

Central Secretariat for Formation - OCSO -

Monastery of Nuestra Señora de los Ángeles,

March 2021.

Newsletter 28

*To the Superiors,
the Regional Secretaries of the OCSO
and to the brothers and sisters
interested in formation.*



RE :

F. Carlos María

The mystics of Helfta

Under the title "The Helfta Chair", we have studied the mystics of Helfta throughout 2020 with the help of Father **Miguel María Vila** from the Monastery of San Isidro, who gave us classes full of wisdom.

After Mechtildis of Magdeburg and Mechtildis of Hackeborn, already in January 2021, it was the turn of **Gertrude de Helfta**. Miguel María, who is also a professor of History of the Church at PREM, presented the biography of Gertrude in a broad historical context. He presented to us the fundamental elements that make up her spirituality, her search for and experience of God, and her relationship with Sacred Scripture, presenting her as a teacher of *lectio divina*.

In the last class, Miguel María presented themes in common to the three mystics of Helfta, especially deepening their relationship with Christ and the theology of substitution.

This teaching, given the circumstances in which we find ourselves, was done online, which has allowed a broad participation of the RE communities. As we recorded the classes, we can share the videos with the brothers and sisters of the Order.

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1a7nILMrOx5R94yYf2Yk-7h807Hy1bzUr?usp=sharing>

CNE, in connection with Récif and REI :

s. Béatrice

The **Cistercian spirituality session**, organized by the Francophone region that was scheduled for July 19-24, 2021 in Aiguebelle on "The Brothers of Thibirine" has been

postponed until next summer (2022) due to the current crisis. The date will be specified later.

RAFMA :

Fr. Justin of the Monastery of Our Lady of Mokoto DRC

VOCATIONAL MOTIVATION

Session from January 25 to 29, 2021

directed by Father Georges sac (Society of Catholic Apostolate. Pallottine)

(I try to offer a summary of the notes that you can find in the attached file.)

This session gathers each year the **postulants** and **novices** of our Diocese with their formators in order to strengthen the capacities of discernment, motivation and accompaniment of young people in formation.



1. Vocation

The animator wanted to specify the three initial vocations :

➤ **Human and Biblical Anthropology:** Who am I? I am dust and divine breath. I am a spiritual soul (Gn 1 and 2; 2 Cor 4: 7), a treasure in a clay vessel. The human vocation is badly lived when it is defined in relation to things: **having, knowledge, power, opinion, titles and functions.**

➤ **Christian anthropology:** The Christian vocation is human life which is open to Jesus. "*It is no longer I who live but Christ in me*" (Gal 2: 19). It is to welcome oneself from the hands of God. The problem in this stage is the image of the Father (God-Father). Since there is no ideal father, let us live in free acceptance of ourselves.

➤ **Religious Anthropology:** our call to religion allows us to become aware of the sacrifice of Jesus. It is based on the previous two.

Here are some *characteristics* of the religious vocation.

- It is a gift for the person, for the Church and for society.
- We do not lose our vocation, but we may not respond to it.
- It is a new creation, a permanent novelty.
- It's a death to oneself.
- The vocation is a promise. The one who promises is the one who performs it. Saint Augustine maintains that *God gives what he commands*.
- It is a free response: "*If Christ sets you free, you are truly free*" (cf. Gal 5: 1).

Indeed, to discover the will of God we have the Bible as a reference. The voice of God is expressed in tones

- Fundamental tone: throughout history. Some received gifts but no fruit.
- Driving tone: it is the set of motivations, desires, values, ideals ...
- Objective tone: what is given to everyone, the Word, the Church, the Time ...

2. Motivation

What the vocation should be based on: On Christ: poor, chaste and obedient; on values. Values play different roles: the animator maintains four:

1. *Utility* function: we can live obedience to be accepted, admired ...
2. *Defensive* function: values protect against internal problems...
3. *Cognitive* function: We can talk **about Jesus** but difficult to **talk to Jesus**.
4. *Expressive* Function: We are ready to give a testimony. This is the ideal.

Thus, the role of formation is to minimize the first three functions. The formators, will help the candidates to discover their fears which paralyze a real motivation. Because most of our fears are related to the image of God.

Some *signs* to discover the vocation in young people:

Spiritual sensitivity, attraction to interiority, desire for formation, spirit of compassion, attraction for poverty and simplicity, not to desire marriage but to have a positive perception of marriage, docility and listening; a taste for risk, love the Church, desire to bear witness, admit mistakes and ask for forgiveness.

3. Education

Education comes from the term *ducere*, which means to get out of ... lead to ... To get out of confusion to go towards the truth. God, as a great educator, brings his people out of slavery into freedom. Thus, the role of formation is to make me discover my real self before leading to the ideal self. Knowledge enables intelligent observation through **behavior, attitudes, feelings, and needs**.

1. Behavior makes me see the inconsistency between reality and the ideal. In addition, a decision is based on values while a reaction is the product of feelings.

2. Attitudes: these are the programs, the sensitivities, which affect the conscience, the capacity of judgment and which is the result of basic education. Trainers must therefore deprogram them. the question is "who, where, how was my consciousness formed?"

3. Feelings: The feeling is **Neutral, Natural, and Normal**. They are part of the emotional dimension of the person. They talk to us about us, they should not lead us.

Through feelings, the real self manifests itself. Over passions and feelings we have no control. They are part of our "self", of our memory: emotional memory (it does not forget anything). Facts' memory (it is selective, retains little information).

4. Motivations: We are largely motivated by our needs. The basis of it all is the wound, the lack which is expressed by the need; they are noticed by expectations and unfulfilled expectation causes frustration, and unmanaged frustration is expressed by aggressiveness which is partly against self and partly against others.

5. Needs: A need is a biological or psychic force that prompts action to eliminate a lack. We distinguish: primary need (to eat, drink, sleep, eliminate, procreate), secondary need (security, economy), spiritual need (to be recognized, to be fulfilled). Thus, dissonant needs clash with vocation values. They are noticed in the attitudes: aggression, the need for emotional dependence, to avoid dangers, to defend oneself, exhibitionism, seduction, attention, sexual gratification, humiliation.

This is opposed by consonant needs: the need for autonomy, knowledge, help, relationship, order, play, recreation.

4. Expectations and Inconsistencies

1. Expectations: When linked to dissonant needs, they are unreal. Also the expectation is linked to the culture. It is proven that unmet expectations create frustration, which is expressed in aggression against oneself or against others!

2. Inconsistencies: Inconsistent motivation creates strain on oneself and on others. The perception of the other is dictated by needs and expectations. Talking about or criticizing the other, what are you saying about yourself? You have to look at the other without taxation, beyond the images.

When values are not received, they are given certain functions:

- ❖ *Utility* function: I use values to fill in my gaps,
- ❖ *Defensive* function: values protect me, I hide my misogyny behind chastity,
- ❖ *Cognitive* function: the community allows me to define myself, to situate myself, to facilitate my life,
- ❖ *Transformative* expressive function. Jesus expresses himself in my way of life, testimony. The integration of values is the ideal and the goal of support.

5. Spiritual and vocational accompaniment

This word comes from *cum* (with) and *panæ* (bread). It is taking bread together, as a traveling companion, it is the bread of the journey. Spiritual accompaniment is a temporal and instrumental help by an elder brother or sister, to the person in formation by sharing a

piece of the journey. To help him recognize the action of God, in the end to respond in a free and responsible way.

This support takes place at two levels: at the individual level and in life. So it is neither an authoritarian nor a friendship relationship. Its objective is the growth of the candidate.

Eight conditions are necessary for successful accompaniment:

1. Decision to be accompanied	2. Basic trust	3. Openness to life	4. Desire to grow up
5. To know oneself	6. Understanding ability	7. Aware of its role	8. Ability to be accompanied.

Due to his mission, **the guide** has certain **powers**:

1. Information power: it is a right and an obligation.
2. Power of reward and punishment: encouragement, positive or negative report.
3. Power of reference: it is like the identification "the master said...".
4. Competence power: the guide should know the answers.
5. Power of legitimacy, the guide receives the right to decide...
The power of the companion depends on the acceptance and maturity of the candidate.

The ambiguous attitudes of the candidate when he unconsciously refuses the guide:

1. **Quiet** (all is well) he always expresses the good side: He wants to reassure.
2. A **hero**: is full of qualities (the other hurt me, but I forgave). Too pure,
3. The **victim**: is full of problems for himself. He seeks affectivity.
4. **Cash-cash**: don't relate, stay away, have nothing to say, that's pride!
5. The **pilgrim**: is accompanied by several, in search of other sanctuaries.

What is the **content** of the support?

- ✓ Significant relationships in history
- ✓ Perception and integration of this story
- ✓ Perception of reality, affective memory which reactivates
- ✓ Values, how are they expressed?

As a conclusion

It is appropriate to notice that a person is mature when he or she is able to discover their strengths and weaknesses and take appropriate measures. Weakness tells us that we are not creators of ourselves. He who does not surrender, lives in illusion. He is a slave to himself. Thus, spiritual accompaniment as a pledge of our growth is a process that never stops. It makes us grow in confidence and surrender.

These are the five points which formed the basis of our session; the exchanges in the working groups were substantial. The participants recognized that this session opened their eyes to the hidden motives of their vocation and equipped them to integrate human, Christian and religious values.

US :

S. Pamela

The US Region cancelled the annual Junior Seminar for 2021 as had happened in 2020 due to the pandemic. **The Regional Secretary of Formation** has organized two online classes for the Region's Juniors, not as a substitute for the Annual Seminar that normally takes place at one of the Region's monasteries.

The two courses are:

- 1) Sacramental Theology: **the Eucharist** taught by **Dr Michon Matthiesen** and
- (2) **Emotional Disorder, Prayer and Healing in the Early Monastic Tradition**, taught by **Fr Daniel Hombergen, OCSO**.

The first class is scheduled for May and will use live streaming and Zoom sessions. The second is scheduled for June and will use Zoom sessions.