

## SESSION FROM 14 to 18 November 2022

Theme: **THE HUMAN VOCATION, Daring to live one's humanity in following Christ**

### Introduction. Monday November 14

**God speaks to us** through our humanity which is the basis of every vocation. Those who live their humanity badly cannot live the Christian and religious life. God speaks to us through creation: we receive the treasure in vulnerability (Gen 2: 7; 2Cor 4: 7).

**We respond** by being aware that our life comes from God; that we are loved and made to love with a love that overflows towards the other. However, **when the person lives his humanity badly**, he looks for his value outside. My value comes neither from religious life nor from priesthood, nor from having.

The preacher develops this theme in 7 points:

**I.** The role of the mother. **II.** The role of the father. **III.** Self-perception. **IV.** Self-esteem criteria. **V.** Inappropriate human attitudes. **VI.** Adapted human attitudes. **VII.** Stages of human development.

Grace relies on nature and the vessel, is only safe in the hands of God. Saint Augustine said it so well "*You made us for yourself Lord and our heart is restless until it remains in You*". Our parents situate us in history; transmit their wounds and **maternal love to us**. The child incorporates the maternal universe.

### **I. The role of mother.**

Mom's love is gratuitous, stable and irrevocable. This love secures the child, gives him his value and the **right to exist**. Through him, the child finds his place in the world. He feels a sense of belonging. Maternal love is a **love of tenderness**. It is the relationship with mom that lays the beginnings of our personality. For the child there is neither past nor future, what matters is the present moment. This is why a mother must have the **pleasure of taking care** of the child. Some **deficiencies of maternal love**:

**1) an absorbing and devouring mother**: she is a mother who only exists for the child. She utters these words "*You are everything to me*"; "*You are my happiness and my reason for living in this house*". Unconsciously, she requires the child to make up for his emotional lack; it blocks his personality. The absorbing mother makes the child feel guilty.

**2) a controlling mother**: The child is obliged, in order to exist, to carry out all that she commands. This child will suffer from **passive submission**. It is easily manipulated.

**3) a narcissistic mother**: in Greek mythology, Narcissus was in love with himself, wanting to embrace his image, he drowned and there, a flower called "*narcissus*" grew. This attitude can lead to self-centeredness and homosexuality.

**4) an impotent mother**: she is a woman who is often ill, unable to take care of the child. This child will feel obligated to take care of the mother. She steals her own child's childhood! Later, he will force himself to help others, like a lifeguard. He **will always feel useful, indispensable**, unable to say "no".

**5) an overprotective mother**: She does not allow the child to make mistakes. She does everything for him. Thus, she protects herself from her own wounds for fear of failing. In adulthood: **difficulty in making decisions and responsibilities**.

**6) a cruel mother:** she is capable of torturing, punishing her own child: “*You bother me, disappear!*”! She is a **sadistic and psychopathic** mother. She carries within her a violence that compels her to take revenge. The child will have a strong sense of guilt. All hurt is relational. But a “*conscious wound, says Saint Gertrude, can be changed into a pearl*”.

## II. The role of dad, his mission. Tuesday, November 15

If the mom gives birth biologically, the dad is the soul midwife. Its role is to **give the child his identity or access to himself**. With mom, the child is in fusion, but dad shows him the **way to autonomy**. Even at 40 you can still cling to your mother’s breast. Thus, the mission of the father is to exercise the **ministry of authority**. Mom loves with tenderness but dad expresses love with authority in 4 ways:

**1) by giving the “name”**, he assumes responsibility for growth. In the Biblical sense, the name means, identity and mission.

**2) dad carries out his mission by the prohibition:** by pronouncing a word which refuses the fusion and tells the child to be himself, dad calls the child to express himself.

**3) the father educates in obedience:** for the child who missed this stage, it will be difficult for him, later, to obey and to listen attentively. It is in the relationship with the father that he learns to obey, because there is no true obedience apart from love.

**4) the father builds confidence:** he gives the child a **taste for risk**, audacity, invites him to dare, to trust himself. If someone lacks trust, [should] reconsider his relationship with the father, for he provides **direction and correction**.

**Here are some criteria for correction:** \*clarity of the remark; \* immediacy; \*fair and proportionate; \*it will be done without passion; \*any punishment will be accompanied by an explanation. It is the right of the child to have a binding and rigorous father, if not, the child could despise his father and make him feel guilty!

### 1. Some manifestations of lack of paternity

They can be grouped into two: a **stifling paternity** and an **absent paternity**.

**a. The 1st** manifests itself when the father exercises **authoritarianism**. It’s a dad who **monopolizes** the word. He does not call the child to express himself. On the other hand, he can be an **overprotective father**. It does not allow the child to develop his creativity.

**b. The 2<sup>nd</sup>:** This is observed when the **father is irregular**, it appears then disappears. So the mother is obliged to assume both roles. When he appears, **it sanctions**. The child perceives the father as a **harmful**, tyrannical and disturbing presence. The children prefer that the father would not there. The child becomes a **rival** of the father.

\*A **tired dad** is considered an **absent dad**. He may be present physically, but absent emotionally.

\*A father who leads a life outside of family life is perceived as an **indifferent father**. He is not interested in the lives of his children. It is an evasion of responsibility. He is afraid of being a father. (Joseph wanted to escape his responsibility).

\*A “**buddy, colleague**” father wants to behave like his children.

\*A **degraded paternity** creates in the child the feeling of shame of his parents.

### 2. What are the consequences, in adult life, of the lack of fatherhood?

**a) confusion:** the identity of this adult is not defined. He doesn’t know who he is.

**b) strong sensitivity to criticism:** the person is forced to adapt all the time.

**c) to impose himself**, he is always right, he transgresses the law claiming that everyone does it.

**d) affective isolation**: it is difficult for him to relate to others. Either he will be dependent (clinging on, tendency to homosexuality), or he will seek his identity in the other, identifying with a character in a movie.

### 3. How to envision a healing path?

Becoming aware that our parents are a channel of the true fatherhood of God. Taking Jesus as a model "*who sees me, sees the Father*" (Jn14:8). Accepting his story; experience **compassion** with regard to the Father, the mother and enter into **empathy**.

### 4. Sibling Rivalry

It is part of the important experiences for our human vocation. Because it is the first group in which we have had significant experiences. Some sibling conflicts are natural, normal and neutral. Conflict expresses difference. The parents will be objective and without preference, will help the child to respect the other; everyone has their place in the family: first, second or last.

### 5. Expressions of lack of self-love.

**1. The narcissist**: remains self-centered, preoccupied with his image. "*The other is like my mirror*". True loneliness is verified by community relations.

**2. The perfectionist**: does not see himself as vulnerable. He is easily irritable and constantly tired, because he does not accept his weaknesses.

**3. The obsession with self-esteem**: it's more at the level of thought than at the physical level. He is a **paranoid**, who thinks everyone is persecuting him, concerned about his health; he is a **hypochondriac**. There is no fulfillment without the gift of self.

**4. Pride**: Two feelings are signs of pride: **irritation and discouragement**. He suffers from the feeling of superiority. Pride is an artificial puff. In the Bible, blindness is synonymous of pride, it heals through humility.

**5. Artificial self-esteem**: the person gives himself importance by things, having, power, knowledge.

**6. Seduction**: "*seducere*" in Latin means: *to attract or direct towards oneself*. Seducers are manipulators, through beauty, speculative intelligence, or services. We all have this power. The real seducer is John the Baptist, he attracted and directed towards Jesus.

**7. Worker (workaholic)**: it is the heresy of activism, behind this is hidden the lack of self-esteem: "*he is worthy of contempt who wants to buy love*" (Song 8:7).

**8. The impotent**: this is the opposite of the worker. He thinks he's losing before he even starts. He believes himself responsible for all the difficulties of the group. He is a person who has not received love and self-esteem.

**9. The shameful**: believes himself to be disgusting, soiled, dirty "Zacchaeus".

**10. Guilt**: the child tortures himself for being guilty of his parents' misunderstanding. Guilt puts us before the law, but sin puts us before the love of God!

**11. The anxious**: a chronic worrier, predicts catastrophe; out of fear, he does not take risks, does not commit and consoles himself when the predicted misfortune arrives!

**12. The anxious**: He has phobia, lack of love. He considers himself to be in permanent danger. He is afraid to read in public, afraid of heights, of enclosure.

**13. The dependent:** is not autonomous, rarely expresses himself in “I”.

**14. The independent:** protects himself by not asking for anything. He isolates himself, does not accept any congratulations, because he thinks that we want to trap him. He always feels threatened.

### III. Self-perception. Wednesday, November 16

How I perceive myself, on that depends all the judgment and the relationship to others. The more my self-esteem grows, the more my perception becomes positive. There are 7 basic signs.

#### The signs of self-esteem, confidence and self-love

**1. Recognize his right to live:** the person who esteems himself recognizes his right to exist. He cannot harm his body, he keeps his health.

**2. Awareness of being unique and irreplaceable:** this attitude expresses confidence and self-esteem. Those who doubt their competence are who compare themselves.

**3. To consider oneself to be loved:** I am loved by God, this makes me present to myself. I can listen, console the other. I am kind I forgive myself and I encourage myself.

**4. Believe in your ability to learn:** I can judge well, do well. To know, you have to learn. I set myself goals.

**5. Accept my level, without comparing myself to the other:** the right comparison is with oneself, yesterday and today, ability to learn from past failures.

**6. Knowing how to encourage yourself following small successes:** it is knowing how to value yourself.

**7. Seek one’s mission and learn to carry it out:** despite the obstacles one remains faithful to the mission. We seek to leave a trace in history.

#### Group work, 5 groups of 9 members

I. Zacchaeus	II. paralyzed	III. Pool	IV. crippled woman	V. Blind
Luke 19:1-10	Mk 2:1-12	John 5:1-9	Luke 13:10-17	John 9:1-7

1. What is the attitude of the main character that Jesus encounters?

2. How does this attitude appeal to me?

#### Report according to the groups and the addition of the preacher

**I. Zacchaeus (Lk 19: 1-10)**, the richer he became, the more he was rejected and the more he wanted to satisfy his thirst for self-esteem. He was busy with the feeling of inferiority.

**How does Jesus heal this lack of self-acceptance?** Jesus **sees him**, recognizes him. This **gaze of Jesus**, this acceptance, this recognition heals him. And Zacchaeus wants to share, since he has no more gaps to fill. And Jesus takes him home. **It is at home**, in ourselves that our value is found, and not outside, in having, in power, in knowledge.

**II. The paralytic (Mk 2: 1-12)**, here is another figure of one who does not accept himself. Jesus recognizes that this paralysis is a reflection of his inner life. Those who do not accept themselves are paralyzed and become a burden for others!

**So how is Jesus going to heal this gentleman?** He brings him back to himself, the fact of being paralyzed comes from yourself *“get up, yourself”*, it is a confrontation with oneself

that Jesus proposes to him. Don't be a burden for others "*take your stretcher, take your weakness, everyone walks with their weakness, but we don't let ourselves be crushed by it*". Thus, this internal problem which is not accepted, is projected outside, on the body by "*somatization*"!

**III. The cripple at the pool of Bethesda (Jn 5)**, suffers from lack of self-esteem. He compares himself, "*the other has more luck, he is faster*".

**How does Jesus heal this person?** He forbids him to compare himself "*what do you live?, what do you want to do with life*". Do not look for the causes outside.

**IV. The crippled woman (Lk 13)** is bent over, looks down, she is "hunchbacked", she has no dignity. Who is the real curved? It is the head of the Synagogue, who does not want people to straight up.

**How does Jesus heal this woman?** Jesus takes the initiative, gives her his attention: "*You have value*". It is that love she has been missing for a long time what makes her bent. We participate in worship while standing and we begin with *forgiveness*. Sin bends us. Mary is not bent, for, conceived without sin.

**V. Blind from birth (Jn 9: 1-7)**, blindness means pride, arrogance, which is a sign of lack of self-esteem.

**How did Jesus manage to heal this man?** He simply said to him: "*my dear, to heal, you have to go back to the mud from which you came. Recognize the part of the mud in you*".

**How does Jesus help the sick to rebuild their self-esteem?**

1. Jesus invites him to self-acceptance.
2. To come to terms with one's history, everything has a meaning.
3. Abandoning comparisons, seeking happiness within.
4. Feeling good at home, in your body, getting out of the clouds and listening to your body.
5. Triple fidelity: to the origins, to the inspiration, to the Church today (*the founders*).

#### **IV. Self-esteem criteria. Thursday, November 17**

All genuine love is overflowing with joy for others. Love comes from God. These criteria are based on three aspects: seeing, talking, feeling.

**1<sup>st</sup> see:** how do I look at myself, at others and at God?

**2<sup>nd</sup> talk:** what comments am I making about myself?

**3<sup>rd</sup> feeling:** the feeling (anger) teaches us that we are dependent.

#### **Self-esteem and relationship with others**

The golden rule is "*do to others what you want them to do to you*". Self-love is the model of love for others. Lack of self-esteem has relational consequences:

**Lack of trust** in others, tendency to isolation and defenses: because we are afraid that we will discover our weakness, these people are rigid.

**Dependency:** A mature person should be dependent, but in moderation.

**Manipulation,** by force or gentleness. Those who do not believe in the love of parents, do everything to "*deserve*" attention.

## **Good self-esteem and relationships**

1. Relationships are lived in an authentic way, neither duplicity nor lies.
2. Able to assume loneliness without isolating themselves. A loneliness that makes present.
3. Autonomy in relationships characterizes a person inhabited by peace.
4. A good self-esteem makes it possible to forgive, and to love.

To respond to religious life, one must have a certain degree of human maturity. Immaturity prevents the spiritual journey.

## **V. Human attitudes unsuited to religious life. Friday, November 18**

1. Ambivalent and unstable attitudes are expressed by permanent hesitations.
2. Hostile attitudes, expressed through anger and blame.
3. Proud attitudes, expressed by domination, difficulty in obeying, contempt for others, sufficiency and indiscipline.
4. Greedy and possessive attitudes, express lust and the pleasure of hoarding.
5. Amorous and pleasurable attitudes, we cling to someone, to sexual deviations: pornography, masturbation.
6. Defensive attitudes, expressed by false excuses: "*I regret their ignorance*", *duplicities*.
7. Recessive or regressive attitudes, when people indulge in laziness and shyness, discouragement, feelings of inferiority.
8. Attitudes of escape, or of compensation are expressed by flight into the virtual and imaginary world.

## **VI. Human attitudes adapted to consecrated life**

Human maturity is a process. These attitudes are grouped into three: towards oneself; towards the world and towards God.

### **1. Attitudes towards oneself**

- a) ability to manage feelings, we channel them towards their goal.
- b) ability to pursue the goal, overcome obstacles, without being exhausted.
- c) objectivity in judgment, capable of openness to the thoughts of others.
- e) being able to take responsibility and accept consequences.
- f) ability to call on one's resources, one can get help, but afterwards.

### **2. Attitudes towards the world and others**

- a) the balance between being present to oneself and to others, giving and receiving.
- b) acceptance of oneself and of the other, unconditionally.
- c) acceptance of criticism, even if the criticism is not fair.
- d) ability to cope with unforeseen events and not be crushed by them (war, volcano, etc.)
- e) living in reality, how I perceive family, economic... reality.
- f) accept the tension between autonomy and obedience, without feeling diminished.
- g) capacity for autonomy in the face of structures, one respects without being a prisoner.
- h) capacity to choose the values, one lives the vows before professing them.
- i) distinguish between the essential and the accidental, recognize what has priority!

j) ability to be flexible, s values are stable, their practices may vary.

### 3. Attitudes toward God

a) overcome parental models that falsify the image of God. Absent dad!

b) a dad who gives more, the child can consider God as Santa Claus.

c) When we say “no”, and we explain to the child, it develops tolerance.

d) prayer is a vital necessity, “*a priest who no longer prays will end up in the trash*”, said Pope Francis. This applies to everyone. Let’s finish at the beginning: 8 steps.

## VII. The stages of human development

**1<sup>st</sup> of 0-1 years:** tension between trust and distrust. We need the virtue of hope.

**2<sup>nd</sup> to 3 years:** tension between autonomy and dependence. We need the virtue of the will.

**3<sup>rd</sup> to 6 years:** tension between initiative and guilt. It takes the virtue of decision.

**4<sup>th</sup> to 12 years:** tension between application and inferiority. It takes the virtue of competence.

**5<sup>th</sup> to 18 years old:** tension between identity and confusion. The teenager opposes the parents. You have to build your identity by virtue of loyalty to values.

**6<sup>th</sup> 20-35 years old:** young adult: tension between intimacy and isolation. This challenge is taken up by the question “*what am I going to do with my life? = vocation*” and “*how do I earn a living? = work*”. The virtue of love helps to overcome isolation.

**7<sup>th</sup> 35-65 years:** adult, tension between fertility and stagnation. There are several forms of fertility: paternity/maternity. Religious life is fruitful. The virtue of compassion, presence to the other develops to heal stagnation.

**8<sup>th</sup> stage 65—:** old age: tension between integrity and despair. Internally the person becomes unified. The virtue of wisdom is put in place to overcome despair. Life is fruitful; he can say to himself “*I offered wisdom to young people*”.

The old man feels a great serenity to live the challenge of his last stage. This serenity is not without humor, as Erikson says: “*I can't imagine a wise old man who can't laugh*”. The old man decides to make death “*his death*”. The meaning he gives to his death constitutes his last personal contribution that he bequeaths to the living.<sup>1</sup>

### Group work:

What are the realizations? What impact will the session have on your journey? The real session begins in life.

We thank Father Georges Sac, the formators and all the communities who have contributed to the realization of this session.

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<sup>1</sup>Cf. JEANNINE GUINDON, *Vers L'autonomie Psychique de la Naissance à la Mort*, Nouvelle édition, Sciences et Culture, Canada 2001, p. 119.