type of prayer an individual daily doing in the spiritual pursuit. Spiritual Resilience is the capacity to adapt, change and respond to different realities of life, and the capacity to move ahead trusting the providence of God. Spiritual integrity is the internal self-concept and belief that a person holds, which cannot be shaken with rumours against the catholic church or due to the failure of any pastoral leaders. Spiritual

Flourishing is the significant spiritual progress that a person experience, including the practice of moral values as socially connecting element in the community and practice of theological virtues together with the parishioners.

These four dimensions, everyday prayer, spiritual resilience, spiritual integrity, spiritual flourishing move as a circle as the building entities of spiritual advancement, meaning the spiritual advancement is an aggregate of all these four circles. Although I have named the fourth circle as spiritual flourishing, the actual spiritual flourishing happens when all the four circles spiritual systems join together. In fact, the reverse can also happen that one of the circles of four dimension becomes weak, then it will affect the balance of the other three circles, consequently spiritual decline will follow. The biblical readings of the Church in a liturgical calendar offers pastoral community for their consideration points to live an ordinary path of holiness and motivates them to keep the commandments of God.<sup>1366</sup>

<sup>1364</sup> CCC.1253.

<sup>1365</sup> Budziszewski J. *Commentary on Thomas Aquinas's Treatise on Law. Op.cit*, P 353.

<sup>1366</sup> Griffin, Patrick. “Marguerite Rutan, Daughter of Charity: An Ordinary Saint”, in *Vincentiana* (October-December, 2011, N° 4), p 398.

Spiritual advancement is influenced by the surrounding people and community. It is very difficult for a single person in the community to be spiritual and all the others not. That is why the pastoral spiritual educational help need to be rendered to the parishioners, so that they may increase their spiritual knowledge and its necessity, and upon understanding the love of God, people may adapt the spiritually as a way of living. Hence it will be right to say that the basic function of a parish is to build a spiritual ecosystem and each believer of the parochial community belong to this spiritual ecosystem.

It is true that people of all cultures were always interested in everyday prayer. This could be seen in the tradition of any religion. Seeking God is the highest call of human person, and most of the people need guidance because spiritual journey is transcendental in nature, above the real experience of daily life. However, people experience transcendental elements in their daily life, often without realizing, therefore, studying spirituality will enable people to give appropriate responses to the call of spiritual life. According to Pope Benedict, *the movement of becoming a Christian, which begins at baptism and which we have to pursue through the rest of our lives, means being ready to engage in a particular service that God requires from us in history.*<sup>1367</sup>

Individual persons with a short period of enthusiasm may be able to live spiritual life without a suitable culture up to a very broad limit. This type of individual spirituality is proven by the beginnings of the desert cloistered life in Egypt, the beginnings of the mendicant monasteries, and holy people, like Simeon of the pillar, have proven it at all times. However, for the average person who is engaged with a lot of other commitments in the world, for a long-word spiritual life, a high degree of good culture is necessary in order to keep the spiritual life fruitful. Through a suitable culture, the members of a community remain active, broad-hearted and broad-minded, and persevere in the act of participating in the spiritual services. Structure of culture gives religion the opportunity to express itself, creates space for growth, enables people to differentiate the important from the unimportant, the means from the end, the path from the goal.<sup>1368</sup> In an educational approach, what the pastoral leaders are trying to create in a parish community, is nothing but a liturgical culture of prayer, which help the people to have habits of prayer.

The parish church is an important and possible place to learn about faith. However, if the parish community really wants to be place of learning about the faith, they have to change

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<sup>1367</sup> Ratzinger, Joseph. *What It Means to Be a Christian. Three Sermons*. Trans. Taylor, Henry. *Op.cit.*, 54.

<sup>1368</sup> Guardini, Romano. *Vom Geist Der Liturgie*. *Op.cit.*, p 39-40.

under today's conditions. A high degree of participation in the parish liturgical services, an attentive sanctification in the liturgy as a family liturgy, baptismal catechesis in parent groups, first communion as family catechesis and a decisive training of young group leaders etc. would invigorate and revitalise step by step parish community.<sup>1369</sup>

### 2.3.2.5 Pedagogical Intent of Thomas Aquinas

Aquinas explains that God, who is pure act without any admixture of potentiality, is in Himself supremely knowable. But what is supremely knowable in itself, may not be knowable to a particular intellect because of the excess of the intelligible object above the intellect; as, for example, the sun, which is supremely visible, cannot be seen by a bat by reason of its excess of light.<sup>1370</sup> When Aquinas states that God is above the intellect, he seems to hold the same method of Augustine who said: “*Si comprehendis, non est Deus*” (if you understand, it is not God). This is a pedagogical way of explaining. There could be many erroneous understandings since the human being is trying to understand something which needs transcendental capacity. Augustine presupposes that God can be understood, but not every notion of God as *verbum*. God has revealed himself in the Word and this Word (Jesus) can be understood, at least to a degree. God is not said to be non-existing as if He did not exist at all, but because He exists above all that exists, inasmuch as He is His own existence. Hence it does not follow that He cannot be known at all, but that He exceeds every kind of knowledge; which means that He is not comprehended.<sup>1371</sup>

According to Aquinas it is impossible for the intellect of people to see the essence of God by their own natural power. Aquinas understands that any knowledge is regulated in accordance with the thing known by the knower, that means, the thing comprehended is in the knower according to the approach and capacity of the knower. Hence, the knowledge of people is ruled according to their own nature. Then, if the mode of anything's state of being exceeds the mode of the knower, it must result that the knowledge of that object is above the nature of the knower.<sup>1372</sup> Consequently the created nature of human beings does not have an intellect to comprehend the essence of God.

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<sup>1369</sup> Fürst, Walter und Werbick, Jürgen. *Katholische Glaubens Fibel*. CMZ-Verlag Winrich C.W.Clasen, Rheinbach, Germany, 2004, p 140.

<sup>1370</sup> *ST*, I, q. 12, a. 1.

<sup>1371</sup> *ST*, I, q. 12, a. 1 ad 3.

<sup>1372</sup> *ST*, I, q.12, a. 4.

Having said that, God is called incomprehensible. We need to understand what Aquinas means. He is not saying that nothing of God is seen, but simply that God is not seen as perfectly as He is capable of being seen. In any syllogism we try to explain demonstrable proposition which is known by probable reason. Then the propositions do not follow that any part of it is unknown, either of the subject, or of the predicate, or of the composition. Through the explanation of a syllogism something is not as perfectly known as it is capable of being known. The wholeness of God is comprehended when God is in His entire essence comprehended. In that situation nothing is hidden from the person who sees Him. Here lies the core of the statement: God is called comprehensible.<sup>1373</sup> The created intellect of a person is unable to comprehend God. People understand God according to the mode of their intellectual capacity and spiritual approach of their will in finding and executing proper methods consistently in the search for the knowledge of God. It opens up the scope of spiritual education about God. Going by the plethora of experience and witness of Old Testament and New Testament, a teacher of catholic religion can enlighten the minds with Catholic tradition enriched with information of God. An individual cannot single handily master an approach to the knowledge of God because of the intellectual inability to comprehend something transcendent absolutely. When many people work towards a single object, the intellectual capacity is strengthened enormously. Only Jesus Christ has seen the essence of God, because Jesus knows His Father and was with Him, from the beginning. Jesus said: “do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father’s house there are many dwelling places...I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me”.<sup>1374</sup> Therefore, accepting the message of Jesus and adhering to His instruction is the perfect way to engage in a search for the knowledge of God. The Apostle Paul says: the Jews are asking for signs and wonders, the Greeks are intent on their philosophy, but what we preach is Christ crucified - to the Jews, a discouragement, to the Gentiles, a mere folly; but to us who have been called, Jew and Gentile alike, Christ is the power of God, Christ is the wisdom of God.<sup>1375</sup>

### **2.3.3 Knowledge of Self, of God and of Duties**

Let us look at the example of St. Paul. He was well prepared and equipped for preaching and had assiduously pursued his studies under Gamaliel. However, the knowledge poured into his soul by revelation dimmed and nearly eclipsed the knowledge he had acquired by his own

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<sup>1373</sup> *ST*, I, q. 12, a. 7.

<sup>1374</sup> John 14: 1,2,6.

<sup>1375</sup> 1 *Corinthians* 1: 22-24; *ST*, III, q. 58, a. 2.

efforts and under the guidance of Gamaliel even though his acquired knowledge is clearly visible from his letters. Relevant examples illustrate the selected topic in a picturesque language.<sup>1376</sup> Learning is absolutely necessary for the preacher, for without the light of learning a person easily falls into error, since, as the Fourth Lateran Council noted, ignorance is the mother of all errors. Therefore, it is recommended that a preacher to have knowledge of self, of God and of one's duties. Self-knowledge will lead the preacher to renounce one's own advantage; the knowledge of God will lead a person to make everyone else know and love God, and the knowledge of one's office will lead preachers to discharge their own duties and to teach others to fulfil their responsibilities. Insufficiency in any of these different aspects will diminish one's effectiveness as a preacher of word of God.<sup>1377</sup> A person does as much to preserve the created happiness as does for the sake of spiritual life; therefore, a person loves created happiness with the grace of God as much as the person loves God. People who consider duties as charity love themselves as much as they love God.<sup>1378</sup> The church is compared to a great harvest that requires workers; nothing is more in conformity with the message of the gospel than to gather light and strength for our soul in prayer and meditation on the one hand, and then to go out and share this spiritual experience with others.<sup>1379</sup> God calls everyone to him and he is to be loved above all things. Henri Caffarel asks a question in his prayer: who is Christ to me? He says: during the prayer he will do his best to discover "Jesus's love" for me. Henri Caffarel suggests four aspects of Jesus to discover more closely "who is Jesus Christ to me". The four aspects are: he has always loved me; he loves me personally; he loves me for who I am; he looks at me with love.<sup>1380</sup> The Catholic Church, in her pastoral mission, attempt to make real Jesus' promise of a new heaven and a new earth (2 Pet 3:13) and to do this by helping people to live authentic lives in accord with the gospel. The human person who fully lives his or her dignity gives glory to God who has gifted this dignity to men and women (*Gloria Dei vivens*

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<sup>1376</sup> CCD: XI:252 (Conference: *Method to be Followed in Preaching*, August 20, 1655).

<sup>1377</sup> Pope Benedict XV. *Humani Generis Redemptionem*. Encyclical on Preaching the Word of God. June 15, 1917, No:14.[http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xv/en/encyclicals/documents/hf\\_ben-xv\\_enc\\_15061917\\_humani-generis-redemptionem.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xv/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_ben-xv_enc_15061917_humani-generis-redemptionem.html) (accessed on 12.11.2019).

<sup>1378</sup> Aquinas Thomas. *On Love and Charity. Reading from the Commentary on the Sentences of Peter Lombard*. Trans. Kwasniewski A. Peter, Bolin Thomas and Bolin Joseph. The Catholic University of America Press, Washington D.C, 2008, p 211. (III Sent. d. 29, a.3)

<sup>1379</sup> Teixeira, Vinícius Augusto. "Mission and Charity: An Identity in Relationship", in *Vincentiana* (April-June 2017, N°2), p 236.

<sup>1380</sup> Caffarel, Henri. *Weil Du Gott bist. Hinführung zum inneren Gebet*. Johannes Verlag Einsiedeln, Freiburg, 2000, p 21.

*homo-* Glory of human life).<sup>1381</sup> This idea of human dignity needs to be understood and re-interpreted in every area of the church's social life.

### 2.3.3.1 Integral Part of the Christian Life

The Eucharist is the source and summit of the Christian life,<sup>1382</sup> and proper disposition to Eucharist enables Christian to receive Eucharist in a worthy manner.<sup>1383</sup> The Eucharist is the concrete summary of catholic faith ... a catholic way spiritual life is attuned to the Eucharist, and the Eucharist celebration, in turn, confirms a catholic way of thinking.<sup>1384</sup> Looking at the history of the catholic Church, the inexhaustible richness of the sacrament of eucharist is communicated through the different names that have been given to this celebration. Each name evokes certain aspects of the celebration of eucharist. The celebration of this sacrament is called Eucharist, because Eucharist means an action of thanksgiving to God. The Greek words *eucharistein* and *eulogein* recall the Jewish blessings especially during a meal which Jesus formulated differently at the time of last supper (Lk 22:19) in order to explain the salvific works of God in creation, redemption, and sanctification.<sup>1385</sup> Therefore, by participating in the eucharistic celebration, the faithful are indeed deepening their faith in the mystery of the salvific plan of God. Baptism is the sacrament of Christ's death and Passion, through which people are born anew in Christ by virtue of his passion, but the Eucharist is the sacrament of Christ's passion by which people are made perfect in union with Christ who suffered. Hence, baptism is called the sacrament of Faith, which is the foundation of the spiritual life, and the Eucharist is referred to as the sacrament of Charity, which is spiritual nourishment and joins people to Jesus, the bond of perfection.<sup>1386</sup>

The celebration of this sacrament is called the Lord's Supper, because of its connection with the supper which Jesus Christ ate with his disciples on the eve of his Passion<sup>1387</sup> and because eucharist anticipates the wedding feast of the Lamb in the heavenly Jerusalem (Rev 19:9). Hence eucharist is a privilege and a call to all Catholics to participate in the eucharistic celebration.

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<sup>1381</sup> Cardinal Renato Raffaele Martino. (President, Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, Vatican City, 2 April 2004, Memorial of Saint Francis of Paola), in *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church. 2004*

<sup>1382</sup> *Lumen Gentium*. 11.

<sup>1383</sup> Abelly, Louis. *Op.cit.*, II: 57.

<sup>1384</sup> CCC:1327.

<sup>1385</sup> CCC: 1328.

<sup>1386</sup> *ST*, III, q.73, a. 3 ad 3.

<sup>1387</sup> CCC:1329.

The celebration of this sacrament is also called the breaking of bread, because Jesus used the rite of a Jewish meal when he blessed and distributed the bread (Mk 8:9; Mt 14:9) ... especially at the last supper (Mt 26:26). It was by this action of breaking the bread that his disciples recognized him after his resurrection (Lk 24: 13-35) and the first Christians used this expression of breaking the bread to designate their Eucharistic assemblies (Act 2:42). By doing so they signalled that all who eat the one broken bread, Jesus Christ, entered into communion with him and formed one body in him.<sup>1388</sup> According to the apostle Paul, this is a call to all who are baptized to partake in the breaking of the bread: *the cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a sharing in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a sharing in the body of Christ? Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread* (1Cor 10: 16-17). Hence this sacrament is called a eucharistic assembly because eucharist is being celebrated among the assembly of the faithful (1Cor 11:17-34). Just as the disciples recognized Jesus in the breaking of the bread, the early community assembled together to celebrate eucharist. Today Catholics need to come together (with all their problems) to celebrate the breaking of the bread. Thus, they will be strengthened by the Holy Spirit to lead a life worthy of their calling and in turn, will also be strengthened to follow along the path Jesus.<sup>1389</sup>

The Eucharistic celebration is the *memorial* of the Lord's passion and resurrection.<sup>1390</sup> This sacrament is a holy sacrifice because it makes present the one sacrifice of Christ, the Saviour and includes the Church's offering as well as the offering of the faithful. The phrases, holy sacrifice of the Mass, sacrifice of praise, spiritual sacrifice, pure and holy sacrifice are also used, because the Eucharistic celebration completes and surpasses all the sacrifices of the Old Covenant.<sup>1391</sup> People are invited to offer a continual sacrifice of praise to God (Heb 13:15): *Come to him, a living stone, though rejected by mortals yet chosen and precious in God's sight, and like living stones, let yourselves be built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ* (1Pet 2:4-5). People sing together with the psalmist *I will lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the Lord* (Ps 116: 13). *People, together with the priest, offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving and call on the name of the Lord* (Ps 116:17). *For from the rising of the sun to its setting my name is great among the nations, and in every place incense is offered to my name, and a pure offering; for my name is great among the nations, says the Lord of hosts* (Mal 1:11).

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<sup>1388</sup> CCC: 1329.

<sup>1389</sup> ST, III, q. 73, a. 3 ad 2.

<sup>1390</sup> CCC: 1330.

<sup>1391</sup> Ibid.

This is the holy and divine liturgy of the parish community and it should be remembered that the liturgy of the catholic church finds its most intense expression in the celebration of this sacrament and that is why we refer to the eucharistic celebration as the celebration of sacred mysteries. We speak of the “most blessed sacrament” because it is the sacrament of all sacraments, the source of Christian spirituality ... the eucharistic species reserved in the tabernacle are designated by this same name.<sup>1392</sup>

Eucharist is holy communion because by this sacrament we unite ourselves to Christ, “for Christ is himself contained in the Eucharist sacramentally,”<sup>1393</sup> and makes us sharers in the body and blood Jesus Christ to form a single body.<sup>1394</sup> The heart of the people who receive holy communion worthily will become the tabernacle of God.<sup>1395</sup> *The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a sharing in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a sharing in the body of Christ? Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread* (1 Cor 10: 16-17). The Eucharistic celebration is popularly known as *Holy Mass*, because the liturgy in which the mystery of salvation is accomplished concludes with the sending forth (*missio*) of the faithful, so that they may fulfil God’s will in their daily lives.<sup>1396</sup> “The sacrament of the Eucharist, although it is received after Baptism, is nevertheless previous to it in intention.”<sup>1397</sup> Hence participation in the eucharistic celebration is an integral part of catholic spirituality, in which the faithful rejoice in the real presence of Jesus Christ. If Jesus Christ had meant his words only symbolically, he would not have allowed those of his followers who could not accept this nearly incredible teaching to leave him, but rather he would have corrected the literal meaning as he did often with his disciples. That, however, was not the case with regard to the teaching found in the sixth chapter of St. John’s gospel.<sup>1398</sup>

### 2.3.3.2 Spirit of Prayer

A spirit of prayer is necessary for the preacher, because God inspires a person who prays (Acts 9:11). The use of colourful words or the use of subtle arguments without prayer makes the preacher who is content with those means nothing but a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal

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<sup>1392</sup> CCC. 1330.

<sup>1393</sup> ST, III, q.73, a. 5.

<sup>1394</sup> CCC. 1331.

<sup>1395</sup> CCD: IX: 261 (Conference. Holy Communion, August 18, 1647).

<sup>1396</sup> CCC. 1332.

<sup>1397</sup> ST, III, q.73, a. 5 ad 4.

<sup>1398</sup> Kreeft Peter. *Practical Theology. Spiritual Direction From St. Thomas Aquinas. Op.cit.*, p 267.

(1Cor 13:1). What gives life and vitality to a preacher's words and makes them promote the salvation of souls is Divine grace. Paul says: I planted, Apollos watered, but only God gives the growth (1Cor 3:6). "If our faith rests on God's veracity, it has an absolute and eternally unshakable foundation."<sup>1399</sup> The grace of God is not gained by study and practice, it is won by prayer. Therefore, people who are little given to prayer or neglect it altogether, vainly spend their time and labour in preaching because in God's sight their sermons profit neither the preachers nor those who hear them.<sup>1400</sup> Spirit of prayer is a constant means to entrust yourself to God and to the people; therefore, all those who are involved in the ministry of preaching should spend time in prayer and ask God to give the spirit of prayer, because prayer is the greatest book for a preacher.<sup>1401</sup> Preachers of the word of God should recognize that the act of faith is both a free choice and a gift of grace<sup>1402</sup> which perfects nature, because if God can move us outwardly, by miracles and preaching, without destroying and weakening our free will, all the more can God do this inwardly.<sup>1403</sup> *Divinity is ineffable and incomprehensible (1Tim 6:16; John 1:18), transcending every comprehending thought, necessarily the prophets and apostles, inspired by the Holy Spirit, guide us to an understanding of the incorruptible nature by many names and concepts.*<sup>1404</sup> The gift of grace given to people is added to their nature, it does not destroy their human nature but perfects it..<sup>1405</sup>

### 2.3.3.3 Be Ambassadors of Christ

According to Pope Benedict XV, the purpose which preachers should keep before their mind in performing their duty may be understood from the fact that they ought to say of themselves, as did St. Paul: we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us, we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God (2Cor 5:20). If preachers are ambassadors of Christ, then when discharging their office they ought to have the same purpose in mind that Christ had when conferring it upon them. Indeed, neither the Apostles nor those who followed them had a mission that was different from Christ's: "as the Father has sent me, so I send you"(Jn 20:21); "for this came I into the world; that I should give testimony to the truth"(Jn 28:37); "I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly."<sup>1406</sup> Ministry of

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<sup>1399</sup> Kreeft Peter. *Practical Theology. Spiritual Direction From St. Thomas Aquinas. Op.cit.*, p 151.

<sup>1400</sup> Pope Benedict XV. *Humani Generis Redemptionem. Op.cit.*, No:17.

<sup>1401</sup> CCD: VIII:171 (Letter: *To Antoine Durand, Superior, in Agde, May 1658*).

<sup>1402</sup> ST, II-II, q. 6, a. 1.

<sup>1403</sup> Kreeft Peter. *Practical Theology. Spiritual Direction From St. Thomas Aquinas. Op.cit.*, p 152.

<sup>1404</sup> Greer, Rowan. A. *One Path for All. Gregory of Nyssa on the Christian Life and Human Destiny*. Cascade Books, Eugene, USA, 2015, p 19.

<sup>1405</sup> ST, I, q.1, a.8 ad2.

<sup>1406</sup> John 10:10; Pope Benedict XV. *Humani Generis Redemptionem. Op.cit.*, No:5.

preaching is aimed at obtaining conversion of souls and not esteem of others.<sup>1407</sup> Preaching aims to magnify the glory of God in Jesus, and to satisfy the deepest need of people to know and admire God.<sup>1408</sup> Preaching the laws of Scripture create sorrow over sin, therefore the preaching of the moral law has a larger place in the formation of the Christian life.<sup>1409</sup>

Inasmuch as Jesus Christ is the head of all who pertain to the Church in every place and time, all people who are involved in ministry are as Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 5:20 *ambassadors of Christ*.<sup>1410</sup> There is only one shepherd, Jesus Christ and he is the way for all who believe in him, and only through him do we have access into a life in grace of God ... all others who are preachers and leaders of the church are ambassadors of Jesus Christ.<sup>1411</sup> Those who are superior in wisdom and virtue should not think that this capacity is for their benefit but rather such gifts are to be shared with the members of the larger community.<sup>1412</sup>

St. Paul explains the mission of preaching and evangelization: that God chose you as the first fruits for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and through belief in the truth; for this purpose God called you through our proclamation of the good news, so that you may obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ, and through grace may give us eternal comfort and good hope, comfort your hearts and strengthen them in every good work and word (2 Thes 2:13-17). Paul further testifies: “But when God, who had set me apart before I was born and called me through his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son to me, so that I might proclaim him among the Gentiles” (Gal 1:15-16). “Then God has given even to the Gentiles the repentance that leads to life” (Acts 11:18).

#### 2.3.3.4 Spiritual Preparation

“The first qualification for anyone whose job to teach the faith is that, they have the faith. The law of cause and effect states that one cannot give what one does not have.”<sup>1413</sup> Nothing can act beyond its species, since the cause must always be more powerful than its effect. The gift of grace surpasses every ability of created nature and God’s grace exceeds every other nature. God gives his grace to people in order that the joy of security might take root in

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<sup>1407</sup> CCD: I:183 (Letter: *To Robert de Sergis or Lambert aux Couteaux*, January 15, 1633).

<sup>1408</sup> Piper, John. “My Glory I will not Give to Another. Preaching the Fullness of Definite Atonement to the Glory of God”; In, *From Heaven He Came and Sought Her. Definite Atonement in Historical, Biblical, Theological and Pastoral Perspective*. Gibson, David and Gibson, Jonathan (eds.), Crossway, Wheaton, Illinois, 2013, p 635.

<sup>1409</sup> Bavinck, Herman. *Reformed Dogmatics. Holy Spirit, Church, and New Creation. Op.cit.*, p 119.

<sup>1410</sup> ST, III, q. 8, a. 6.

<sup>1411</sup> ST, III, q.8, a. 6 ad 3.

<sup>1412</sup> Kreeft Peter. *Practical Theology. Spiritual Direction From St. Thomas Aquinas. Op.cit.*, p 48.

<sup>1413</sup> Kreeft Peter. *Practical Theology. Op.cit.*, p 150; ST, II-II, q. 2, a. 6.

them ... even as they engage in burdensome activities and are persecuted because of their faith.”<sup>1414</sup> Hence the Lord said to St. Paul “my grace is sufficient for you” (2Cor 12:9). Preachers are not the cause of grace but rather God bestows his grace on people in order to enkindle their minds with knowledge.<sup>1415</sup> Grace is understood in two ways: first, as a habitual gift of God and second, as a help from God, who moves the soul toward good. Viewing grace as a habitual gift of God means that a certain preparation is required for attaining that gift. But if we speak of grace as a help from God that moves us toward good, then no preparation is required on people’s part because this anticipates Divine help. However, every spiritual preparation must be by the help of God moving the soul to good.<sup>1416</sup> “The human mind plans the way, but the Lord directs the steps” (Prov 16:9) The cultivation of spiritual life has divisions of remarkable ethical scope, because all mysticism has an impact on the community, on the mission situation, in the common life and in the method of work of the missionaries. A well cultivated spirituality certainly will not fail to have an impact in the assimilation of the virtues that characterize the spirit of gospel and serving the poor.<sup>1417</sup> Faith is not merely an intellectual act of accepting the witness of the apostles concerning Jesus Christ, but is a personal relation, a spiritual bond, with Jesus Christ who is seated at the right hand of God.<sup>1418</sup>

*Prayer is the great book for a preacher: from it you will draw the divine truths of the Eternal Word, who is their source, and you in turn will pour them forth on the people.*<sup>1419</sup> A preacher needs to be a person fully conformed to the will of God just as Paul who was commanded by Jesus on the road to Damascus “get up and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do”(Acts 9:6) For the sake of Jesus Christ, preachers need to move from a worldly view to the heavenly vision, need to clothe themselves in an indifferent attitude toward toil and rest, toward poverty and wealth, toward praise and contempt, toward life and death. There can be no doubt that the apostles made such progress in the apostolate because they conformed themselves with perfect submission to the will of God. Like the apostles, every preacher devoted to the salvation of souls should be first of all so zealous for God’s service as to feel no concern about who their hearers are to be, what success they will have, or what fruits they are to reap. They should have an eye not on any self-interest but on the glory of God.<sup>1420</sup>

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<sup>1414</sup> ST, I-II, q.112, a. 5.

<sup>1415</sup> ST, I-II, q. 112, a. 1.

<sup>1416</sup> ST, I-II, q. 112, a. 2.

<sup>1417</sup> Teixeira, Vinícius Augusto. “Mission and Charity: An Identity in Relationship”, *Op.cit.*, p 237.

<sup>1418</sup> Bavinck, Herman. *Reformed Dogmatics. Holy Spirit, Church, and New Creation. Op.cit.*, p 121.

<sup>1419</sup> CCD: VIII:171 (Letter: *To Antoine Durand, Superior, in Agde*, May 1658).

<sup>1420</sup> Pope Benedict XV. *Humani Generis Redemptionem. Op.cit.*, No:15.

### 2.3.3.4 Clarity and Brevity in Preaching the Word of God

The central task of Christian ministry is magnifying the glory of God, and the ministry of preaching aims to display the fullness of the revelation of the glory of God for God's people.<sup>1421</sup> Jesus said to his disciples, "go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation" (Mark 16:15) The preaching of the disciples renewed the whole world. The religion of Jesus Christ has withdrawn the minds of people from errors of every kind and led people to the truth. That preaching has also touched the hearts of people and led them to develop virtuous lives ... yes, this has happened as a result of proclaiming God's word.<sup>1422</sup> Paul said: faith of the people is developed and progressed through what is heard, and what is proclaimed is the word of Jesus on the lips and in the heart (Rom 10: 7-8). Christoph Theobald says that the favourable moment for the preaching of the gospel does not lie solely in the growing poverty of a church, which is clearly traced back to the gospel as the principle of its existence. It lies not only in the cultural humus that has gradually formed among our contemporaries, through their sense of autonomy, through their interest in the very concrete and elementary dimensions of human existence or through their way of being, in the global Solidarity from the near and tangible things and to approach the whole of your life from this or that episode. The opportunity lies above all in the treasure of the biblical text itself, which belongs to the Church, which has succeeded across all cultural and religious boundaries in attaining the status of a text in our secularized societies that has a revealing or identity-forming power. The happy coincidence of these three factors, poverty of the Church, cultural context and biblical text, is our *Kairos*.<sup>1423</sup> We are immersed in a very diverse, pluralistic and multifaceted scenario in the area of ethnic, cultural, and religious context; however, we cannot forget the grace and challenge to integrate the message of salvation in the gospel and radiate the values.<sup>1424</sup> Clarity and brevity in preaching involves two fundamental aspects: speaking in simple language and practicing a short homily. Vincent de Paul said: *Let us preach Jesus Christ and souls; let's say what we have to say simply, plainly, and humbly, but firmly and charitably; let us not try to gratify ourselves but to please God, to win souls, and to dispose them to do penance, for everything else is only pride and vanity.*<sup>1425</sup> The experience of the mission preaching testifies that wordiness hinders their good effect and serves only to try the patience of the listeners, whereas a short moving talk is often

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<sup>1421</sup> Piper, John. "My Glory I will not Give to Another. Preaching the Fullness of Definite Atonement to the Glory of God"; *Op.cit.*, p 635.

<sup>1421</sup> Bavinck, Herman. *Reformed Dogmatics. Holy Spirit, Church, and New Creation. Op.cit.*, p 119.

<sup>1422</sup> Pope Benedict XV. *Humani Generis Redemptionem. Op.cit.*, No:1.

<sup>1423</sup> Theobald Christoph. „Heute ist der günstige Augenblick.“ *Op.cit.*, p 101-102.

<sup>1424</sup> Teixeira, Vinícius Augusto. "Mission and Charity: An Identity in Relationship", *Op.cit.*, p 215.

<sup>1425</sup> CCD: XII:22 (Conference: *Detachment from the Goods of this World*, June 8, 1658).

followed by good results.<sup>1426</sup> Love of God is constituted in his self-communication, and love of menschen is constituted in their faith. The work of God outwardly in human being is the work of the trinitarian love.<sup>1427</sup>

### 2.3.4 Becoming an Instrument of Shalom

Anselm Grün states that elderly people often find it difficult to let go of their power and influence. We see this sometimes with politicians who are afraid to resign. They derive their self-worth from their power alone. In family businesses we often find that the father cannot leave his company to the son. The father runs the business until that he can no longer do so. Even if the son has already been appointed as the successor, the father sometimes still does not allow the son to do what he wants. The problem of letting go of power creates countless conflicts.<sup>1428</sup> True peace in parish administration can be established, when the authority of parish administration is shared among the appointed persons of the parish. Shared authority leads to shared responsibilities, consequently develops more collaboration in all areas of pastoral work. Authority with regard to pastoral and spiritual administration should be shared equally among men and women. Jesus shows not only no contempt for women, but he showed an astonishing impartiality towards women, which is evident from the fact that women, from the beginning, are seen as following Jesus. They accompanied and supported him and his disciples from Galilee to Jerusalem; Jesus was no stranger to personal affection for women; they were present at the time of his death and burial. The legally and humanly weak position of women in the society at that time is considerably enhanced by his prohibition of divorce by the man who alone could write a divorce certificate. No Christology can therefore emphasize the being of Jesus as a man more than his being human: God revealed himself not specifically in man, but in menschen.<sup>1429</sup>

Women have a unique understanding of reality. They possess a capacity to endure adversity and “to keep life going even in extreme situations” and hold on “tenaciously to the future”. This helps explain why “wherever the work of education is called for, we can note that women are ever ready and willing to give themselves generously to others, especially in serving the weakest and most defenceless. In this work they exhibit a kind of affective, cultural and spiritual motherhood which has inestimable value for the development of individuals and the future of society. At this point, how can I fail to mention the witness of so many Catholic women and Religious Congregations of women from every continent who have made education, particularly the education of boys and girls, their principal apostolate?”<sup>1430</sup>

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<sup>1426</sup> CCD: VI:623 (Letter: *To Pierre Cabel, Superior in Sedan*, November 17, 1657).

<sup>1427</sup> Congar, Yves. *Der Heilige Geist*. Herder Freiburg im Breisgau, 1982, p 230.

<sup>1428</sup> Grün Anselm. *Die Höhe Kunst des Älterwerdens*. Vier-Türme GmbH, Münsterschwarzach Abtei, München, 2007, p 57.

<sup>1429</sup> Küng, Hans. *Wegzeichen in die Zukunft. Programmatishes für eine christlichere Kirche*. *Op.cit.*, p 162.

<sup>1430</sup> Congregation for Catholic Education. *Male and Female, He Created Them*. # 18. *Op.cit.*

Gundrun Sailer reports that a young roman priest asked Benedict XVI in March 2006 whether it was not the time to make women “more visible” in the church. As it is well known, Christ had reserved the priestly ordination for men, replied the pontiff. But it is justified to ask whether women could not be given more space and more responsible positions in the leadership of the church.<sup>1431</sup>

The German word *Freiheit* comes from the *indogermanic* root *prai*. That means: protect, treat, enjoy. The *Germanen* called the ones they loved and protected, free persons. Those persons could stand freely and with full rights in the community, they were free, unbound, independent, not cramped.<sup>1432</sup> Often recalled marvellous metaphorical words of Pope John XXIII when he opened the Second Vatican Council, that it was time to open the windows and let in the fresh air, still has many areas left to explore. Towards the course of change in the Church in the sense of the council of Vatican second, a new connecting bracket has to be constantly sought and established, in relation to the understanding that is able to take the expansion of the method of functioning of the church into account, between the theological understanding of the clergy centric functioning of the church and the delimitation of ecclesiastical practice caused by social change.<sup>1433</sup>

#### **2.3.4.1 The Empty Space of Aquinas on the Economy of Salvation of Man and Woman**

The divine economy of salvation refers to God’s providential ordering and governance over all things. When people refer to an actual or concrete divine economy, they are referring to the present order of God’s providence over a hypothetical ordering of things which might have been possible, but which does not actually exist. The ultimate end of menschen is the beatific vision of God, which is the end flowing from their nature together with the help of supernatural grace. Jesus frequently asserted that he knew the Father, and he knows what the Father knows. In the development of our spiritual life, it remains a mystery to know what the God the Father knows. Jesus was conscious of his union with the Father whom he knew in a perfect manner and during his entire life his desire was to fulfill the will of the Father. Such is known as an intuitive science, and that science is identified with the beatific vision.<sup>1434</sup> Menschen cannot only with their natural powers attain perfect beatification, they necessarily

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<sup>1431</sup> Sailer, Gundrun. *Frauen im Vatican. Begegnungen, Porträts, Bilder*. St. Benno Verlag GmbH Leipzig, 2007, p10.

<sup>1432</sup> Grün, Anselm. *50 Engel für das Jahr. Ein Inspirationsbuch*. Herder, Freiburg im Breisgau 1997, 81.

<sup>1433</sup> Mette Norbert. *Einführung in die katholische Praktische Theologie. Op.cit.*, p 13.

<sup>1434</sup> Scheeben Joseph Mathias. *A manual of Catholic Theology*. Based on Scheeben’s „dogmatik“ Volume 2, Wilhelm Joseph and Scannell B. Thomas, Kegan Paul trench Trubener & Co, London, 1906, p 147.

need the assistance of supernatural grace. People are in a *debitum naturae* (the debt of nature), but God is the source of this *debitum naturae*, which is nothing more than the recognition of the natural order (a) independently intelligible and as (2) a manifestation of divine wisdom and divine province.<sup>1435</sup> The elevation of menschen in Jesus Christ, the elevation of the level of economy of salvation, surpasses the order of nature which could be explained as two levels of gratuity, one surpassing creation and another surpassing the natural order of creation.<sup>1436</sup> Both creation and supernatural grace are gratuitous, while they are simply not owned. Menschen have their ontological features, the creator gives them the power to act their own proper level. God respects the nature that He has given to the human being because the author of nature takes away nothing from the beings that is proper to their nature.<sup>1437</sup>

Aquinas complicated his rational theology of image of God in man and in woman, and then he went out of place in saying that image of God is found in man and not directly in woman but indirectly.

The image of God, in its principal signification, namely the intellectual nature, is found both in man and in woman. Hence after the words, "To the image of God He created him," it is added, "Male and female He created them" (Genesis 1:27). Moreover, it is said "them" in the plural, as Augustine (Gen. ad lit. iii, 22) remarks, lest it should be thought that both sexes were united in one individual. But in a secondary sense the image of God is found in man, and not in woman: for man is the beginning and end of woman; as God is the beginning and end of every creature. So when the Apostle had said that "man is the image and glory of God, but woman is the glory of man," he adds his reason for saying this: "For man is not of woman, but woman of man; and man was not created for woman, but woman for man."<sup>1438</sup>

Aquinas was unsuccessful to understand the creation narration completely in its entire meaning. I would like to prove his rational theology of man and woman were incomplete in four ways.

First, Aquinas tried to defend here, in his peculiar way, the reason of which I cannot exactly find, but I can say that Aquinas relied on the literal word of Genesis chapter 2 and not Genesis chapter 1, that God created Adam first and then Eve. He followed literally the narration of creation in Genesis chapter two that Adam was a man who was created first, and Eve was a woman who was created second as a companion to Adam. Aquinas missed one of the important messages written in the same chapter: "Then the man said, this at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh" (Gen 2:23). The phrase *bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh* obviously

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<sup>1435</sup> Swafford, Andrew Dean. *Nature and Grace. A New Approach to Thomistic Ressourcement*. Pickwick Publications, Eugene, USA, 2014, p 9-11.

<sup>1436</sup> Swafford, Andrew Dean. *Nature and Grace. Op.cit.*, 11.

<sup>1437</sup> Torrell Jean-Pierre, O.P. *Saint Thomas Aquinas. Spiritual Master*. Vol.2, Trans.by Royal Robert, The Catholic University of America Press, Washington D.C, 2003, p 238-239.

<sup>1438</sup> *ST*, I, q. 63, a. 4 ad 1.

explains: the very own self, the same essence. Interestingly, God created Adam out of mud but not Eve, then Eve was created from the rib of Adam, which proves evidently, that in essence both of them are the same. We read in the *New Testament*, the grace of God is sufficient for any person, for the power of God is made perfect even in weakness.<sup>1439</sup>

The Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches us: *incorporated into Christ by Baptism, the person baptized is configured to Christ. Baptism seals the Christian with the indelible spiritual mark (character) of his belonging to Christ. No sin can erase this mark, even if sin prevents Baptism from bearing the fruits of salvation. Given once for all, Baptism cannot be repeated. Incorporated into the Church by Baptism, the faithful have received the sacramental character that consecrates them for Christian religious worship. The baptismal seal enables and commits Christians to serve God by a vital participation in the holy liturgy of the Church and to exercise their baptismal priesthood by the witness of holy lives and practical charity. The Holy Spirit has marked us with the seal of the Lord (Dominicus character) "for the day of redemption." "Baptism indeed is the seal of eternal life." The faithful Christian who has "kept the seal" until the end, remaining faithful to the demands of his Baptism, will be able to depart this life "marked with the sign of faith," with his baptismal faith, in expectation of the blessed vision of God - the consummation of faith - and in the hope of resurrection.*<sup>1440</sup>

Second, Aquinas himself wrote that whoever had the law of grace instilled into them belonged to the New Testament.<sup>1441</sup> He understands two ways through which grace may be instilled. First, through being part of the nature of the person, and thus the natural law is instilled into being. Secondly, grace is instilled into a person by being, as it were, added on to the nature by a gift of grace.<sup>1442</sup> In both cases, in principle both men and women are equally included, that is to say, either they receive the grace naturally or they receive the grace as gift being bestowed upon them. In baptism and confirmation both genders receive the grace of God equally, and both genders partake equally in the economy of salvation.<sup>1443</sup> Baptism not only purifies an individual from all sin, but also makes the neophyte a new creature, an adopted child of God, who becomes a partaker in the divine nature, a member of Christ and a co-heir with him, and a temple of the Holy Spirit.<sup>1444</sup>

Third, when Aquinas understands image is rationality, an idea also supported by the fact that Jesus is logos, explained in the Gospel of John, he cannot simply exclude women from rationality because rationality is the most obvious feature of humanity. The image of God is present in all men and women and this is indicated in both Genesis 5 and 9:6. Genesis 1:27 and 5:2, are often taken as stating that the original creation of the image was of the man and woman and so these texts demand that both men and women are both created in the image of God. The

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<sup>1439</sup> 2 Corinthians 12:9, ...but he said to me, my grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness. Swafford, Andrew Dean. *Nature and Grace. Op.cit.*, 94.

<sup>1440</sup> CCC. No:272, No:1273, No:1274.

<sup>1441</sup> ST, I-II, q. 106, a.1 ad 3.

<sup>1442</sup> ST, I-II, q. 106, a.1 ad 2.

<sup>1443</sup> CCC. 1217.

<sup>1444</sup> CCC.1265.

image of God is centred in the human mind and will, in the spiritual soul by which people can know and love God, and attain the ultimate end, spiritual union with God in heaven.<sup>1445</sup> Aquinas says that the image of God in its principal signification namely the intellectual nature is found both in man and in woman, however, he twists this quoting Paul, and in a secondary sense places woman in the second place which is against the obvious fact of intellectual nature of woman.<sup>1446</sup>

Fourth, the neophyte becomes a new creature in the economy of salvation, and this individual is saved through the glory of Jesus Christ,<sup>1447</sup> and not through the glory of man. Unfortunately, Aquinas understands the economy of salvation of woman apathetically in relation to man. Perhaps he also tried to follow the interpretation of St. Paul in 1 Corinthians 11, wherein occasionally the meaning and usage of the word man in relation to the image of God is difficult to understand. At times Paul uses the word as a metaphor of an image language meaning solely to husbands and wives, and at times Paul reverts the meaning of the same metaphor to all men and women. St. Paul would have accepted the creation story as historical, and indeed he builds a significant aspect of his understanding of the means of salvation straight on the shoulders of Adam in the letter to the Romans 5, and not, significantly on Eve. Besides, recent discussion on origins has tended to accept the basic idea of evolution, while noting that any scientific studies and scientific statistics cannot rule out the indication, that in the course of evolution God did intervene at specific points. In this case, the creation of the Adam and Eve was probably one of those specific direct creations, which both narrations of Genesis 1 and 2 conclude with a deliberate direct divine intervention which enables relationship, the human with the divine, and woman with man. In *Summa theologiae*, human and divine relationship is central to the theme of contemplation, which is the highest form of prayer and virtuous disposition.

In the highest form of prayer, the mind of a person is in silence, because the soul is in delight with the vision of God. Prayer can only be itself if it understands itself as the last moment of speaking before falling silent, as the act of disposing oneself, before the incomprehensibility of God at our disposal, as the reflection, or even oneself after all the last development of strength fully trusts in the infinite whole, that reflection can never come to terms with.<sup>1448</sup> Both men and

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<sup>1445</sup> Kreeft Peter. *Practical Theology. Spiritual Direction From St. Thomas Aquinas. Op.cit.*, p 47.

<sup>1446</sup> ST, I, q.93, a.4; Barron Robert. *Thomas Aquinas. Spiritual Master. op.cit.*, p 162.

<sup>1447</sup> "Christ merited the glory of being exalted, through the lowliness of His Passion". ST, III, q.46, a.1.

<sup>1448</sup> „Das Gebet kann nur es selber sein, wenn es sich selbst versteht als den letzten Augenblick des Redens vor dem Verstummen, als die Tat der Verfügung über sich selbst, eben bevor über uns die Unbegreiflichkeit Gottes verfügt, als die Reflexion, noch eben man sich selbst nach aller letzten Kraftentfaltung voll Vertrauen fallen lässt in das unendliche Ganze, das die Reflexion nie aufarbeiten kann.“ Rahner, Karl. *Praxis des Glaubens. Geistliches Lesebuch. Op.cit.*, p 138.

women are capable of disposing themselves before God. Both Adam and Eve could dispose themselves to God;<sup>1449</sup> both Josef<sup>1450</sup> and Mary<sup>1451</sup> could dispose themselves to God; after the resurrection Jesus communicated with his disciples<sup>1452</sup> as well as with Mary Magdalene<sup>1453</sup>.

*Throughout Ratzinger's theological opus, the Logos is described as the speech of God, as the "word" that is the creative principle of the universe. Thus, all things have their origin in the Creative God and in rationality. Ratzinger regularly refers to this concept as the priority of the Logos and the priority of meaning. This priority of meaning is what allows for a coherent and rational world.*<sup>1454</sup> When the proximate end is intended and ordered to the ultimate end, people should learn to live the proximate end as a means of achieving the ultimate end.<sup>1455</sup> Although absolute equality is an ideal, people should learn to respect potentiality to equality in the status of life in the world. Just as Jesus said, "do to others as you would have them do to you" (Lk 6:31). Cardinal virtues and theological virtues help us in learning to lead a life that begins with the premise of the new law by judging the life situations with practical intellect in the effort of participating the eternal law. If people take counsel from the new law, in order to reason, whether our particular action is in accord with the ultimate end,<sup>1456</sup> then we will no longer speak about man and woman, white and black, yellow and brown, but rather we would speak about human person. Eve came to the world from old Adam, but the new Adam Jesus Christ was born of Mary.

### 2.3.4.2 The Blooming of Potentiality

Almost all writers use the word "man and woman" to specify two categories of menschen. Why should we categorize menschen? This is a fundamental question, which is mysteriously answered. One of the serious concerns in answering the justification of this classification, people use reference to historical facts and tradition. When present politic is future history, can we not begin a new history regarding the understanding of menschen? When a word hurts the sentiments of people, we classify them as racially insensitive words. By categorizing menschen into two broad categories, are we not doing the same? I do not like to

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<sup>1449</sup> Genesis 3:8; "They heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden."

<sup>1450</sup> Matthew 1:20–21; 2:13; 2:19–20; 2:22

<sup>1451</sup> Luke 1:26–38.

<sup>1452</sup> Johannes 20,19,26–29; Luke 24,13–32.

<sup>1453</sup> John 20:11–18.

<sup>1454</sup> Lynch, John J. *The Logos as Reason, Word, and Love in the Theology of Joseph Ratzinger*. Yorktown, Virginia, 2014, p 41.

<sup>1455</sup> Rziha John. *Perfecting Human Actions*. *Op.cit.*, p 241.

<sup>1456</sup> ST, I-II, q.100, a.1; ST, I-II, q.91, a.4; Rziha John. *Perfecting Human Actions*. *Op.cit.*, p 242.

categorize menschen into man and woman, because both of them are mensch, and they are menschen, created in the image of God. An image has two sides, and one side of the image cannot be weaker than the other side of the same image.

Alison Forrestal narrates many incidents of women empowerment through Vincent de Paul. Besides revolutionary initiatives Vincent de Paul has done in the women religious order, he recognized the religious spirit of lay women and with profound trust motivated them to organize together. Alison Forrestal writes that, *almost every female member of the Lamoignon Family was vigorously active in the confraternities, with the matriarch Marie as the core surrounded by two of her three daughters, Madeleine and Anne, duchess of Nesmond, as well as her daughter in law. The women were also closely linked to the Visitation. Marie de Lamoignon had received spiritual direction from François de Sales while he sojourned in Paris, and he prepared her daughter Madeleine for her first communion. Ties were maintained in the longer term when Marie's third daughter, Elisabeth, made her profession in the convent in the faubourg Saint -Jacques. After her father's death in 1636, her mother and sisters all retreated to the convent to mourn in seclusion for a time. For these women, the bonds of maternal and sisterly kinship were instrumental in the construction of their long-lasting loyalty to religious causes and institutions. De Paul understood perfectly the potential that lay within them. He urged confraternal members to recruit their kin and to prepare them to accept the commitments their works of charity entailed. Mothers, he noted, who impassioned their daughters, nieces, and daughters in law through their words and example, rendered them all like burning coals that are united together.*<sup>1457</sup> Hans Küng says, the Catholic Church, whose official and power structures are completely dominated by men, in order to become a Church of all menschen, women should be represented in all decision-making bodies: at parish, diocesan, national and world level.<sup>1458</sup>

### **2.3.4.3 Strengthening the Role of Women Above Cultural Barriers and Prejudices**

At a time when cultural barriers prevented women from taking their place among men in order to learn by listening to a Rabbi, Jesus allowed the women to learn from him and sit in the midst of the male disciples. Those male disciples had accepted with respect the presence of women among them while following Jesus, otherwise, Jesus would not have after the resurrection revealed himself to Mary Magdalene and commissioned her to be a witness to his eleven disciples. The early testimony of disciples given to the Emmaus brothers after their

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<sup>1457</sup> Forrestal, Alison, *Op.cit.*, p. 191.

<sup>1458</sup> Küng, Hans. *Wegzeichen in die Zukunft. Programmatishes für eine christlichere Kirche. Op.cit.*, p 165.

Emmaus experience informs us: *the Lord has truly been raised, and has appeared to Simon (Lk 24:34)*. This revelation of the resurrected Jesus to Mary Magdalene is considered to be one of the earliest encounters of resurrected ... but what I would like to stress upon is not the importance of who saw first the resurrected Jesus, but that Jesus included and integrated the woman in his salvific mission.

**a) Jesus allowed the Samaritan woman to speak about him:** In the narration of the gospel of John, the first woman who made interaction with Jesus is the Samaritan woman. The parable of Samaritan women tells us, that women can give testimony and proclaim about Jesus Christ. In this story Jesus asked the Samaritan woman water, but she was reluctant to give. Jesus answered her, *if you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, 'give me a drink,' you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water*. Here Jesus was instructing the woman about the living water, this equates in a special manner the parallel instruction at the last supper, “drink from it, all of you” (Mt 26:27). Jesus told the women: *everyone who drinks of this water (the water of the well) will be thirsty again, but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give, will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life (John 4: 13-14)*. Upon hearing about the living water, the Samaritan woman asked for it. *Jesus explained, God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth. The woman said to him, I know that Messiah is coming (who is called Christ). When he comes, he will proclaim all things to us. Jesus said to her, I am he, the one who is speaking to you (John 4:24-26)*. The Samaritan Woman was convinced, and the grace of God began to work through her, she took up the role of a missionary and began to proclaim the good news of the arrival of messiah.

Then there was an issue of social interruption, which is narrated in the reaction of the disciples of Jesus, because, they were surprised that he was talking with an woman that too a Samaritan Woman (because Jewish Rabbis seldom held dialogue with woman and Jews considered Samaritans as impure people due to their intermarriage with gentile people; they were descendants of the northern Israelite tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh, who survived the destruction of the Kingdom of Samaria by the Assyrians in 722 BCE). Jesus instructed his astonished disciples, saying “I have food to eat that you do not know about.” “My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to complete his work”. The story concludes with the statement: many Samaritans from that city believed in him because of the woman’s testimony. Jesus allowed the Samaritan woman to speak about him, whereas Jesus did not usually allow any one at many occasions after he performed miracles, to give witness of him (*Mark 1:44, 5:43, 7:36,*

*Matthew 9:30*). Her witness (although against the Jewish tradition) physically and spiritually led many of the people of her town to Jesus.

**b) God allows women to proclaim:** When Jesus was presented in the temple according to the law of Moses, after Simeon praised and thanked God for allowing him to see the glory of Israel, Anna the daughter of Phanuel came, praised God and began to speak about the child Jesus to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem (*Luke 2:36-38*). Mary Magdalene and the other Mary (the wife of Clopas, the mother of James and Joses, who was also at the foot of the cross) were privileged to proclaim the glorious message of resurrection of Jesus to his disciples (*Mt 28:8*).

**c) Jesus defends Mary's choice to listen:** In the story of Mary and Martha (*Luke 10*), the sisters of Lazarus, Jesus indicates a paradigm shift of the role of women, because those days Jewish woman were not expected to sit and listen to the teachings of a Rabbi or a teacher. Mary sitting alone with the male disciples is an implementation of paradigm shift of the role of women counter to cultural traditions. Upon the request of Martha, to send Mary to help her in the arrangements for the guests, Jesus says that "Mary has chosen the better part, which will not be taken away from her" (*Luke 10: 42*), thereby Jesus subtly invites Martha to sit among his disciples with Mary.

**d) Implication of the word Apostle:** Paul vindicates his apostleship to Galatians, saying: *God, who had set me apart before I was born and called me through his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son to me, so that I might proclaim him among the Gentiles, I did not confer with any human being, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were already apostles before me* (*Gal 1:15-17*). Paul claims to be apostle (ἀπόστολος / apóstolos) through the grace of God, and because God has revealed his son Jesus to him.

Jesus said to Mary Magdalene after his resurrection: *Do not hold on to me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and say to them, I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God. Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord"; and she told them that he had said these things to her* (*John 20: 17-18*). Here gospel of John testifies, Mary has seen the resurrected Jesus, therefore God was kind enough to reveal his resurrected son Jesus to Mary Magdalene, this could be also understood in Pauline terms, an apostolic experience, to be an apostle.

### 2.3.4.4 Inclusion of Women

Inclusion of women in pastoral ministry is a matter of mutual respect which is founded on the unity of people as brothers and sisters in God. This union occurs in a trinitarian fusion which gives its fullness of meaning to their spirituality.<sup>1459</sup> We should encourage the formation of women as spiritual leaders. According to Vincent de Paul, the poor country women who comes to ministry, who were lacking refinement, not knowing how to read, and unfamiliar with the mysteries of religion, changed radically in a short time and became reserved, recollected, and filled with love of God through the regular practice of prayer. They drew their strength from the foundation of prayer. God strengthened them with his grace and God infused them with virtues and knowledge of the spiritual mysteries.<sup>1460</sup> Vincent de Paul encouraged lay women to become active in ministry and take positions of leadership. When some tried to excuse themselves from their public duties of caring for the foundlings by claiming that these were unsuitable for women, he countered that *God had used persons of your sex to do the greatest things ever done in this world; reaching back through salvation history, he endeavoured to rally them by pointing out women had surpassed men in their achievements, when they had taught others, fed others and led others.*<sup>1461</sup> As Vincent was explaining the rule to the Daughters of Charity, he told them that they were to show great honour to the Ladies: *They are the ones who give you the means of rendering to God the service you give to the patients. What could you do without the ladies? So, show them great respect, no matter what their rank.*<sup>1462</sup> Here in this situation, the sisters are religious people and ladies are lay people. Although both are women, Vincent stressed the importance of including the lay women and giving them respect, recognition and honour in pastoral ministry.

Natural and acquired aptitudes are not a fundamental consideration for apostolic ministry but charity which gives grace. *Charity is kind, gentle, patient and bears all things without complaining; those are the true virtues which the pastoral leaders should be having. How could people correspond faithfully with the grace of God which is being granted to them if they do not have in them charity? What will become of them?*<sup>1463</sup> Vincent de Paul adventures here a new interpretation of Christian theology, emphasising the virtue of charity the fundamental element of one's vocation as a pastoral minister. Vincent de Paul illustrates his view of charity by explaining its meaning in relation to paradise. He asks a rhetorical question:

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<sup>1459</sup> Renouard, John-Pierre, *Op.cit.*, p. 119.

<sup>1460</sup> CCD: IX:328 (Conference: *Mental Prayer*, May 31, 1648).

<sup>1461</sup> Forrester, Alison, *Op.cit.*, p. 194.

<sup>1462</sup> CCD: IX:96 (Conference: *Explanation of Regulations*, June 14, 1643).

<sup>1463</sup> CCD: IX:124 (Conference: *Cordial Respect*, January 1, 1644).

what is paradise? He answers by saying that paradise is the dwelling place of God. In addition to the first rhetorical question, he asks a second question: where do you think the earthly dwelling place of God is? He continues, in hearts filled with charity. *A person of charity and a community of charity is a paradise, because where God is there is paradise.*<sup>1464</sup> A spirit of prayer is essential for pastoral ministry.<sup>1465</sup> *What blessings should a sister not hope for from God if she does her utmost to put her heart in the state of being united with the heart of our Lord and wishes to do everything required to live as a true daughter of charity!*<sup>1466</sup>

### 2.3.4.5 Creating A Kairos Moment

In the Greek epic of gods, we find *Kairos* besides *Chrónos*, the god of time. *Kairós* is the god of the right moment, the opportunity that may or may not be taken advantage of. Each and every one of us probably remembers some special *Kairos* moments in life. For the first disciples, such a *Kairos* moment was the encounter with Jesus. It is necessary to understand *Kairos* moments in order to understand the spiritual progress of a person. At the beginning of his mission, Jesus proclaimed: *the time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news* (Mark 1: 15). As Jesus wept over Jerusalem, he said: *they will crush you to the ground, you and your children within you, and they will not leave within you one stone upon another; because you did not recognize the time of your visitation from God* (Luke 19:44). One of the experiences of Felix with Paul is interesting. Apostle Paul was in custody, when Felix, who was a Jew, came with his wife Drusilla, and he sent for Paul and heard him speak concerning faith in Jesus Christ: *but as he spoke about justice and the coming judgment, Felix became frightened and said, go away for the present; when I have an opportunity, I will send for you* (Act 24:24-25).

How can we create *Kairos* moments for the members of a parish? Catholic spirituality is a spirituality grounded on communitarian activity and belief, and, of course, it is a spirituality that is centered on a sacramental life.<sup>1467</sup> The creation of *Kairos* moments in the parish community, through pastoral activities, is intended to deepen the faith and strengthening the possibilities of an encounter with God through repentance and practice of virtue. This spiritual development could be offered to the parish community through three forms of activities. First, a forum for discussion about the liturgical and parochial activities; second, a reflection on those

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<sup>1464</sup> CCD: IX:125 (Conference, *Cordial Respect*, January 1, 1644).

<sup>1465</sup> CCD: VII:171 (Letter: *To Antoine Durand*, May 1658).

<sup>1466</sup> CCD:X:327 (Conference: *Mortification, Correspondence, Meals and Journeys*, December 9, 1657).

<sup>1467</sup> Rahner, Karl. *Praxis des Glaubens. Geistliches Lesebuch. Op.cit.*, p 49.

activities from a biblical perspective, and third, how have these activities impacted the parish community. Overall, every parish activity should be aimed at creating a *Kairos* moment so as to assist the faithful in understanding and living the Christian faith. Therefore, pastoral ministry calls for an accountability with regard to one's own action, discussion and evaluation of planning and/or coordinating different activities, and an evaluation of the various planned activities. Based on two basic questions the activities are planned for creating *Kairos* moments: what is the means through which God is trying to communicate with us? how are we trying to respond to God through living our faith?

A parochial community is called to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ (2 Pet 3:18). Many pastoral communities may consider only the interests of the community, but looking to God's interest enable us to go forth and engage in ministries, because interests of God surpass those of communities.<sup>1468</sup> When parish ministries attempt to create *Kairos* moments, they help people and the pastoral team to focus more on the Word of God and meditate on it (Ps 1), and put that Word into practice (James 1:22). Every ministry, from the perspective of faith, needs to create an atmosphere in which men and women are able to discover the possibilities of an encounter with Jesus. A deeper understanding of faith leads to devotion, which in turn impels people to perform practical acts of faith, and also leads them to develop habits of prayer.

Christoph Theobald's critique of the decline of Christian institutions in Europe and the method of adapting insights of historians and sociologists to the present reality, could open up new horizons for a *Kairos* moment. He states that the initial conviction with regard to the unlimited duration of the *Kairos* moment, which has long been preserved in Christianity, raises the following question: is the historical and traditional method still appropriate for preaching the Gospel? The decline of Christian institutions in Europe, a phenomenon which is widespread in France, challenges us and makes us ask questions with regard to cultural exchange (*ex-culturation*). The effect of social exchange impacts the seemingly reduced Christian presence in society, and the catholic method of approach is unable to influence the daily life of the people. There is a great temptation to use a sociological analysis of society in order to look for ways in which the faith, that has been handed down to us, can be viewed as relevant? We are, however, likely to deprive ourselves of essential insights from the work of historians and sociologists if we only consult them to improve our evangelization strategies. If, on the other hand, we read

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<sup>1468</sup> CCD: XIIIb:272 (Document: *Council of June 19, 1647*).

them from a perspective of faith, then, they can initiate a process of “*decentring*”<sup>1469</sup> and learning. We are far from an understanding of the significance of the social situation and its possibility for creating a *Kairos* situation, which not only gives witness to the work of wisdom or the Spirit in human history, but also, and above all, allows us to discover unknown facets of the gospel.<sup>1470</sup>

According to Karl Rahner, when God says he is present with his own infinite, eternal glory and authenticity, when God says that he himself wants to be our ultimate goal, the goal towards which the whole of created reality moves, when God says that he wants to be the God who sanctifies us, the God who forgives us, then this is really important because if God really said this, it has a most fundamental significance for our own lives.<sup>1471</sup> The best way to interpret the message of God and its significance with regard to life in the midst of the present-day world is proclamation, education, dialogue and one’s own example. In addition to the celebration of the liturgy, there is also a pastoral need to provide spiritual orientation to children, youth and adults of a pastoral community. Non-liturgical activities present many possibilities for communication, dialogue and teaching, which can eventually motivate the members of the community to act with conviction. In order to create more *Kairos* moments in a pastoral community, I would like to suggest establishing “Vincentian Pastoral Ministry Society” in every parish. This is a concept which attempts to engage families, children, youth and adults in a pastoral manner. During the past ten years, my conversations with youths and adults, has revealed a huge gap with regard to the active engagement of children and youth in the parish. Between the time of their formation for the first holy communion until their formation for the sacrament of confirmation, parishes seem to do little planning for children aged 9-15. Many people could be engaged in the area of forming children by providing them with regular catechetical instruction. This activity was most important to Vincent de Paul, who exhorted his conferrers to honour the manner that Jesus used when instructing, teaching and converting people.<sup>1472</sup> Vincent himself was a teacher and guardian of children during the time that he was preparing for ordination.<sup>1473</sup> A systemic change in the spiritual and catechetical education of children between 9-15 will be realized through the establishment of the Vincentian Pastoral

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<sup>1469</sup> Christian vocation is a call to become a decentred person, away from oneself, which implies to become a helping person to others.

<sup>1470</sup> Theobald, Christoph. „Heute ist der günstige Augenblick. Eine theologische Diagnose der Gegenwart“, in *Frei Geben. Pastoraltheologische Impulse aus Frankreich*: Feiter, Reinhard und Müller, Hadwig (HG), Matthias Grünewald Verlag, 2012, p 82.

<sup>1471</sup> Rahner, Karl. *Im Gespräch*. Imhof, Paul und Biallowons, Hubert (Hrsg.), Band 1: 1964-1977, *Op.cit.*, p 58.

<sup>1472</sup> CCD: VI:400 (Letter: *To a Priest of the Mission*).

<sup>1473</sup> Abelly, Louis. *Op.cit.*, I:38.

Ministry Society. I have formulated the constitutions of this envisaged society of Vincentian Pastoral Ministry Society by referring to the Constitutions of the *Congregation of the Mission* founded by Vincent de Paul.

## **Vincentian Pastoral Ministry Society**

### **Chapter One: Charism**

1. The charism of the society of the Vincentian Pastoral Ministry Society (VPMS) is to follow Jesus Christ in doing works of evangelization after the example of St. Vincent de Paul. In order to clothe themselves in this charism, members individually and collectively engage in three specific activities:

1.1 they make regular efforts to acquire holiness appropriate to their way as Christians who live in accord with the spirit of Christ.

1.2 they work at evangelizing youth, especially between 9-15 years, so that they assist children after their first holy communion until they enter into the formation process to receive the sacrament of confirmation.

1.3 they help parish priests, and the pastoral team in their evangelizing efforts in the pastoral community.

1.4 The Vincentian Pastoral Ministry Society will develop pastoral activities for children and youth. The word, “Vincentian” indicates that the group is internally motivated by the spirituality of St. Vincent de Paul, the founder of the Congregation of the Mission and co-founder of the Daughters of Charity. The word, “pastoral” indicates that the engagement of the community is within the territory of a parish and all the works of the community are pastorally relevant to the local situation. Furthermore, their ministry is intimately connected with the pastoral plan of the parish. The word, “Ministry” indicates that the members will serve by involving themselves in planning and organizing social, educational and spiritual activities for the larger community as well as for parish.

2. With this charism in view, every member of the Vincentian Pastoral Ministry Society, being faithful to the gospel and attentive to the signs of the times shall seek to discover new ways and means for the spiritual development of children and youth. The members shall try to remain in a state of continual renewal by regular evaluation of their spirituality, daily life and ministries.

3. The Vincentian Pastoral Ministry Society is a secular society of Christians engaged in apostolic activity for children and youth. The members, following the spirituality of St. Vincent de Paul, pursue their own specific vocation in accord with the norms of the Roman Catholic Church and the particular practices sanctioned by the local Bishop, and in cooperation with the parish priest and the pastoral team. The members live their specific vocation, and they strive to practice charity by observing the Constitutions of the Vincentian Pastoral Ministry Society.

4. The Vincentian Pastoral Ministry Society, following the spirituality of St. Vincent de Paul, works in close cooperation with the bishops, parish priests, and pastoral team.

5. The Vincentian Pastoral Ministry Society is composed of Catholic Christians, who are clothed with the Spirit of Jesus Christ as proposed by St. Vincent de Paul: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor” (Luke 4:18). Therefore, Jesus is the rule of every ministry and shall be considered the centre of life as far as a member is considered, and as far as the activity of the Society is considered.

6. The Spirit of the members of the Vincentian Pastoral Ministry Society is that of Jesus Christ: “When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd” (Mt.9:36). The members shall try to express this spirit by practicing in a special way five virtues: simplicity, humility, gentleness, mortification and zeal for souls. The spirit of their life and ministry ought to nourish them and support the cause of Vincentian Pastoral Ministry Society.

## **Chapter Two: Parish Activity**

7. The members of the Vincentian Pastoral Ministry Society should see themselves as called by God to assist the pastoral team. Their activities will illustrate their own grace, vocation and identity

8. Love of Christ urges the members to guide the children and the youth of a pastoral community. Their pastoral work is supportive of the parish pastoral team. During their supportive apostolic service, the following characteristics are to be kept in mind by each member in the work of evangelization:

8.1 clear and expressed preference for the apostolate among the children between 9-15 years. These are children who have received holy communion but have not been formed for the sacrament of confirmation. In order to spiritually guide these children, the members of the Vincentian Pastoral Ministry Society divide these children aged 9-15 into five groups, namely, Mary, Joseph, Stephan, Thomas Aquinas and Vincent de Paul.

8.2 All the members strive continuously to develop their spiritual life according to the words of St. Paul: “*Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer*” Romans 12:11-12.

8.3 engage in apostolic service among the poor.

8.4 organize meetings and programmes for the spiritual and pastoral development of children, youth, and members.

8.5 strive to live in a continuous state of spiritual advancement by engaging every day in personal prayer and regularly participating in the Sunday eucharistic celebration.

9 A governing board composed of members of the Vincentian Pastoral Ministry Society will decide the forms of pastoral activities to be undertaken with the spirit and example of St. Vincent de Paul in consultation with the local parish priest and pastoral team, and in conformity with the local diocesan Bishop.

10 The apostolate among the children aged between 9-15 years has to be earnestly promoted within the structure of five groups (Mary, Joseph, Miraculous Medal, Thomas Aquinas and Vincent de Paul) and with a yearly plan for their spiritual and social activities.

11 All the members will become involved in the apostolate for children and youth, as per the yearly plan made by the team of the governing body of the Vincentian Pastoral Ministry Society.

12 To read the Bible, to meditate on biblical themes and to speak about the gospel are integral components of the spirituality of the Vincentian Pastoral Ministry Society.

13 Like the good Samaritan of the parable in Luke 10:30-37, St. Vincent de Paul was a good Samaritan to the poor and needy. In order to have a global understanding of the Catholic Church, the members will involve themselves, as far as possible, in charitable activities together with the Congregation of the Mission founded by St. Vincent de Paul.

### **Chapter Three: Life in Unity**

14. The Catholic Church begins every prayer by invoking the name of the Trinity, the ultimate source of its action. The members of the Vincentian Pastoral Ministry Society live their lives within the Catholic Church and begin every pastoral service with prayer, and live in trinitarian unity, the ultimate source of its life and action.

14.1 The members of the Vincentian Pastoral Ministry Society follow Jesus Christ who called the apostles and the disciples into a community of fraternal life to live and share the good news.

14.2 Gathered together for the apostolate in the name of the Trinity, people of both genders, including children, youth and adults, come together to engage in pastoral ministry.

14.3 The personal life of each member has to be respected. Members come together for pastoral activity, their family life and job have to be given due respect.

14.4 The concerns of the private life of each member should be respected and promoted.

15 Members might propose various initiatives which should be evaluated in light of the charism and the common good of the parish and the Church.

16. Each local group can do pastoral service in light of the Charism and in accordance with article 3 of the constitution.

17 The evangelical life in the Vincentian Pastoral Ministry Society is animated by a love for Jesus Christ and by the regular practice of five virtues namely, simplicity, humility, gentleness, mortification, and zeal for souls.

18. The Vincentian Pastoral Ministry Society is responsible for its own structural and activity development. All the members strive together for spiritual as well as structural growth.

19. Group plan, monthly plan and yearly plan are means to direct the life and activity of the society. Evaluation of the pastoral activities shall be conducted periodically as per the formulated plans in accordance with the constitution and article 3.

20. All the members are like family members, they support each other, work together in the process of evangelization, and conduct programmes for the well-being of the members.

21. The community of the Vincentian Pastoral Ministry Society prays regularly for all its sick members, and at least once in a year, prays for all the members who have died.

#### **Chapter Four: Prayer**

22. Jesus Christ sought the will of the Father in prayer. He taught his disciples to pray and to live in the spirit of prayer. In the same way each member will begin any pastoral ministry with a prayer and conclude the activity with the prayer "Our Father".

23. St. Vincent de Paul Said: give me a man of prayer and he will be ready for everything (Abelly III:61). Prayer is the living source of the spiritual life of all pastoral ministers. Prayer opens the mind to the teachings of the gospel, helps people to decide spiritual matters, and preserves people in the love and mercy of God.

24. The pastoral ministry of guiding children to know, to love and to adore God is a unique experience of evangelization. Pastoral care for adults and families ought to be done in a spirit of prayer in which the members share spontaneously their experience and knowledge of God.

25. The spiritual life of the members should be directed toward participation in the Eucharistic celebration. As far as possible they should make participation in Sunday Eucharistic celebration a priority. By participating in the Eucharistic celebration, members experience the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and make themselves, in Jesus Christ, a living offering for pastoral service.

26. Daily personal prayer at home is obligatory for each member. Each person can decide on the time they will spend in personal prayer. Praying Divine Office is advocated by the Catholic Church. Daily prayer helps us to grow in the recognition of the providence of God.

27. Praying as a group helps the members to animate the spiritual life in a community spirit. During group prayer and through fraternal dialogue, the members share their spiritual and pastoral experiences.

28. One of the Vincentian traditions, which was advocated by St. Vincent, is to pray one hour daily. The community should try as far as possible to spend one hour in prayer at least once a month, either in private or in common, so as to cherish the spirit of St. Vincent de Paul.

29. Each member makes an annual retreat, either in private or in common.

30. The feast of the Immaculate Conception of Our Lady, St. Joseph, the Miraculous Medal, Thomas Aquinas and St. Vincent de Paul are to be specially celebrated. Christmas and Easter are special occasions for spiritual enrichment and celebration.

#### **Chapter Five: Members**

31. The members of the Vincentian Pastoral Ministry Society are people who believe in Jesus Christ, who have received baptism. Inspired by the spirituality of St. Vincent de Paul and the

teachings of the Church, they strive, according to their capability and time, to respond to the pastoral needs.

31.1 The members include man and woman who are engaged in different sorts of civil or clerical works and duties. Lay people, priests, deacons, religious men and women, any Christian can become a member of the society. All of them work in the Vincentian Pastoral Ministry Society without any salary.

31.2 All members of the community volunteer in the Vincentian Pastoral Ministry Society.

31.3 All members engage in every kind of apostolate in the parish in accordance with article 3 of the Constitution.

31.4 All members are admitted into the society by the president of the Vincentian Pastoral Ministry Society in an oath taking ceremony in the presence of the Bishop or the parish priest or a delegated person.

31.5 Each person who applies for admission into the society has a minimum training period of six months before becoming a member. The president can in consultation with the four council members accept or cancel the application.

31.6 The president of the Vincentian Pastoral Ministry Society can dismiss a member in consultation with the council members after giving three written warnings. In the matter of serious offence committed by a member against the universal and particular law of the society, the president can immediately dismiss any member.

31.7 A member can also leave the Vincentian Pastoral Ministry Society with a written letter to the president.

## **Chapter Six: Admission of the members**

32. Any baptised person is admitted into Vincentian Pastoral Ministry Society who has applied for membership.

33. During the formation period the candidate will be observed, and if found capable of engaging in the society and obeying the universal law of the Church and the particular law of the Vincentian Pastoral Ministry Society, then admittance will take place during a liturgical celebration.

34. The formation period of a candidate shall be no less than six months and no longer than one year.

35. There has to be at least six persons involved in the formation process. These six persons give their evaluation report to the president of the Vincentian Pastoral Ministry Society. The president together with four council members approve or reject the recommendation of the persons involved in the training.

36. Each member agrees to pay a monthly membership fee. The fee should not be less than one Euro per month.

37. According to the tradition of the Congregation of the Mission, founded by St. Vincent de Paul, members take a promise in written form:

I, NN, born on... will voluntarily dedicate myself in the society of the Vincentian Pastoral Ministry Society, to serve without salary, in the spirituality of St. Vincent de Paul, after the example of Jesus Christ, obeying the constitution and engaging in pastoral ministry.

### **Chapter Seven: Formation**

38. Spiritual formation never ends. It is a continuous process. During the formation process, members learn the catechism of the Catholic Church and the constitutions of the Vincentian Pastoral Ministry Society. As far as possible members are welcome to learn something about St. Vincent de Paul and the Congregation of the Mission.

39. Members learn how to say a prayer when they are exercising their ministry among children aged 9-15.

40. Members learn the pedagogical methods of guiding the children aged between 9-15 years.

41. Members learn to cherish personal prayer, and to lead a spiritual life together as they carry out their duties in the midst of the world.

### **Chapter Eight: Administration**

42. The Vincentian Pastoral Ministry Society is located within the territory of a parish. There will be only one society in a parish.

43. If the parish is divided, then after the division of the parish, the society will be divided, so as to facilitate the pastoral activity of the parish. While dividing the society, wealth and debt of the concerned society will be equally divided. In case a few parishes are formed into one parish, then the existing Vincentian Pastoral Ministry Society in those parishes will be joined together, so as to form a single unit.

44. The President and vice president are elected for a six-year term. If the president is a man, then the vice president should be a woman. The Vice president is one of the council members. All the offices of Vincentian Pastoral Ministry Society follow 50:50 gender policy.

45. To be elected to an office, a candidate should get an absolute majority of the total number of votes received. In the case that more than one person is seeking to be elected to an office, the member who gets the most votes is elected. To remove the president from the office two thirds majority against the president in the general assembly is necessary. All the members of the society physically present in the general assembly have the power to vote. An election commission, which is appointed by the president, conducts all elections. In the absence of the President, the vice president takes up the office for temporary matters and decisions.

46. The President and the four councillors decide upon the monthly and yearly plan and of the activities of the society. The Treasurer of the society can attend the meetings of the president and councillors, if the treasurer is invited by the president.

47. Every year a general assembly of all members is conducted. In the general meeting the members evaluate the activities of the society that took place during the past year, and a yearly plan for the pastoral ministry of the next year is presented, discussed and approved. The plan is approved by the affirmative vote of an absolute majority of participants.

48. General meeting has the right to discuss and decide upon all financial matters.

49. General assemblies are conducted every year. A minimum of half an hour of general assembly is dedicated to spiritual recollection.

## General Conclusion

The operation of the mind allows the menschen to grasp, affirm and deny things. In a broad perspective, the act of entertaining an idea in the operation of the mind does not ascertain the idea in operation as true and false, rather they are simply an operation, which is an expression of the mind. However, when the rational judgments are in accord with the affairs of the community in which a person exists, they become less defective. The scope of spiritual education exists in the area of rational judgment, because education provides individuals with a skilled attitude which involves judgement.

Both spirituality and education are words that suppose a continuous process of rational acts to increase the intelligibility of individuals. The knowledge of the presence of God is not simply self-evident against all the backgrounds of several worldly considerations of the human mind. The argument that the existence of God is *per se* inserted in the mind of all human beings, does not place the knowledge of God naturally in the comprehension of human person as something self-evident to the individual. There is no doubt that God is beyond time, space and place; God exists everywhere, and God also exists in human beings. There is a difference between the presence of God and a knowledge of the presence of God. The question may be asked whether the presence of God in the human person is active or passive, because the former is objective, and the latter is subjective. Knowledge become active through the operation of the mind and considering this fact, spiritual education provides pedagogical assistance to individuals so that they come to a greater knowledge of the presence of God, then spiritual education helps individuals to initiate the knowledge of God to be active. One who has developed the knowledge of the presence of God, will affirm that God exists and that said reality is self-evident. This will not be the case of the people who have not yet developed a knowledge of the presence of God, because there was no true judgement in their mind with regard to the presence of God. A pedagogical approach to spirituality by pastoral ministers in a pastoral

community is a means of developing true judgement in the mind of the individuals of the pastoral community.

Spiritual pedagogy implies commitment to create spiritual interests and habits of spiritual exercises and thus enlarge the catholic culture of living the faith in Jesus Christ. Participating actively in the pedagogical process of spiritual activity will develop a practical understanding of theological precepts and, as a result, both pastoral leaders and the faithful will profit from the act of preaching, teaching, and on-going formation. There exists in the human person a capacity of restructuring the method of their thinking and developing a suitable attitude towards spiritual commitments. This spiritual commitment of people who are involved in the field of pastoral care in the name of Jesus Christ, creates an atmosphere in and around them for the process of learning and transformation. Christology remains at the center of catholic spiritual pedagogy and, I would even say that the climax of Christian spiritual pedagogy is Christology.

When Catholics learn to pray, they learn to communicate with Jesus Christ in prayer, and thereby they establish a relationship with God. This relationship will be founded upon communication rather than the use of words in prayer. That means, prayer is not limited to the use of words. As the habit of prayer advances as a result of perseverance, people will begin to meditate and contemplate the love of God and God's multiple presences. Prayer is an on-going process that creates an inner change in the menschen and produces acts of charity. When this continual conversion within the menschen takes place, they will gradually, through their own resolutions, enter into contemplation.

The spiritual life, when integrated with charity, reveals, in the midst of the community where the faithful are living, the essential elements of the proclamation of faith in Jesus Christ. The spiritual life, when deprived of acts of charity, lacks the focus of social doctrine of the church and the spirit of love towards neighbour. As followers of Jesus Christ, the faithful have necessary reasons to develop an authentic spirit of contemplative charity, to follow their master, the evangelizer of the poor, because God lives through their words and works. Prayer, especially, meditation and contemplation are the two superior components, which develop a relationship with God and form committed individuals, who live the vision of a kingdom of justice and live like Jesus, emptying themselves to put on Christ in a spirit of prayer. The menschen of prayer will be doing works of charity, in the name of Jesus, from the depths of their spiritual interest.

When Christians do works of charity in the name of Jesus Christ, that is a learned virtue in their spiritual life. In the world we find many others who also involve themselves in the social

developmental works. The philosophy and theology of the catholic works of charity is founded on love of God and love of neighbour. Therefore, the catholic need not fear to develop a pedagogical approach for spiritual education and evangelical dialogue, thereby to involve themselves in intellectual engagement with philosophical, theological, scientific, cultural and religious traditions and apathies. Catholics need not limit their evangelical dialogue and debate to practices of their faith and the art of living the spirit of Jesus to their own circles out of fear of criticism against the church due to failure of some of the members of the church, because those incidents do not legitimize fear of self-criticism, for the art of living the faith is gradually purified by reason as it disconnects truth from cultural delusions and illogical conventions. Reason is an inherent part of the nature of the menschen, and a common ground for evangelical dialogue and understanding, among Catholics and others. An authentic pursuit of truth and advancement in spirituality is not pursued with unfriendliness and resentment, rather with the habit of prayer in the acts of charity, mortification, humility, simplicity, meekness, and zeal for souls.

An act of catholic charity is not limited to the minimum obligations attributed to the fundamentals of justice. Prayer and charity, when lived as virtue, see Jesus Christ in the neighbour, and the person in need is helped and loved through the act of charity. Charity, as a moral force, maximizes the act of benevolence and through its noblest love, it contributes to the positive moral development of the giver and receiver. The materials used in the works of charity which has passed through space, could be named as *Kronos* and the time which gave meaning and purpose to those materials through act of charity, could be called *Kairos*. The soul of a mensch grows through *Kairos*, because *Kairos*, happening through the mensch, gives meaning and purpose to time, whereas the state of *Kronos*, although it is time, nevertheless, it is related to space and matter as the body of a person in which the soul exists. The soul of a mensch is not simply spiritually advanced through *Kronos*, that is, by the mere fact that the soul exists in the body, but the soul of a mensch will journey through *Kairos*, that is, its acts happened in time which give meaning and purpose, towards God, its competition.

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