

**RESPECT AND
INTERCULTURAL
DIALOGUE IN THE
SALVATORIAN FAMILY**



Joint International Charism Commission - 2008

Other Sources for deepening the theme

- √ “*The Spirit of Dialoguing and Universality*” – Article of Sylvie Brunzel- Lauri, SDS - Italy.
- √ “*Universality and Universal Love*” – Sr. Carol Leah Thresher SDS
- √ “*In Family and with Charism*” – Luis Munilla Article: *A vueltas con la expresión: “FAMILIA SALVATORIANA”*, pg. 109s.
- √ “Postulation Salvatorian Press” – N° 19 – December 2006.
- √ “Books 1, 2 e 3: Salvatorian Key Elements – International Charism Commission”
- √ Collection: *Drinking from the Sources of the Charism*”: The Salvatorian Family meeting with Salvation - 48/8 p. 11 – Feb /2007– CIS, Brazil.

RESPECT AND INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE IN THE SALVATORIAN FAMILY

“...men and women, with cultures and distinct history, working side by side in mission. We nourish mutual trust and respect by the differences existing among us”.... (CD IV, 14)

Opening Prayer

At this present time in our history, the theme of **respect and intercultural dialogue** is current and urgent. In the globalizing world today, very often tormented by divisions, sectarianisms and fundamentalism, we are challenged to experience internationality and multiculturalism as part of our identity as Salvatorian Family. Respect and intercultural dialogue are dimensions that need to begin within each person, creating and opening spaces towards others. We shall start reflecting on this theme and invoke the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit (prayer or song), followed by a moment of silence in order to be in communion with all the Salvatorian men and women, of all ethnic groups, and with every person throughout the entire world.

Motivation

A student raised the following question to his teacher: “Why are there so many religions and political parties?” The teacher took a chair and put it down before all. He asked each one to look carefully at the side of the chair they were able to see. Some students could see the front side, others could see the side of the chair, no one could see the backside the same way. Then, the teacher explained that that was the reason of the diversity of religions, parties and opinions. Each one's vision of the chair was not absolute. In fact, no one was able to see the chair as a whole. Each one had a different vision, because they were in different places, looking at the chair from different angles. According to the teacher, the person who tried to see the chair by changing the area of vision would be closer to the truth. Walking around the chair would help to know it better; bending down it would be possible to see the bottom part of the chair; touching it would allow the person to experience the notion of texture and the material used in its making. The teacher explained that when we get up from our places, from our positions, when we allow

ourselves to evaluate things from another perspective, we learn more about the issue and our comprehension becomes enlarged, grows and is enriched. In light of this short story we can think about our challenge to witness our common identity to live unity in diversity. Diversity is, without a doubt, one of the greatest treasures of our Salvatorian Family. Each member, each community, each branch can be distinguished by its specific gift. In living our Charism the gifts of each person become like a link of the same chain, or threads of the same fabric. *“Even if the three branches are autonomous, it is in interacting that we express our Charism (DC IV, 15).*

However, it is not so simple and not so easy to live diversity, because it demands breaking down prejudices, being open to other identities, in a spirit of tolerance, and ability to dialogue among all those involved in this process. It requires above all humility to recognize that we do not always possess the “whole” truth.

1. From which angle do you see the Salvatorian Family? What is your experience of living the Salvatorian call in diversity?
2. In general, how does our group/community live this dimension of our Salvatorian Charism?

Biblical Meditation

The Salvatorian Family responds to its call based on a profound experience of God, as the center of our life. Engaged in manifesting the goodness and love of Jesus the Savior, we are called to practice respect and dialog with others. This open vision is rooted in the evangelical ground of the Savior’s universal brotherhood. In the Gospel, Jesus reveals in a translucent way an attitude of welcoming ALL. The most characteristic sign of His attitude was His openness to those who were different, to those who were excluded and marginalized. The great goal of his mission was not primarily to spread a new doctrine, but “to witness a new way of living and living together”. Thus, we Christians, find in Jesus the basic reason for our openness to others. The dialogue sprouts from the inner heart of the Gospel. What is most specific in following Jesus is to be so close to “another person” and to be what “the other from his/her irreducible way of being expects as a Christian attitude

That our discussions will not divide us, but will be means of searching for truth and wellbeing.

That each one of us, in constructing our own life, will not impede others in the construction of their lives;
That our differences do not exclude anyone from community.

That we look at one another, Lord,
with your eyes,
And love each other as you love us.
That by living as sisters and brothers we do not to be closed in on ourselves,
But be available, open and sensitive to the desires of others.

That at the end of all ways, beyond all our searches,
And at the end of each discussion and after each encounter,
There will not be winners nor losers, but brothers and sisters of the same family. Amen!

End with the Blessing of Father Jordan. (SD I 189,6)

May the Almighty God + the Father + the Son and the Holy + Spirit bless you,
He will sanctify you, confirm and multiply
as the sand of the sea
And as the stars in the sky, until the end of times.
Amen

We need to be open communities or groups to each other, as we live with attitudes of loving, attentiveness, welcoming, respectful, valuing and integrating gestures. However, it is necessary to overcome the so-called “higher cultures” and the “lower cultures”. All cultures have intrinsic and proper values.

The personal and community discussion we need to keep engaging in systematically, in addition to the deeper knowledge of our historical roots and traditions, presumes, also, interest in knowing about the cultures of other members of the Salvatorian Family, about the places where we do our ministry, about the signs of times current in the society today and in the life of the Church. As we face these challenges we are invited to take in heart the following questions:

1. How can we build greater unity in the diversity of our communities? Concretely, how can we strengthen the relationship among the three branches of the Salvatorian Family in our country?
2. As persons who live the same Charism, how can we know each other better, knowing about the different cultures, about the Salvatorian activities in ecclesial and social situations with their own and diversified characteristics?
3. What are the steps and commitments proposed to us in assuming collaboration in common activities?
4. What phrase would be the resume of our reflection today that helps us to live this Salvatorian theme?

Final Prayer

Lord, we ask you: Help us to grow in the knowledge of our inspirations, understanding better our own limitations.

Help each one of us to feel the need of one another.
That we may not be indifferent when another is tired, sad,
indisposed and discouraged.

today. Let us recall (or read) some Biblical texts that illuminate this theme.

Lk 10, 25-37: The love of our neighbor is, in the first place, an authentic human love that moves us, that is compassionate with the person who is maltreated and hurt. Through action in solidarity one can verify the love that brings us closer to others. For this, it is necessary, like the Samaritan man moved by compassion, to leave our own path in order to go into another’s way.

Acts 2, 1-11: For the one who allows herself or himself to be guided by the Spirit of Jesus there are no borders, because one’s main goal is to live by the Project of God Who came to save all. The Holy Spirit is a continuously renewed and updated memory of what Jesus did and said (cf Jo 14, 26). No one possesses the Spirit fully; nobody is deprived of this Spirit. Each member has own attributes. Each one speaks a proper language, but there is understanding among all. The Pentecostal experience does not erase the differences, but shortens the distances.

1Cor 12, 4-20: The diversity of the members of the Community is the factor of mutual growth. The Spirit within the Community gives it its deep unity. The Spirit builds Community in unity and diversity because “each one receives the gift to manifest the Spirit for the good of ALL” (1 Cor 12, 7). Everyone is nourished and becomes inspired from the same source, the Holy Spirit.

1. What other passages in the Bible refer to this theme?
2. How does the Word of God help us to live and witness our Salvatorian Vocation that leads us towards the dialogue with and respect for other persons?

Deepening Our Charism

The theme of Universality is the most genuine and lasting part of our tradition. The global apostolic vision was always a current theme in the mind and teachings of our Founder. The dream of Father Jordan, Mother Mary of the Apostles and of the earlier Salvatorians was a Society, which was enriched

by the diversity of gifts and functions, by the geographic, social, ethnic diversity of the members put at the service of the fullness of life, based on the knowledge and love of Jesus Christ, the Savior. In order to make this dream concrete, Father Jordan calls all without exception, without caring what might be his or her view of the “angle of the chair”, once this “view” is inspired by the charity of Christ and put at the service of the mission of saving humankind. Let’s recall some texts referring to this theme:

Words of Father Jordan, Mother Mary of the Apostles

“All peoples, all nations, all races, all tribes, all human beings; you are debtor of all! Do not rest until all know, love and serve Jesus, the Savior.” (SD I, 70)

“Always hold on to this universality. Keep focused on the “ubique et omnibus”s! It is for all countries and each one in his place has the task, the duty, to participate in spreading this spirit. We shut out no nation. Thus, the Society is not destined for Italy or Germany, but for all. And it is also the spirit of the Society that people of every nation are admitted. This is a very important point. And if you stray from this you depart from the spirit of the Society. In addition, as the Society is not narrowly limited either to place or social class, so we should work with the educated and non educated, with the sophisticated and with the simple and uneducated. No nation, no people, no situation is beyond consideration. It is especially important for you to heed this. Therefore, don’t always concentrate on where the greatest success is to be found. Everywhere there are souls, there we must work. This is what I would like to leave you as my testament. Don’t deviate from this.” (Talks of Father Jordan General Chapter- 17.02.1899)

“Now in a religious order it is impossible never somehow to infringe on another’s rights; but on the other hand love and leniency must be practiced. There must be order. Everyone has rights but order must be also maintained”. (Talks of Father Jordan - 08.01.1897)

“The love for the neighbor is that divine cement, without which no community will be able to keep together in unity.” (SD IV 4, 3)

“Above all, however, keep mutual love among yourselves... That among you everything will be done with love”. (Rule of 1884)

“Disseminate always, spread out everywhere. Involve and renew the universe! Attract the pastors – attract teachers – and consecrated virgins, O, guide!” (Mother Mary)

Other Salvatorian Texts

“The universality of the Salvatorian Charism is grounded in God’s gratuitous love which involves us in life. Instead of being mere spectators, we are participants. God’s, approach teaches us that all peoples and nations are to be respected. They all have the right to a full life. Any movement toward exclusion must be replaced by love large enough to embrace the universe. Prejudices must be identified and overcome through the process of conversion so that all people have access to the fullness of life...” (“Francis Jordan’s Apostolic Vision – A light for Living in the New Millennium”. S.Carol Leah Thresher, SDS, in Salvatorian Key Elements, Charism Mission, Spirituality, Identity” – Part 1, p. 27).

“The human dimension of “caring” can and needs to be impregnated warmly in our community relationships. It lowers our defenses, breaks down the hardness of our hearts and allows us to spread our mercy in living out attitudes of tenderness and in solidarity”. (Drinking from the Sources of our Charism 48/8, Feb/2007, CIS – Brazil)

“We belong to different races, but are equal in everlasting dignity. It does not mean uniformity, but deep unity, communion and ministry. If the similarities bring us closer, the diversities enrich us.” (Jordan, A Young Man under the Fire of the Spirit, Milton Zonta, SDS, p. 27)

Challenges Of Intercultural Dialogue

As carriers of this precious gift of our Salvatorian call, we need to integrate and to balance our cultural differences. Humanity, so often marked by divisions, sectarianisms and intolerance needs our witness of being in communion. This is a demand that cannot be missing in the Salvatorian Family.