

Echoes of the XXXVIth National Days Of vocational pastoral for the youth Religious Conferences, CONFER

We owe these Echoes to a young Spanish brother, Brother Alfonso Blazquez, presently studying at Portugalete.

« *and he walked with them* »

Accompany the efforts of vocational discernment



Our Churches and our congregations will not have vocations if those who hear the call do not see that they can realize it, to configure it and consecrate it in a new manner of being Church or Religious Life. We cannot invite the youths to «assume that it exists». The youths want to be co-responsible. The desert is not inviting. It is indispensable to present an enthusiastic face that wages on the life by concrete choices.

We must sound out, welcome and face the new situation in all its novelty by trying to discover all the opportunities that it harbors and revive the transmission of the faith as the choice of Jesus Christ and community membership. This supposes, necessarily, new options in the pastoral and a Christian community that is really flourishing.

We must rethink our choices of the pastoral taking into account our work with the youths, all the while keeping the aspects that continue to be valid, but trying to find places and strategies thanks to new methods. We cannot continue to work as if nothing has happened or changed.

Recover the apostolic zeal (personal and institutional). Grow due to this zeal for the mission (this is part of the identity of the religious) and work at creating small communities that are truly missionary. Recover the experience of being sent. Note the lassitude in the pastoral and discern its sense. Examine it in more detail and relate it to the experience of God.

Be able to recognize the occasions (of mission) that are offered to us, exploit them, learn to be able to develop them and to make use of them to give a new impulse in our choice of pastoral, so that we may go «further and deeper».

It is necessary to **establish a global project of pastoral of the youth**, having a **point of departure** (the reality of the youth), an **itinerary** (with many paths, different announcements, productive experiences) and an **opening** (we need prolific Christian communities that serve as references). We need well-established Christian communities where we can envisage the Christian vocation.

Find the choices of pastoral that put advantageously into action the capacity of eliciting vocational questions and responses. All are not equal. Look at the model presented by the text of the rich young man. (Mk 10): **listen, propose, look with love, leave free.**

Putting into action a systematic scheme of reflection and of strategic choices susceptible to make our educational and pastoral action capable of creating favorable conditions for the development of the vocational dimension is essential.

Although we are not all agents of the pastoral and all communities are not called, it is nevertheless necessary to favor a supporting climate in our establishments. It is fundamental that the Christian community is visible. We should profit by the evaluations and the crises that we perceive to determine the conclusions and the choices on which we must work.

Only a consecrated life that radiates life and consecration will attract the youths ready to give everything to live it themselves. One does not join a

club that is on the verge of closing. Choices aimed at survival can only retard the degradation. One must wager on creation, finding a future for the mission that is visible.

The fruits depend on many factors but above all on the sowing. More than ever before it is necessary to be clear on what we sow. In the pastoral four verbs are key-verbs: **to go out** [to the 99 (lambs), because henceforth there will be but one left in the house], **interrogate** (to be interested in others), **listen, pro-**



La Pasqua Juvenil reunites, during the Easter week, a large number of youths from our schools in Spain.

Here, a brother animates a meeting with some youths.

pose. Do not improvise. Continue to create a road, knowing well that we shall meet obstacles.

It is indispensable to create possible conditions. One must not go «alone in life»; it is the time to go in community.

Conditions for a community to favor vocations:

- Manifest passion for the Gospel and for Jesus. Find joy in following Jesus.
- Have an open community where we can enter and leave.
- Have open doors, a transparent life. Be at home. Share all that we are. Go ahead of.
- Have a praying community.
- It is urgent to cultivate in the communities the culture of «benediction», have more words of benediction than of «fratricide correction».
- It is necessary to «desire vocations» and starting from this to offer collaboration.
- We cannot permit having isolated communities, preoccupied only with themselves and their «little problems».
- Joy is essential, as well as the fact of transmitting it; we must be seen as being enthusiastic and happy when we talk and live with Jesus and of what concerns Him.

H. Alfonso Blazquez

David Gonzalez, a Chilean Postulant's testimony (May 2007)

I WOULD LIKE TO GIVE A BRIEF ACCOUNT of my experience at the Culiprán Postulate. I think and I know that it has helped me greatly in the steps so far taken in my personal and vocational calling. It is an experience which permits me to discover numerous novelties, favourable to the discernment of my vocation.

I cannot deny that it was rather difficult for me to get used to the lifestyle lived here at the College, the more so that it was not like the one I had known at the Postulate of Santiago these last two years.

In the Community, it was not difficult, on the contrary, granting that I had the habit of living with the Brothers. I think that all of us are different (some compared to others), that all bring something for the

building of the Community, that all of us are capable of mutual love despite the differences in age and nationality.

At the University, at the beginning, I experienced some difficulty to start studying again after several years of interruption, without fearing however, knowing that I could make it. Besides, I have companions on whom I can rely and who I can help in return. We help one another; better still, we have created a new climate which favours our choice of religious life and enlightens us on the way of making such a choice a sign for the others.

The course of studies I am following helps very much to clarify things, in particular, thanks to the theology, to the study of the Old Testament (which