

Vie montante internationale Vida ascendente internacional Life ascending international

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EVANGELISATION, for a new humanity

During the 2010 Montreal International Meeting of VMI, the participants decided to clarify the Movement's objectives, previously defined by our three pillars: Friendship, Spirituality, Apostolate. They were re-phrased as follows -Living together fraternally, Deepening our Faith and our Spiritual Life, Fully living our Christian life within the Church and within Society. With a view to the next International Meeting in 2018, the Management Committee of Lisieux (2016) suggested that we further enhance our understanding of the third pillar by working on the theme: The older generation, evangelising agents in our multi-generational and multicultural society. The following thoughts are intended to encourage our discussions.



Fra Angelico

esus is the first Evangelist. He announces the Good News. He sends out His disciples to evangelise in their turn. His last words on earth, before His Ascension, were to send His Apostles, and all the Church, out to evangelise. According to the Acts of the Apostles, the principal activity of the first Church, consisted of evangelising.

The history of the Church is the history of the evangelisation of the entire world. The teaching of the last Popes reminds us continually of Christ's mission to all the members of His Church.

Pope Paul VI left us a beautiful and easy text, called *Evangelii Nuntiandi* - translated as "Announcing the Gospel to the People of our Time" (1975).

Before the Conclave which elect-

ed him Pope, Cardinal Bergoglio had said to the Cardinals that he hoped the Church would "know the gentle and comforting joy of evangelising". He was quoting the words of Paul VI at the end of "Announcing the Gospel".

John-Paul had described evangelisation as "a joyful, patient and progressive sermon on the liberation which the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ achieved for us" (*The Church in Asia, 1999, n*°19).

The first great text written by Pope Francis is called "The Joy of the Gospel" (Evangelii gaudium). In this exhortation he repeats the conclusions of the 2012 Bishops' Synod on "The New Evangelisation for the Transmission of the Faith".

This evangelisation is the trans-

mission of the Good News. "May today's world, which searches, sometimes in desperation, sometimes hopefully, receive the Good News from evangelists who are not sad and discouraged, impatient or anxious, but rather from Ministers of the Gospel whose lives burn with passion, who have been the first to receive the joy of Christ." (Paul VI).

Let us not forget this invitation to joy, the joy that comes from Jesus and from His Spirit, and not from us! This is the first task for the Church in approaching those who don't know Jesus Christ and those who refuse Him. Many elderly people, parents and grandparent think of the younger generations, their children and grandchildren who are baptised and know their Catechism but are separated from

the Church due to a breakdown in communication. It is often very painful.

Our generation is conscious of the treasures provided by the Gospel; the Good News brings humanity to life; the Holy Spirit advances our development. The world, "which often goes astray and needs answers which provide it with courage and hope", suffers when the Gospel is not preached. ("Joy of the Gospel", 114). The Church also suffers because without cultural and generational divergences there can be no new learning.

We might ask a question: does evangelising mean only talking about Jesus? I am reminded of something I read recently about Father Suarez . A Spanish Jesuit, he was expelled from China in 1951 and lived on in Macao until 2011. He spent his life serving the local communities, especially the thousands of Chinese refugees fleeing from the mainland. One of his work colleagues wrote about him: "Father Suarez never spoke God's word in words, but I saw Jesus in him every time I was with him". We could also think of Mother Teresa with the poor people she looked after in Calcutta. The important thing for her was to see Jesus in them! To see Jesus, to make Jesus seen.

This is how Pope Francis speaks of taking Jesus to others: "as well as to people close to you as to people you don't know: the first moments consist of a dialogue where the other person explains and shares his joys, hopes and worries - lots of subjects that lie on a person's heart". Listening to the other is the first step. "We listen with humble witness, always ready to learn, knowing that the message will be so rich and profound that we shall always be out of our depth".

Every baptised person, says the Pope, becomes a "missionary-disciple" because he has encountered the love of God in Jesus Christ and that love transforms him. He has a need to communicate to others what he feels and what he believes in. ("The Joy of the Gospel" n° 120-121, 127, 129").

Each one of us is responsible for being an Evangelist. But, Pope Paul VI reminded us, it's a big step, with potential pitfalls: awaking sleeping giants, witnessing, having explicit discussions, speaking with the heart, getting close to people, taking the initiative Such moments might seem mutually exclusive, or even forcibly to exclude each other. But in fact they are complementary, and mutually enriching."

Don't let's wait till we have mastered the theory! Let's start talking! I propose that everyone tries this three stage preparation:

- 1. I think back to when I was myself evangelised. How, when, who by, in what way, which part affected me most?
- 2. I think about what the effects have been, and I thank God for the benefits I have received in my life.
- 3. I ask myself, as a "disciple-missionary", what the Lord mightl expect from me in response to my personal vocation "in whatever circumstances the Holy Spirit will provide".

P. François MAUPU

2018: Forthcoming International Meeting

The next VMI International Meeting will be held in November 2018 in Santo Domingo (in the Dominican Republic).

It will bring together representatives of the national Movements of Vie Montante/Life Ascending from all over the world. It will give us the opportunity to assess our activities since the last International Meeting in October 2014 in Namur, and to look at our future plans, as well as to reflect on the theme chosen during the last Management Committee Meeting in Lisieux:

"The older generation, actors for evangelisation in a multigenerational and multicultural society"

The Meeting will be prepared by the next Management Committee in KATOWICE (about 80 km from Krakow, in Poland) this year, from 4th to 8th September .

It will be followed by the General Assembly, during the course of which the members of the new Executive Committee will be elected (the President, the Vice-President, the General Secretary and the Treasurer) for the period from 2018 to 2022, as will the Continental Representatives who will make up the future Management Committee. ■

The life of the teams

ARGENTINA

n our country, Vida Ascendente is essentially focused on evangelization, based on the three "pillars" of VMI: friendship, spirituality and apostolate - which remain our objectives. This is not an obstacle to our concern for others: on the contrary, there are charitable actions in all the parishes to fight against poverty.

Each group has its own characteristics, depending on local needs.

As for the mission of the groups, the main objective is to improve the situation of the elderly, to develop their role in society, by emphasizing their experience; it is also to deepen their spirituality, so as to move towards a re-

flective and mature faith.

Meetings are usually held in the parish halls, they can be weekly, biweekly or monthly. They last from 2 to 3 hours.

They begin with a prayer, with the intentions offered by those present, a reading of the Gospel of the day with thoughtful interventions from all the participants. Then we have readings and comments on the work proposals provided each year by Father Osvaldo Montferrand, our Spiritual Director, or other topical issues: news, pontifical documents, saints' birthdays, surveys, etc. All that can help us to live this stage of life positively, without losing sight of our life in the community, al-

ways based on understanding and especially on love.

The meetings end with sharing a snack, and our thanks to Mary for being with us.

The members discuss their apostolate with the other parishioners in charge of pastoral care, liturgy, charitable works, and with diocesan priests or bishops.

Each group maintains its unique character, adapting itself to the needs of each place.

Susell DEMARCO

BURKINA FASO

In their Activity Report, the Vie Montante members working in Burkina Faso describe some details of material and economic life, sometimes very difficult, in some of the teams in the Diocese of Nouna.

Bomborokuy • We visit the sick. On every Feast day they go to Confession and receive Holy Communion.

Djibasso • We receive 0.07 Euros for each person. We have a communal field and we sell what we grow, then the profits go into the cashbox and are used for everyone. The money goes towards praying for rain, for Requiem Masses and for helping the Catechists, or helping in the fields.

Doumbala • We have collections for

money or for cereals to help us continue with our work (prayers for rain, visiting the sick etc). When somebody dies we all visit the afflicted family and give them some money.

Saint Joseph • It's difficult for Vie Montante to operate without an office..... We make peace between families and we are preparing to visit people in the outlying areas to help them increase their understanding ...

Tansila • We all work together as a team and all the money is put in the common cashbox ... the older generation often clean the inside of the church and the ground nearby. We visit outlying areas and invite people over 50 to join Vie Montante.

Solenzo • We visit the sick, we reconcile quarreling families. However, Christian marriage is not a success because young men marry two wives so as to have more help in their fields. Old people look after chickens. We receive 0.20 Euros each month, plus a sum for our cashbox and one for our CEPAM box and we also help the Catechists with the work in the fields. During the AGM we talked about the causes of divisions within families, within Christian communities and parishes, and within society as a whole, and we questioned how we Christians could work for greater unity and cohesion.

Compiled fom Adolphe SIMBORO and Michel KONDE

SWITZERLAND: "CONFERAMBLE" GROUPS *

As our existing members get older, it becomes more and more difficult to recruit younger people, who don't consider themselves elderly enough, to join.

Faced with the very different motivations and interests felt by retired people - who may be anywhere between 50 and 80 years of age - we have conceived the idea of experimenting with "walking-discussions" or "confer-

ambles" groups.

The intention is to continue with our customary discussions on the same VMI themes, but to do it while walking. It would happen like this: the theme is outlined at the beginning of the walk and one or two questions are suggested. The walkers, while moving alone, in couples or small groups, examine and reflect on the ideas suggested. Everybody stops at an agreed

meeting-place and shares together the general outcomes and opinions.

Then we listen to the Word of God, which we meditate on while making our way to a local church or chapel accompanied by a local member familiar with the history of the neighborhood. There will always be a keen elderly resident willing to describe or explain important or little-known facts about their local district.

After having noted, summed up and recorded the feelings generated by the bible text and the deliberations of the group we draw the meeting to a close with a picnic out in the open air or in a suitable nearby building.

Our members think this is an interesting idea, and the "conferamble"

groups are growing and being talked about although there is some way to go yet before everyone is convinced.

Finally, to forge deeper links between the disparate groups of retired people we have suggested that the youngest elements and the walkers, might celebrate together a Day of Recollection, or Christmas, *Thus, MCR* would remain united in Spirit while participating in different activities.

François MERÇAY

*To confer with one another while ambling from A to B

THE EUROPEANS ARE MEETING IN PARIS

ast March in the VMI Headquarters, the members of the Executive Committee of Vie Montante Internationale and the European Co-ordinator, Monika Ptak, welcomed the new European Presidents and their teams:

Sylviane Sbille Hancq and Christian Liebenguth from Belgium, François Merçay and his wife from Switzerland

Alvaro Medina del Campo and Jaime Tamarit from Spain, Ross Robert from the United Kingdom, and our Spiritual Director Father Antonio Rego from Portugal.

The object of the meeting was to get to know one another and to explain the different structures and procedures of the Movement in the three official languages - not always an easy exercise! Each of us presented our own national movement and also learnt about new initiatives. The aim was to share information too about certain projects which might be developed

on a European level - among them is the internet site, the exchange market, which aroused a lot of interest when the Chemins de Saint Jacques de Compostella were mentioned, and the "confer-amble" walks which are popular in Switzerland. We have not forgotten either the possible projects to be shared between the border teams of our different countries.

Beautiful paths to travel together!

Monika PTAK

HONG KONG: Happy Birthday

On the 19th April LAI in Hong Kong celebrated its 15th birthday with a Thanksgiving Mass and a celebration meal. We send our fond greetings and congratulations to the leaders and all the members.





THE CCIC IS 70 YEARS OLD

VMI works with the CCIC (the Catholic

Committee for Cooperation) which plans and works for peace within Unesco and outside.

To celebrate its 70th anniversary the group organised a conference based

on the theme "What sort of world do we want to build together?" Several well-known personalities from all over the world took part.

Goyita Boyd and Jean-Michel Simeon from our Management Committee also attended the celebrations and they were able to meet Cardinal MARA-DIAGA briefly; he is the Archbishop of Tegucigalpa and they gave him a document describing VMI, in the hope of starting the Movement in Honduras in the future. ■

ROME Father Alexander AWI has been appointed to the Dicastery for laity, family and life

On 31 May 2017 this Brasilian priest of 46 was appointed by Pope Francis to assist Cardinal Kevin Farrel, responsible for that part of the Roman Curia created in 2016 which

combines the authority of the previous Pontifical Councils for lay people and for the family.

Father AWI was born in Rio de Janeiro, he is a Doctor of Theology, a teacher of Pastoral Theology, editor of a magazine, and part of the editorial team responsible for the publication of the Aparecida Conference documents.

(source : Zenit)