

SOVEREIGN MILITARY HOSPITALLER ORDER
OF SAINT JOHN OF JERUSALEM
OF RHODES AND OF MALTA

Journal of Spirituality

Order of Malta and New Evangelization



ROME 2012

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THE YEAR OF FAITH AND HOW THE ORDER SHOULD PLAY ITS PART

His Holiness the Pope, in the contest of the New Evangelization, has proclaimed a Year of Faith, beginning in October 2012 and ending in November 2013. He expects all Catholics, and indeed, all Christians to play their part in this initiative. How should the Order react to this challenge?

I believe that we have a unique opportunity in which to play our part because of our worldwide structure and because of our contacts both in the world of business and among those who suffer. The Holy Father, in proclaiming the Year of Faith on the 16th October 2011, emphasised that we are all asked to bring the Faith to the potential Faithful and that none of us should act alone. He points out that even St Paul had collaborators - he quotes Silvanus and Timothy (cf. 1 Thes 1:1) and refers to others. He teaches that our work must be preceded, accompanied and followed by prayer - prayer that “*constantly mentions you*” and he points out that “*God has chosen you*”.

We should bring the Holy Father's message to all we meet, particularly in our daily lives, whether this is in our homes, offices, places of work or among Our Lords the Sick, among whom we work.

Above all, he urges us to *“learn from the Mother of the Lord and our Mother to be humble and at the same time courageous, simple and prudent, meek and strong, not with the strength of the World but with the strength of the Truth”*.

I am sure that all of us in the Order of Malta will answer the Holy Father's call for action and that we can look forward to an increase in our own Faith and to an increase in that of others whom we meet.

Fra' Matthew Festing
H.M.E.H. The Prince
and Grand Master

INTRODUCTION

(translated from Italian)

With the Apostolic Letter “*Ubicumque et Semper*” dated 21 September 2010 Pope Benedict XVI established the Pontifical Council for the New Evangelization. I believe it is my duty, in this introduction, to quote some of the statements made by the Supreme Pontiff to explain this decision.

In the Apostolic Letter we read: “*Hence the mission of evangelization, a continuation of the work desired by the Lord Jesus, is necessary for the Church: it cannot be overlooked; it is an expression of her very nature ... In our own time, it has been particularly challenged by an abandonment of the faith—a phenomenon progressively more manifest in societies and cultures which for centuries seemed to be permeated by the Gospel*”.

“*Only a re-evangelization*”, the Pope adds, “*can assure the growth of a clear and deep faith*”. Benedict XVI also speaks of “*some areas that have almost completely abandoned the Christian religion, where the light of the faith is entrusted to the witness of small communities*”.

Benedict XVI did not fail to refer to the actions taken by his predecessor: “*John Paul II made this urgent*

task a central point of his far-reaching Magisterial teaching, referring to it as the “new evangelization,” which he systematically explored in depth on numerous occasions—a task that still bears upon the Church today, particularly in regions christianized long ago”.

The Holy Father reaffirmed his intentions when receiving the participants in the first plenary assembly of the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of the New Evangelization in the Clementine Hall of the Vatican on 30 May 2001: *“The term, “new evangelization” recalls the need for a renewed manner of proclamation, especially for those who live in a context, like the one today, in which the development of secularization has had a heavy impact, even in traditionally Christian countries”.*

On the same occasion, H.E. Mgr. Rino Fisichella, President of the newly established Pontifical Council, stressed *“the climate of cultural change, which is one of the most challenging in the history of humanity”*, and mentioned that *“announcing the Gospel to today’s world is a difficult path, but it deserves to be followed on account of the importance of its goal”.*

In the capital city of a country that once had many missionary vocations I have been told that many young people were not any longer able to iden-

tify the persons of the manger scene, which was still displayed in some show-windows at Christmas time. In the same country, precisely in the parish of my neighborhood, the priest had organized so called “alpha” catecheses for people that know practically nothing about the Christian faith.

Dedicating an issue of the Journals of Spirituality to the new evangelization is an expression of our conviction that the Order of Malta has the duty to take on the challenge that the Holy Father has proposed to the Church. In October 2012, the XIII General Ordinary Assembly of the Synod of Bishops will be held in Rome on the topic “*The new evangelization for the transmission of the Christian faith*”.

We will follow this event well-prepared and with an open mind.

A.A.

NEW EVANGELIZATION

(translated from Italian)

Benedict XVI's decision to establish the Pontifical Council for Promoting the New Evangelization was made official during the celebration of the First Vespers on the Eve of the Feast of Saints Peter and Paul. In his homily in the Basilica of St Paul Outside the Walls, the Pope said: *"I have decided to create a new organism, in the form of a pontifical council, with the principal task of promoting a renewed evangelization in the countries where the first proclamation of faith has already resounded and where there are churches of ancient foundation present, but which are living through a progressive secularization of society and a kind of "eclipse of the sense of God" which constitutes a challenge to find the appropriate means to propose again the perennial truth of the Gospel of Christ"*. The new dicastery was officially created with the Apostolic Letter *Ubicumque et Semper* of 21 September 2010. The choice of the date, the feast of St Matthew, is symbolic and has a clear significance: the new evangelization has continuity with Christ's command to send his Apostles throughout the world and this mandate is underpinned by the Gospel. I

think the foundation of this new Council can be considered “prophetic”. I use the adjective intentionally, because it does not only mean looking at the present with the intention of providing a significant response to the great challenges it poses; it also means looking to the future to understand how the Church will be called to perform its ministry in a world undergoing the great cultural changes that herald the start of a new epoch for humanity. With this prophetic thought, the Pope reinvigorates the Church’s missionary spirit, especially in those places where faith seems to have been weakened by the influence of secularism.

The Pontifical Council for the New Evangelization thus possesses an important background that provides it with a solid foundation and guidance for its future commitment and I am convinced that this dicastery is one of the sweetest fruits of Vatican II. Rereading the words of John XXIII fifty years after its establishment we immediately find references to the changed rapport with God in the modern world, to the need to rediscover the appropriate formulas for understanding the Gospel. Ten years after Council Vatican II, Paul VI convened the

Synod of Bishops to discuss the theme of evangelization, and his Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (1975) is still relevant. We do not find the expression “new evangelization” in this Exhortation, and yet it speaks clearly of a new way of proclaiming the Gospel. These pages are also an impressive analysis of the changes occurring in a world destabilized by general unrest. For chronological reasons the Council was not fully aware of them, but these issues were present in the Synod, just as the Church’s desire to rediscover the highway of its mission was also evident.

It was John Paul II who introduced the expression “new evangelization” in his magisterial teaching. It is not clear if the Pope had fully realized the real movement that would have been created but, albeit obliquely, there was a suggestion of the road to take, with a fortunate confirmation in the different forms of the pastoral. As a consequence, many ecclesial movements understood that their action should be steered towards this horizon. Many understood the urgency of Paul’s words and took them to heart: “*If I preach the gospel, this is no reason for me to boast, for an obligation has been imposed on me, and woe to me if I do not pre-*

ach it!” (1 Cor 9:16), injecting enthusiasm and strength to overcome weariness and confusion. The new evangelization shows the fundamental core the Church has to deal with over the centuries, because it is part of its nature. But it also demonstrates that the repeated solutions put forward over the last decades, albeit full of good intentions, seem insufficient and a new commitment is required to involve directly the Church.

There is a real danger that “new evangelization” can seem an abstract formula and thus its meaning and aims need to be clearly explained. Two expressions seem to me particularly effective. The first indicates the content and the second proposes the methodology. The new evangelization takes its inspiration from the Letter to the Hebrews: “*Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever*” (Heb 13:8). Nothing ever changes or alters. What is announced today is exactly the same as that announced during the first day of Christianity. The second expression is the *magna carta* of the Christian apologia: “*Always be ready to give an explanation to anyone who asks you for a reason for your hope*” (1 Pt 3:15). Words that retain their significance in the various regions of our little world where

Christians are made martyrs. Believers will always be asked to “give an explanation” for their faith. Apologia is not extraneous to believing, on the contrary it fully belongs to the act with which one enters the logic of faith. This act has to be carried out freely; it has to be the fruit of a total abandonment to God in which we entrust ourselves to Him with our intellect and will. Regrettably not many believers seem to have been eager to explain their faith, at least during the last decades. We are deluded if we imagine that the new evangelization can be achieved by merely renewing past formulas. Certainly, the solution does not lie in inventing novel means to satisfy a modern world in constant movement, so uncritically eager for new experiences. The road to take is not simple and it requires remaining faithful to the essence. Only in this way will it be possible to build something that is consistent with its spirit, but also able to be accepted and understood by people different from those of the past.

The path of the new evangelisation is thus mapped out. We are called to renew the announcement of Jesus Christ, of the mystery of His death and resurrection, reviving faith in Him by a conversion of life.

If our eyes were still capable of observing clearly the events that mark our present-day life, it would be easy to prove that this announcement still occupies a special place. Thus we must prompt reflection on the sense of life and death, on a life beyond death; Jesus Christ has to be part of these concerns marking our existence and determining our identity. If the proclamation of the new evangelization is not underpinned with the element of mystery that envelops life and which relates to Jesus Christ's infinite mystery of God, it will not be effective when asking for the response of faith. The new evangelization thus requires the ability to explain your faith, showing that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, the only saviour of humanity. The possibility of offering today's world the answer it awaits depends on this ability.

The new evangelization starts from here: from the conviction that grace acts and transforms until it converts hearts, and from the credibility of our witness. Looking towards the future with the certainty of hope enables us to move forward from that romanticism which looks only to the past or from believing in an utopia, fascinated by theories that cannot be corroborated. Faith engages us in the world in which

we live and not responding to it signifies ignorance and fear, something that we as Christians cannot allow. Staying closed in our churches could give us some consolation, but it would render the Pentecost worthless. It is time to throw open the doors and return to announcing the resurrection of Christ of which we are witnesses. As St Ignatius Bishop of Antioch wrote at the dawn of Christianity: *“It is not sufficient to bear the name of Christians without the reality”*. If people today want to recognize Christians they must do it by their engagement in faith and not by their good intentions.

Archbishop Rino Fisichella
President of the Pontifical Council
for the Promotion of the New Evangelisation

EVANGELIZATION TODAY

(translated from Italian)

During the XX century Christianity experienced a great expansion albeit the percentage of Christians compared to global demographic growth dropped from 34.4% to 33.2%. Certain regions of the world, and in particular the Far East and the Indian sub-continent, are still essentially untouched by evangelization. This consideration has prompted some theologians to question the duty of evangelizing, since in their opinion following Christ is only one of the ways of achieving salvation.

We know that John Paul II reacted to this approach with his Encyclical *Redemptoris Missio* (December 7, 1990), in which he affirmed that “*Christ is the one Saviour of all, the only one able to reveal God and lead to God*” (5). For people of all time, therefore, Christ has “an absolute and universal significance” (6). This obviously does not mean there is nothing true in other religions. However it is a truth that tends to be all-round, revealed in Jesus Christ. Since God also wants the salvation of all – so the Pope reasons – the truth of the Gospel “*must be made concretely available to all*” (*ibid.* 10). Hence

the unavoidable duty of evangelization. The Church is thus missionary by its very nature. Following the example of the Good Shepherd, it is continually seeking the lost sheep (cf. Jn 10, 1:18). But it must not be forgotten that every Christian, as a member of the Church, is a participant in this missionary task. The Pope clearly asserts it “*The Church, and every individual Christian within her, may not keep hidden or monopolize this newness and richness which has been received from God’s bounty in order to be communicated to all mankind*” (*ibid.* n.11).

An initial conclusion is necessary here: if such a task concerns every Christian, then the Knights and Dames of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta, who justly honour *tuitio fidei* as their eternal emblem, should feel even more involved. The service to the Gospel is thus a significant duty for those who are proud to belong to the *melitense* Order.

Today, in the wake of a phrase coined by Pope John Paul II, we speak of a “new evangelization”. This does not mean a “new” content of the proclamation of the Gospel, as if what was announced yesterday no longer applies today. By “new evangelization” we mean not only the need to take into account the innovations in society with which the

Church has to come to terms but also the recent technologies which Christians today must use to proclaim the eternal message of the Gospel. Naturally, the reference to the “new” must never allow us to lose sight of how, precisely in the light of the Gospel, the proclamation must be made. It must first of all be based on personal witness: “*You are,*” said Jesus, “*witnesses of these things*” (Lk 24:48); it must encourage interpersonal relationships: “*Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations*” (Mt 28:19); it must be spread throughout the universe: “*Go into the whole world and proclaim the gospel to every creature*” (Mk 16:15).

It would be ingenious to think that this is an easy path. Paul VI was already demonstrating that, if the Church tries to model itself according to Christ’s will, it inevitably come up against the worldly environment in which it lives or to which it is getting closer (cf. *Ecclesiam Suam*, 60). Hence, to carry out its mission properly, it has continuously to step back from its surroundings, it has to “detach itself” from the world. A Church that finds itself comfortable in this world and settles there, a Church satisfied with itself because it considers it is accepted by a public to whose needs it has adapted, would no longer be the

Church of Christ. Did He not himself say about his disciples: *“They do not belong to the world any more than I belong to the world”* (Jn 17:16)?

Only a Church that constantly tries to be in step with its Lord can effectively offer the world the news which it most needs: the announcement that God truly exists and *“so loved the world that He gave His only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him might not perish but might have eternal life”* (Jn 3:16). Christians, to the extent in which they make room in their life for Christ, can also become credible witnesses to Him, proclaiming that He became a real man, lived with us, suffered and died for us and then rose again to remove the barriers of death and throw open to us the doors of the true life, the eternal life. This is the “news” for which each of us is waiting.

A very topical aspect of evangelization emerges here. By asserting that God has been made man, the Church at the same time proclaims the mystery of the singular dignity of man, a being God wanted in His image and likeness (cf. Jn 1:27), a being assumed by the Word made flesh for His entry into the world as Redeemer (cf. Jn 1:14). An immediate consequence of this fact of faith is that the human being has

always, in every situation, to be viewed with the greatest respect.

Instead there is a worrying lack of respect towards human beings today. Scientific progress has given us the technological possibility of manipulating our human nature: scientists can create new human beings according to certain plans and can deny existence to other human beings who do not correspond to this plan.

It is thus extremely important to establish the criteria for evaluating these interventions. It is clear that simple technological “feasibility” is not a sufficient criterion. But neither is the recourse to the principle of majority rule, the main criterion in modern democratic assemblies: what is good and what is bad is not decided by the majority. The valid criterion has to be whether a certain action is consistent with human nature and, in the end, with God’s creative Reason.

From the dawn of Christianity this criterion was clear to Christian thinkers who – as Pope Benedict XVI has recently demonstrated – were guided by encounters with both the Stoic philosophers and with the experts of the by then well-established Roman jurisprudence. A rich and stimulating reflection was prompted by that

meeting between lay and Christian thought, developing throughout the Middle Ages to arrive at the fundamental acquisitions of Enlightenment and thus the modern Declarations of Human Rights. St Paul had already pointed out in his Letter to the Romans: “*For when the Gentiles who do not have the law by nature observe the prescriptions of the law, they are a law for themselves even though they do not have the law. They show that the demands of the law are written in their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even defend them*” (2:14 ff.).

A fundamental chapter in the evangelization commitment concerns the Christian’s defence of the inviolable dignity of every human being, from conception to death. Many contemporaries who do not have the fortune of basking in the “additional light” that comes from faith often do not see the importance of this duty. “*Only he who knows God knows man,*” wrote Romano Guardini. Without the knowledge of the man who comes from God you can consider your fellow creature manipulable and, in certain circumstances, disposable. Faith in God has to help modern Christians develop a concrete commitment for the human being.

How can we ensure the unitary and concordant

witness of believers in a pluralistic and discordant world like ours, an indispensable assumption if they are to influence public opinion? An initial response is that the guide which all believers must follow is the Word of God contained in the Holy Scripture. Obviously, an “intellectualistic” reading of this Word is not enough, there must be an approach of meditation and prayer, capable of nourishing the soul and steering it towards that knowledge of the mysteries that God revealed only to the simple (cf. Mt 11:25).

It should not even be an “individualistic” reading because God entrusted to the Church the treasure of his Revelation, which examines its riches with the aid of the Holy Spirit as promised to the Apostles and their successors (cf. Jn 14:26; 15:26; Acts 15:28 etc.). Committed believers will thus listen to the authentic magisterium of the Church but will also take into account the often valid proposals emerging from other believers’ study of the Word of God.

I am sure that the Knights and Dames of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta, for centuries engaged in bearing witness to Christ, albeit during very different historical situations, will continue with renewed enthusiasm in their service to the Gospel,

well aware of the glorious past that honours them and firm in their decision not to betray the trust that the Church has always put in them.

Card. Paolo Sardi

Cardinalis Patronus of the Order

SCRIPTURAL AND THEOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF EVANGELIZATION

The verb *euangelisēsai* derives from the noun *euangélion* (gospel): This is what everybody, who has dealt with this question, writes¹. In ancient language (both Hebrew and Greek) this term indicates the “reward” granted the messenger bringing the good news; in the Greek world, in particular, *euangélion* also means the joyful message for the military victories and the benefits granted by the sovereign. In the New Testament the term is not used in this sense, but rather with the specific meaning of announcement/conveyance of the

¹ For further information please see: G. COLOMBO, *Sulla evangelizzazione*, Milan 1997; R. CALVO PÉREZ, *Evangelización*, in “Diccionario del sacerdocio”, Profesores de la Facultad de Teología de Burgos (dirs), BAC, Madrid 2005, p. 283-289; P. GIGLIONI, *La nozione di nuova evangelizzazione nel magistero*, in «Seminarium» 31 (1991), p. 35-55; PAUL VI, *L'evangelizzazione: discorsi e interventi*, introduction by G. COLOMBO, Rome 1995; J. ÈSQUERDA BIFET, *Teologia della evangelizzazione*, Brescia 1980; E. FRANCHINI - O. CATTANI (editors), *Nuova evangelizzazione: la discussione, le proposte*, Bologna 1991; J. GRAND'MAISON, *Seconda evangelizzazione* [1973]. I. I testimoni, II. Gli strumenti, III. I progetti, Bologna 1975-76; K. LEHMANN, *Che cosa significa «nuova evangelizzazione»*, in «Communio» 19 (1992), 124, p. 63-70; *La missione del Redentore. Studi sull'enciclica missionaria di Giovanni Paolo II*, Leumann (TO) 1992; G. GISMONDI, *Nuova evangelizzazione e cultura*, Bologna 1993; *La nuova evangelizzazione*, presentation by G.P. SALVINI, Rome 1995; G. COLZANI, *Evangelizzazione*, in “Dizionario di Ecclesiologia” (edited by G. CALABRESE - P. GOYRET - O.F. PIAZZA), Rome 2010, p. 659-675.

good news of Christ's victory over sin and death (*kerygma* or *euangélion*). The Gospel is the good and novel news of divine salvation of God through Jesus Christ.

Evangelization was the task of Jesus Christ (cf. Lk 4:18; he has come to evangelize the poor), and it is the primary task also for the apostles who are faithful to the assignment received from Jesus (Mt 24:14, 26:12; cf. also Mt 28:19; Mk 16:15 ff.), and for the Church of subsequent generations in the wake of the Apostles' preaching (cf. Acts 2-3; 1 Cor 9:16).

Evangelization thus has its origin in the instruction given by Jesus Christ to the Apostles. The Church is faithful to the same paschal assignment, and pursues its action under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. All of the Church's teachings (and in particular those of Benedict XVI) move along this line – with its rich nuances: *“It is the duty of the Church to proclaim always and everywhere the Gospel of Jesus Christ. He, the first and supreme evangelizer, commanded the Apostles on the day of his Ascension to the Father: “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you” (Mt 28:19-20). Faithful to this mandate, the Church – a people chosen by*

God to declare his wonderful deeds (cf. 1 Pt 2:9) – ever since she received the gift of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost (cf. Acts 2:14), has never tired of making known to the whole world the beauty of the Gospel as she preaches Jesus Christ, true God and true man, the same “yesterday and today and for ever” (Heb 13:8), who, by his death and Resurrection, brought us salvation and fulfilled the promise made of old. Hence the mission of evangelization, a continuation of the work desired by the Lord Jesus, is necessary for the Church: it cannot be overlooked; it is an expression of her very nature”².

Evangelization is nothing else but “*the proposal to live one’s earthly life according to Jesus Christ*”³.

Evangelization has a trinitarian genesis and development, and it is rooted mainly in Incarnation and Pentecost. “*As you sent me into the world, so I sent them into the world*” (Jn 17:18); “*Go into the whole world and proclaim the gospel to every creature*” (Mk 16:15). The Logos incarnate becomes – through Easter – the Gospel of God: “*But you will receive power when the holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, throughout Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of*

² BENEDICT XVI, *Ubicumque et Semper*. Apostolic Letter in the form of *motu proprio*, September 21, 2010.

³ G. COLOMBO, *Sulla evangelizzazione*, Milan 1997, p. 27.

the earth” (Acts 1:8). The outpouring of the Spirit, “protagonist of evangelization”, inaugurates a new order in history and allows the announcement of the good news to resound and be heard by people of all languages, cultures and human conditions.⁴

Evangelization serves above all to build up the Kingdom of God in individual persons, in history and in the world. Paul VI wrote: “*As an evangelizer, Christ first of all proclaims a kingdom, the kingdom of God; and this is so important that, by comparison, everything else becomes the rest, which is given in addition. Only the kingdom therefore is absolute and it makes everything else relative. The Lord will delight in describing in many ways the happiness of belonging to this kingdom, a paradoxical happiness which is made up of things that the world rejects, the demands of the kingdom and its Magna Charta, the heralds of the kingdom, its mysteries; its children, the vigilance and fidelity demanded of whoever awaits its definitive coming*”⁵. And John Paul II added: “*The Church is effectively and concretely at the service of the kingdom ... But it must immediately be added that “this temporal dimension of the kingdom remains” incomplete unless it is related to the kingdom of Christ present in the*

⁴ Cf. R. CALVO PÉREZ, *Evangelización*, cit., p. 285.

⁵ PAUL VI, Apostolic Exhortation, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 8 (EN).

Church and straining towards eschatological fullness”⁶. This means that, when the Church evangelizes, it helps building the kingdom of God and it serves mankind.

Through the centuries, the history of evangelization thus becomes “*the history of the spread of Christianity and of the conversions thereto, a history of the formation of new Christians*” through the credible witness of apostles, missionaries, evangelizers. But it is also and especially the effort of the Church (since its very beginning) to face the big challenges of cultural changes. The efforts for an inculturation of the faith, which is inseparably connected with evangelization, have been immense during all epochs. Especially in the last five centuries, this work was sometimes delayed – for instance in America and Asia – by “*misunderstandings and disputes about the best methods for inculturation of the faith among these peoples*”; in other cases, it only met with “*incomplete success*”, for instance in the “*contact with modern Renaissance, illuminist and scientific-industrial culture*”⁷.

If, on the one hand, the Church has never

⁶ JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter, *Redemptoris Missio*, 20 (RM).

⁷ U. GIANETTO, *L'evangelizzazione nella storia della chiesa*, in «Credereoggi», a. XII, n. 67, 1/1992, p. 5-14.

stopped evangelizing and has gained remarkable experience and wisdom over the centuries, we cannot deny, on the other hand, that there have also been periods of weariness. To speak with the words of G. Colombo: there has been a real “*sclerosation process*”, which, according to Colombo, “*reduced the Church’s capacity to perceive new developments and to rapidly adapt to the same*”. We have indeed to admit that in some periods “*the Church used its evangelization methods far too long, repeating them instead of renewing them*”⁸.

It is therefore true that evangelization always represents “*the fundamental and most challenging issue for the Church*”⁹. As a commitment, it is far from being concluded. Pope John Paul II reminded us of this some years ago: “*The mission of Christ the Redeemer, which is entrusted to the Church, is still very far from completion. As the second millennium after Christ’s coming draws to an end, an overall view of the human race shows that this mission is still only beginning and that we must commit ourselves wholeheartedly to its service*” (RM, 1). The same concept is strongly confirmed by Benedict XVI: “*Even in the deserts of the secularized world, man’s soul thirsts for God, for*

⁸ G. COLOMBO, *Sulla evangelizzazione*, Milan 1997, p. 10.

⁹ *Ibid.* p. 7.

*the living God. ... There are regions of the world that are still awaiting a first evangelization; others that have received it, but need a deeper intervention; yet others in which the Gospel put down roots a long time ago, giving rise to a true Christian tradition but in which, in recent centuries with complex dynamics the secularization process has produced a serious crisis of the meaning of the Christian faith and of belonging to the Church". He then adds: "From this perspective, I have decided to create a new body, in the form of a "Pontifical Council", whose principal task will be to promote a renewed evangelization in the countries where the first proclamation of the faith has already resonated and where Churches with an ancient foundation exist but are experiencing the progressive secularization of society and a sort of "eclipse of the sense of God", which pose a challenge to finding appropriate to propose anew the perennial truth of Christ's Gospel"*¹⁰.

Before the Second Vatican Council, the term "evangelization" was used mainly in reformed churches. The Catholic Church preferred the word "missions", which included all activities deployed by the Church in the performance of its missionary, catechumenal and pastoral action – from the first

¹⁰ BENEDICT XVI, *First Vespers for the Solemnity of the Apostles Peter and Paul*, Homily. June 28, 2010.

announcements to non-Christians to the celebration of the sacraments. The Protestant A. Duff – as R. Calvo Pérez and others have reminded us – was the first to use this term during a congress in New York in 1854. In 1900, on the occasion of the United States Presbyterian Conference, R. Speer defined evangelization as the “*teaching and preaching of the pure Gospel of salvation*”, or as “*the opportunity to know Jesus Christ as one’s own Lord and Saviour*”.

In the documents of the Second Vatican Council the term “evangelization” appears approximately thirty times, and it has various meanings. The first is missionary teaching, i.e. the first announcement (cf. *Ad Gentes*, 6). In another context, it has a broader meaning, i.e. a global outlook on the whole ministry of the Word and not only on the first announcement (cf. *Lumen Gentium*, 35; *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, 5; *Gaudium et Spes*, 44). A third interpretation sees evangelization as the Church’s entire missionary work (especially in the Decree *Ad Gentes*; cf. 20, 35, 38-41).

The fact remains that during the Council and in the years immediately following the terminology remains changeable.

It was during the preparation and progress of

the Synod of Bishops about evangelization (1974) and in the context of the theology of liberation that the issue of the manifold meaning of the term “evangelization” appeared in its full scope. The bishops did not succeed in finding a single definition that satisfied everybody, so they left the Pope with the task of finding a synthesis.

And indeed the synthesis arrived! In *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (1975) Paul VI describes evangelization not on the basis of the given situation, but starting from Christ, who is presented as an evangelizer through his words, actions and signs (EN, 6-12). From Christ the Pope then proceeds to defining the mission of the Church. For Paul VI, “*evangelizing means bringing the Good News into all the strata of humanity, and through its influence transforming humanity from within*” (EN, 18); evangelizing “*is the vocation proper to the Church*” (EN, 14). The Church must evangelize: Evangelization is rich, complex and dynamic. “*This question of “how to evangelize” is permanently relevant, because the methods of evangelizing vary according to the different circumstances of time, place and culture, and because they thereby present a certain challenge to our capacity for discovery and adaptation*”, especially for lay people (EN, 17 and 40). In brief:

Evangelization involves *“an explicit message, adapted to the different situations constantly being realized, about the rights and duties of every human being, about family life without which personal growth and development is hardly possible, about life in society, about international life, peace, justice and development - a message especially energetic today about liberation”* (EN, 29). Liberation and human development are not alien to evangelization. Paul VI finds a threefold connection of an anthropological, theological and evangelical kind: *“Between evangelization and human advancement - development and liberation- there are in fact profound links. These include links of an anthropological order, because the man who is to be evangelized is not an abstract being but is subject to social and economic questions. They also include links in the theological order, since one cannot dissociate the plan of creation from the plan of Redemption. The latter plan touches the very concrete situations of injustice to be combated and of justice to be restored. They include links of the eminently evangelical order, which is that of charity: how in fact can one proclaim the new commandment without promoting in justice and in peace the true, authentic advancement of man? We ourselves have taken care to point this “that in evangelization one could or should ignore the importance of the problems so much discussed today, concerning justice, liberation, development and peace*

in the world. This would be to forget the lesson which comes to us from the Gospel concerning love of our neighbour who is suffering and in need.” The same voices which during the Synod touched on this burning theme with zeal, intelligence and courage have, to our great joy, furnished the enlightening principles for a proper understanding of the importance and profound meaning of liberation, such as it was proclaimed and achieved by Jesus of Nazareth and such as it is preached by the Church” (EN, 31).

According to Paul VI, the challenge of inculturation is best met by those people who focus (in the wake of GS, 50) on an evangelization of the cultures in their anthropological richness, thus overcoming the equation between Christianity and Western culture: *“The Gospel, and therefore evangelization, are certainly not identical with culture, and they are independent in regard to all cultures. Nevertheless, the kingdom which the Gospel proclaims is lived by men who are profoundly linked to a culture, and the building up of the kingdom cannot avoid borrowing the elements of human culture or cultures. Though independent of cultures, the Gospel and evangelization are not necessarily incompatible with them; rather they are capable of permeating them all without becoming subject to any one of them. The split between the Gospel and culture is without a doubt the drama*

of our time, just as it was of other times. Therefore every effort must be made to ensure a full evangelization of culture, or more correctly of cultures. They have to be regenerated by an encounter with the Gospel. But this encounter will not take place if the Gospel is not proclaimed” (EN, 20). At the same time, Paul VI underlined the general standard of “*priority of the Gospel’s truth as compared to culture*” as a basis on which the new synthesis between Christianity and cultures may be built. Not all cultures are alike; they possess not only values, but also signs of evil and distortions that the Gospel tries to correct. In this sense, missionary activities allow such cultures to purify and elevate themselves, since they are put in contact with the Gospel.

The problem of inculturation – as G. Colombo has put it – is tied to the development of “contextual theologies”, according to which the “actual situation” is the place where “truth shows itself”, and such truth exists only in “historical forms”, i.e. “shaped by a certain environment”. In this idea the insubstantiality of a purely verbal notion of evangelization comes to the surface and therefore the need to implement it “incorporating” the Gospel (“inculturation”) in current forms of life. This means that “*only those who have*

deeply assimilated a given culture, as far as they belong to it or converted to it, would be able to understand and convey the Gospel to that special environment. This point leads to the criticism concerning missionaries coming from other churches/cultures: they are allegedly not able to produce real inculturation. On the other hand, it is precisely the missionaries who represent a concrete method of building communion between churches, since this implies mutual enrichment of the same. And since culture and religion are closely linked (in some cases they even coincide, just think of Asia), the issue of inculturation leads to the third challenge that missionary activity was and is called to face: the encounter with other religions”¹¹.

Over the past forty years, the Magisterium focused on searching for deep answers to the many challenges connected with the Church’s evangelizing action: from the challenge of inculturation to the challenge of pluralist Christologies, from secularization to relativism and laicism.

These challenges led John Paul II to make “new evangelization” the pastoral programme of his pontificate, adapting evangelization to modernity.¹²

¹¹ G. COLOMBO, *L’evangelizzazione dalla Gaudium et spes alla «nuova evangelizzazione»*, in C. Ghidelli (editor), *A trent’anni dal Concilio. Memoria e profetia*, Rome 1995, p. 329-345.

¹² Cf. in particular A. AMATO, «*Redemptoris Missio*» come quadro

The late Pope asked for a new evangelization that was no simple duplication of the previous one or a return to old patterns. The best known and most commented remark was made by John Paul II in Latin America, precisely in Port-au-Prince (Haiti) on 9 March 1983, on the occasion of the XIX CELAM Assembly in the framework of the celebrations for the 500th anniversary of the continent's first evangelization. In 1983, the Pope demanded a new commitment “*not for re-evangelization, but for a new evangelization – new in its dedication, new in its methods and expressions*”.

Some years later, this time in Europe, John Paul II came back to this issue. On 21 May 1985 – during his visit to Belgium – he delivered a speech on “*Pastoral Guidelines for a New Evangelization*”. In October of the same year, during the IV Symposium of the European Bishops' Conferences, he spoke about “*Secularization and evangelization in today's Europe*”.

dottrinale dell'evangelizzazione nel mondo contemporaneo, in “Cristo Chiesa Uomo. Il Vaticano II nel pontificato di Giovanni Paolo II”, Atti del Convegno Internazionale promosso dalla Pontificia Facoltà Teologica San Bonaventura-Seraphicum e dalla Fondazione Giovanni Paolo II Centro di Documentazione e Studio del Pontificato. Rome, October 28-30, 2008, edited by ZDZISLAW JÓZEF KIJAS Ofm Conv. ANDRZEJ DOBRZYŃSK, p. 206-219.

In the closing speech, the Pope reminded of the many “new challenges” that evangelization in Europe has to face because of the numerous “*cultural, political, social and economic changes*” we are experiencing. Europe’s special situation (since it is Christian by tradition) offered new possibilities for evangelization: this is why we are speaking of re-evangelization or second evangelization. Finally, with the Post-Synodal Exhortation *Christifideles Laici* (1988), new evangelization was devised as a universal, global process, and the Encyclical Letter *Redemptoris Missio* (1990) made new evangelization the Church’s official programme in the widest possible frame at the beginning of the new millennium¹³.

The various meetings of the Synod of Bishops are following the teachings of *Redemptoris Missio*. In particular, the *Lineamenta* drawn up in view of the XIII Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod, which will take place from 7 to 28 October, 2012, in the Vatican, bears the title “*The New Evangelization for the Transmission of the Christian Faith*”. In the first chapter of the *Lineamenta* we find the following definition:

¹³ Cf. A. AMATO, «*Redemptoris Missio*» come quadro dottrinale dell’evangelizzazione nel mondo contemporaneo, cit; R. CALVO PÉREZ, *Evangelización*, cit., p. 287.

“A “new evangelization” is synonymous with renewed spiritual efforts in the life of faith within the local Churches, starting with a process to discern the changes in various cultural and social settings and their impact on Christian life, to reread the memory of faith and to undertake new responsibilities and generate new energies to joyously and convincingly proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ” (5).

The Encyclical *Redemptoris Missio* is asking: *“Is the missionary work among non-Christians still relevant? Has not be replaced by inter-religious dialogue?... Is not possible attain salvation in any religion? Why then should be missionary activity?” (RM, 4).*

The same Encyclical declares: *“The Council makes frequent reference to the Church’s role in the salvation of mankind. While acknowledging that God loves all people and grants them the possibility of being saved (cf. 1 Tim 2:4), the Church believes that God has established Christ as the one mediator and she herself has been established as the universal sacrament of salvation...It is necessary to keep these two truths together, namely the possibility of salvation in Christ for all mankind and necessity of Church for salvation” (RM, 9).* And later on: *“Through dialogue, the Church seeks to uncover the “seeds of the Word”, a “ray of that truth which enlightens all men”, these are found in individual and in religious*

traditions?” (RM, 56).

Also the Catechism of the Catholic Church is considering this problem: *Outside the Church there is no salvation. How are we to understand this affirmation often repeated by the Church Fathers? Re-formulated positively, it means that all salvation comes from Christ the Head through the Church which is his Body ... they could not be saved who, knowing that the Catholic Church was found as necessary by grace, try in their actions to do his will as they know it through the dictates of their conscience – those may achieve eternal salvation. Although in way known to himself God can lead those through no fault of their own, are ignorant of the Gospel, to that faith without which it is impossible to please him, the Church still has the obligation and also the sacred right to evangelize all men?*” (nn. 846, 847, 848).

In our days, evangelization must be viewed as a global, complex and dynamic process, which requires a contribution by all the baptized (cf. *Christifideles Laici*, 33). The Church must be able to constantly leave the “Cenacle” to make its courageous proclamation. Sharing the faith through a Word that is believed, announced and lived remains of crucial importance.

The Church evangelizes, yes, but at the same

time it must itself be evangelized in the first place through constant conversion and renewal so that it may evangelize the world in a credible manner. Paul VI stressed this point in the Post-Synodal Exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi*: “*The Church is an evangelizer, but she begins by being evangelized herself. She is the community of believers, the community of hope lived and communicated, the community of brotherly love, and she needs to listen unceasingly to what she must believe, to her reasons for hoping, to the new commandment of love. She is the People of God immersed in the world, and often tempted by idols, and she always needs to hear the proclamation of the “mighty works of God” which converted her to the Lord; she always needs to be called together afresh by Him and reunited. In brief, this means that she has a constant need of being evangelized, if she wishes to retain freshness, vigour and strength in order to proclaim the Gospel*” (EN, 15).

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REREADING THE *EVANGELII NUNTIANDI* OF PAUL VI

(translated from Italian)

Pope Benedict XVI, in his Apostolic Letter *Ubicumque et semper* – quoted in the Premise to this edition of the Journals of Spirituality – with which he establishes the Pontifical Council for Promoting the New Evangelization (21-IX-2010), before referring to his predecessor Blessed John Paul II writes: “*With foresight, the Servant of God Paul VI noted that the task of evangelization, as a result of the frequent situations of dechristianization in our day, also proves equally necessary for innumerable people who have been baptized but who live quite outside Christian life (Evangelii Nuntianti, 52)*”. There are in fact frequent consonances between Benedict XVI and Paul VI in their respective encyclicals and in the Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Nuntianti*.

The situation today is similar to that of the years of Paul VI’s pontificate; the phenomenon of dechristianization is even more widespread and there is an even greater despondency, especially in the countries with ancient Christian history.

I

The Times and Reasons of *Evangelii Nuntiandi*

In the autumn of 1973, the third General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops was held in Rome to address the issue of evangelization. There were animated speeches, especially by bishops coming from the Third World. Following that assembly, Paul VI for the first time promulgated an Apostolic Exhortation on the theme treated by the Synod, enriching it with pontifical doctrine and authority and imposing a new impetus to the Church's commitment to evangelization.

The pontifical document aroused much interest and is, under many aspects, still relevant today. I thought it useful to reread it in the light of this Journal's theme. In his first encyclical *Ecclesiam Suam* (1964) Paul VI declared that: "*The Church realizes what is God's will in its regard, it will gain for itself a great store of energy, and in addition will conceive the need for pouring out this energy in the service of all men. It will have a clear awareness of a mission received from God, of a message to be spread far and wide. Here lies the source of our evangelical duty*". This concept is reiterated in the speech to the Synod Assembly (October 1974): "*The task of evangelizing all people constitutes the*

Church's essential mission?

Paul VI was very aware of the anxieties of society “*at this time of uncertainty and confusion*” (EN, 1). “*This first proclamation is addressed especially to those who have never heard the Good News of Jesus ... But, as a result of the frequent situations of dechristianization in our day, it also proves equally necessary for innumerable people who have been baptized but who live quite outside Christian life*” (EN, 52). Paul VI then continued: “*Atheistic secularism and the absence of religious practice are found among adults and among the young, among the leaders of society and among the ordinary people, at all levels of education, and in both the old Churches and the young ones*” (EN, 56).

In his Apostolic Exhortation, the Pontiff places an emphasis on the task of evangelization entrusted to the Church: “*bringing the Good News into all the strata of humanity, and through its influence transforming humanity from within and making it new ... solely through the divine power of the message she proclaims, both the personal and collective consciences of people, the activities in which they engage, and the lives and concrete milieu which are theirs*” (EN, 18).

Paul VI was particularly concerned with the conditions of the world's populations. He expressed this profound interest in his Encyclical *Populorum progressio*

(1967), widely quoted in Benedict XVI's Encyclical *Caritas in Veritate*; *Evangelii Nuntiandi* also bears a clear impression of this preoccupation which, from the viewpoint of the Gospels, extends to the evils afflicting those countries.

The Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi*.

The pontifical document consists of an introduction, seven parts and the conclusion. The seven parts are entitled: “*From Christ Evangelizer to the Church Evangelizer – What Evangelizing Means – The Content of Evangelization – The Paths of Evangelization – The Recipients of Evangelization – The Workers of Evangelization – The Spirit of Evangelization.*” This article does not propose to analyse the entire text of the Apostolic Exhortation, but solely to illustrate some salient points regarding: “*The Purpose of Evangelization – The Recipients of Evangelization – The Evangelizers.*” In a second part, some *teachings of the pontifical document pertinent to the Order of Malta* will be briefly highlighted.

The Purpose of Evangelization

Central Core of Evangelization

In the Preamble to his Apostolic Exhortation, Paul VI states that the evangelical message is necessary and irreplaceable because “*it is a question of people’s salvation. It is the beauty of the Revelation that it represents. It brings with it a wisdom...*”

Jesus is the first evangelizer. What is His message? “*As the kernel and centre of His Good News, Christ proclaims salvation, this great gift of God*” (EN, 9). The kingdom of God and salvation are the key words of Jesus’ evangelization. “*There is no true evangelization if the name, the teaching, the life, the promises, the kingdom and the mystery of Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God are not proclaimed*” (EN, 22). This fundamental point has to be understood as a priority as much as the social aspects linked to evangelization. Thus the proclamation of salvation lies at the core of evangelization, “*a transcendent and eschatological salvation, which indeed has its beginning in this life but which is fulfilled in eternity*” (EN, 27).

The Church, whose essential mission is evangelization, also represents its subject. The adherence to the Kingdom that is announced “*cannot remain abstract*

and unincarnated, reveals itself concretely by a visible entry into a community of believers: the Church is the “visible sacrament of salvation”; where the “adherence to the Church, and acceptance of the sacraments, which manifest and support this adherence” is vital (EN, 23).

Evangelization and Liberation

Paul VI, who in the Synod had heard the appeal of numerous bishops from all the continents, and especially from the Third World, in the name of the people “*engaged ... in the effort and struggle to overcome everything which condemns them to remain on the margin of life: famine, chronic disease, illiteracy, poverty, injustices in international relations and especially in commercial exchanges, situations of economic and cultural neo-colonialism,*” writes: “*the Church, as the bishops repeated, has the duty to proclaim the liberation of millions of human beings, many of whom are her own children – the duty of assisting the birth of this liberation, of giving witness to it, of ensuring that it is complete,*” and concludes that “*this is not foreign to evangelization*” (EN, 30). “*Between evangelization and human advancement – development and liberation – there are in fact profound links*” (EN, 31).

On the basis of these assertions, and with no

less firmness, the Apostolic Exhortation specifies that: “the Church links human liberation and salvation in Jesus Christ, but she never identifies them” and warns “the Church cannot accept violence ... as the path to liberation” (EN, 37). The Church acts in another spirit: “The work of evangelization presupposes in the evangelizer an ever increasing love for those whom he is evangelizing” (EN, 79). This does not mean that the commitment is less: *“She is trying more and more to encourage large numbers of Christians to devote themselves to the liberation of men. She is providing these Christian “liberators” with the inspiration of faith, the motivation of fraternal love, a social teaching”* (EN, 38).

When *Evangelii Nuntiandi* came out, the so-called liberation theology was already a growing phenomenon in various parts of the world, and especially in the Latin American countries where it was steering sectors of the Church, and especially religious orders, in dangerous and often uncertain directions. Two interventions of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith were needed to explain both the negative and positive aspects of this “theology”. In any event, *Evangelii Nuntiandi* had already clearly asserted the relationship between evangelization and liberation.

As said earlier, in his Encyclical *Caritas in Veritate*

Pope Benedict XVI repeatedly referred to Paul VI, dedicating the entire first chapter to “*The Message of Populorum Progressio*”. There are also references to *Evangelii Nuntiandi* in that chapter. After having quoted the passage indicating the existence of links between evangelization and human promotion (see above), *Caritas in Veritate* comments: “Paul VI clearly presented the relationship between the proclamation of Christ and the advancement of the individual in society. Testimony to Christ’s charity, through works of justice, peace and development, is part and parcel of evangelization, because Jesus Christ, who loves us, is concerned with the whole person” (15).

Recipients of Evangelization

The Gospel message has a universal range: “*For the Church, evangelizing means bringing the Good News into all the strata of humanity, and through its influence transforming humanity from within and making it new*” (EN, 18); it is addressed to people’s conscience and heart to convert them (EN, 4). In this universal destination, the Apostolic Exhortation *privileges the poor* (EN, 6) *and the dechristianised world*: “*This first proclamation is addressed*

especially to those who have never heard the Good News of Jesus, or to children. But, as a result of the frequent situations of dechristianisation in our day, it also proves equally necessary for innumerable people who have been baptized but who live quite outside Christian life, for simple people who have a certain faith but an imperfect knowledge of the foundations of that faith, for intellectuals who feel the need to know Jesus Christ in a light different from the instruction they received as children” (EN, 52). It is also addressed those who do not believe and those who do not practice (EN, 55,56).

An entire number (20) is devoted to the *evangelization of cultures*. Paul VI observes that: “... *the split between the Gospel and culture is without a doubt the drama of our time, just as it was of other times. Therefore every effort must be made to ensure a full evangelization of culture, or more correctly of cultures*”. Paul VI’s affinity with intellectuals is known, that with the philosopher Jean Guitton is testified to in his book “Dialogues avec Paul VI”¹. At the end of Vatican Council II, the Pope personally delivered to Jacques Maritain the Message of the Council to Intellectuals.

¹ JEAN GUITTON, *Dialogues avec Paul VI*, ed. Fayard 1967.

The Evangelizers

“All Christians are called ... to be real evangelizers.” (EN, 21). If the destination of the Gospels is universal, no Christian can shirk the task of proclaiming it. Next to such a far-reaching affirmation, Paul VI makes a no less resolute observation: *“Modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if he does listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses”*. The importance of a witness of a Christian life is frequently stressed in the exhortation.

If the witness of a Christian life is already in itself a proclamation, then predication, catechesis, modern communication means and the introduction to the sacramental life are also obviously necessary. The pope, bishops, priests, and religious have a special task since in the consecrated life they are witnesses of holiness and the radical demands of the beatitudes (EN, 67-70).

The field of evangelizing activity for lay people lies in the vast and complicated world of politics, of society, of the family, of professional work and of suffering (EN, 70). Young people are also called to be apostles of youth (EN, 72).

The Apostolic Exhortation points out essential conditions for real effectiveness in evangelization: *“The world which, paradoxically, despite innumerable signs of the denial of God, is nevertheless searching for Him in unexpected ways and painfully experiencing the need of Him – the world is calling for evangelizers to speak to it of a God whom the evangelists themselves should know and be familiar with as if they could see the invisible (cf. Heb 11:27). The world calls for and expects from us simplicity of life, the spirit of prayer, charity towards all, especially towards the lowly and the poor, obedience and humility, detachment and self-sacrifice. Without this mark of holiness, our word will have difficulty in touching the heart of modern man”* (EN, 76). *“As evangelizers, we must offer Christ’s faithful not the image of people divided and separated by unedifying quarrels, but the image of people who are mature in faith and capable of finding a meeting-point beyond the real tensions, thanks to a shared, sincere and disinterested search for truth”* (EN, 77).

II

***Evangelii Nuntiandi* for the Order of Malta**

The Order of Malta has to face the challenges presented with the *New Evangelization* and a rereading of *Evangelii Nuntiandi* offers some pointers for this

task. The English title of the Apostolic Exhortation is “Evangelization in the Modern World”. The times of Paul VI’s documents are not very different from those in which the Order of Malta, its members and its institutions, are now operating. In reality, the estrangement from the faith and Christian values has increased in the countries of ancient Christian history, including the European ones in which the Order has the highest proportion of Members.

The Essence of the Church.

Paul VI has been adamant in stating that evangelization is an essential mission of the Church and that “*all Christians are called ... to be real evangelizers*”. First of all, it is important for each Member of the Order to feel and experience their membership in the Church. Romano Guardini, in his book “*The Essence of the Church*”, writes two phrases worthy of reflection: “*What concerns the Church also concerns me. The same “new life” pulsating in the Church and in the Christian community*”². “*I am a Christian personality to the extent to which I am a member of the Church and it is alive in me*”³.

² R. GUARDINI, *Il senso della Chiesa*, ed. Morcelliana, 2007, p. 42.

³ *Ibid.* p. 45.

The Order of Malta, in its quality as a lay-religious Order, has a greater responsibility for evangelization. According to the rules set down in the “*Regulations and Commentary*”⁴, its members of the first, second and third classes are more closely linked to the Church, with a greater participation in its evangelizing mission.

The Means of Evangelization

Witness. Paul VI has firmly stressed the value of witness for evangelization purposes. Witness is even more important for the Members of the Order of Malta because of the nature of the order they belong to and also for the negative impact that any counter witness has on the Order’s image and on its capacity to influence society. Albeit society has moved away from religiousness and often from Christian values, it is still responsive to the example offered by other people, by the family and by the group belonged to. There is an intrinsic ability to spread evangelical values in the witness of a life consistent with

⁴ *Preamble* 3,b, p. 7, 18

Christian principles. Hence the lapidary words in the Apostolic Exhortation: “*Evangelized to evangelize*”.

Spreading. St. Peter tells the Christians to be “*always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have*” (I Pt 3:15). The Apostle’s words contain a dual recommendation: preparation in the doctrine of the faith and the courage to spread it.

Among the **means of evangelization**, the Pope’s exhortation dwells on one which is within everyone’s reach: person-to-person communication. Many people have an almost instinctive restraint in talking about their faith. Paul VI exhorts us not to “*forget this form of proclamation whereby an individual’s personal conscience is reached and touched by an entirely unique word that he receives from someone else*” (EN, 46). The encyclical *Ecclesiam Suam* was a profound study of the *colloquium salutis*, the “dialogue of salvation”.

In his encyclical *Deus Caritas Est*, Benedict XVI gives invaluable advice: “*A Christian knows when it is time to speak of God and when it is better to say nothing and to let love alone speak*” (31). This should be borne in mind in the Order’s humanitarian works in non-Christian countries.

There are also vast fields for evangelization in which the Members of the Order of Malta are asked to work. Some of them were studied during the International Seminar on Strategies in Venice (January 2009). It is particularly helpful to reread the conclusion of Working Groups 4 and 6: the former on the dissemination of Christian education and the latter on the promotion of the Christian culture in the secularized world of the XXI century.

But both individual and collective action would be rendered sterile, if not counter-productive, by divisions and quarrels within the Order, not immune to egoisms causing jealousy and rivalry. It could be useful to reread n. 2 of the “Journals of Spirituality” (2002): “*For a Spirituality of Communion*”. The EN gives a severe warning: “*As evangelizers, we must offer Christ’s faithful not the image of people divided and separated by unedifying quarrels*” (77).

Liberation. Paul VI’s affirmation that : “*Between evangelization and human advancement – development and liberation – there are in fact profound links*”, when translated into the principles underpinning the Order of Malta’s Patrimony, means that the links between *tuitio*

fidei and *obsequium pauperum* are equally profound. In this sense the purpose of the Order's entire charisma is that of evangelization, even though the humanitarian actions that aim to provide "liberation" from suffering, when they are carried out in non-Christian countries, are indirectly to be considered as a pre-evangelization. This theme is developed in Albrecht von Boeselager's article in the present Journal.

Before entrusting to Mary, Star of evangelization, the teachings contained in his Apostolic Exhortation, the Servant of God Paul VI expresses the hope that I give here in conclusion of this article: *"And may the world of our time, which is searching, sometimes with anguish, sometimes with hope, be enabled to receive the Good News not from evangelizers who are dejected, discouraged, impatient or anxious, but from ministers of the Gospel whose lives glow with fervour, who have first received the joy of Christ, and who are willing to risk their lives so that the kingdom may be proclaimed and the Church established in the midst of the world".*

Archbishop Angelo Acerbi
Prelate of the Order

FROM GREGORIAN REFORM TO NEW EVANGELIZATION

(translated from French)

Although the foundation of the hospital in Jerusalem precedes it, it is customary to link the origins of the Hospitallers of St. John to the first crusade. It can never be sufficiently stressed that the foundation of the Order of St. John is part of a much broader renewal of the Church, ranging from the mid XI century to the mid XII century, which is conventionally called “Gregorian Reform”. But this name can lead to confusion, albeit it defines one of the main episodes of this period, the struggle for the freedom of Episcopal elections, reaching its culmination in the battle between Pope Gregory VII and the German Emperor Henry IV. Most people know about the famous event in Canossa (1077)¹, the very image of the battle between temporal and spiritual power. But the reforming movement was not limited to this. It was an authentic desire to revitalize the Church, *renovatio ecclesiae*, that not only included the restoration of pontifical authority

¹ The French reader can refer to the recent overview by S. GOUGUENHEIM, *La réforme grégorienne*, Temps Présent, Paris 2010.

but also an increased sense of the dignity and duties of the clergy: a renewal of religious life, an attempt thoroughly to Christianize society. In its long history the Church, *semper reformanda*, thus advances from renewal to renewal, from the Gregorian Reform to the new evangelization.

To understand the origins of the Hospitallers it is helpful to look at the broader picture. Their birth and development was not an isolated event but one of the results of this *renovatio*; afterwards the “Gregorian” popes and bishops, who gave many privileges and favours to the Hospitallers, were to make them effective agents for pursuing the Reform. I shall highlight some aspects that seem to relate specifically to the Order.

The Revolution of Charity

We must not imagine that the founding of the hospital in Jerusalem and the establishment of a group of brothers around the hospitaller Gerard was the only initiative of its kind. During the XI century, hospitaller foundations appeared in the wake of the renewal of the Church and the monasteries and many

began to speak of a “revolution of charity”. We are talking about the great and small hospices of St. Bernard, founded by the saint from Menthon between 1043 and 1046, those of Aubrac and Roncisville or along the Way of St. James, without counting a multitude of small local foundations. Some were established by members of the clergy, like Lanfranc, Archbishop of Canterbury (1070-1089), who founded a hospital dedicated to St. John the Baptist at the doors of his cathedral.

Other initiatives were started by lay people. At the end of the XI century, a small lord in the Dauphiné, Garin de la Valloire, decided to take care of people suffering from “St. Anthony’s Fire”, a disease caused by eating grains contaminated with a fungus. He established a group of “brothers” including some members of the clergy, and Urban II recognised his work in 1095. This was the origin of the Antonian order. At the start of the XII century in Montmorillon, in the Vienne department, Robert du Peu, a pilgrim returning from the Holy Land with wife, children and servants, founded a hospital for the poor, obtaining pope Paschal II’s approval during a council meeting in Troyes on Ascension Day 1107.

So Gerard's initiative was anything but an isolated phenomenon². But the Hospitallers of St. John were able to give a permanent form to this ferment of initiatives and create an authentic spiritual current of dedication to the Poor and Sick, expressed in the Rule of Raymond du Puy written in the mid XII century.

The Peace Movement

At the end of the X century, and partly under the influence of the abbots of Cluny, an extensive movement for limiting the incessant fights between local lords started to take shape. In 989, a council held in Charroux asked for immunity not only for the goods of the Church, but also for those of the *pauperes*, peasants, merchants and travellers. These decisions were reiterated in the councils of Puy-en-Velay (990) and Anse (994). At the council of Puy, Bishop Guy d'Anjou obliged the lords present to swear an "oath of peace", that is to pledge to observe the decisions taken. To stop private wars, a council held in

² See the proceedings of the talks held in 2006 in Puy-en-Velay, *Les chanoines réguliers, émergence et expansion*, Publications of the University of Saint-Etienne, 2009, and in particular p. 159-210, article by François-Olivier.

Poitier in the year one thousand attempted to set up an arbitration system; faced with the failure of this attempt, various councils tried to limit the duration of conflicts by establishing the “Truce of God” rule, forbidding any fighting between Thursday and Sunday. The crusade itself was prompted by this movement; the word “crusade” was not in fact used before the XIV century; contemporaries only talk about “peregrination” or “*santo passaggio*”.

Even though it is not known exactly what Pope Urban II said to Clermont in 1095, he indubitably invited the lords present to put their warlike passions to the service of a more righteous cause, the defence of the poor and pilgrims. What we call the “militarization” of the Hospital comes under this heading: men accustomed to the business of war used their might to serve the weakest, first of all to defend the pilgrimage ways, and then evolving to the *tuitio fidei* that became an integral part of the Order’s rule from the end of the XV century. It is worth noting that this “fight for the faith”, so integral to the Order’s identity, has its roots in the great movement against violence and in favour of Christianization during the XI to XII centuries. Not only did the Hospitallers – and the

Templars – ensure a permanent military presence in the Holy Land, but in the west they contributed to numerous peace negotiations. When the Archbishop of Narbonne Arnaud, the Count of Tolosa and the Viscount of Béziers renewed their vows of peace during the council held in 1140, the Hospitallers and Templars were guarantors in the Bulls of approbation promulgated by Popes Innocent II and Hadrian IV. And many other examples could be cited³.

The New Forms of Religious Life

There was an extraordinary renewal of religious life between the XI and the beginning of the XII century. Some foundations followed the Benedictine tradition in all its severity, such as La Chaise-Dieu in 1053, Vallombrosa in 1070 and Cîteaux in 1098; others chose the hermitic current such as Camaldoli, founded in 1015 but only approved as a congregation

³ The Hospitallers (and Templars) were often involved in peace agreements. Thus, in 1158 Raymond du Puy attempted to forge an agreement between the Count of Forez and the Archbishop of Lyon, the Prior of Saint-Gilles, Odin, an agreement between the Abbot of Cluny and the Viscount of Mâcon in 1180; Hospitallers and Templars were guarantors in a peace agreement between the Archbishop of Lyon Renaud and the burghers of the city in 1208.

by Paschal II in 1113; and the Chartreuse, founded in 1084. Another current tried to renew the life of clerics through community life. This is the canonical movement based on a rediscovery and “adaptation” of St. Augustine’s Rule, carried out within the circle of Bishop Yves de Chartres (1040-1116).

The Hospitallers presented a third model that was neither monastic nor canonical – a *fraternitas* made up of lay people and a few clerics who pledged to serve the poor. It was undoubtedly one of the first times in which a religious order is defined by means of its core mission; the Three Vows and the willingness of members to be sent here and there rather than the promise of “stability” in a church or monastery were also original and innovative characteristics. Thus once the first nucleus of the Hospitallers was approved in 1113, Pope Pascal II encouraged this new form of religious life that met new needs. Another original characteristic of the Hospitallers is the possibility offered to lay men and women to be associated with the Order, participating both in its worldly life and spiritual goods. In a letter of 1123 Raymond du Puy was already speaking of these *confratres* who brought their contribution to the Order;

he considered them as if “serving in Jerusalem”, *quasi ipsi militent in Hierosolimis*⁴.

The statute of the new Order must not have been very clear to the canonists of the time – nor is it much clearer today – and the Order itself has maintained, it seems voluntarily, this ambiguity: in the ancient charters, when a man or a woman “give” themselves to the Order, it is not always easy to know their exact status, confrere, brother, sister, donat⁵... A part of the Hospitallers’ attraction is explained by this possibility, completely new at the time, offered to lay men and women to be closely associated with a religious order and to follow a path of personal sanctification through a concrete activity – whether hospitaller or defensive – that did not cut them off from the world.

After Pascal II’s Bull of February 1113, the popes rapidly understood the interest in this new order as an agent of the *renovatio* desired by the Gregorian current. The Hospitallers do not only perform an important charitable work; in the Holy

⁴ DELAVILLE LE ROULX, *Cartulaire*, n. 46.

⁵ In 1199 the Bishop of Avignon was forced to point out that a married man can only be admitted as a brother if his wife makes a profession of continence.

Land they were the main permanent strength with the Templars; in the west they were the defenders and faithful agents of the papacy⁶, and it knew it could rely on this centralized structure, involved as it was through its networks of associates with society as a whole. The network of commanderies also participated in the religious organization of the rural population and the Hospitallers were given the express privilege of setting up churches in *loca deserta*, recently populated agricultural areas, notwithstanding any opposition (Bull of Innocent II *Christiane Fidei Religio*, 1137).

At the Service of the New Evangelization

Can the Order of St. John today give a contribution equal to the Church's *renovatio* in the Third Millennium? It is not impossible to find the same specific aspects in the current context. It was Blessed Pope John Paul II who wrote in his apostolic letter *Novo Millennio Ineunte* that the time of a “*new creativity of charity*”⁷ had arrived, an appeal often reiterated in

⁶ Perhaps in the most concrete manner: up to the XV century, the pope's “guards of honour” his *cubicularii*, were provided by a Templar and a Hospitaller.

his addresses to the Order of Malta. “Humanitarian works” and “solidarity” represent an important commitment for the “people of good will” of our times. The Order can give its contribution not only in terms of its millenary experience but also by “evangelising” these just and good human aspirations, opening them to all the dimensions of charity. Pope Benedict XVI in his encyclical *Deus Caritas Est* recalled “*the distinctiveness of the Church's charitable activity*,” that must not become “*just another form of social assistance*” and which remains the most effective witness: “*A pure and generous love is the best witness to the God in whom we believe and by whom we are driven to love*”.⁸ Just as in the XII century, the world needs a “revolution of charity”.

The Order can also continue to carry out its role in the “movement of peace” of our times. Just as in the beginning, this “peace” can pass through “*an authentic battle for the integral advancement of human beings*,” a “*noble battle for the defence and development of the human person*” according to the words of Blessed

⁷ *It is time for a new creativity of charity*. Cf. *Address of Pope John II to the Order of Malta*, Bergamo, 2001.

⁸ *Deus Caritas Est*, n. 31.

John Paul II⁹. 'There are many international arenas in which the Order can work for peace since its sovereign status enables it to intervene in areas of conflict or tension and its ambassadors can perform an authentic role as witnesses and guarantors of peace. What better symbol of hope and peace than that given by the Maternity Hospital in Bethlehem, in what seems to be the site of an insoluble conflict? In another context, the Order's many initiatives in various areas of instability seem equally to help mend the "fractures" in our society; Blessed John Paul II spoke in this regard of an authentic "*prophetic service for the marginalized and excluded*". The Order's minuscule initiatives can appear absurd in the face of the wretchedness and the needs of a suffering humanity. But they have an inimitable value of witness, they are "prophetic gestures", a sign of the kingdom of justice and peace.

Finally, our almost millenary Order still has something to say to the Church of our times in the way it understands religious life. With regards to the turmoil of experiences and initiatives, our era is in no way inferior to the XII century: many "new communities" have appeared, which has sometimes required the Church

⁹ Address for the Order's Jubilee, October 19, 2000.

to make adjustments or regulations. Our Order remains surprisingly modern in its way of bringing together in the same religious family, the Professed – authentic religious linked by the Three Vows but who live their consecration in the world – Members in Obedience, lay married men and women, who make a promise of real value, called to live through this promise their baptismal sanctification, and finally the Members of the Third Class whose commitment makes them real “members of a religious order”. These are equally elements that many contemporary spiritual currents have tried to rediscover, a religious life “in the world”, an association of lay people who have a certain form of consecration, the establishment of spiritual “families” with various levels of commitment.

The Order has been experiencing this for 900 years, under forms varying with the times, but always underpinned by the original intuitions. Like the great renewers in the Church’s history in the XII, XIII or XVII centuries who based their action on the witness to religious life, the Order of Malta can give today, in the context of the new evangelization, its specific contribution through its way of living the consecrated life.

It is not only through its charitable actions or its defence of human dignity that the Order can work to renew the Church; it is also through the witness it gives as a religious order, both faithful to its long history and capable of creativity. It is very important for the future of the Order and for the significance of its testimony that it be increasingly identified as a religious order. We have to make every effort to ensure that the vocations of the Professed, “essential core”, “heart” of the Order,¹⁰ continue to flourish, that its Members perceive the call to obedience not as a higher status but as a deeper commitment, so that each Member understands that the Order is not a *decoration* but a pressing appeal to live baptismal sanctity through serving one’s neighbour. Just as in its distant origins the Order was one of the pillars of the Gregorian *renovatio*, so may it today, through its action and the witness of its members, be one of the actors of the new evangelization.

Fr. Bruno Martin
Conventual Chaplain *a. b.*

¹⁰ Regulations and Commentary, Roma 2011, c. XIV.

“Our Brotherhood will be an everlasting one, for the soil in which it is rooted is the misery of the world, and God willing, there will always be people who seek to reduce this misery and make distress easier to bear”

OBSEQUIUM PAUPERUM AND THE MISSION OF NEW EVANGELIZATION¹

(translated from German)

Introduction

At first sight, it may seem that the assignment for a new evangelization is connected with our mission of *tuitio fidei* rather than that of *obsequium pauperum*. In his latest Apostolic Letter *Porta Fidei*, Pope Benedict XVI gives us a brief explanation on this connection². As Members of the Order of Malta, we must in any case carefully consider how our charisma may best be put in the service of the new evangelization. To do this, however, we must also examine the current situation of the Order and the aspects that may be liable to improvement in order to fulfill the assignment for new evangelization in the best possible manner. In short: What is the appropriate renewal

¹ Amended version of the opening remarks at the VII Conference of the Americas, Lima, November 2011.

² Cf. PF, 14

that is asked of us while remaining faithful to our founding patrimony?

When asked about the state of the Order, His Highness the Grand Master likes to reply that he has the impression that – taking everything into consideration and looking at it as a global whole – *obsequium pauperum* and the field of diplomacy seem to be in good shape; the development of the Third and Second Classes also looks good; but the situation of the First Class is absolutely unsatisfactory and the number of Professed Members must definitely be increased. I would like to pick up this subject and look into it. In spite of a growing number of new Professed, a fundamental solution to the need of recruiting younger candidates in isolation has not yet been found.

If, by contrast, we view the Order as an organism with various organs and limbs, then if we see that one of the organs or limbs is not healthy, this tells us that something is wrong with the whole organism. If my heart or liver is out of order, it is not only my heart or my liver that is sick – it is me who is sick. If the doctor determines that my heart or liver is not in good shape, he must look for the causes. Often the

fundamental cause of the problem does not lie in the heart or the liver, but in one's lifestyle, too little exercise, unhealthy food or even an addiction. Treating the heart or liver alone would just be tinkering with the symptoms and would only bring short-term and superficial relief at best.

We must therefore ask ourselves, very precisely, whether the difficulty of recruiting young, suitable Professed Members, profoundly motivated by the charisma of the Order, is a basic, contemporary weakness of the Order that can be tackled in isolation, or if it is not at least a symptom telling us that other things in the Order need to change. This question seems to me to be of existential importance. If the cause of the problem lies elsewhere within the Order, our efforts to bring young people to Profession will remain fruitless. It will not be sufficient to redesign the Novitiate, reintroduce elements of community life, and so on. Worse still, it would be unjust to persuade young people to devote their whole life to the Order – to wager their life on it, so to speak – if we are not in a position to provide for conditions for such a life to be a success.

In the recent past it has mainly been older men,

often widowers, who have entered Profession. For them it is no longer a matter of devoting their “whole” life, but rather of consecrating their final years to God. I do not wish to deprecate this in any way. Without them, the Order would not have survived the last two hundred years. And many of them have lived exemplary lives and done great things. But the step they take is fundamentally different from the decision of a young person to live his whole life according to the evangelical counsels and to leave everything behind for the sake of God’s will and to follow Christ.

Some believe that the causes of the dilemma of Profession are not so much to be found within the Order as in external circumstances. Lay Profession, it is said, is no longer appropriate – if someone feels a calling, then he should rather become a priest in order to help overcome the shortage of priests. But this overlooks the fact that the priestly calling and lay Profession are two completely different things, an *aliud*. And the argument also falls down for another reason. Many new Catholic communities experience a new flowering from lay Profession. So our view of the external circumstances reinforces the signs that

we must continue to seek a diagnosis within the Order; that the difficulty of recruiting Professed Members is a significant symptom of deeper issues within the Order itself which must not be taken lightly. Therefore I will also address this question here at this conference, where it is not primarily a matter of fostering Professions. We must all earnestly try to understand what correctives may be required of us all in order to improve the condition of the Order.

A View of the Founding Charisma and Today's Mission

To do this, we must firstly have an idea of what the Order should ideally be like. And secondly, we must be able to diagnose the condition in which it really finds itself. In my short conference introduction I cannot address all these issues; I can only give a few pointers. The key instruments to help us determine the ideal state of the Order are given to us by the Magisterium of the Church and by the Popes in their function as the successors of St Peter.

The Council's Decree for the religious orders, *Perfectae Caritatis*, calls on the orders to uphold in

honour their original founding charisma, their *patri-monium*, and to examine from this perspective everything that has been accumulated or lost in the course of history. Our Order began with Brother Gerard and the Hospital in Jerusalem, with service to the sick, the poor and those in misery. The task of defence was not added until later. Then, in recent centuries, defence developed into *tuitio fidei* as we know it today. It can therefore be said that *obsequium pauperum* represents, so to speak, the base note of our Order's mission, which has hardly changed over time. Against this, *tuitio fidei* represents, so to speak, the changing over- or undertones. The meaning of the term *fides* – faith – alone has changed significantly in the course of history. While today it is understood to refer to personal faith as well as the deposit of faith laid down in the Magisterium of the Church, in the Middle Ages it additionally referred to all aspects of life in a community that was dominated by the Church, a *way of life* determined by Christianity, so to speak³. These fundamental differences between *obsequium pauperum* and *tuitio fidei* do not imply any value judgement in the sense of one taking priority over the other. But they

³ This is of great importance for understanding the crusades.

are of the greatest importance for the understanding of the two facets of our *patrimonium*.

With regard to *obsequium pauperum*, the Blessed Gerard and our tradition from the time of our foundation have handed down some important basic rules. Brother Gerard said of the new Brotherhood: “*Our Brotherhood will be an everlasting one, for the soil in which it is rooted is the misery of the world, and God willing, there will always be people who seek to reduce this misery and make distress easier to bear*”. Here, he names two prerequisites for the survival of the Order:

Firstly: The Brotherhood must be rooted in the misery of the world. Rooting of the Order in the misery of the world is a condition we must fulfil – yes, with God’s help, but depending on our own efforts.

And secondly: The vocation of people depends on God’s will.

Both of these points are closely related. Individuals who wish to work to reduce misery and make distress easier to bear will find their way to us to the extent to which our Order really is rooted in this misery. The misery of the world is the biotope of the Order. Only in this ecosystem can it flourish. We must take this statement seriously – quite personally

and literally. What is the Order other than the sum of its Members? So this statement also means that we personally, as Members of the Order, must set down our roots in the misery of the world. That sounds hard. As a rule, we live in conditions that are far removed from misery.

But precisely here is the mission of our Order:

- Firstly, to open the eyes of those who live far removed from misery, so that they perceive the misery;
- Then, to take our own personal decision to help;
- And in the next step, to organise further help, as shown by the example of the Good Samaritan.

The rich man⁴ failed to see the beggar Lazarus at his gate. He did not come down from his ivory tower of “leave well alone”. And so he was never confronted with the challenge of giving help, and never faced up to it. Thus, the first step that is clearly demanded of us consists of consciously and deliberately seeing the misery all around us and in the world, taking

⁴ Lk 16:19 ff.

notice of it and letting it shock us. And this in turn can only happen if we let those in misery get close to us, if we enter into a personal relationship with them, perceive them in a biblical sense.

In some cases this can be extremely uncomfortable, or even dangerous. It is not for nothing that people who have a degree of affluence must protect themselves and their property from criminality, precisely here on this continent. The living quarters of the poor are often breeding grounds of violence, from which it is wise to keep one's distance.

And yet, how do we deal with the fact that the Bible – and in concentrated form the rules and traditions of our Order – teach us to recognise the face of our suffering Lord in the face of the poor, even to the extent that the tradition of our Order speaks of those in misery as *our lords*? In our Order there is no excuse for running away from these lords.

Allow me to take these thoughts a stage further. Christ's identification of Himself with the suffering, His compassion, His solidarity with them, meant that He felt every help given to them as help for Him Himself⁵ – just as we experience aid for a loved one

⁵ Mt 25:31 ff.

who has fallen into need as a relief for ourselves. How often have we felt the consequence that the thankfulness of that person can be experienced together with the thankfulness of the Lord – so that it radiates back on us, that this relationship really brings us closer to the Lord Himself, exercises its transforming power on us? We do experience this in the Order. Lourdes is a preferential place for this experience. But my question is: is this the charisma that radiates from the Order today? Many are impressed, and rightly so, with what we do around the world. But what is a young person's main impression of the Order of Malta? Is it that we are drawn towards, and driven by, our suffering Lord whom we find in misery, and is this the charisma that shines out from us personally? Or is it outshone by the glory of our great history, by our prestige and organising power? All these things are right and good, but they must be no more than means to an end. I believe that, at this point, we need to examine our consciences. I am convinced that the key lies here. If we can find the right path here, the Lord will work miracles, including the miracle of vocations to Profession.

The second instrument that the Church has put

into our hands as a diagnostic medium is the pronouncements of the Popes regarding the particular needs of the age. Standing alongside fidelity to the founding Charisma or *patrimonium* of the Order is the necessity for us, as an Order, to give an answer to the needs of the particular age. The more we succeed in this, the richer will be the fruits of our labours, and I count vocations to Profession among these.

With a view to the present age, it is particularly necessary for us to seriously heed and respond to the call by the last and the present Pope for a new evangelization. One might suppose that this call is directed primarily towards *tuitio fidei* and less towards *obsequium pauperum*. But that would be an illusion. Both belong inseparably together.

Pope John Paul II wrote in his apostolic letter “*Novo Millennio Ineunte*” (49): “*The century and the millennium now beginning will need to see, and hopefully with still greater clarity, to what length of dedication the Christian community can go in charity towards the poorest. If we have truly started out anew from the contemplation of Christ, we must learn to see him especially in the faces of those with whom he himself wished to be identified: ‘I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was*

naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me” (Mt 25:35-36). This Gospel text is not a simple invitation to charity: it is a page of Christology which sheds a ray of light on the mystery of Christ. By these words, no less than by the orthodoxy of her doctrine, the Church measures her fidelity as the Bride of Christ.”

A few lines later he writes (50): “The scenario of poverty can extend indefinitely, if in addition to its traditional forms we think of its newer patterns. These latter often affect financially affluent sectors and groups which are nevertheless threatened by despair at the lack of meaning in their lives, by drug addiction, by fear of abandonment in old age or sickness, by marginalization or social discrimination. In this context Christians must learn to make their act of faith in Christ by discerning his voice in the cry for help that rises from this world of poverty. This means carrying on the tradition of charity which has expressed itself in so many different ways in the past two millennia, but which today calls for even greater re-sourcefulness. Now is the time for a new “creativity” in charity, not only by ensuring that help is effective but also by “getting close” to those who suffer, so that the hand that helps is seen not as a humiliating handout but as a sharing between brothers and sisters”.

If the fidelity of the whole Church as the Bride of Christ is measured by how it behaves towards the

poorest, how much more is this question directed at us, whose mission is precisely to aid the poor? Equally, the call for a new creativity in charity is directed particularly at us in the Order of Malta. We must direct and measure the realisation of our mission of *obsequium pauperum* by the yardsticks of our founding Charisma and the needs of the age – so that the Order can develop its full radiance, so that we are granted the gift of new Professions, and so that we can properly fulfill our mission of new evangelization.

Obsequium Pauperum

Here I would like to mention two aspects, both of which need to be fulfilled in a complementary way: our own personal commitment and the institutional anchoring of the works of the Order.

- Personal Commitment

The Order's "*Constitutional Charter and Code*", and – based on these – the new "*Regulations and Commentaries*", draw attention in various places to the obligation of Members of the Order to involve themselves personally in the works of the Order for *obse-*

quium pauperum. This requires the steps that I mentioned previously:

- Preparedness to personally encounter misery and people in misery, to really face up to this misery and let it get close to us;
- Preparedness to give aid deriving from this experience.

The leaders of the Associations have the crucial responsibility to bring candidates and Members to this experience, to motivate them to personal action and to keep this motivation alive. We clearly observe how, in those places where this happens, the Order flourishes, and where it does not happen, the Order is in danger of falling into sedation.

It is important for Members to be prepared to give this call to *obsequium pauperum* a certain priority in their life, over and above other social commitments or other activities.

- Institutionalisation of Our Works

For the works of the Order to grow on a permanent basis, they need to be institutionalised in some way. In the past, the activities of some Associations have changed whenever there was a change in leader-

ship, depending on personal inclinations. Such activities rather have the character of private initiatives under the guise of the Order. They are also indications of a patriarchal style of leadership, rather than one based on a consensus backed by the Members. Otherwise there would not be such major changes whenever the leadership changes. The works must be properly rooted in the Association. This does not exclude supporting activities outside the Order. But our own Order's works must be in the forefront.

- Working with Volunteers

An important type of institutionalised activity is working with volunteers in their own voluntary organisation. Since the middle of the last century, various Associations have begun to build up voluntary organisations, initially with the task of first aid and disaster relief, and later increasingly for further medical and social services as well. In most cases, these initiatives have accomplished great success. We can distinguish between two fundamental approaches, which may also exist in parallel. On the one hand there are mostly local groups of volunteers drawn from circles socially related to the Order. In most cases these are

rather loosely organised in institutional terms, because their relationship to the Order is on a more personal basis.

And then there are voluntary organisations that recruit from quite different social classes. Overall, these have become very significant for the Order. These are legally independent organisations in the meaning of Article 239 of the *Code*. The success of these organisations depends on one essential key factor. The Associations and their Members must be personally involved in the organisations and identify with them. Only in this way can a living relationship develop. Only in this way can the spirit of the Order come alive in these organizations, and only in this way can difficulties and misunderstandings be avoided. I know from personal experience that this can often be arduous. But it is necessary. The volunteers must be given the feeling that they are welcomed by the family of the Order. No impression must be given that they are a second-class grouping or that they are only there to further the prestige of the Association.

Our assignment for the transmission of our faith concerns the many thousands of volunteers in our Order in the first place. I may say that we owe it

to them not to leave them in the dark about the reasons of our hope and to give them an understanding of the world of faith.

***Obsequium Pauperum* and New Evangelization – The Dignity of the Suffering Person**

We are currently witnessing an increasing obscuration and distortion of the real Christian image of humanity. For instance: Where euthanasia is considered imperative out of humanitarian reasons, humanity has lost sight of man's real dignity. Where the killing of human embryos with sick genetic material is viewed as a humanitarian progress, a truly human anthropology has been completely twisted.

The force of attraction of the Blessed John Paul II attained its greatest power in his suffering before his death. It created a surge of sympathy, but perhaps even more, a wave of hope. The people could feel that, from his increasing weakness in suffering, an ever growing strength came forth – a divine strength. The Blessed John Paul II granted us this teaching on two occasions: 20 years before his death in the words of the prophetic – as far as he himself was concerned –

apostolic letter *Salvifici Doloris*, and then for a second time through his own suffering. Rarely has the mysterious connection between suffering and salvation been made so tangible for those of us living today.

In our present times, this connection is at risk of fading in the light of the other truth of sickness and suffering as a real evil, with the danger that the view of God can become obscured. The mysterious reality of sickness and suffering, which is a part of humanity, has the potential – more than almost any other – either to give birth to new and even greater suffering, or to contribute to overcoming it in union with the suffering of Christ. All of us, who are called upon to heal, care for and attend the sick and suffering, now confront an almost overwhelming task.

The apostolic letter *Salvifici Doloris* ends with an invitation that we should again take our faith in the suffering man Jesus as a basis to show mankind the real human being with all its dignity – and suffering cannot be banned from that.⁶

Showing the dignity of a suffering person occurs in a very special way when we care for suffering

⁶ Cf. SD, 33 with reference to *Gaudium et Spes*, 22.

people, so that Christ's love may appear and have healing effects through our efforts. We must show how we consider those who we care for. Then we will also be in a position to show the world the healing and liberating impulse arising from this kind of care.

Our pilgrimages with sick and disabled people and the summer camps for young disabled guests are two of the most meaningful examples we can find in our Order.

It has long been a tradition in the Order of Malta to make journeys of pilgrimage with sick and handicapped people. Central to this are the pilgrimages to Lourdes. In addition there are a multitude of smaller journeys to local places of pilgrimage. These pilgrimages are a special opportunity for the pilgrims – and for those accompanying them – to experience suffering, to share it and to give aid in union of body, soul and spirit. Here I can do no more than cast a spotlight on the healing power of these pilgrimages. The miraculous physical healings are rare transcendental signs of the healing presence of God. More frequent, on the other hand, are the miracles of inner healing with occasional physical effects, and the miracles of the power to embrace suffering and to unify it with the suffering of

Christ, and thus to give it meaning. For the carer who experiences this happening, it opens up a new dimension in their view of those who suffer, of their dignity and greatness, but also of their loveliness despite all the alterations that suffering often brings about.

A recent initiative, which is being taken up more and more in the Order of Malta, is the organisation by young people of holiday camps for handicapped young guests, in most cases those living in care homes. Here, I particularly wish to mention the camps in poorer countries such as in Romania or Lebanon, arranged for severely mentally and physically handicapped young people. One-on-one care is the normal practice. For the duration of the camp, the rule is that the wishes of the guest are to be carried out as far as possible. If he wishes to run, dance, or sit in the corner for the whole day, then the carer runs, dances or sits with him. True miracles of love occur, such as when an autistic person suddenly smiles, or when someone who has always crept into a corner suddenly starts to dance. In some cases, carers from the home also take part. The manager of a care home was once asked if it was not rather depressing for the carers to experience how, for a limited time,

an atmosphere could be created for the young people that was impossible to achieve in the home with its limited staff. She replied that the opposite was the case. She said that the carers were extremely thankful to have the opportunity to see those under their care in such good circumstances, and to gain new insights into them and their capabilities. Needless to say, the young persons who act as carers at the camps have also undergone a change when they return home.

To supplement these examples, I would like to mention a further example from another initiative. Father Hans Stapel's new movement for the healing and rehabilitation of drug-addicts, *Fazenda da Esperança*, is entirely based on living with the Word of God. Living with a word for a given period of time liberates the addicts. The concrete experience of the Word of God as a word that heals and at the same time leads us to truth should apply more strongly throughout the routines of medicine and nursing.

Tuitio Fidei

As Pope Benedict wrote in *Deus Caritas Est*, the best defence of God and man consists precisely in

love⁷. This statement is especially important for us. Our *tuitio fidei* must not be separated from *obsequium pauperum*. The practice of *obsequium pauperum* motivated by the Gospels is, in itself, a defence of the faith. I am convinced that it is here that our talent for new evangelization lies. I would also like to mention three further aspects:

- The dissemination, and in this case also explicitly the defence, of Catholic teachings about life in the context of current issues relating to biological and medical ethics;
- In view of the great treasury of Christian families in our Order, the witness and propagation of the value of the family. Incidentally, the fostering of Profession and a life of celibacy also requires this background. When family ties and the appreciation of the Sacrament of Marriage are dissipated, the idea of celibacy is difficult to impart. The two things are connected.
- The dissemination of the teachings of the faith, especially among the youth.

⁷ Cf. DCE, 31

The Sovereignty of the Order

There has been much deliberation about interesting questions regarding the sovereignty of the Order in international law. I am not concerned with these here. I would like to reflect with you for a moment on its inner justification, because this is what obliges us to defend rigorously the sovereignty of the Order. The emergence of the statehood of the Order on Rhodes was based on historical accident rather than any calculated strategy. But the lack of an apparent human strategy does not exclude the possibility that a divine one stands behind it. We can say one thing with certainty: if our sovereignty was only about our own glory or the fame of the Order, about standing out from the multiplicity of other charitable organisations and holding a special position – although this would undoubtedly bring various practical benefits – it would not be enough.

By ancient tradition, we in the Order speak of the sick and poor as “Our Lords”. This means that we should recognise them as our lords not only in our personal service, but also as the lords of the Order. Everything about the Order is to serve them, and the

same applies to its sovereignty. The poor and sick are, often enough, precisely those whose voice is not heard. The countries of the world are in the hands of the successful and powerful. In this sense, those in misery have no country. Therefore we must be their alternative country, to give them a voice in the counsels of the peoples, the sovereign voice of the poor and forgotten. This is not only the justification but also the mission of our sovereignty. Therefore it is our obligation to defend this sovereignty and to use it.

Also in this context, it is again clear how important is our personal commitment to the poor and sick. It is from our contact with them that we must learn how to represent their voice among the peoples of the world. And it is clear that we need large and visible institutional and international works – such as Malteser International, for example – in order that we can help effectively and that our voice remains credible.

This is also how the new fund-raising Initiative with the “*Fund for Forgotten People*” should be seen. Those in misery, who are also the forgotten, must be the prime recipients of our aid, and it is they to whom we must give a sovereign voice.

Conclusion

Let me return to where I started and to the quotation from our Grand Master that I cited at the beginning: *obsequium pauperum*, diplomacy and the Third and Second Classes are in good shape. It is indeed the case that the works of the Order have undergone great expansion in recent decades. In the last thirty years, the number of our diplomatic relations has tripled and the Order has been admitted to the United Nations as an Official Observer. Our membership is growing in numbers. In view of the fact that 200 years ago the Order was literally almost at an end, we can look thankfully at our impressive development, behind which we are amazed to recognise the hand of God. In the Order, God's grace has done powerful work. In this sense, as the Grand Master indicated, the Order really is in good shape. But I would venture to say that a few things still need to be done to address our next concern, the growth of a lively, young First Class, and thus to bring the Order back to a fully flourishing state.

- We must create an environment in which young candidates for Profession and Professed Members can devote themselves entirely to

obsequium pauperum. After the loss of a large portion of the Order's property at the beginning of the XIX century, Professed Members were instructed to earn their own livelihood. We are probably not in a position to abandon this principle completely. But given the scope of the Order's activities today, it would be ridiculous to assert that the Order cannot cover the costs of the suitable deployment of an individual Professed Member. In particular, an important component of the Novitiate must be that Novices can devote themselves entirely to *obsequium pauperum* in a community project over a longer period of time.

- We must admit more young Members overall, so that young men who are considering the Profession will find an environment in which they are not just confronted with elderly men.
- And all of us must convey the message – in all clarity and truth, and in a way that others can experience – that our Order represents a family that devotes itself, in obedience to “Our Lords the Sick”, to the mission of reducing misery and making distress easier to bear.

The example of many young people, who put their lives in the balance for the sake of the poor and sick, for suffering and forgotten people (and therefore also for Christ), would impress the desired seal on our efforts for the new evangelization. Nothing is more credible than the dedication of one's own life.

I have an important incidental remark to make about this. None of this will be of much help if conflicts exist within the family of our Order, as is unfortunately the case in many Pories and Associations. Conflict is a particular danger in those bodies of the Order where new initiatives are proposed or renewals are undertaken. It is precisely here that Satan, the enemy, seeks to cause division. Conflict and division leave no room for the Holy Spirit. They destroy brotherhood – so that instead of appealing to new candidates with our brotherly spirit, we repel them. The new *Regulations and Commentaries* place great emphasis on the fostering of community and our brotherly treatment of one another within the Order. The best means of avoiding conflict is the rooting of the Order and its Members in the misery of the world, as Brother Gerard called for. Where this takes place, the wells of conflict will be dried out. Only when we

truly accept the sick and the suffering as our lords, and only desire to serve them and improve their situation, can the Lord guide us with His spirit and grant us new vocations. But if we concern ourselves too much with our own honour, our prestige and being in the right, then conflict will be programmed and our Order will be endangered.

We are speaking here of a vital spiritual struggle that will help to decide the future of the Order. We must be conscious of this situation at all levels of leadership, and actively counteract the dangers as well as fostering the correct orientation of the Members. The beginning of the second chapter of the Epistle to the Philippians is an important reminder to the Order today: *“If there is therefore any exhortation in Christ, if any consolation of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any tender mercies and compassions, make full my joy, that ye be of the same mind, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind; doing nothing through faction or through vainglory, but in lowliness of mind each counting other better than himself; not looking each of you to his own things, but each of you also to the things of others.”*

Even though we on Earth, as a sinful people and a sinful society, will never attain this ideal, I am con-

fidant that the Grand Master will one day be able to add to his statement: the situation of the First Class has also significantly improved, which means that the Order has grown in its fidelity to its mission. With God's help, it will play its part in the new evangelisation of the world. God has caused great things to happen in our Order in the last few decades, and I am convinced that it is His intention to bring them to completion.

Baron Albrecht von Boeselager
Grand Hospitaller of the Order

NEW EVANGELIZATION AND VOLUNTEERS

(translated from Italian)

*Modern man listens more willingly to witnesses
than to teachers, and if he does listen to teachers,
it is because they are witnesses.*

PAUL VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 41.

According to official statistics, 80,000 volunteers are currently cooperating with the Order of Malta in its different institutions all over the world; they ensure ordinary and extraordinary service in the care of sick and poor people, in first aid, in disaster relief and other emergency situations.

The volunteers, who cooperate with the Order either permanently or temporarily, take part in its charisma, its spirituality, its activities and its initiatives of a technical and spiritual kind.

New Evangelization

The new evangelization proposed by Pope John Paul II¹ concerns all Christians, all people having responsibility within the Church, all religious Orders

¹ JOHN PAUL II proposed the “new evangelization” for the first time in the course of his First Apostolic Visit to Poland, during the homily he held on June 9, 1979: “*on the threshold of the new millennium, in these new times, these new conditions of life, the Gospel is again being proclaimed. A new*

and all volunteers as well.

Due to their very decision to *put their time and capabilities at the service of their fellow men*, volunteers are *fertile ground*² for the new evangelization.

*“New evangelization does not mean a “new Gospel”, because “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and for ever” (Heb 13:8), but rather, it means an appropriate response to the needs of humanity and people today in a manner adapted to the signs of the times and to the new situations in cultures, which are the basis of our personal identities and the places where we seek the meaning of our existence. Consequently, a “new evangelization” means to promote a culture more deeply grounded in the Gospel and to discover the new man who is in us through the Spirit given us by Jesus Christ and the Father”*³.

The new evangelization requires a twofold movement on our side: on the one hand we have to look at the origins of the Church, and on the other hand to the times in which we live.

evangelization has begun, as if it were a new proclamation, even if in reality it is the same as ever” (Homily at the Shrine of the Holy Cross in Mogila, 1).

² *“The seed is the word of God [...]. But as for the seed that fell on rich soil, they are the ones who, when they have heard the word, embrace it with a generous and good heart, and bear fruit through perseverance” (Lk 8:11-15).*

³ SYNOD OF BISHOPS – ORDINARY GENERAL ASSEMBLY, *The New Evangelization for the Transmission of the Christian faith. Lineamenta*, 23. Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Città del Vaticano 2011, 23

The Model of the Apostles

In *Evangelii Nuntiandi* Paul VI reminds us that the first and foremost standard of any evangelization is the model of the Apostles⁴. The Acts of the Apostles describe the spread and *growth* of the Church – from Jerusalem to Rome. Both the Gospel and the Acts show the importance given by Luke to the numerical growth: the first three disciples (Lk 5:10), the twelve Apostles (Lk 6:12-16), the seventy-two disciples (Lk 10:1), the hundred-twenty disciples after the Ascension (Acts 1:15), the three thousand after Pentecost (Acts 2:41), and the five thousand after the healing of the invalid man at the temple (Acts 4:4). But it's not just a question of numerical growth, since Luke notes: “*And every day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved*” (Acts 2:47), and he stresses that this growth is experienced in deep unity: “*together*” (Acts 2:44). Throughout the Acts of the Apostles Luke shows how “*the word of God continued to spread and grow*” (Acts 12:24)⁵.

⁴ *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 15.

⁵ M. SAINT-PIERRE, *Chiesa in crescita. I fondamenti della nuova evangelizzazione*, Paoline, Milan 2011, p. 101-124.

The Apostle Paul, evangelizer and founder of Christian communities, in his letters tells us not only how he founded some new churches, but also how he follows their developments, how he stimulates them and encourages them to *grow*⁶.

Luke and Paul teach us forcefully that a Church that does not evangelize is dead inside: a parish that does not endeavour to increase the number and quality of the faithful runs the risk of disappearing (as the Acts tell us). The principle of such growth, however, is not an industrial criterion of expansion, profit and consumption, but a secret, which the early Church had clear in mind, and which actually represents the real core of the new evangelization, i.e. the *education* of the disciples.

The Educational Emergency

The present “educational emergency” gives particular meaning to the words of Pope Paul VI: “*Modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if he does listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses. [...] It is therefore primarily by her conduct*

⁶ M. SAINT-PIERRE, *op. cit.*, p. 125-169.

*and by her life that the Church will evangelize the world, in other words, by her living witness of fidelity to the Lord Jesus*⁷.

The *Lineamenta* for the Synod of Bishops of the year 2012 about the new evangelization underline: *“No matter what the proposal in the “new evangelization” and no matter what the pastoral project of proclamation and transmission of the faith, there is no escaping the fact that men’s and women’s lives give force to the their efforts at evangelization. Precisely in this manner, their life has an added value, confirming the authenticity of their selfless dedication and of the truth of what they teach and call upon others to live. Today’s “educational emergency” increases the demand of educators who know how to be credible witnesses of those realities and of the values which can serve both as the basis for personal existence, and the shared projects of living together in society”*⁸.

Thanks to the *added value* given by the circumstance that the volunteers *put their time and capabilities at the service of others*, they are a fertile ground both for accepting the new evangelization and for transmitting it through their witness..

“The new evangelization is not taking up the first evan-

⁷ *Lineamenta*, 22.

⁸ *Lineamenta*, 22.

gelization again, or simply repeating the past. Instead, it is the courage to forge new paths in responding to the changing circumstances and conditions facing the Church in her call to proclaim and live the Gospel today”⁹, through words and deeds (cf. Acts 1:1).

Voluntary Work Today

Today, the voluntary work is a recognized human and social experience, to which individuals and associations of various cultures and orientations commit themselves in their local environment.

The *Carta dei Valori del Volontariato*¹⁰ (Charter of Voluntary Values), drawn up by representatives of the world of volunteer service at the end of the International Year of Volunteers organized by the United Nations in 2001, describes a volunteer as follows:

“A volunteer is a person who, after having fulfilled the duties proper to any citizen, puts his/her time

⁹ *Lineamenta*, 5.

¹⁰ The *Carta dei Valori del Volontariato* (2001) is the result of profound reflection by many organizations supported by experts and researchers. Through a 24-point list, the *Carta* describes the identity and goals of *volunteer work*. The document is composed of three sections: basic principles, volunteers, and volunteer organizations.

*and capabilities at the service of others, for the community he or she belongs to, or for mankind as a whole. A volunteer works freely and gratuitously, stimulating creative and effective answers to the needs of the beneficiaries of his/her action or contributing to the realization of the common good*¹¹.

A volunteer takes action – either individually or as a group – for the *common good*¹² or for *building up a better world*¹³.

Voluntary Work Inspired by Christian Principles

Voluntary work inspired by Christian principles is based on the concept of a person created in the likeness¹⁴ of a God, who enters human history freely, gratuitously and humbly, and who teaches us love as the guiding principle of the relation between God and men and of the relation among men themselves.

In Jesus Christ, the relation between human

¹¹ *Carta dei valori del volontariato*, 1.

¹² *Compendium of the Catechism*, 407-410; *Compendium of the Social Doctrine*, 164-170.

¹³ *Carta dei valori del volontariato*, 2.

¹⁴ Gen 1:26-27; SMOM, Code, art. 236 § 2: “*The members of the Order, recognizing the image of God in each individual, are especially called upon to become involved in those situations where human life is threatened*”.

beings takes on the form of brotherhood: Love, in its twofold dimension (towards God and towards fellow men) is the synthesis of a believer's moral life.

In the Encyclical Letter *Tertio Millennio Adveniente* John Paul II wrote: “*From this point of view, if we recall that Jesus came to “preach the good news to the poor” (Mt 11:5; Lk 7:22), how can we fail to stress more resolutely Jesus’s and the Church’s preferential option for the poor and the outcast?*”¹⁵. The volunteers of the Order of Malta shouldn’t find it difficult to recognize in these words *obsequium pauperum*, one of the fundamental and identity-establishing elements of the Order.

The Spirituality of Voluntary Work Inspired by Christian Principles

Voluntary work is one of many possible lifestyles of a person. A volunteer shapes his life on the basis of some essential values, such as gratuitousness, service, solidarity¹⁶, respect for the dignity of others, sharing, and sobriety.

From this viewpoint, volunteer work inspired by

¹⁵ JOHN PAUL II, *Tertio Millennio Adveniente*, 51.

¹⁶ *The Principle of Solidarity*, in *Compendium of the Social Doctrine*, 192-196.

Christian principles wants to realize authentic “human” relations, following the example of Christ and the Good Samaritan: “... *a Samaritan traveler who came upon him was moved with compassion at the sight*” (Lk 10:33,34). The Samaritan, who “*came upon him and cared for him*” becomes the very icon of Jesus’ style, i.e. of a truly human and Christian style and of the style of any volunteer in the Order of Malta. The main reference value for voluntary work inspired by Christian values is the gratuitousness, which must never be considered only from an economic point of view.

It is not a question of setting gratuitous services against paid professional work, since we are speaking about giving importance and meaning to gratuitousness defined as relation-guiding value, giving in an altruistic manner and respecting the other person without forcing him/her into a relationship, without claiming any reward.

Voluntary Work in a Changing Society

The witness given by volunteers in a changing world may play an important role in making people more responsible and concerned to the common good with *creative and effective ideas*. Voluntary work

inspired by Christian principles needs to be re-qualified and re-oriented in the frame work of current social changes, it must be subject to a new evangelization, while keeping the word and example of Jesus Christ as its main reference.

In the relations with the relevant institutions, the volunteers must be put in a position to adequately play the role of collaborators in understanding needs, establishing priorities, planning citizenship policies, organizing services, verifying quality and attainment of established targets, and also informing of deficiencies and waste.

This task concerning subsidiarity¹⁷ needs not only laws recognizing the relevant services, but also education and support processes.

Education

The volunteers of the Order of Malta have always looked with greatest attention towards the poor and needy in our society: old and sick people, homeless, prisoners, drug addicts, immigrants, vic-

¹⁷ The principle of subsidiarity was formulated in the Encyclical of PIUS XI *Quadragesimo Anno* (1931), and it was taken up by all subsequent documents of the Church's social doctrine: "*Still, that most weighty principle, which cannot be set aside or changed, remains fixed and unshaken in social philosophy: Just as it is gravely wrong to take from individuals what they can accomplish*

tims of natural disasters and emergency situations...

“Voluntary work” does not mean improvisation, and no organization can do without education, promotion and coordination. Education¹⁸ concerns both the learning of techniques and methods required to render the services and the ripening and development of the human and Christian motives¹⁹ that make up the identity of the volunteer and of the relevant organizations.

The education of the Order of Malta volunteers will make special reference to the two sides of the Order’s specific identity: religious order and hospitalier order²⁰.

Pope Benedict XVI prompts us to combine specialist know-how with an education of the heart:

*by their own initiative and industry and give it to the community, so also it is an injustice and at the same time a grave evil and disturbance of right order to assign to a greater and higher association what lesser and subordinate organizations can do. And all this is a serious damage and a subversion of the right order of society, because every social activity ought of its very nature, to furnish help to the members of the social body, and never destroy and absorb them” (PIUS XI, *Quadragesimo anno*. Reconstruction of the social order, 15.5.1931; cf. also *Compendium of the Social Doctrine*, 185-188).*

¹⁸ P. SARDI, *Formation and Service*, in “Journal of Spirituality”, 11, p. 29-37; A. ACERBI, *Formation and Service in the International Strategy Seminar in Venice*, in “Journal of Spirituality”, 11, p. 103-117.

¹⁹ G. VON KÜHNELT-LEDDEHN, *Christian Motivation in the Service of the Volunteers*, in “Journal of Spirituality”, 11, p. 81-91.

²⁰ SMOM, *Regulations and Commentaries*, Rome 2011, p. 26-30; p. 131-141.

“Consequently, in addition to their necessary professional training, these charity workers need a “formation of the heart”: they need to be led to that encounter with God in Christ which awakens their love and opens their spirits to the others. As a result, love of neighbours will no longer be for them a commandment imposed, so to say, from the outside, but a consequence deriving from their faith, a faith which becomes active through love (cf. Gal 5:6)”²¹.

Young Volunteers

Education can take on various forms: not only in activities carried out in the Order’s different volunteer groups, but also proposing voluntary work to individuals and groups of young people²² interested in initiatives of this kind. In fact, it means proposing a lifestyle based on gratuitousness and service in favour of the weaker strata of the population.

The world of youth, with its many expectations,

For the Italian Relief Corps of the Order of Malta (CISOM) six documents about spirituality were prepared (Rome 2011): *Hospitality, Service, Volunteer Work, The Order of Malta, Poor and sick people: Obsequium Pauperum, Lifestyle of the Order’s Volunteers.*

²¹ BENEDICT XVI, *Dens caritas est*, 31a.

²² P. DELCLAUX, *The Education and the Service of the Youth in the Light of the Charisma of the Order of Malta*, in “Journal of Spirituality”, 11, pp. 75-83.

resources, time, places and ideas, finds in voluntary work not only an opportunity to render an original service, but also an important opportunity for education in human solidarity, faith and Christian charity.

Give an Explanation for the Reasons of our Hope

The vast world of voluntary work is a sign of hope in our times. “New evangelization” means sharing with the world its anxiety for salvation and “*giving an explanation to anyone who asks for a reason for our hope (1 Pt 3:15). Men and women need hope to be able to live their present life: the content of this hope is “the God who has a human face and who has loved us to the end”*”²³.

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Spiritual Assistant of the Italian Pilgrimages

²³ BENEDICT XVI, *Spe salvi*, 31; *Lineamenta*, 25.

PROMOTING CHRISTIAN CULTURE IN A SECULARIZED SOCIETY

Most of the countries in which Members of the Order reside are now largely secularized. It is possible to exaggerate this trend; surveys show that more than 40% of adults in the United States attend religious services nearly every week, or more frequently. Over 80% say they belong to a church or other religious organization (compared with 4% in France), and 47% affirm that religion is “very important” in their lives (compared with 12% in the Netherlands).

Nonetheless, the trend toward secularization is marked. Each of the positive indicators for religion in the United States has declined significantly in recent decades. The transformation appears complete in most of Europe.

It was against this backdrop that the Order’s 2004 International Strategy Seminar addressed this issue in its Working Group Six. That Working Group’s final report produced a number of thoughtful recommendations. It concluded:

“The foremost and most important part of the battle to preserve and promote Christian culture in a secular world is the

example of Christians ... the Members of the Order are the "rontline" of this battle ...".

The Working Group focused its recommendations primarily on the formation and education of our members, to enable the propagation of our faith. This article will attempt to build on and extend those recommendations, with particular reference to the situation in the United States (but hopefully in a way that will prove useful to members in other countries as well).

There are, of course, many ways in which we can begin to promote Christian culture; indeed, Vatican II's Pastoral Constitution *On the Church in the Modern World* called for the laity to "*carry out their earthly activity in such a way as to integrate human, domestic, professional, scientific and technical enterprise with religious values.*" The field is almost unlimited, and in particular the need to push back against the secularization of artistic and popular culture has never been greater. But space limitations force me to narrow the focus of this article, and so I would like to suggest that members of the Order can contribute in a special way to promoting:

- a culture of life;
- a culture of faith;
- a culture of solidarity.

A Culture of Life

Pope John Paul II, especially in his encyclical *The Gospel of Life*, stressed the need for a culture of life. We Members of the Order are, by virtue of our membership, committed to the value and integrity of every single human life. This commitment is often conceived as primarily a matter of policy and politics, and of course in the United States and many other countries, there are constant skirmishes over maintaining or extending protection for human life, on issues ranging from abortion to stem cell research to capital punishment. Our faith should impel us to participate actively in some of these political struggles (although, I would add, the Lord's command to "judge not" should also make us slow to denounce those who are not willing to join us on each and every issue). But beyond policy and politics, there is much for us to do in our daily lives to build up the culture of life.

In *The Gospel of Life*, John Paul II urged that, in support of the Gospel of Life, "*we develop a contemplative outlook ... with deep religious awe to ... revere and honor every person*" (83).

The Pope called for "*a patient and fearless work of*

education,” including the renewal of a culture of life within Christian communities themselves, and most especially for the family – the “domestic church” – to raise children who are imbued with these values.

“We can say that the cultural change which we are calling for demands from everyone the courage to adopt a new lifestyle, consisting in making practical choices – at the personal, family, social and international level – on the basis of a correct scale of values: the primacy of being over having, of the person over things” (98).

This is, as John Paul II wrote, “*an immense and complex task,*” and no Member of the Order (nor anyone else) can join the battle on all fronts. But prayerful reflection on Pope John Paul II’s magnificent encyclical might help each of us to find his or her own place in the ranks.

A Culture of Faith

A “culture of faith” could be defined or described in any number of ways. What I have particularly in mind is rooted in the fact that I am a parent. Like many parents in increasingly secular societies, I have been concerned for the prospects of my children and

grandchildren. Will they hold on to the faith I received from my own parents? Will they be able to pass it on to their own children? Will that faith give them the strength to resist the encroachments and inducements of a secularized society? Discussions with my children and their contemporaries would make me very pessimistic, were it not for the fact that the Holy Spirit is with us.

It seems that the promotion of a culture of faith must begin with the family, the “domestic church” of which John Paul II wrote, and our direct evangelization of our own children and grandchildren. I know this is already a concern for many of our Members – a glance through the biographies of Knights and Dames shows many who have been active in Catholic education and catechesis.

A second front in this effort is helping those who have drifted away to recover their faith. This is the thrust of the New Evangelization – to “repropose” the truths of Catholicism, as the Holy Father has phrased it. It is a massive challenge here in the United States, as some researchers believe that four young Catholics are leaving the Church for every one who joins. And the situation apparently is even more dire

in the United Kingdom, Ireland, and Europe. What can be done?

One answer to this question was elegantly stated by Cardinal Donald Wuerl, the Conventual Grand Cross Chaplain *ad Honorem* of the Federal Association, in his pastoral letter on the New Evangelization:

“Somehow in what we do and how we express our faith, we have to be able to repropose our belief in Christ and his Gospel for a hearing among those who are convinced that they already know the faith and it holds no interest for them. We have to invite them to hear it all over again, this time for the first time.”

Just how to do this is a challenging question. It takes tact, because a heavy-handed approach is almost certain to fail. It takes knowledge of our faith, because we cannot convey what we do not ourselves understand. And it takes imagination: we need to consider *why* a friend or family member or co-worker has turned his or her back on the Catholic faith, and what we might be able to say that could possibly break through to him or her.

And it also takes courage. Many of us (myself included) are often reluctant to reach out to a family

member or neighbor for fear of being rejected, for fear of undermining a relationship. But we need to remember that we are called to repropose the Faith – in whatever way we find to do it. That is how we help recreate a culture of faith.

Just this week, I heard about the comment of a younger person who returned to Catholicism after having drifted away. *“What brought me back,” he said, “were the repeated conversations my father had with me about spiritual things – and his listening to me without judging.”*

A Culture of Solidarity

Finally, we need to build up a culture of solidarity. “Solidarity” is a word we often hear and seldom consider carefully. John Paul II wrote that

“Solidarity ... is not a feeling of vague compassion or shallow distress at the misfortunes of so many people, both near and far. On the contrary, it is a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good; that is to say, to the good of all and each individual, because we are all really responsible for all” (On Social Concern, 38).

Solidarity is more important than ever in a secular culture, because that culture, as has often been

noted, is relentlessly individualistic, focused on the self. That is the dominant theme of advertising, magazines, the internet. That is what we need to resist. The Catholic approach is to attend not only to one's own interests, but to the common good, and especially the needs of the poor and vulnerable. As the U. S. Bishops put it in a 1997 pastoral letter:

“Cain’s question, ‘Am I my brother’s keeper?’ (Gn 4:9), has global implications and is a special challenge for our time, touching not one brother but all our sisters and brothers. Are we responsible for the fate of the world’s poor? Do we have duties to suffering people in far-off places? Must we respond to the needs of suffering refugees in distant nations? Are we keepers of the creations for future generations? For the followers of Jesus, the answer is yes. Indeed, we are our brothers’ and sisters’ keepers. As members of God’s one human family, we acknowledge our duties to people in far-off places. We accept God’s charge to care for all human life and for all creation” (Called to Global Solidarity, 3).

This should come naturally to Members of the Order. From earliest times, our calling has been to serve Our Lords the Poor and the Sick. But they are also Our Brothers and Sisters the Poor and the Sick, as, popes and bishops have reminded us. If they lack

the basic necessities in life, we too are injured. And we need to feel ourselves in solidarity – and to act in solidarity – with the unborn, the elderly, and those who are under pressure from society’s denial of their right to live.

Solidarity helps build up the culture of life. In his encyclical on that subject, Pope John Paul II called for solidarity: we need “... *the service of charity, which finds expression in personal witness, various forms of volunteer work, social activity and political commitment.* This is a particularly pressing need at the present time, *when the “culture of death” so forcefully opposes the “culture of life” and often seems to have the upper hand ... We must care for the other as a person for whom God has made us responsible*” (*The Gospel of Life*, 87, 93).

Building a culture of solidarity also builds a culture of faith. It strengthens our own faith; it invites others to the Faith. It is an authentic sign of a Christian; it was, Pope Benedict reminds us, the thing most remarked on by the Romans in the early centuries of Christianity (*Deus Caritas Est*, 22). Many who have been drawn to the Church, or brought back to the Church – especially the young – will say that the Church’s unwavering commitment to the poor is what drew them.

As Pope Benedict said in his first encyclical, *Deus Caritas Est*, this is really at the heart of Catholic Christianity:

“Love for widows and orphans, prisoners, and the sick and needy of every kind is as essential to [the Church] as the ministry of the sacraments and preaching of the Gospel. The Church cannot neglect the service of charity any more than she can neglect the sacraments and the Word” (22).

None of us can do everything. But perhaps we could resolve, each of us, to choose one step for the culture of life, one for the culture of faith, one for the culture of solidarity, and commit ourselves to those three things. They could form our small contribution to the resistance against the secularization of society. Jesus, after all, took a small contribution of loaves and fishes and performed a miracle.

A final thought: Perhaps our greatest act of resistance will be the way we live our everyday lives. Pope Benedict made that point earlier this year:

“We want to make the words of the Servant of God, Pope Paul VI, our own, when he said with regard to evangeli-

zation, *“It is therefore primarily by her conduct and by her life that the Church will evangelize the world, in other words, by her living witness of fidelity to the Lord Jesus – the witness of poverty and detachment, of freedom in the face of the powers of this world, in short, the witness of sanctity”* (Apostolic Exhortation *On Evangelization in the Modern World*, 41)” (Address of Pope Benedict XVI to Participants in the Plenary Assembly of the Pontifical Council for Promoting the New Evangelization, May 30, 2011).

We can make our own the prayer of Cardinal Newman:

“Make me preach Thee without preaching - not by words, but by my example and by the catching force, the sympathetic influence, of what I do.”

W. Shepherdson Abell
Grand Cross of Magistral Grace
with Ribbon in Obedience

ON THE ORIGATION OF YOUCAT

(translated from German)

The birth of YOUCAT was actually initiated by a somewhat embarrassing incident: During the presentation of the German *Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church* in 2005 in Vienna (Austria) by Cardinal Schönborn, a mother asked to speak and said: “*Eminence, I wanted to buy this Compendium for myself and my adolescent children, but it is completely unusable for youngsters, since it is not understandable. So I won’t buy it*”. Thereupon, Cardinal Schönborn said to Bernhard Meuser, the German publisher of the *Compendium*: “*Actually, what we really need is something specific for young people*”.

Some days later, Bernhard Meuser accidentally had a meeting with Michaela Heereman, Dame in Obedience of the Order, with whom he wanted to discuss another book project. Incidentally, he told her about the Cardinal’s remark, which had been echoing in his heart since the presentation. He described his dream to her: Take time to examine the *Compendium* with a small group of young people for one week and hear from them what they think, what they are inte-

rested in, what they consider incomprehensible and of no importance and what their real questions are. After that, a youth catechism should be written on the basis of their critic, their reactions and their real issues. He concluded, rather resignedly: *“But there are no such young people”*. Michaela Heereman replied: *“You’re wrong there; such young people do exist; we have them”*.

By the term “we”, she meant Michaela Heereman herself and Msgr. Johannes zu Eltz, who had been referents of the so-called “reli-camps” for the past eleven years. The camp was organized by Count and Countess Magnis, Members of the Order of Malta. Observing the life of their children, who at that time were between 5 and 15 years old, they had noted that observant young Christians increasingly find themselves in a minority position in school and among friends; they therefore need external supports for their faith in order to receive a confirmation of the elements that their families try to convey. This led to the organization of the “reli-camps”, and each of the four Magnis children was allowed to invite ten friends. The special feature of these 5-day camps was the mix of games, sports, being together with friends

and age-appropriate catecheses. In the eleventh year, the reli-camp participants attended together the World Youth Day 2005 in Cologne. For many of the adolescents (who have grown to be young adults in the meantime) it was a particularly inspiring occasion, because the spiritual experiences and reflections in the faith, which they had been living in the private frame of the reli-camps, received its confirmation and extension in a really “Catholic”, i.e. worldwide community of the World Youth Day.

When those young people were asked whether they were willing to dedicate the 2006 reli-camp to the hard work of working out a youth catechism, the referents were astonished to find out that only very few of them knew the meaning of the term “catechism”. And when the adolescents understood that they were asked to help explaining the Church’s treasure of faith in a manner that’s attractive and understandable for young people, many of them were scared by this task and said that after all they weren’t theologians and still had many more questions than answers. *“That’s exactly why we chose you”*, was the answer. Eventually, all those who had enough time were involved and cooperated enthusiastically. In

addition to the core-group other young people were also invited to attend: youngsters far away from the church and Lutheran Christians. In the end, the group was composed of 52 young people, more than half of whom from families belonging to the Order. There were school pupils, apprentices and university students between 15 and 25 years of age.

The referents of the catechism-camp (and YOUCAT's authors-to-be) were two priests: Dr. Johannes zu Eltz, a Member of the Order of Malta himself until his ordination to the priesthood and presently city dean of Frankfurt, and Dr. Christian Schmitt, member of the Community Emanuel and parish priest in the diocese of Münster, as well as two lay people: Bernhard Meuser, publishing director and established author of spiritual works, and Michaela von Heereman; both are theologians, married and parents of several children.

For their first meeting with the youth group, the authors had set themselves the goal not only of making the statements of the *Compendium* understandable for them, but also to work with them on the questions. In fact, the questions contained in the *Compendium* were mostly not straightforward, as

youngsters would pose them, but instructional questions, intentionally formulated in such a way that it was easy to give a precise answer to them. These instructional questions made the *Compendium* appear out of the world and far from real life right at first sight.

The *Compendium* was closely analyzed by four thematic groups – as much as 7-8 hours a day. In many cases, it was a long and difficult task to explain the propositions to the girls and boys so they could pose the questions that a young person would ask.

After one year's work, the four authors traveled to Rome to meet with Professor Langer, a religion pedagogue from Regensburg, who Bernhard Meuser had asked to contribute as a consultant. His assessment regarding the texts presented to him was withering; for instance, the draft of one of the authors had been written in a well understandable, modern language, but had then been wholly rewritten by another author (at the expense of readability) in order not to lose sight of doctrinal clarity and the connection with the genre "catechism". So this genre catechism seemed to be incompatible with the target group "youth". "*Forget it and go eat an ice cream*": That's

what the professor said as a conclusion. The authors followed his second suggestion, but after that they also went to church for an *Eucharistic adoration*. And this led to a brainwave: Each question was to have two answers; one, set in bold type, which sticks – as concisely and understandably as possible – to the doctrinal style of the Catechism and also employs the wording of the Catholic tradition; and a second, in most cases longer one, set in normal type, with comments and explanations to the first answer, but written in a language that's close to the world and life of the XXI century and its young people.

This method was followed for the second draft, which was presented to the girls and boys during the following summer camp in 2007. Again, some of them criticized it sharply. On the basis of the feedback received, it took almost two more years to work out the final draft of the YOUCAT texts.

In the meantime the work gained more and more shape as various other elements were defined through various ideas: Bernhard Meuser suggested introducing marginal columns. These columns now enrich the theological responses to the questions of faith through appropriate quotations from the Holy

Scriptures, the documents of Popes and Councils, of Saints and Fathers of the Church, but also of scientists, poets and politicians. It is intended (or better: necessary) that in the versions in other languages such columns are filled with other quotations, since in Indonesia and Africa, Spain and the Czech Republic people certainly have some other Saints and high-profile Christians than in Western Europe.

In this way, YOUCAT became not only a book for the transmission of knowledge, but also a small, but polyphonic spiritual treasure chest. Following the explicit request of the adolescents, the marginal columns also contain a kind of theological dictionary, explaining various technical terms such as absolution, incarnation, Trinity etc. A further important element was the use of a great number of pictures / photographs taken from the world of youth. The pictures were meant on the one side to break up any monotony of a merely textual transmission of the faith and on the other hand to show that the faith concerns life as a whole – as it is depicted by the photos, which could and should be replaced by others in the translated versions.

The graphic design of YOUCAT was entrusted

to Alexander Lengerke, Knight in Obedience of the Order of Malta and a friend of the authors; with his stick figures he produced a further opening of the YOUCAT's text structure. His sketches, presented with a certain self-irony, facilitate the understanding of many substantial and complex topics; they inspire to further reflection, produce smiles and persuade the reader to browse.

During the final phase, it was the intercession of the renowned psychiatrist and theologian Manfred Lütz (he, too, a Knight of Malta, but what's more important a member of the Pontifical Council for the Laity) that opened many more doors to YOUCAT. However, without the patronage of Cardinal Schönborn, who trusted the team and constantly supported it, the project would never have come to a good end. In the end, the decisive step was made by the Holy Father himself: He gave YOUCAT a wonderful preface and thus provided the little yellow book with the required Catholic-universal updraft, which really made it "YOUCAT", the youth catechism of the Catholic Church.

This year, YOUCAT will be published in 22 languages, including Croatian, Russian, Vietnamese,

Arabic and Hindi; in Madrid, it will be put (in the six languages of the World Youth Day) in the 700,000 backpacks of the young pilgrims as a gift of the Pope to the young people from all over the world. This is to make sure that the words that the Pope has written in his preface will find thousands of followers: *“Study the catechism! This is my heartfelt wish ... Study it with passion and perseverance! ... read it together, if you are friends, form groups and study networks, exchange ideas on the Internet...”*.

At the same time of the World Youth Day, an international Internet site of YOUCAT has been activated: www.youcat.org. Through this web site, the youth of the world can exchange their questions, doubts, hopes and experiences of faith.

After all, this is the best way to use YOUCAT. It was created through dialogue, and we know that speaking about one's own issues and doubts with others, who may already have found answers in the faith, was the right way not only for the disciples of Emmaus, but it is also for us today. This is why YOUCAT is an excellent companion for team work: In the youth organizations of the Order of Malta, with confrmands, ministrants and catechumens. But it is also

useful for adults who just want to look up what the Church really has to say about: The person of Jesus, the Holy Trinity, the theory of evolution and the theology of creation, tyrannicide and “just war”, poverty and hunger in the world... or who want to find the traces of the Members of the Order who have contributed to the work. They will certainly make a find.

One last thing: If you, too, dear reader, are planning to embark on a huge project that appears almost impossible, there is a reliable method you should follow: Go and eat a good Italian ice cream, and then go to a church for an Eucharistic adoration. Then you will have the Holy Spirit on your side, and with him obviously also the Church.

Michaela Freifrau Heereman von Zuydtwyck
Dame of Honor and Devotion in Obedience

THE WOLRD DAY OF YOUTH

(MADRID 2011)

(translated from Spanish)

Let no one take away your peace ... be proud of your faith!

With these rousing words our very dear Pope Benedict XVI initiated his visit to Madrid for the XXVI World Youth Day. We had the great fortune to be able to play host to this great ecclesiastic event in our country. It's true that religious life in Spain is not experiencing one of its best moments, but all this must help us to understand that we're not responsible for everything, Peter's successor came to strengthen us in our faith and to demonstrate to the entire world that Christ does not take away anything but rather gives everything.

The Youth Day officially began on August 16 with a solemn mass celebrated by Cardinal Rouco Varela in Plaza de Cibeles, attended by thousands of people; during it the Archbishop of Madrid called us young people "the generation of Benedict XVI".

For the entire week Madrid's Parque del Retiro, in the heart of the city, was a great attraction, with

200 exhibitors, a tent-chapel for Eucharistic adoration and a vocation cafe with various stations including that of the Order of Malta. Great importance was also given to confession, and for the entire day priests were taking confessions at the Retiro in all languages. The Missionaries of Charity looked after the Eucharistic chapel, always full of young people praying, and there was a fine exhibition dedicated to Gaudí's Sagrada Familia.

On Thursday 18 the tension rose as the Holy Father's arrival approached and at midday he was given a fantastic welcome in Madrid. The Pope knows all about the problems of young people and speaks discreetly without circumlocution; he constantly invites us to live with our hearts in Jesus, following Him and overcoming our fears and complexes.

On the 19 the Pope encountered the younger religious in the incomparable scenario of the Courtyard of the Kings in the Escorial monastery and the university professors inside the Basilica. Once again the Pope placed himself on the same level as his interlocutors, contemplative among the contemplatives and doctor among the doctors. In the afternoon an impressive *Via Crucis* was celebrated

along the Paseo de Recoletos, in which each station was represented by images from the Spanish Holy Week. The Cross was carried at each station by youths, giving an invitation to all young people to embrace his or her cross, because that is where Christ conquered death.

Seminarians from all over the world present at World Youth Day 2011 were privileged to attend a holy Mass in the Cathedral of Santa Maria Real de la Almudena officiated by the Pope, who stressed the importance for a candidate to priesthood to shape all his life to Christ. The vigil in Cuatro Vientos represented one of the most eagerly-awaited moments and there was a tremendous response: Two million enthusiastic young people listening to the Pope.

A blizzard did not manage to discourage the young who came to acclaim the successor of Peter. But the most important moment was that of the Eucharistic adoration, in which Benedict XVI consecrated all the young people to the Heart of Jesus. It was impressive to see so many young kneeling regardless on the rain-soaked ground, because Christ was the authentic protagonist of that unforgettable vigil in Cuatro Vientos.

The next morning the sun was out and everything seemed to tell us that the Youth Day was about to reach its climax: the Holy Father celebrated mass at the conclusion of the Seminarists from all over the world present at World Youth Day 2011 amid a multitude that recalled Our Lord's preaching around Tiberias. At the end of the Mass the next World Youth Day in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil was announced.

With regards to the logistic organization, a special mention should be made of the collaboration of our Order in assisting people with reduced mobility placed next to the altar.

Before returning to Rome, the Pope met all the volunteers to thank them for their great contribution to the good functioning of the World Youth Day. The Pope departed, leaving this thought: What does God expect from each of us in this World Youth Day 2011? In what way does God ask me to follow Him?

Rev. Fernando Ignacio Altolaquirre Orbe
Magistral Chaplain

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