

**PASTORAL CARE
OF YOUTH IN THE CONTEXT
OF LASALLIAN SPIRITUALITY (2)**

Some difficulties and challenges

We believe that in this pastoral work, recently done, we are beginning to detect certain common grounds for the future. This pastoral work cannot be planned «from the drawing board». It is a question of living among the youth and to discover the way together with them. It is the youth themselves who best understand the realities of evangelization.

We believe that the Lasallian Youth Movement does not have for its objective to be a life-long commitment in the Christian life on the part of those who join it. There are already movements in the Church for those who want to live their Christian life «within a movement». The Mojula is a stage in ecclesial incarnation and discernment. Our youth ought to find «their own» place of commitment with the world and with the Church. We have to rediscover the meaning of «being secular», of being in the world. Our Latin American people possess too great a richness of cultural values in order to start on another road which is not that of encarnation to revivify the evangelization in them.

Some youths, nevertheless, will discover that the «Lasallian style of living the Gospel» is what God is inviting them to embrace. How? Where? With Whom?

There are some timid responses and other spirited witnesses, but this is only the beginning.

Among the poor to whom we are offering some educational services, members and leaders continue to emerge who give us a new pastoral style which is more suited to the poor and the deprived. How do we respond to this new reality?

The young people of the movement who open our schools to the poor areas often come into conflict with some of our Brothers. Some among us are literally stuck by the internal working of a school, which beside overwhelming us, does not permit us to see what it going on 100 meters away from our lecture halls. This creates conflicts. How can we profit by this instead of allowing it to destroy us?

The Brothers, so scarce and tired, see in these youths the illusion of a reserve of future replacements who will finally allow the work to carry on, which they have continued up until now with so much sorrow and sacrifice. How can we make them accept the fact that our young people want «another thing»?

At times, some Brothers find these youth leaders and animators to be closer and easier to understand, more in tune with their own ideals than their own Brothers in the community. What do we do when confronted with the risks and problems which are evoked by such a situation?

Associating with the older youth necessarily implies a greater or lesser involvement in the realities in which they themselves are living. Sometimes these are union activities, university, political, and economical matters, etc.. These activities invite our participation in spite of our rules and the strong resistance on the part of many Brothers. What can be done

so that the Brothers who are working with youth will not be rebuffed or criticized by their own community?

In summary, the challenge facing us here is the relationship between the Institute and the Youth Movement. The document cited at the beginning of this article manages to deepen the reflection on this matter which cannot be resolved in these few lines.

Youth pastoral apostolate and recruiting vocations

I have left for last this topic, which, unfortunately, is for many the only thing at present worth talking about. We are not engaged in the Pastoral Apostolate among Youth so that there may be more Brothers. This is not fair in itself. It is not a question of changing the method of «recruitment», and instead of showing a swimming pool and a house of formation to now show a Brother playing a guitar because it is more attractive to the young.

It is the intention of our Youth Pastoral Apostolate to have all the young people in our group find in themselves the elements which will lead them to discern and choose the life style which will let them find their own vocation, in its most profound and widest sense: to put into reality their Plan of Life.

Still, with the same force with which we affirm that we cannot be forced into a trap or be subjected to pressures of any type, we say that we believe that in the measure that our young people go on learning our spirituality and sharing our mission, they will have the elements which will allow them to freely choose to «associate themselves» with us within the Institute.

This is not a question of a theoretical affirmation. Those who said this same thing many years ago without being able to prove it, suffered very much. Today, thanks be to God and to the efforts of many, our novitiates continue to be repopulated by youths belonging to these youth groups. This is cause for hope and rejoicing.

But our joy is just as great when we see so many young men and young women opting for teaching among the poor as a way of life, by becoming catechists, by choosing service to the Church, by a commitment to the liberation of our people. Both God and our Founder wish that we in the Church of today should take up this challenge of our times. The Institute must take up this challenge if it wishes to be faithful to God, to the service of man, and to the dignity of life, according to its charism.

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