

THE APOSTLESHIP OF PRAYER IN THE LIGHT OF APARECIDA

The Apostleship of Prayer (AP), with the Eucharistic Youth Movement (EYM), wishes to collaborate with the Church's mission in Latin America today. The National Secretaries of the continent and some collaborators met to study the Document of Aparecida and listen to the voice of the Spirit in these texts. We would like to take up the challenges it poses and formulate the proposed spirituality of the AP in significant language for present-day Christians.

We feel in tune with and addressed by the words of our bishops, and believe that the AP is a valid answer to what this Church needs today in order to continue training disciples-missionaries.

The Apostleship of Prayer in a fragmented world

The bishops diagnosed lights and shadows in our continent, and invite us to revitalize the way of being Catholic (13). They remind us that this only will achieve in a meeting with Jesus (21). In a fragmented world which has lost its sense and direction, in the AP the spiritual itinerary we live is a formative one which leads us to rediscover life as the gift of the Father, which we live together with the Son, led by the Spirit. It teaches us to answer God's gift with the offering of our entire life, collaborating in this way in the Church's task.

The AP in the training and life of the disciple-missionaries

As AP and EYM we want to contribute to the training of disciples and missionaries of Jesus Christ so that our people may draw life from him. This is our general horizon, in communion with the entire Church of Latin America. In the AP we learn to feel apostles, i.e., disciples invited to intimacy with the Master, sent to share his mission. The whole of life is apostolic if it is offered and surrendered to God. What we do, even the most simple things of daily life, is converted into a field of action for the Kingdom. Thus "we become involved in the claims of reality and are able to find in them a profound meaning in everything we must do for the Church and for the world" (285).

Our path is the one proposed by our bishops as a training process, founded on the *meeting* with Jesus, which leads to *conversion*, to *discipleship*, to *communion* and the *mission* (278). For more than 160 years this has been the spiritual path of the AP. It includes the "human, spiritual, community, intellectual and pastoral-missionary" dimensions (280).

As AP, centred on the Eucharist, we learn to ask each day for the light of the Holy Spirit to be "a powerful centre of irradiation of life in Christ" (362). We want to announce and bear witness to Christ in words and actions so that He may be better known, loved and followed, because "knowing Jesus is the finest gift a person can receive; meeting him is the best thing that has happened to us in life, and making him known through our words and works is our joy" (29).

The AP and EYM help to discover the vocation to discipleship and the mission at every human stage and in all its dimensions. The only thing we seek is to live the common priesthood of the People of God received in baptism, in full trinitarian communion (cf. 157).

We see in Mary the perfect model of missionary disciples and propose her as inspirer of our apostolic life.

The AP in the service of our people

We are aware of the need to renew our proposal and our missionary urge. We feel enthusiastic in front of the challenge of the new cultures. We see the need to formulate our proposal in comprehensible language for our contemporaries (cf. 480). Thus we will be able to contribute to the penetrating of faith into the cultural substratum of our people, and especially into the urban culture.

We offer the Church of Latin America our methodology and proven experience in parishes, schools and other ecclesial organizations. This is a pedagogy for a heart-to-heart relationship with the risen Jesus Christ; for a life centred on the Eucharist; for friendship with Mary; for feeling with the Church; for praying as Jesus prayed. In the Eucharistic Youth Movement we invite children, adolescents and young people to live "in Jesus' style". We trust that, as in the past, this will continue to produce vocations in the service of the construction of the continent of hope and love.

Let us take this prayer of Benedict XVI as our own:

"May the Virgin Mary obtain for Latin America and the Caribbean area the grace to clothe itself with the strength of on High (cf. Lk 24:49) to irradiate on the continent and throughout the world Christ's holiness. May He be glorified, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. Amen" (*Homily at the inauguration of Aparecida, May 13th 2007*).

Participants at San Miguel, Argentina, May 6-10 2008:

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