Feast of the Holy Trinity

Brother Robert's message to the Brothers

TRINITY SUNDAY

7 June 2020

Is it not a great blessing to know when we are together with our Brothers, whether to engage in interior prayer or to perform some other exercise, that we are in the company of our Lord and that he is in the midst of the Brothers?[1]

Dear Brothers,

As we celebrate the feast of the Holy Trinity, let us rejoice in the gift of our vocation, a gift we share with one another. We give thanks to Father, Son and Holy Spirit for calling us by name to participate – together and by association – in God's mission. Our consecration to the Trinitarian God energizes us to announce the Gospel to the poor.

As communities of men consecrated to procure God's glory, the lockdown caused by COVID-19 has given us a precious gift: an extended period to be together to contemplate God's will for each one of us and for the entire Institute. The lockdown has afforded us extended time for conversation, prayer, contemplation and sharing our experience of God in light of the global crisis.

Regarding the call to consecrated life, the protagonist in *Gilead*, a novel by Marilynn Robinson, says: "One great benefit of a religious vocation is that it helps you concentrate. It gives you a basic sense of what is being asked of you and also what you might as well ignore". As individuals and as communities we would do well to reflect on what is being asked of us right now and what it would be best for us to ignore.

These two questions are part of my prayer and reflection during this time of the pandemic. Once again, the words of the Capitulants to the 42nd General Chapter (1993) inspire me:

… to "go to those" who do not have the means to learn and assume their place in

society because of famine, war, oppression . . . to “go to those” who are victims of economic and political turmoil and who suffer the brunt of the spasms of a disturbed world – unemployment, substance abuse, AIDS, suicide.[2]

The spasms of a disturbed world are glaringly obvious as we confront the effects of the virus. We are ambassadors of Jesus Christ, so the widening educational and economic gap among the few who have much and the many who have little urges us to reimagine the way we witness to the Reign of God in our educational communities.

> *Dedicated to the apostolic ministry of education, the community realizes that its mission constantly needs to be discovered at the different stages of its life and as it comes into contact with new situations. Accordingly, it takes part in the reappraisal of both its aims and methods, with a view to coming closer to the spirit of the Gospel and to re-examining the pastoral value of its activity.**[3]***

Brothers, may we continue to be critically attentive to emerging economic, educational and ecclesial dynamics. Let us seize the moment and make the Gospel the touchstone for all of our decisions regarding our fraternal life and our apostolic endeavors.

Like De La Salle, we must attentively listen to “the God who intervenes in the history of His people, the God who comes to meet humanity”.[4] Our challenge is to create practical strategies to make God and the Good News relevant right here and right now in our religious and educational communities.

We are living in a time of grace, a time of transition, a time to return to the heart of our charismatic and Gospel-centered history. It is a time that inspires us to return to the freedom, audacity, and creativity of the first mystical experience. We face this moment as a call for a personal and institutional conversion toward the world of the vulnerable and impoverished.[5]

We live this time of transition, looking with the eyes of faith, at the devastation caused by the pandemic and we sense that the Holy Spirit is loudly and clearly calling us to action on behalf of God’s people. Our experience tells us that “to be faithful to the Holy Spirit implies…a definite commitment to the unexpected”.[6] How are we responding to this unexpected and catastrophic event? I believe we are moving away from the status quo and sterile routines. We are willing to

recommit to live the Gospel radically and joyfully. We are moving away from an over-concern for efficiency. Increasingly we are proactively with the poor in the struggle for justice.[7]

Brothers, as you celebrate Trinity Sunday with the renewal of vows, I invite you to consider the following reflection by a Brother Visitor:

Being witnesses of hope in the educational service of the poor means to firmly believe that the good God always reveals himself to us, invites us, and commits himself to us; or better, we with him, with his project, with his message of love and peace, of reconciliation and fraternity. Let us make our life a song of hope, our heart a source of dreams, our witness a vocational invitation, our word an expression of blessings, our disposition an inspiration, our journey a path of permanent seekers of new apostolic adventures. The vitality of the Institute depends on the value of its members and on the ability to propose, create, and demonstrate that another world is possible to the extent that all Lasallians strive to make it a reality. These are times of burning the boats and betting the remains. These are times … for dreaming new scenarios, for inviting young people to join the journeyers who know how to sow hope and love while on the journey.[8]

Finally, Brothers, the Capitulants to the General Chapter in 1946, still reeling from the horrors of World War II, sought God in the security of the past. They re-affirmed the 1718 version of the Rule and sought to dismiss the laypeople who taught in the schools during the war.[9] Let us take this historical lesson to heart and not allow today's horrors to lead us to turn inward. The Capitulants to our next General Chapter, to be held in Pattaya, Thailand, in the context of the pandemic, must seek God in the emerging realities impacting religious life, educational dynamics and ecclesial structures. Our vision must be oriented towards the future and to new ways "to proclaim the Good News in places where Christ has not been heard of, so as not to build on a foundation laid by someone else". (Romans 15: 20).

Your Brother,

Brother Robert Schieler, FSC
Brother Superior

[1] Campos, Miguel FSC & Sauvage, Michel, FSC. Encountering God in the Depths of the Mind and Heart. No. 25.

[2] Circular 435: The Documents of the 42nd General Chapter, Rome, 1993, pp. 19, 20.

[3] The Rule, Article 54.

[4] Campos, Miguel FSC & Sauvage, Michel FSC. Encountering God in the Depths of the Mind and Heart. Notes 17 – 23.

[5] Circular 469, The Documents of the 45th General Chapter, Rome, 2014, 1.15.

[6] Campos, Miguel FSC & Sauvage, Michel FSC. Encountering God in the depths of the Mind and Heart. p. 429.

[7] Circular 469, The Documents of the 45th General Chapter, Rome, 2014, 1.17.

[8] Gomez, Carlos FSC. Visitor, District of Bogota.

[9] Cf. Campos, Miguel FSC, et. al. The Fragile Hope of a Witness, pp. 100-117.