

# 9<sup>th</sup> MEETING OF LIFE ASCENDING INTERNATIONAL AT SANTO DOMINGO

## PREPARATORY WORK

**(From the compilation made by Professor Minaya  
of the responses of the different countries of the movement.)**

### **1. What promotes evangelization?**

The testimony of the elderly person in the family and in society is a key factor in evangelization, especially in secularized countries where religious training has been abolished in schools. This evangelizing action is reinforced by religious movements, such as Life Ascending, which promotes an apostolate and a volunteer service based on the charisms of the elderly person. In these groups, teamwork is encouraged both within the family and in the parish.

We must emphasize the importance of the support and training of the person throughout his course in sacramental life, from childhood to maturity (confession, communion, confirmation, marriage).

The global pastoral programs undertaken at the national level in countries such as Mauritius (KLEOPAS) or the Dominican Republic (the first national pastoral plan launched in 1982) have had a very positive impact. However, it is necessary to insist on the fundamental role of the pastoral care of the elderly in national apostolate programs.

To compensate for the distance separating the young people from the Church, it is very useful to strengthen the pastoral care of young people through the organization of the living-together, events, pilgrimages, training programs and movements promoting the charisms of the Youth. Good examples are the organization of choirs, music groups and summer camps.

The importance of prayer, especially devotion to Mary, is underlined in all countries, with the promotion of the Prayer of the Rosary so requested by the Madonna during her appearances in Fatima and Lourdes.

The dominant individualism in today's Society and lack of training create mistrust and give rise to a lack of decision and commitment.

### **2. evangelize when you are a senior?**

#### Difficulties

The main difficulties for the elderly person in the exercise of the apostolate of the elders are their isolation and difficulty of displacement. For this, it is necessary to overcome the limitations imposed by the age, and overcome the fear of indifference and ridicule.

The deterioration and destructuring of the family, as well as the care of the grandchildren, require almost exclusive attention of the elderly, which leaves them little time to devote themselves to other tasks, not allowing to overcome these difficulties.

Another fact to consider is the lack of control over new technologies.

In some countries of Latin America, the syncretism between forms of ancestral religiosity and Catholic Marian fervour is deeply rooted, especially among the elderly, and it is very difficult to make them understand that

part of this cultural and religious mix is the true path that leads to our Lord. On the other hand, a new form of gnosis has appeared among young people. She sees technology as a new form of wisdom with which they think they are satisfied. A case like the other hinders the consolidation of faith.

### Opportunities

There are more opportunities for evangelization among elderly in the family, and they also have more time to accompany patients to hospitals and residences.

Movements such as Life Ascending prepare the elderly to integrate better into modern life and help them to bear witness of life. Therefore, a deeper and stronger formation is needed to be able to cope effectively with the current proliferation of the most diverse evangelical groups.

In principle, the elderly person has the time and the energy to carry out works of charity and Apostolate. It is mainly they who help the liturgy, take care of the places of worship and distribute the communion.

### Prayer

At this stage of life, prayer and participation in the Eucharistic celebrations and the Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament are of great importance. Elders are devotees of the Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, it is necessary to encourage personal prayer by deepening the experience of the continued presence of God and his message. We can think here at the path of the two disciples towards Emmaus.

Delegations unanimously stressed the need to promote the prayer of the Rosary

### Difficulties

The catechesis cycle that accompanies the sacramental life of the person does not always lead to a Christian life project.

Unfortunately, the Church sees the elderly person more as the recipient of the action than as an actor of evangelization.

### **3.-Do certain activities of your movement affect evangelization? Which? How?**

The statements by the delegations of Argentina and Uruguay that they lack activities outside the movement due to the lack of trust and support of the priests should be emphasized.

The movement collaborates with other movements such as the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul, the Charismatic Renewal, Caritas, etc.

The groups of Life Ascending are very active in all areas. We highlight, for example, twelve activities mentioned by the delegations in the preparatory work for this International meeting:

1. They visit residences and hospitals and proclaim the gospel there. They visit the poor of the periphery by announcing the Gospel through retreats and days.
2. They complete this activity by a voluntary visit of sick and lonely people.
3. They carry out active voluntary service in charitable institutions, care for expelled persons, support for the poor, a movement for life, assistance to the emigrant, etc.
4. They interact with people of other beliefs interested in Life Ascending. Pay attention to contacts of interest with people who, unexpectedly, are approaching the church
5. They promote meditation of the Gospels with commentary and texts for meditation. They promote the daily life of the Gospel.
6. They publish religious books and magazines,

7. They promote formation meetings, itinerant formation, courses, coexistence and spiritual exercises.
8. They encourage continuous renewal so that their members are not left behind in the progress of modern life. Correction in time of incorrect ideas
9. They organize visits to the religious centres of the country and exhibitions in churches and public spaces. Projection of religious films and organization of concerts of sacred music.
10. Their members commit themselves as readers and ministers of Communion
11. They insist on prayer as a personal encounter with God.
12. They organize and participate in meetings of Ascending Life within secular schools.

#### **4.- In our country, in our church, in our movement, is the good news announced to the poor?**

The statement of the delegation of Peru that the country is eminently Catholic, so that the country, the church and the movement conform themselves to the message of Pope Francis for the announcement of the Good News to the poorest is motivating.

This contrasts with the statement of the Swiss delegation that this announcement of the Good News to the poor is hampered by fear, neglect and comfort.

Usually, the episcopal conference organizes the pastoral care of the Word for the poor. Within it, the movement Life Ascending is engaged in the parishes for the announcement of the Good News, especially to the elders collaborating with other movements such as the Conference of St. Vincent de Paul, the Legion of Mary, charismatic groups, the Parish support, networks of Messengers, Family Action, evangelisation meetings, parish teams, mission houses, etc.

This evangelization reaches the periphery of the cities. Frequently Members of Life Ascending themselves belong to the least favoured class and that is why they are the recipients of this evangelization.

Life Ascending announces the by visiting people in solitude at home and, in the light of the Gospel, pray in groups

The elderly also frequently practices volunteering activities that bring the Good News to those expelled and abandoned. Without forgetting that loneliness is another form of poverty, it becomes obvious that the proclamation of the Good News to the poor is at the very heart of the mission of Life Ascending.

Let us listen without judging, exceeding our comfort zone and preventing that our friendship weaken, living the Brotherhood.