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MIGRANTS

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Editorial

Dear Readers,

This SEDOS Bulletin has as general theme: *PEOPLE ON THE MOVE*. These words refer to the title of the review of the *Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People*. The Church at large, and especially the present pope, Pope Francis, want to defend the migrants who have to flee their country because of war or severe poverty. What can we offer them as Christians? How can we help them to integrate into society? Many such questions come up when reflecting on this humanitarian problem.



We start the series of articles with the contribution of a theologian, Marie-Laure Durand, at the meeting of Young Religious of France at Passy-Buzenval, in 2012. She depicts each religious as a *missionary of hope*. Hope is needed when our humanity is hard pressed. In times of trouble, the religious are those who can bring a message of hope. The same can be said of all missionaries. We too are, and have to be, missionaries of hope. “To be a missionary of hope,” she says, “one must be a witness of the hope of others, that is, be capable of inspiring hope in others. It is not a matter of passing on your own hope like a foreign object, but of helping others to find their own hope.” This is why we have chosen this article as the first one, because it helps us to see that taking care of the migrants is a way of giving them ways to find their own hope again.

The second article tells us the story of a couple, Jean-Marie and Émérita, who with their four girls had to flee from Rwanda in 1994. They share how they were treated as friends by many on the way, in Kinshasa, in Belgium, and lastly in France. In France they attained the status of refugee; and how they are trying to integrate. In this way, the problem of refugees and migrants becomes more visible.

This takes us to the next two next articles which discuss how one can do pastoral work for the migrants. The first is by Fr. Raniero Alessandrini, C.S., who as a Scalabrinian

serves Hispanic and Filipino migrants by providing them with a space to overcome the traumatic experience of migration. Besides the pastoral guide and the migrant, a basic Eucharist and an evangelizing community is needed. “The transforming power of faith in Christ, shared by both the migrant and the caregiver, gives the encounter a spiritual dimension which more readily proves successful on various levels,” he writes. *Christ becomes the “Companion on a journey”*.

Fr. Alfredo J. Gonçalves, CS, starts by giving an overview of the situation, explaining the motivations behind the migration. He then takes a biblical, theological, and pastoral look at this world-wide phenomenon. He ends by pointing out what we can do to help the migrants concretely. (The reader can find the English version of this article in our *SEDOS Bulletin* of July-August 2015, as this was the talk he gave at our Residential Seminar then.)

We like to end this series of articles on Migration with the words Cardinal Antonio Maria Vegliò, president of the pontifical council for migrants, said at one of the panel discussions during the international encounter “*Sete di Pace*”, organized by the *Community of Sant’Egidio* (19 December 2016), in Assisi (Italy). He points out that besides the care for the migrants, the migrants themselves have to make an effort to integrate into the new social and cultural context and not think only of satisfying their own needs.

With all these articles we hope that we have covered some of the important dimensions that come into the picture when caring for migrants. But the most important is our personal contribution to the migrant in need of hope.

SEDOS Bulletin closed the first 50 years of its existence last year, and the SEDOS team is happy to go on serving our readers with many new *Documents and Studies on Global Mission*. Here you can have a look on what has been published through the years: <https://sedosmission.org/sedos-bulletin-index-1969-2018/>

THANKS FOR YOUR SUPPORT!!!

Fuir sans savoir où l'on va...

Un parcours de migrants parmi tant d'autres. Bien d'autres itinéraires auraient mérité d'être évoqués à supposer qu'on ait eu l'occasion d'en recueillir le témoignage. Celui-ci n'est sans doute pas le plus dramatique qui soit, pas le moins douloureux non plus... Les premiers événements s'étant déroulés il y a plus de vingt ans, les personnes qui les ont vécus disposent d'un recul suffisant pour en faire aujourd'hui une relecture. Enregistré en mars 2016, ce témoignage oral a été et mis en forme par la rédaction de Spiritus.

Avec leurs quatre fillettes âgées de douze, dix, quatre et un an, Jean-Marie et Émérita vivent à Kigali. Elle travaille dans une entreprise de la ville; il est officier supérieur de la gendarmerie nationale rwandaise. Nous sommes en 1994. Dans la soirée du 6 avril, l'avion qui ramenait d'un sommet régional en Tanzanie le président rwandais Habyarimana et le président burundais Ntaryamira est abattu au cours de sa phase d'approche de l'aéroport. Le pays s'embrase. Jean-Marie réalise aussitôt la menace qui pèse sur lui et sa famille; ils sont Hutus. Le 8 avril, Émérita réussit à être exfiltrée, avec ses filles, vers sa préfecture d'origine, Kibuye, avant de poursuivre jusqu'à Bukavu, la grande ville la plus proche du Zaïre voisin. Jean-Marie les rejoint en juillet.

Sauver sa vie et celle des siens

Mais ils n'y sont pas en sécurité. Des Rwandais recherchent Jean-Marie; sa vie est en jeu. Un fonctionnaire zaïrois, qu'ils avaient aidé et qui était devenu leur ami lorsqu'il était en poste à Kigali, cède aux instances de l'une de ses filles, dont Émérita est la marraine, pour tâcher de les faire sortir de Bukavu. Finalement, en août

1994, ils y parviennent: cette famille les accueille chez eux, à Kinshasa, loin de la frontière avec le Rwanda.

Même là-bas, la situation reste difficile et incertaine; la sécurité n'est pas assurée. Les agents du HCR (*Haut commissariat pour les réfugiés*) leur conseillent de ne pas demander de statut de réfugiés dans ce pays. Mais où aller? C'est là qu'intervient un autre lien de marraine à filleule. Le directeur de l'entreprise où travaillait Émérita à Kigali, était de nationalité belge; son épouse, hôtesse de l'air, était devenue une grande amie de la famille et marraine de la dernière de leurs filles. Cette amie s'efforce alors de faciliter les démarches pour l'obtention de visas pour la Belgique. Sans succès. On leur suggère d'aller au Cameroun: là-bas, ils pourraient s'installer de façon durable... Mais, malgré toutes les démarches entreprises, les

visas restent inaccessibles. Sous la pression, grâce à un ami en poste à l'aéroport jouant de son influence, ils réussissent à embarquer, quasiment sans bagages, sur un vol pour Douala. Nous sommes en mars 1995.

De Douala, la famille vient se fixer à Yaoundé. L'amitié de l'hôtesse de l'air belge se montre à nouveau très précieuse. À l'occasion d'escales dans la capitale camerounaise, elle leur apporte des vêtements collectés en Belgique, dont peuvent profiter

aussi d'autres réfugiés rwandais à Yaoundé. Elle sollicite d'autres collègues de la compagnie aérienne pour une solidarité financière qui permet à Émérita de lancer un petit commerce. Sur un terrain qui a pu être mis à disposition, Jean-Marie apprend tant bien que mal un nouveau métier, celui d'agriculteur; production de manioc et de patates douces dont bénéficient, là aussi, d'autres réfugiés.



Nouveau départ vers l'inconnu

Mais ce sont des questions de santé qui vont motiver un nouveau départ. Émérita est insulino-dépendante et, à Yaoundé, l'approvisionnement en médicaments, qui restent très chers, n'est pas régulier. L'aînée des filles, asthmatique, développe des allergies fréquentes. Partir à nouveau... pour aller où? En août 1996, les deux filles aînées, elles seules, parviennent à prendre un vol pour la Belgique; l'aînée y est accueillie par une ancienne voisine de Kigali que Jean-Marie avait un jour secourue et sauvée de justesse; elle va pouvoir être soignée. Émérita tente de rejoindre ses filles; sans succès. Malade, sans visa, elle prend le risque de recourir à des passeurs pour finalement réussir, vers la fin de 1996, à prendre un vol pour la France avec les deux plus jeunes fillettes. Elle se fixe en banlieue sud de Paris. Jean-Marie devra attendre jusqu'en avril 1997 pour les y rejoindre.

Pour tous deux commence, auprès de l'OFPRA (*Office français de protection des réfugiés et apatrides*), une longue et complexe procédure en vue d'obtenir le statut officiel de réfugiés. Émérita y parvient au bout de deux ans. Mais pour Jean-Marie, les choses s'avèrent beaucoup plus difficiles. Malgré plusieurs témoignages en sa faveur, les personnes en charge du dossier exigent des preuves formelles qu'il n'a pas trempé dans le génocide: «Si tu n'as pas tué, comment se fait-il que tu n'aies pas été tué, comment expliquer que tu sois vivant?» Apparemment, tout militaire ou fonctionnaire hutu était, jusqu'à preuve du contraire, présumé «génocidaire». Convocations multiples, interrogatoire par des militaires censés mieux comprendre le déroulement des faits, passage devant une commission de recours, présentation aux services de l'OFPRA de documents établis par la justice rwandaise elle-même... Ce n'est qu'au bout de quatre ans que le dossier de Jean-Marie finira par aboutir. Entre temps, c'est comme filles d'Émérita seulement que les deux aînées parties en Belgique

obtiennent le statut de réfugiées mineures en France.

Relire le chemin parcouru

Être mis à nu

Les moments les plus difficiles de notre parcours ont été les départs: sortir du Rwanda, quitter Bukavu, quitter Kinshasa... Au Rwanda, nous avions réussi notre vie: carrière, profession honorable... Nous étions valorisés. Nous commençons à préparer de façon lointaine le temps de la retraite... Nous sommes alors tombés dans le «néant»: retomber à zéro, devenir un «nul», se retrouver «nu», dans l'insécurité permanente. En particulier quand nous avons quitté Kinshasa: vêtus de presque rien, nous étions dépossédés de tout et ne savions pas où nous allions. Matériellement et socialement, nous avions tout perdu. Ainsi étions-nous sous le



regard de nos enfants: incapables de subvenir à nos besoins, vivant de l'aide des autres... Si nous n'avions pas continué inlassablement à nous battre, nous serions sans doute morts ou peut-être devenus fous. Maintenant nous avons tous deux retrouvé un emploi, une vie

normale; nous avons repris confiance en nous. La vie est un combat permanent.

Un autre moment très difficile: les démarches et l'attente avant d'obtenir le statut de réfugiés en France, en particulier pour Jean-Marie: «Ce qui m'a permis de tenir à travers tout cela, c'est que je n'avais aucune raison de cacher quoi que ce soit. Je me savais innocent, j'avais la conscience en paix. J'avais aussi le soutien de mon épouse qui connaissait bien toute la situation. De toute façon nous ne pouvions pas mentir, car nous étions connus au Rwanda.» Émérita: «Ayant la conscience tranquille, nous n'avons pas dévié de notre route; nous gardions confiance en Dieu. Nous avons beaucoup prié; Dieu nous a donné la force.»

Le trésor de l'amitié

Et puis il y a eu l'amitié des gens. Cette dame belge, hôtesse de l'air, dont le mari avait la leucémie mais qui a continué à nous aider malgré tout, en de multiples occasions. Cette famille de Kinshasa qui nous a fait sortir de Bukavu et accueillis chez elle. Ce voisin camerounais de Yaoundé qui, pour que nos deux plus grandes filles puissent quitter le Cameroun, a accepté de se constituer leur tuteur et de les faire partir avec d'autres enfants qui allaient en colonie de vacances en Europe... C'est une succession de «miracles» de ce genre qui nous a permis de traverser tout cela. Comme chrétiens, partout où nous sommes passés, nous avons fréquenté les communautés paroissiales et y avons toujours trouvé de l'amitié, du soutien. En région parisienne, le Secours catholique nous a efficacement soutenus. L'Église ne nous a pas laissé tomber. Nous sommes actuellement membres de l'équipe d'animation paroissiale.

Quant à savoir qui nous sommes vraiment aujourd'hui et si nous nous sentons chez nous ici en France, chacun de nous a un peu sa propre manière de répondre:

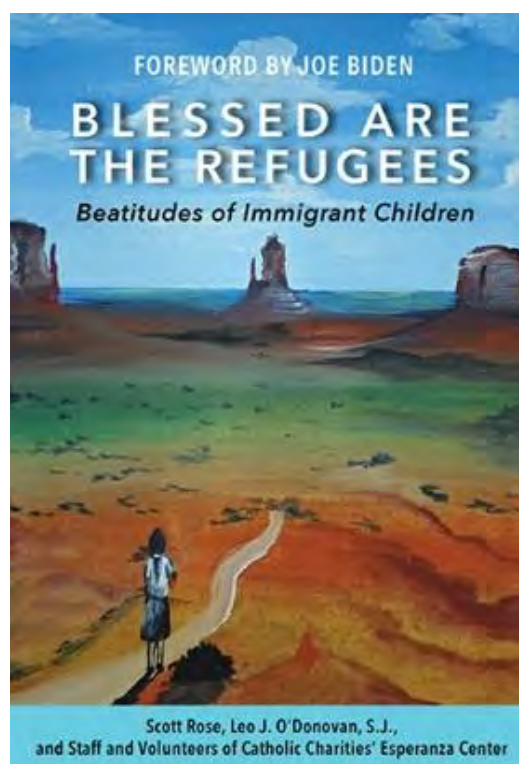
Jean-Marie: «Je suis rwandais. J'ai fait des efforts pour entrer dans la culture française. Sur le plan professionnel, j'ai passé des concours; je suis devenu conseiller pour l'emploi et je me retrouve bien dans ce rôle. Donc, d'une part, je me sens chez moi. Mais, d'un autre côté, je me sens toujours rwandais.»

Émérita: «Très vite, j'ai cherché à avoir une activité sociale: d'abord comme bénévole puis comme employée dans un centre socioculturel de quartier. Je me suis bien des fois retrouvée face à des SDF, des personnes sans domicile fixe plus démunies que moi. Je me suis sentie utile à quelque chose; cela m'a aidé à remonter la pente. Finalement, j'ai fait une formation d'éducatrice spécialisée qui m'a permis d'accéder au même niveau professionnel que les gens d'ici. Aujourd'hui je me retrouve française à part entière; mais je suis aussi toujours rwandaise... Je m'aperçois que j'ai connu des "vies" dont les gens d'ici n'ont pas l'expérience. C'est pour moi comme un avantage par rapport à eux...»

Nos filles, maintenant avec nous ici en France, n'ont pas eu le temps de se sentir vraiment chez elles au Rwanda, même si les deux aînées ont des souvenirs d'enfance du pays. Elles ont maintenant des amis, des copains et copines qui sont français et françaises. Les deux plus jeunes ne sont pas sensibles à la différence Hutu - Tutsi; pour elles, «tu es rwandais, je suis rwandaise: O. K.»; ça se limite à cela et ça leur suffit.

Pour nous c'est un peu différent... Nous avons laissé derrière nous des milliers de morts; certains membres de nos familles sont restés sur place, mal considérés, dans la misère; il y a la tristesse de voir la situation actuelle du pays. Mais nous avons aussi gardé des amitiés avec tous les rwandais connus là-bas, Hutus et Tutsis. De telle ou telle personne qui nous est restée particulièrement proche nous pouvons dire en vérité: Cette personne-là, c'est une Tutsi; mais, pour nous, c'est comme notre sœur.

(Ref.: *Spiritus* N° 225 Décembre 2016, pp.437-441.)



(Gift from Orbis Books to SEDOS Library)

Religious, Missionaries of Hope



I am not giving a course of Theology. I want to respond to a certain number of questions posed to me by the theme, 'Religious, missionaries of hope', studied at the meeting.¹

Hope when our humanity is hard pressed

Before entering on the theme itself I would like to make a detour via the Bible. The title which was proposed to me was 'Missionaries of Hope' with respect to the religious life. However, normally when one speaks of hope it is because one is undergoing a difficult moment. Rarely does one speak of hope when everything is going smoothly! So hope is often linked to a time of crisis, and so of choice. At the same time talk of hope suggests that the situation is not inescapable. In these days the situation is dark, but something is also being born in the night. In hope 'something is being prepared'. Note the double implications of this expression. 'Something is being prepared' suggests that something needs to be done. It can also suggest that something is on the way despite ourselves. I have looked in the Bible for a strong moment which could clarify our situation. I have chosen to speak to you about Joseph of Arimathea:

⁴²Now as soon as evening came, since it was Preparation Day—that is, the day before the Sabbath—⁴³Joseph of Arimathea, a respected member of the Council, who was himself awaiting the kingdom of God, went boldly to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. ⁴⁴Pilate, surprised if he was already dead, summoned the centurion and asked if he had been long dead. ⁴⁵Having been assured of this by the centurion, he granted the corpse to Joseph.

⁴⁶Joseph bought a linen cloth, and taking him down from the cross, wrapped him in the shroud. (Mark 15.42-46)

In this account Joseph is all alone, surely in the depths of despair. The Messiah in whom he believed has just died on a cross. At the exact moment Joseph eschews theology and philosophy. No matter what he is thinking or living through at this moment; that is not the problem; he must deal with the body and this inescapable reality. Joseph takes it upon himself to act despite his feelings of disappointment, of blockage. He takes the body and places it in the tomb because it is the only thing he can do at this moment, and he pays his last respects to the body of him in whom he believed.

This behaviour expresses an act of hope, certainly dark even for Joseph himself. Psychoanalysis has shown us that we are not transparent to ourselves. Hope against all human hope begins with this gesture. And it is because Joseph placed the body in the tomb that it is possible to affirm the Resurrection on the Sunday morning. The body had disappeared because in the darkest of nights Joseph had taken charge. We shall come back to that. Hope is never so problematic as when the situation is difficult and seems to be at an impasse. The New Testament teaches us that hope is acting out that 'something is being prepared'.

In what way is religious life a mission of hope? Can it be a witness of hope in today's world? In the light of what I have heard this weekend I would like to stress several points.

¹ A Contribution for the Meeting of Young Religious of France, Brother and Sister, Act 2 on 29th January, 2012, at Passy-Buzenval.

The Meeting between Modernity and Religious Life

Acceptance of Modernity

The weekend has been shot through with this. Many of your proposals consist in taking seriously modernity, its complexity, its novelty, its de-stabilizing character. This acceptance is a starting-point to work on. Hope is not flight from reality to take refuge in ideas or sentiment. Reality cannot be avoided, but the question is the difference between acceptance and approval. Approving something is equivalent to saying, 'Fine!'. Acceptance is saying, "This is the case; it could be different, but it is not." Joseph of Arimathea could have taken the road of dis-appointment or anger; he does not do so.

Your proposals show a tension, a human challenge: how should one react to a world, to people who are in a situation or choice of life which they would not have chosen, with which they are not necessarily in agreement, which they perhaps do not understand? I find there a real question, and your answers differ according to your charisms and personalities.

Anthropological changes

How can one take up a stance in a situation of changing anthropologies? How should they be read? In fact today's anthropology is changing and playing havoc with our conceptions of relationships. We have a different attitude to many things:

- A different relationship to our bodies: vitaminized, nourished, warmed, pain free, larger, our body is different. We communicate with the world through our bodies; if the body changes, our access to reality changes.
- A different relationship to nature: 50% of humanity now lives in cities. There are consequences of this removal from nature which teaches us patience and humility.
- A different relationship to technology, notably information technology and the virtual world.
- Different social relationships, especially in family break-ups.



Trappist community of Gedono (Indonesia)

Everyone has been caught unawares by this new anthropology: how can we make sense of it? If I am running through all these changes rather rapidly, it is because we are more and more in a 'bloodless' society, a 'sunless' world. I am perhaps going to shock you, but what better expresses a bloodless and sunless society than religious life? The classic argument to make sense of the vows of religion was solidarity, with the poor, the lonely, the captive. In this day and age we must go further with this argument and modernize it. You are

a family which has gone through a break-up. Accept to make sense of families which have had a break-up and live bloodlessly, to make sense of same-sex parents. This is a fierce dispossession, becoming significant to persons totally unexpectedly!

You must explain to us how, and perhaps at what price, it is possible to live bloodlessly. How can you become a brother without choosing it? How can you explain this to a rebuilt family? How can you make permanent sense of such a family? How can you call 'sister' someone who could be your mother? You must also explain to us the condition of living a life without a stable foundation. What price mobility? How can you belong to a place without being born there? What makes one belong in a place? What makes one belong to a group? It would also be very interesting to turn to religious life to discover what fidelity is.

This brings a real challenge. How can the relationship in which you live explain the new bonds of family? This brings in something about which you do not have much to say, community life. This silence puts a question to me; as in archaeology, the absences speak as loud as the actual finds.

- If it works, the successes must be shared
- If it doesn't work, you must discover why not.

Society needs your explanation on this matter because you are working on relationships. You must tell us on what conditions it works when you put men and women together. How should one behave when one has something to say to someone and wants to avoid being hypocritical or damaging? In the language of yesteryear a brother would say, 'Convents are shot through with individualism.' How do you deal with individualism? How do you deal with mixed cultures? How do you deal with mixed generations?

Society is asking itself all these questions, and you are the outriders, ahead of the pack, like the first explorers in the Promised Land. It is the fineness of the grain which is interesting! It is where it grates that we expect an answer from you. If it grates on you it grates on us too, in our schools, our families, our businesses, our living together. It is precisely here that you can be witnesses to the women and men of today. You can do this because you have the ability to analyse what you are living, and you have the words for it.



suffering to suffering by personal judgments. God alone knows the secret of hearts, and the Church rests part of its credibility on this.

Gospel frequency

Another point which has been stressed during this weekend and which is a witness to hope comes into play: you are the bearers of an anthropology anchored in the Gospel. You stress that modern society is passionate, but that it is developing a rapidity, a mobility which generate stress, and in the end tend to destroy people.

You underline also that by your choice of life you are bearers of a force — whether you are apostolic or contemplative — which is at work in silence, prayer and withdrawal. One person may say, 'It is vital to be grafted into Christ', another, 'We have a schedule which holds us fast, the liturgy of the hours'. By this you witness that life can be lived according to different rhythms. By rooting yourselves in the Gospel you make your own a frequency unavailable to modern society. In a society where it is always a matter of being stronger, more beautiful, more speedy, in an anthropology which is rapidly changing and taking us away from what nature can teach us (notably patience and humility) you are the guarantors of this

frequency. In this you possess what many people are beginning to seek on our society: you know how to find yourselves in the byways of the interior life. You have a precious spiritual savoir-faire: you know how to let go, to work on your own ego, to work on your desires, on the dark night of the soul. All this knowledge of the interior life which is ourselves is a source for which many people thirst.

At the same time there is room for disquiet. How is it possible to share such a frequency with others without oneself falling onto the other side? Someone once said, 'The fragility of another shows me my own fragility.'

I would like to add a third condition to those of 'bloodless' and 'foundation-less'. I would like to add 'non-judgmental'. Our Church needs people deeply anchored in Christ but non-judgmental. For many people religious life is the bearer of this hope. For example, to say 'I will pray for you' without adding 'provided that you change your ways or so that you may change your ways;' this is like keeping hold of something which is meant to be given freely. Just start giving people their liberty, recognizing them as adults! The hard and harmful world is thirsty for something different: you can touch hearts. Society does not want a Church which adds exclusion to exclusion, familial and social, or which adds

Indeed, this dialogue with modernity is a risk because you have accepted to be witnesses of Christ in your lives, in your bodies, in your relationships. Anything human is fragile! We are, like Japan, built on a fault-line. We have to invent earthquake-proof houses, earthquake-proof personalities, capable of moving a metre or two without collapsing. That makes an interesting building-site: what are the norms of earthquake-proof religious life ? Putting that question brings us into a concrete situation. In a forum on the internet someone put the question: how long before Vespers does one need to quit Twitter in order to be in the right frame of mind? It is an excellent question which many parents would ask about the evening meal. Once again your answers and the limits you put would interest everyone because you wear this anthropological change of clothing over a spiritual good sense.

Reviewing Change

So much for changes in society; I would now like to dwell on changes in the religious life because I have been astonished by the relative silence on this matter. You know better than I the changes which centre on the fall in numbers of religious. This has brought profound changes: inter-juniorate, inter-congregation, fusion of communities between communities who share a charism, creation of new communities. In a world which depends more and more on marks of identity you accept to forego them in order to live better.

The great question of our society today is how to retain hope in the face of change and de-stabilization. But you, in the most profound silence, are in course of changing collectively before the whole world. You have the opportunity to be well ahead. To be missionaries of hope consists in explaining to us how this is possible without losing serenity.

You have a second asset in this mutation: you are not an institution. You are made up of individual and collective elements without becoming an institution, although you are part of an institution, the Church. Today all institutions are in a state of collapse (politics, universities, syndicates, the French Football League); people have lost confidence by an excess of woodenness, of self-protection, of

inability to be creative. Institutions protect themselves instead of serving the purpose for which they were created. On the other hand religious life can be creative where the ecclesial institution, as institution, cannot. This means to say that you are objectively the part of the Church which moves most. Thank you!

By closing establishments to re-structure and re-think religious life you contradict the idea of a destined future. To hope is to leave the past aside. Joseph, lowering the body of Christ, knows well that nothing will ever be the same again. The object of hope can never be what one already knows. If this is not hope, it is expectation. So hope presupposes laying aside. Something is being prepared: God is in process of trying to advance, to construct something out of what we leave, out of what we give to him. The power of God exceeds the understanding we have of him.

Should one seek to be a witness?

At the present time there is a great debate about how to be Christian: we have been ‘the salt of the earth’; we must be ‘the light of the world’. It seems to me that the stake is not to choose between salt and light; what is at stake is to be in place.

Look at the passage in Genesis 20. Abraham puts Sarah forward to Abimelech as his sister. Abimelech is warned in a dream of Abraham’s deceit and reproaches him, saying, ‘You have behaved improperly towards me.’ Abraham replies that Sarah is his wife and also his sister, but he will not do it again. In the next chapter Sarah at last becomes pregnant. Abraham and Sarah produce a child because they are in place. Being in one’s place in human relationships allows the production of a family. In the Letter to the Romans Paul tells us that hope is a time of having children. One does not become a witness simply by wanting to be a witness; the important thing is to be in the right place, and it is by being in the right place that one bears witness. If one is on the right frequency, everything goes well. So the main question is, ‘Am I in the right place ? Is the place where I am really mine?’ But equally, Am I being allowed to be in the right place without intrusion or indifference?’ In one of the forums a sister said, ‘How can we

make the French sisters understand that we have riches of our own?' Am I leaving room for others?

What is this hope?

Are we to be missionaries of our own hope or of the hope of the Church? The latter; but that is not all! Here too there must be an inversion. To be a missionary of hope, one must be a witness of the hope of others, that is, be capable of inspiring hope in others. It is not a matter of passing on your own hope like a foreign object, but of helping others to find their own hope. By contact with you something of their own hope can come back to life, things which they had abandoned because life had maltreated them. The centre is not your own hope; the title 'missionary of hope' indicates something quite different. It is a matter of someone else's hope, and this presupposes at least two things:

- That you should be firmly rooted in hope. If you yourselves hope, this will be obvious — no worry!

- That there is no witness to hope without a relationship. Every meeting with God is mediated by a meeting in the world.

What you are can re-awaken, lift up (like raising from the dead) something living, something divine in the people you meet. In order to be a witness to hope for others you need a wide space in yourselves so that others may hope through you. Hope required

patience. Many of our mistakes, of our breaks in relationships come from impatience, from our wanting to go too fast. You can't make a plant grow by pulling it upwards! Life is speeding up, but we must accept that not everything is going quicker.

In a world which is accelerating and growing more complex in a world in search of authenticity, religious life can be a guarantee of the essential. Thank you!



Consequences of the typhoon Yolanda
for the Benedictine Missionary Sisters of Tutzing
in the Philippines, 2013

(Ref.: *Alliance for International Monasticism*, No.112, 2017-pp. 39-48.)

Elementos para una Pastoral de Migrantes

Cuando abordamos la cuestión de los migrantes, refugiados, desplazados, itinerantes, etc., la expresión “signos de los tiempos” sale naturalmente. En efecto, es así como la Doctrina Social de la Iglesia (DSI) denomina el fenómeno de esta “multitud de apátridas” que hoy más que nunca circula por los caminos del mundo. Sin hablar de los que mueren o desaparecen simplemente en las aguas del Mediterráneo, en las arenas del desierto o en fronteras anónimas. Pero la temática no es el monopolio de las instituciones, sean públicas, privadas o religiosas.



Se trata más bien de un enorme desafío que implica diversas instancias de las relaciones internacionales, de los gobiernos, de la sociedad civil, de las iglesias, de las organizaciones no-gubernamentales, de las entidades, de los movimientos sociales... En los párrafos siguientes se pondrá el acento, sin embargo, sobre la acción social, pastoral y política que se desarrolla en el vasto dominio de la movilidad humana, de manera especial en las actividades de la Iglesia Católica. Sin entrar en los detalles, seguiremos el método ver-juzgar-actuar.

1. Fotografía de la movilidad humana

En los últimos decenios del siglo XX y de primeros del XXI, la mayoría de los investigadores comienzan a hablar de cambio de paradigma. No es una época de cambios, dicen algunos, sino un cambio de época que sacude no solamente la superficie política y social de las aguas, sino sobre todo las

corrientes subterráneas de la economía y de los valores culturales. La Constitución Pastoral *Gaudium et Spes* sobre la Iglesia en el mundo de hoy, documento aprobado por el Vaticano II en 1965, ya nos había advertido: “El género humano vive hoy una nueva etapa de su historia, caracterizada por cambios profundos y acelerados, que progresivamente se extienden al universo entero” (GS, n° 4).

Los desplazamientos humanos de masas constituyen, en general, una especie de termómetro que mide la temperatura de una tal transformación. En efecto, a lo largo de la historia, estos movimientos preceden o siguen frecuentemente cambios de carácter estructural, tanto desde el punto de vista social y económico, como desde el punto de vista político y cultural. Forman una especie de olas ocultas, signos visibles de fenómenos invisibles. Hace más de un siglo, con las migraciones dichas históricas, provocadas por la Revolución Industrial, el papa León XIII presentaba la *Rerum Novarum* (1891), un documento inaugural de la Doctrina Social de la Iglesia (DSI), utilizando expresiones como “sed de innovación” y “agitación febril” (RN,1). Los dos reflejan de forma llamativa y significativa el movimiento incesante de las migraciones en todas las direcciones.

1.1 Cifras y trayectorias

Las cifras relativas al movimiento migratorio son generalmente la causa de la controversia entre los sociólogos, los demógrafos y los investigadores en general. La razón es simple: la mayoría de los inmigrantes están en situación irregular en numerosos países, lo que les lleva a “escondarse para protegerse”. De ahí la dificultad de obtener estadísticas fiables. La instrucción *Erga Migrantes Caritas Christi*, publicada en 2004 por el Consejo Pontificio

para la Pastoral de Migrantes e Itinerantes, afirma en la introducción: *“hoy las migraciones constituyen el más importante desplazamiento de personas de todas las edades. A lo largo de las últimas décadas, este fenómeno que comprende actualmente unos 200 millones de seres humanos, se ha transformado en una realidad estructural de la sociedad contemporánea y está siendo un problema cada vez más complejo desde el punto de vista social, político, religioso y pastoral”* (EMCC, presentación).

Dos observaciones afloran. La primera es que diez años después de la puesta al día de este documento en 2014, la ONU estima que 232 millones de personas viven fuera de su país de origen. Si sumamos los migrantes internos y/o temporales y los que se desplazan cada día a causa de su trabajo, las cifras tienden a aumentar considerablemente. El Consejo Noruego para Refugiados (CNR) ha constatado —por otra parte en su último informe oficial publicado en 2012— no menos de 45’2 millones de refugiados en el mundo. En breve, si añadimos los migrantes por cuestiones sociales y económicas, los refugiados, los exiliados y expatriados, los nómadas y todos los que viajan, por mar y aire, obtendremos una cifra nada despreciable frente a la población mundial.

La segunda observación concierne el concepto de “realidad estructural” utilizada por el documento. En efecto, un análisis actual de la economía mundial y de la sociedad moderna o postmoderna no puede ignorar el factor “migración” si no quiere correr el riesgo de ser anacrónica. Los historiadores y otros investigadores de renombre como Eric Hobsbown, Alain Touraine, Boaventura Santos, Manuel Castells, Antonio Negri, Jürgen Habermas —entre otros— dedican largas páginas a este tema de la movilidad humana. Para algunos los desplazamientos de la masa humana acaban siendo poco a poco, una especie de

ventana para observar la sociedad humana y el mundo. En otros términos, una clave de lectura privilegiada para todo estudio serio y actual.

¿Dónde tienen origen los flujos migratorios más importantes y hacia dónde se dirigen? La mayoría tiene tendencia a dejar los países periféricos (o subdesarrollados) hacia los países centrales (o desarrollados). Es, entonces, un movimiento del hemisferio sur —Asia, África y América Latina— en busca de nuevas oportunidades en el norte. Por otra parte, mucha gente, muchas familias dejan los países de Europa del Este, del antiguo “telón de acero”, de la antigua Unión Soviética para intentar construir un futuro en los países occidentales. El cuadro de desplazamientos



humanos no es, a menudo, tan simplista para adaptarse a este esquema. Al lado de estas tendencias significativas, millones de personas se desplazan en todas las direcciones imaginables, de forma temporal o definitiva.

El mismo fenómeno existe a nivel nacional y regional. Según el sociólogo paraguayo Tomás Palau, *“el movimiento dinámico y plural de personas en lo que se llama “los complejos de fronteras”, donde se cruzan las fronteras de dos o más países, es uno de los síntomas más importantes de la economía mundial”*. Detenidos en los aeropuertos por las leyes sobre la inmigración, cada vez más estrictas y selectivas, los trabajadores rechazan las fronteras de su país de origen, intentando a todo coste, entrar al otro lado. Prueba de ello es lo que sucede entre la frontera de México y Estados Unidos, en el mar que separa África del Norte y Europa del sur o en la zona de tres fronteras de la desembocadura del río Iguazú, (Brasil, Argentina y Paraguay) —por no poner más que algunos ejemplos. Es una “aventura” macabra que deja un reguero de cadáveres sin sepultura en las arenas del desierto y en las aguas del Mediterráneo, y en los senderos sinuosos de la selva.

No hay que olvidar tampoco lo que podría llamarse la migración limítrofe. Es el movimiento constante de trabajadores que se desplazan de una región a otra, o de un país a otro en busca de trabajo, a menudo temporal. Migran hacia cultivos agrícolas, proyectos gubernamentales u obras de construcción civil. La triple frontera entre Chile, Bolivia y Perú es un ejemplo de ello. Es importante subrayar igualmente el drama de las “personas desplazadas” a causa de la violencia en sus diferentes formas, como es el caso de miles de colombianos atrapados entre dos fuegos, de la guerrilla y de la armada. En el primer caso tenemos una emigración de resistencia consistente en dejar temporalmente por no hacerlo en definitivo; en el segundo, es una evasión hacia los centros urbanos o los países vecinos.

1.2. Nombres y rostros

Más importante que las cifras, los esquemas y las estadísticas es la realidad de la gente, su nombre, su rostro, su historia y su destino. La movilidad humana reúne trabajadores individuales y familias enteras, hombres y mujeres, jóvenes y niños que huyen de algo a la vez, o que buscan algo al mismo tiempo. **Huyen** de la pobreza, la miseria y el hambre; la violencia y los conflictos armados; la discriminación, los prejuicios y la persecución política, ideológica o religiosa... **Buscan** un lugar que les acoja como ciudadanos y que puedan considerar como patria.

Podemos utilizar tres adjetivos para clasificar la migración contemporánea. Es, al mismo tiempo, más grande, más compleja y más variada. Es más grande que los movimientos del pasado. Como hemos visto, el número de personas que se desplaza crece progresivamente sobre la superficie del planeta. La revolución de transportes y comunicaciones es la causa. El historiador Peter Gay ha elegido el tren y el movimiento como dos grandes metáforas del siglo XIX, con enormes desplazamientos transatlánticos. Según él, entre 1820 y 1920, no menos de 62 millones de personas han salido del viejo continente europeo hacia nuevas tierras de América, de Australia, y de Nueva-Zelanda.

¡Qué decir entonces de lo que sucede en nuestros días!

La emigración es igualmente más compleja. En el pasado, la gente arrancaba las raíces del país que les había visto nacer y crecer y donde habían enterrado sus antepasados. Pero lo hacían, en general, para trasplantarlas en otro lugar y por arraigarse en él como colonos. El origen y el destino de los flujos migratorios estaban más o menos previstos, determinados. Hoy la tendencia se traduce en una migración que se repite y que está compuesta de varias etapas, a veces sin profundizar las raíces en ninguna parte. Un ir y venir sin fin, con horizontes y perspectivas diversas. Los movimientos migratorios tienden a navegar según el flujo y reflujo de las olas creadas por la economía mundial. Una verdadera “armada de reserva” que no vive, pero que campa — como ya lo había denunciado Karl Marx. Se desplazan a voluntad de los vientos y de las nuevas posibilidades de empleo o de subempleo. es un movimiento circular, pendular, según algunos.

Finalmente, el fenómeno migratorio es más diversificado. Nuevas personas, razas, pueblos y naciones forman parte del contingente de migrantes. El pluralismo cultural y religioso de la sociedad contemporánea se reproduce por igual en los diferentes rostros de los migrantes. En algunas ciudades como Nueva York, Roma, Sao Paulo, París o Londres —entre las ciudades más cosmopolitas— los habitantes crecen casi a diario “las mil caras del otro”, y pueden entrar en contacto con lenguas, banderas y culturas diferentes. Es difícil, incluso imposible, encontrar un país que no esté implicado, de alguna manera, en el fenómeno de la migración. Algunos como lugares de origen, otros como lugares de destino, y otros como zonas de tránsito, sin mencionar algunos países que pueden representar, al mismo tiempo, las tres funciones, como Méjico, Guatemala, Portugal, Italia y Turquía.

2. Radiografía del fenómeno migratorio

No basta, a menudo con hacer una fotografía. Todo médico, digno de ese nombre, si desea verdaderamente curar a su paciente, debe intentar conocer las causas profundas de la enfermedad. Conocer el mal es la condición *sine qua non* para poder prescribir el medicamento justo. Lo mismo pasa con el fenómeno de la emigración. En la mayoría de los casos nos enfrentamos a desplazamientos forzados, que pueden ser evitados por políticas apropiadas en los países de origen o en los países de tránsito y de destino. En pocas palabras, es un problema que puede ser corregido con relaciones nacionales e inter-nacionales.

De ahí emana la necesidad de hacer una radiografía de la movilidad humana. Solo ella puede romper, a veces, las apariencias engañosas. Es importante también escuchar historias de cada migrante, conocer los valores de cada cultura, profundizar en el estudio de la realidad de la migración. La radiografía revela no solamente la piel, sino los huesos, los órganos internos y el corazón. De esta forma, como veremos, podemos desarrollar una pastoral más eficaz.

2.1. Motivaciones inmediatas

Preguntemos a todo migrante por qué ha dejado su patria y migrado hacia otra región u otro país. Lo que le ha obligado a dar un paso tan arriesgado y, a veces, sin retorno. Las respuestas pueden ser muy diversas. Algunos dirán que tenían el deseo de conocer otros lugares; otros pueden mencionar una sequía prolongada o una fuerte inundación; otros mostrarán aún las cicatrices de un conflicto armado o recordarán con tristeza los miembros de su familia que han fallecido víctimas de la violencia. Muchos dirán simplemente que han seguido a un pariente o un amigo que les ha precedido; después ellos mismos han llamado a los conocidos y, de esta manera, la red familiar se ha reestructurado.

Un grupo considerable deja el país por razones de salud, en busca de lugares donde los cuidados médicos son mejores, más

rápidos y que disponen de equipos modernos. Muchos jóvenes de los dos sexos, después de los estudios de primaria y secundaria, buscan lugares donde pueden continuar los estudios superiores, en vista de la profesionalización y de la obtención de un empleo. Pero los términos “trabajo”, “mejor futuro” y “vida mejor”, aparecen en prácticamente todas las respuestas. Igualmente es frecuente hablar de “fuga de cerebros”. En este tipo de visión emergen, naturalmente, los llamados factores de expulsión y de atracción. Pero la primera respuesta del migrante y del que le escucha pueden ser engañosas. Las motivaciones inmediatas esconden normalmente causas más profundas. También aquí la fotografía necesita ser radiografiada.

2.2. Causas lejanas

En gran parte de los flujos migratorios, el medio social y económico de origen está marcado por una doble contradicción. Por una parte, hay islotes de riqueza en un océano de pobreza y miseria, donde caminan juntos la concentración de riquezas y la exclusión social. La línea que divide el primer y tercer mundo atraviesa, ciertamente, el interior de cada país e incluso de cada región. Por otra parte, desde el principio de los años 1970, asistimos a una crisis prolongada y estructural del sistema capitalista de producción que aumenta el movimiento circular de enormes masas de gente en el mundo entero. La crisis se ensaña, primeramente, con las personas más vulnerables, las que están obligadas a buscar mejores formas de vida en tierras lejanas, tras las huellas de la acumulación del capital.

Tomemos el ejemplo de los que culpan la sequía del abandono de su patria. En principio la respuesta no es falsa, sino incompleta. Si es cierto que la ausencia prolongada de lluvia obliga a la gente a dejar su región o su país, es cierto que ella sola no determina un éxodo masivo. La sequía marca la hora de salida, pero detrás de este infortunio hay una estructura agraria y agrícola que desde hace mucho tiempo priva a la gente de todo tipo de defensa. Esto se prueba con el hecho de que grandes propietarios de tierras, con o sin lluvia, se quedan. Luego, lo que expulsa no es

la sequía, sino “la clausura” donde viven. En otros términos, las condiciones de injusticia y desigualdad de la propiedad inmobiliaria.

Lo mismo sucede con otros tipos de respuestas o análisis superficiales. En el contexto de la movilidad humana en general, la visión inmediata, superficial o simplemente cíclica esconde a menudo causas más profundas y estructurales. En la mayoría de los casos, la raíz de la migración se encuentra en la situación económica y social desfavorable a la permanencia en el lugar de origen. La falta de trabajo y de salarios decentes, la precariedad del sistema de salud pública y la educación, las condiciones de trabajo semejantes a la esclavitud, la cultura patriarcal en la cual las mujeres son totalmente sumisas al poder masculino, la explotación del trabajo infantil (no confundirlo con una sana iniciación de los niños a ciertos servicios en el regazo familiar) —son ejemplos de tal situación.

Ciertos países y algunas regiones, son como residuos medievales en pleno siglo XXI. Ahí el capitalismo revela uno de sus rostros más obvio y perverso: paradójicamente y de forma contradictoria, con la revolución tecnológica en curso, las innovaciones tecnológicas más avanzadas coexisten con formas de trabajo condenadas y prohibidas desde hace mucho por la lucha sindical a lo largo de la historia. Como ha declarado el sociólogo José de Souza Martins, formas no capitalistas pueden ir junto a un sistema de producción capitalista.

Las otras causas de desplazamiento de masas están liadas —como lo hemos visto más arriba— a la persecución política, ideológica, o religiosa que obliga a la gente a huir. Están liadas también a los prejuicios, a la xenofobia, a la discriminación étnica o religiosa; a un conflicto armado en el interior del país (por ejemplo el Líbano) o entre dos estados diferentes y beligerantes (por ejemplo Israel y Palestina, Rusia y Ucrania); a enfrentamientos entre fuerzas rebeldes y fuerzas armadas (por ejemplo en Colombia); a la violencia sobre diferentes formas, en particular la trata de seres humanos causada

por el crimen organizado; a la lucha por el control de las drogas y el tráfico de anuas (por ejemplo México, Colombia y Brasil); al trabajo temporal que, a lo largo de los años puede conducir a una migración permanente.

3. Una mirada bíblica, teológica y pastoral

Hay tres formas de leer el fenómeno de la migración a la luz de la Palabra de Dios. La primera consiste en tomar una historia bíblica o un libro en particular —respectivamente el episodio de los discípulos de Emaús o el Libro de Rut— y a partir de él intentar profundizar en el tema. La segunda forma consiste en elegir los textos bíblicos que tratan la cuestión de la migración y tejer con ellos una reflexión de carácter teológico, espiritual o pastoral. La tercera, finalmente consiste en leer toda la Palabra de Dios en la perspectiva de la movilidad humana, poniendo el acento sobre una teología o una espiritualidad de camino. Sin subestimar las otras formas, seguiremos la tercera, considerando solamente algunos textos paradigmáticos del Antiguo Testamento y del Nuevo Testamento, para ilustrar la experiencia del pueblo en marcha.

3.1. Mirar el migrante con los ojos de Dios

En lo que concierne la antigua alianza, podemos concentrar nuestra mirada sobre lo que los expertos llaman el “credo histórico” del pueblo de Israel: Deuteronomio 26, 5-10, en su versión más elaborada y Ex 3,7-10, una versión más primitiva. Se trata, como sabemos, de la experiencia que ha contribuido a la fundación de Israel como Pueblo de Dios. Comparando las dos versiones, encontraremos cuatro verbos en primera persona del singular, todos atribuidos a Dios, mostrándonos un hilo conductor que se presentará a lo largo de toda la Biblia. “Y Yahvé dijo: *he visto el sufrimiento de mi pueblo en Egipto, he escuchado sus gritos bajo el peso de la esclavitud, conozco su sufrimiento y he bajado para liberarlo y conducirlo a una tierra que mana leche y miel*”.

Las cuatro formas verbales —ver, escuchar, conocer y descender— indican que, a lo largo de su “experiencia fundadora”, los israelitas han desarrollado la teología y la espiritualidad de un Dios que no solamente está atento a la situación concreta del pueblo en el país de esclavitud, sino que sobre todo descende para unirse a él en la marcha del éxodo y del desierto y, más tarde sobre las del exilio y la diáspora. Este acto de descender se realizará plenamente con el misterio de la encarnación. Aquí es importante señalar la sensibilidad y la solidaridad de un Dios que se hace próximo y que, frente a la opresión del Faraón, toma parte en favor de los que sufren y son humillados. En breve, es un Dios que privilegia a los pobres, no solamente porque son pobres o porque son necesariamente “buenos”, sino porque son víctimas de circunstancias históricas indeseables.

El movimiento profético no hace más que poner al día, a su vez, la misma teología y espiritualidad en los momentos desconcertantes de la monarquía y el exilio. La combinación de la alianza entre la *liberación* y la *promesa* se reviste con nuevo vigor. De ahí el triple acento profético: el **recuerdo** que “vosotros habéis sido ya esclavos en Egipto” y que por eso no debéis oprimir al extranjero que habita en vuestra tierra, ni vuestro propio hermano; la **denuncia** frente a las distintas formas de opresión, porque vosotros “¡Príncipes de la casa de Jacob y jefes de la casa de Israel! No conocéis el derecho, sois enemigos del bien y amigos del mal! Cuando habrán devorado la carne de mi pueblo y que le habrán arrancado la piel y roto los huesos... “dice el profeta Miqueas (Miqueas 3, 1-2). En fin, el **anuncio** que es como el aliento de un pueblo oprimido que espera la promesa de la Jerusalén celeste, de “un cielo nuevo y una tierra nueva” (Isaías 65, 17-25).

En cuanto al Nuevo Testamento, podemos detenernos en dos textos fundamentales. Por una parte, al principio de su ministerio público, el profeta itinerante de Nazaret (John P. Meier) toma el libro de Isaías para anunciar lo que podemos llamar “el programa de Jesús” (Lc 4, 16-20; Is. 61,1-2). El revela desde el principio, su predilección por los

oprimidos, los esclavos, los prisioneros y pobres, lo que toma, en otros términos las expresiones “el huérfano, la viuda, el extranjero” del Antiguo Testamento. **La opción preferencial por los pobres** está arraigada en el corazón del Maestro, porque tiene un afecto especial con los marginados, los impotentes, los migrantes y los excluidos: “*fui extranjero y me acogisteis*” (Mt. 25,35).

Por otra parte el evangelista Mateo interrumpe habitualmente la narración para introducir breves resúmenes, poniendo en evidencia alguna cosa que no se debe olvidar. “*Jesús recorría todas las ciudades y aldeas...*”, nos dice el texto. Y continúa: “*Viendo la multitud cansada y abatida, Jesús tuvo compasión porque eran como ovejas sin pastor*” (Mt. 9, 35-38). Dos observaciones: primero llamar la atención sobre el verbo “*recorrer*” que, él solo —lo que muestra la práctica pastoral de Jesús— podría ser utilizado para un buen retiro de conversión. Jesús no se limita a atender a la gente en el templo (o a la puerta de las iglesias), va al encuentro de los peregrinos. Además entre las “*multitudes cansadas y abatidas*”, podemos poner un acento particular sobre el nombre de migrantes que vagan por los caminos del mundo entero, a menudo huérfanos, solos y perdidos.

3.2. Mirar a Dios con los ojos de los migrantes

Quien anda mucho aprende rápidamente a aligerar no solamente su equipaje, sino también su alma. Cada largo viaje nos enseña a poner de lado lo que es superfluo y a guardar lo esencial. El hecho de migrar y migrar ayuda a distinguir lo que es esencial y lo que es negociable. El camino,—sobre todo si es recorrido una, dos o tres veces— nos da la sabiduría de deshacernos de lo que es pesado y de ralentizar el paso para concentrarnos sobre el fin, el horizonte de la existencia humana. En una palabra, los pies del peregrino desarrollan una mística natural, la de relativizar “las cosas” en cantidad y de absolutizar “una/la sola cosa”, lo que es lo más importante como podemos constatarlo en la visita de Jesús a la casa de Marta y María

(Lc 10, 38-42). Por otra parte, según el concepto de *cor inquietum* de San Agustín, el migrante representa la condición de todo ser humano, peregrino en la tierra, en búsqueda de la patria definitiva.

Según la Doctrina Social de la Iglesia (DSI), hay semillas del verbo en el corazón de cada persona y de cada cultura. Desplazándose de un lugar a otro, los migrantes son portadores de esas semillas. Según el bienaventurado J.B. Scalabrini —“padre y apóstol de los migrantes”, así como los pájaros y el viento transportan el polen que fecunda la vida, así los viajeros de los caminos llevan con ellos expresiones y valores que fecundan la tradición cultural de otros pueblos. Por eso la migración no deja de ser un proceso de evangelización que promueve la depuración y la purificación recíproca y permanente de las culturas, como nos lo recuerda el documento de Aparecida, por otra parte, el migrante no puede ser considerado únicamente como víctima del mercado de trabajo. Si es cierto por una parte que es generalmente un candidato para los servicios más pesados, los más peligrosos, y los peor pagados, por otra parte es igualmente verdad que su testarudez indomable e imbatible hacen de él un protagonista y un profeta del futuro. Por vías inhóspitas y hostiles o “sobre aguas desconocidas hasta ahora” —según la expresión del poeta portugués Luís de Camões— la mirada dirigida hacia Dios es el faro del “frágil navío” de cada migrante.

Es esta perspectiva, la fe y la esperanza del pueblo migrante es generalmente una luz que muestra nuevos horizontes para la historia, que sea personal, familiar o colectiva. En su equipaje, incluso pobre y reducido, es raro no encontrar un símbolo de la religión de sus antepasados, como la Biblia o el Corán para los musulmanes. Así, el acto de migrar pone en movimiento, por sí solo, no solamente las esperanzas del migrante y su familia, sino

también la propia historia. Por una parte el desplazamiento forzado denuncia, en su origen, la incapacidad de numerosos países para acordar una vida digna a sus compatriotas. Por otra parte anuncia, a través del fenómeno del tránsito y la destinación elegidos, la necesidad urgente de cambios estructurales en las relaciones nacionales, regionales e internacionales. En breve, no es exagerado afirmar que la expresión de Martin Luther King: *I have a dream* (tengo un sueño) es una fuerza motriz en la vida del migrante. Parafraseando a Euclides da Cunha, “*el migrante es en principio y ante todo alguien fuerte*”.

4. Desafíos y perspectivas: ¿qué hacer?

Tras un breve panorama de la realidad de la migración (partes I y II), seguido de algunos elementos bíblicos, teológicos y pastorales que iluminan y orientan (parte III), el objetivo de esta última parte es el de dar pistas de acción sociales, pastorales y políticas. Más que reinventar la rueda, intentaremos poner el acento sobre ciertas actividades que, en la mayoría de los casos están ya en marcha en la Iglesia en general y en la Pastoral de Migrantes en particular.

4.1. Acogida y documentación

La acogida es el ADN de la Pastoral de los Migrantes. Es la apertura del corazón, de las puertas y de los espacios eclesiales y culturales para “el otro, el extranjero, el diferente”. Acoger significa, sobre todo, promover una ayuda inmediata a los que llegan a un nuevo lugar. Esta asistencia, caso por caso, significa preocuparse de las dimensiones personales, familiares, sociales, jurídicas, educativas, sanitarias, psicológicas... Por eso existe una red de Casas de Migrantes dispersas en las fronteras (entre Méjico y Estados Unidos, entre Méjico y Guatemala, o entre Chile, Bolivia y Perú) y en ciertas ciudades con gran número de migrantes (Sao Paulo, Santiago,



Manaos). es inútil añadir que, muy a menudo, es necesario enseñar la lengua local.

La acogida acompaña un largo proceso de regularización de documentos. Sin éstos, todas las puertas se cierran, comenzando por el acceso a un trabajo decente y a un contrato formal. El trabajo, a su vez, abre una serie de posibilidades. Una vez más los migrantes pueden contar con una red de centros de acogida y orientación, que cuentan con la colaboración de asistentes sociales, de abogados y otros profesionales que pueden ayudar a la integración más rápida en la sociedad. La manera grosera con la cual tratan la mayoría de las autoridades de la policía federal a los nuevos venidos, es bien notoria. La presencia de un profesional da mayor confianza a los migrantes.

4.2. Derechos de los migrantes

El compromiso con la defensa de los derechos del hombre en general y de los derechos de los migrantes, en particular, es una de las características de la acción social y pastoral en el mundo de la movilidad humana. Muchos inmigrantes quedan durante meses, años, incluso decenios (si no es toda la vida) en situación precaria y sin papeles, en esta situación irregular, acaban siendo vulnerables a toda clase de explotación de trabajo, sexual y presa fácil para las redes mundiales del crimen organizado.

Conocemos bien el peso de la palabra “clandestino” en las sociedades como Estados Unidos, Europa, Australia, Japón, entre otros. Traduce concretamente la inseguridad, la inestabilidad, el miedo y al final del todo, el proceso de repatriación. Desgraciadamente, en lo que concierne el trato de los inmigrantes desprovistos de documentación regular, pasa lo mismo en los países en desarrollo o emergentes. Por eso es necesario poder contar con una protección jurídica para la conquista y/o la defensa de los derechos a la vida y a la dignidad humana.

4.3. Parroquias multiculturales y pluriétnicas

Desde un punto de vista estrictamente pastoral, en las parroquias de acogida, es necesario salvar y promover los valores

culturales y religiosos de los migrantes. No es difícil crear espacios para encuentros multiculturales o pluriétnicos, como la fiesta del santo patrón, la fiesta nacional, etc. Aquí, no obstante, se esconde una ambigüedad que presenta un engaño capaz de confundir, a menudo a los menos avisados. La conservación de la lengua original, de expresiones culturales y religiosas ayuda a cimentar y mantener la cohesión del grupo étnico, en particular en los casos de discriminación, de prejuicios y de hostilidad. No obstante, en el proceso de salvamento cultural existe el riesgo de crear guetos que impiden una integración rápida y natural. En términos metafóricos, los ángeles de la tradición religiosa se pueden tornar en demonios, en promotores de la división y el aislamiento. El desafío consiste en encontrar el equilibrio entre el respeto de los diferentes grupos étnicos y la integración progresiva en la sociedad del país de acogida.

Preservar y promover los valores inherentes a cada persona, a cada pueblo y a cada cultura exige primordialmente un espacio privilegiado para la historia individual y colectiva, en este sentido, las reuniones de migrantes por grupo étnico son, a menudo, extremadamente reveladoras. Se supone que la emigración conlleva un golpe que deja heridas, algunas de las cuales no cicatrizarán nunca. El desarraigo y la exposición al sol tórrido del camino presentan consecuencias inevitables. Normalmente el individuo que parte sufre tanto como el que se queda en el país de origen. Contar su propia historia — como nos lo dice la psicología— es un medio de exorcizar las sombras que oscurecen nuestro itinerario. Verbalizar el sufrimiento permite liberarnos del peso heredado del pasado. Lo mismo sucede con la historia de grupo en su conjunto. Por eso es importante promover un tiempo y un espacio a los migrantes que, cruzándose con sus recorridos, pueden intercambiar sus experiencias y así enriquecerse mutuamente.

4.4 Presencia en el origen y en el destino

Del mismo modo que los movimientos migratorios establecen un **punto de**

supervivencia entre la patria y el país de destino, los agentes y los líderes que acompañan a los migrantes pueden comprometerse a construir, gracias a la correspondencia, un **punto social y pastoral** entre el lugar de origen y el lugar de destino. Intentar unir los dos lados del puente con visitas regulares, misiones populares, intercambios de información y de personal... Es una forma de mantener y de reforzar la fe y los esfuerzos de los migrantes en su lucha por una vida justa y digna. Si los migrantes tienen dificultades para ir a la iglesia, ella debe hacerse presente donde estén ellos.

Esta presencia de la iglesia, a la vez en la casilla de salida y en la de llegada, no es una novedad de tiempos modernos. En efecto, en el siglo XIX, el obispo J.B. Scalabrini fundó dos institutos religiosos (para hombres y mujeres) y un instituto laico para acompañar los emigrantes italianos, tanto en su propia diócesis de Piacenza y en las otras regiones de Italia, como al otro lado del océano, en Estados Unidos, Brasil, Argentina, Australia y otros lugares. Era, decía, para llevarles *“la sonrisa de la patria y el consuelo de la fe”*. Decía también que *“para los migrantes, la patria es la tierra que les da pan”*, concluyendo que *“la migración extiende el concepto de patria”*.

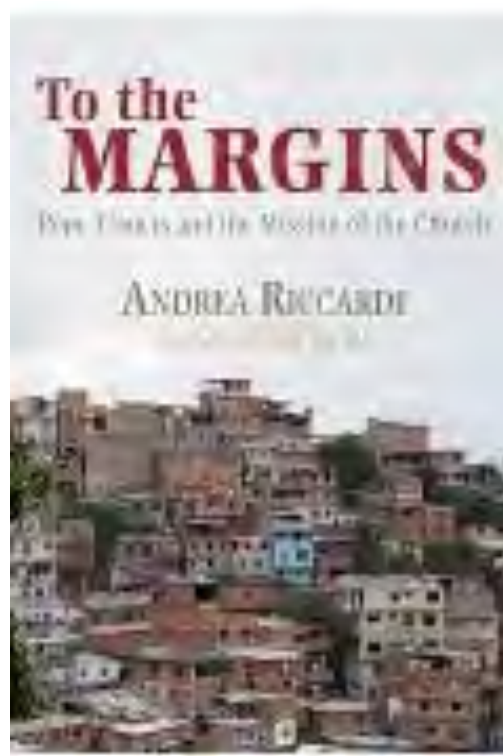
4.5. Centro de estudios y de pastoral

Para desarrollar un trabajo más eficaz y de mayor incidencia social y política, es necesario hacer una lectura científica y actual del fenómeno de la movilidad humana. Así nacen los Centros de Estudios Migratorios, presentes hoy en Europa, Asia, África y América del Norte y del Sur. En colaboración sinérgica con otras instituciones académicas, estos centros realizan investigaciones, estudios y organizan conferencias, reuniones, cursos y seminarios para implicar al mayor número de personas, y también sensibilizar a la Iglesia, la sociedad civil y las autoridades del drama de la migración, es evidente que una lectura profunda de los flujos y las tendencias, de las causas y las consecuencias de la migración queda rigurosamente condicionada a los elementos precedentes. Permite no sólo aumentar las actividades

pastorales, sociales y políticas, sino que también pone el acento sobre los cambios necesarios para las nuevas leyes de inmigración.

Es importante subrayar, en este sentido, la realización del Fórum Internacional de la Migración y de la Paz. En su 5ª edición (Antigua, Bogotá, Méjico, New York y Berlín), el Fórum ha presentado un doble objetivo: por una parte, separar el concepto de la migración de la ideología de la seguridad nacional y del crimen organizado, subrayando ante todo el potencial que representa para la construcción de la paz. Por otro lado, comprometer las autoridades políticas, los pensadores universitarios y otras personalidades, en una participación social y política más importante en favor de los derechos de los migrantes.

(Ref.: This article was the lecture given in French by the author at the SEDOS Residential Seminar: *SEDOS Bulletin* Vol. 47, No.7/8, 2015. The Spanish translation is taken from *Misiones extranjeras*, N° 268, Septiembre-Octubre 2015- pp.485-497.)



(Gift from Orbis Books to Sedos Library)

Fr. Raniero Alessandrini, C.S.

Companion on a Journey. Pastoral Guidance to Migrants

Introduction

This work follows a publication that I had the privilege of editing about three years ago, entitled, “Welcome, a Pastoral Response to Hispanic Migrants”: it was enthusiastically



received as a basic text for helping English speaking priests and leaders better understand and welcome the millions of Hispanic migrants who have become an integral part of the many multi-cultural parishes in the

United States.

The suggestions offered in that publication were primarily based on Church's documents, biblical reflection, and publications by theologians and others involved in the Hispanic apostolate. I attempted to provide a selective compendium of essential tenets and so eliminate the need for extensive readings within the discipline. The various sections of that publication addressed the following sub-topics: understanding culture and the dialogue between cultures; migration and biblical tradition; basic documents of the Church on migration; faith and religiosity; popular piety and celebrations; typically Hispanic celebrations; Hispanic expressions of faith and culture; challenging components in Mexican American culture; pastoral suggestions for community building and liturgical celebrations.

This present work offers further challenges to English speaking clergy and leaders: it examines some basic directions for effective pastoral guidance not only within the Hispanic worldview but also the Filipino. These two groups share many similarities in

both their respective cultures and migration experience.

After briefly reiterating the reflection on migration as both a challenge and a blessing as considered in my first book, I will again present some basic concepts essential for the understanding of culture and of dialogue between cultures as proposed also by Pope Francis in his Apostolic Exhortation “*Evangelii Gaudium*”. These concepts are key in facilitating any encounter between the pastoral guide and the migrant.

A brief description of the technique of pastoral guidance, taken at random from selected publications, will be followed by reflecting on the specific guidance of Hispanic and Filipino migrants within their own historicity. This awareness is crucial in facilitating a successful pastoral encounter.

Migration is a painful and complex experience. In order to successfully accompany Hispanics and Filipino, who are living this trauma, the counsellor must understand and empathize with the suffering of their lives and reach out to them. A chapter will be devoted to this issue.

At the very heart of an effective pastoral encounter is the important reality of the presence of Christ within the first contact and the ongoing relationship between the migrant and the pastoral caregiver. In his Apostolic Exhortation, Pope Francis stresses that this contact requires a basic Eucharistic and evangelizing community. The transforming power of faith in Christ, shared by both the migrant and the caregiver, gives the encounter a spiritual dimension which more readily proves successful on various levels. Christ becomes the “Companion on a journey” for

both the distressed migrant and the pastoral healer.

The work closes with appendices, taken at random from selected publications, presenting general and practical guidelines for successful pastoral guidance, including group therapy, proper use of prayer and Scripture, and tactful referrals.

1. Immigration: a Challenge and a Blessing

The phenomenon of migration is as old as the very history of humanity. Since before the written record, the human experience has witnessed the steady flow of individuals and groups who have felt the need, for whatever reason, to abandon their homeland and seek a new ground. Motivated by either pure adventure or by the hope of finding a better environment, we can safely say that all nations are the outgrowth of different migration movements and civilizations. Various economic, political, social, religious and cultural factors embody this phenomenon in its causes and consequences.

With people of different cultures, values, and models of life knocking at our doors, the life and pastoral structures of the majority of parishes in North America have changed dramatically the last thirty years. From national and monocultural faith communities we now witness multi-cultural parishes called to give pastoral attention to specific ethnic groups.

Consequently, to build an authentically Catholic Church each faith community is called to integrate into itself the specific reality of the groups that compose it.

The message of Scripture

In the Old Testament, Israel is constantly instructed that *“the great God, almighty and awesome... loves the strangers, providing them food and clothing”* (Dt. 10:17-18) and reminded of its own experience: *“You shall treat the alien who resides with you no differently than the natives born among you; have the same love for him as for yourself, for*

you too were once aliens in the land of Egypt” (Lv. 19:34).

Jesus himself was himself a refugee as a member of the Holy Family fleeing from the terror of Herod (Mt. 2:12-23); and later, one who preached throughout Galilee and Judea but having no home of his own, *“nowhere to lay his head”* (Lk. 9:58). The countenance of our Lord and Saviour is also present in the face of the migrants: *“...for I was a stranger and you welcomed me... And I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did it for me”* (Mt. 25:35- 40). Today the local church is called to become an anchor for immigrant families and refugees thus requiring a balancing of social and cultural differences. Its mission is to provide opportunities for both spiritual and pastoral growth.

The message of the Church

Historically, the Catholic Church has had a shared affinity with the experiences of migrants. Moreover, the Church has often been an advocate on social and legal issues stemming from immigration, including public policy debates. This affinity and advocacy are compelled by two fundamental sources: first, the Church’s social teaching, stemming from a Gospel perspective rooted in the Old Testament and reinforced by tradition and papal encyclicals; and, second, historical experience as an “immigrant church” from one generation of new comers to the next.

Sacred Scripture is rich in accounts of hope-filled movement to places of promise and that movement continues as part of the church’s history. In 1891 Pope Leo XIII issued the encyclical letter *Rerum Novarum* (On the Condition of Labour), which crystallizes the meaning and understanding of the church’ teaching on human rights rooted in natural law and God’s revelation, including the right to survive and support a family, specifically mentioning the situation of migrants. Later, (1952), in the apostolic constitution *Exsul Familia* (The Refugee Family), Pope Pious XII reaffirmed that members of God’s one human family have the right to migrate in order to ensure their just claim to a life of dignity. This also was expressed by Pope

Saint John Paul II when in 1985 he addressed the New World Congress on the Pastoral Care of Immigrants.

More recently, the bishops of the United States in their 2003 pastoral letter written jointly with the bishops of Mexico, *“Strangers No Longer; Together on the Journey of Hope”*, presented the Catholic theological tradition in terms of five basic principles through which the Church looks at migration:

- all persons have the right to find in their homeland the economic, political and social opportunities to live with dignity and achieve a full life by using their God-given gifts. In this context, sustaining life and family is a basic human need.
- when persons cannot find employment in their homeland to support themselves and their families, they have a right to seek it elsewhere. This right is not absolute; it must be based on reasons that are just. In today’s world, with poverty so widespread and overwhelming, migrating is presumed to be a just reason.
- sovereign nations have the right to protect and control their borders for the sake of the common good of their citizens. But this right is not absolute. Nations also have an obligation to the universal common good, which extends beyond individual borders. The more powerful economic nations such as the United States have a greater level of this obligation as they manage substantial resources for human needs and strive for greater accommodation of migration flows.
- those who flee wars and persecution, that is refugees and asylum seekers, should be afforded protection in all nations because of the threat to human life.
- regardless of their legal status, whether authorized or not, documented or not, refugees or simply immigrants, all possess inherent human dignity which is to be respected and supported.

The local parishes are often the only beacon of hope amid all the uncertain and unsettled situations that affect the lives of recent

migrants in particular. Their effort confirms that the local church is, as it should be, a place of spiritual uplifting, social community, and sacramental stability. It should be a place of calm and security for all who worship and participate in the life of the parish. Pastoral guidance supports such a welcoming and comforting environment, while it is facilitated by it at the same time.

To conclude this overall brief presentation, the following clarifications will be useful for a successful pastoral counselling to Latino/Filipino immigrants.

Undocumented immigrants are persons who have entered the sovereign nation bypassing the official routes/and or procedures to enter. They may also have entered the country with the proper documentation but have remained past the allotted time, or may have received a visa and have been engaging in activities not allowed by it. Undocumented status may be temporary as for immigrants who are in the process of obtaining necessary documents. It could be of a more permanent nature as in the case of many Latino/Filipino low-wage and/or seasonal workers.

Although the individuals who make up the Latino population share a strong socio-cultural, linguistic, and historical background, the large group referred as Latino is made up of diverse aggregations in Central, South America, and the Caribbean, defined along more specific ethnic, national and cultural lines.

2. Cultures and Dialogue between Cultures

In essence the content of this section addresses reflections on basic components of culture and how all cultures need to enter into a dialogue to assure a peaceful future for humanity. In particular it will be useful for the understanding of migrants' culture and a welcoming approach of the pastoral counsellor.

Basic components of culture

The complexity of various elements that constitute a culture makes any clear definition

difficult. We are dealing with human experiences and values and each human being is an enigma.

Culture, distinctly assimilated and lived by each individual, is a phenomenon that characterizes nations and communities with an implicit unique world view. Culture is the way of life of a community seen in its totality.

Experiences have been stored and preserved in language, customs, traditions and myths. Thus, culture exemplifies the cumulative and shared experiences of a community, which are transmitted from one generation to another.

Reflection on culture in its modern sense is rather recent in Church's teachings. *Gaudium et Spes*, —Vatican II Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World — devotes a long section to culture (paragraphs 53-62).

Dialogue between cultures

No individual is completely free from the cultural influence that is constitutive of his or her personality. Human beings are conditioned by continuous relationships that shape their identity.

We live in a pluralistic world. The world has been called a global village, where plurality is woven into the very fabric of our human family. There is a plurality of world views, religions, and ways of organization in a society. Today, close proximity and easy contacts among cultures, religions and diverse forms of spirituality are a pervasive phenomenon.

Inter-cultural and inter-religious identity is becoming part of the contours of many nations: plurality is being acknowledged as a constitutive aspect of our modern world.

This world's wide phenomenon affects the relationships among nations with conflicting consequences. It is not fully understood and causes stressful reactions. Our experience of plurality and diversity is painfully ambivalent.

On the one hand, diversity becomes enrichment; on the other is often perceived as an obstacle leading to intolerance and suppression especially of the minority and the weak. Living with difference and plurality is a major struggle in many societies.

In order to understand cultures with their basic and varied components it is essential to accept the challenge of comparing them with ours. Migration exposes us to this challenge. Culture is always marked by stable and enduring elements as well as by contingent and changing features: it is a living system.

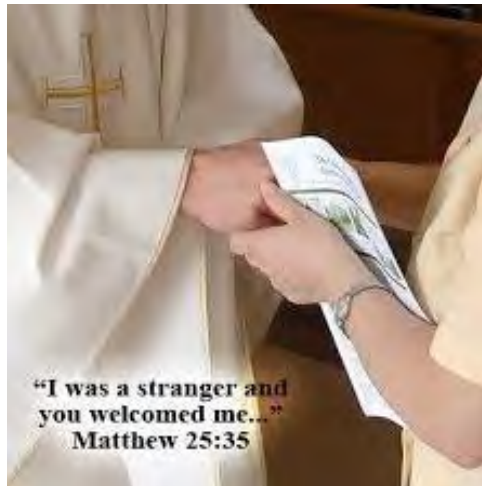
Today all cultures are affected by modern global trends and the massive technological innovations. The ability of cultures to

adapt to change differs: some cultures tend to stress the need for stability in order to preserve their identity in the fast changing world; others fast adjust their institutions to fit into the process of change.

A serene and objective encounter with other cultures requires the awareness of our own culture and the appreciation of its historic and social make up. At the same time the encounter will reveal our limitations and safeguard from conceited isolation.

A deeper reflection favoured by such encounter will disclose components familiar and common in all cultures, a providential factor that facilitates mutual acceptance and enrichment.

Inspired by a Christian perspective, the encounter should become an enriching, welcoming dialogue. Furthermore, the dialogue should unfold a communion which has its source in Christian revelation and finds its model in the Triune God. Pastoral counselling should be understood and practiced at the light of such a communion. Individuals come to maturity through receptive openness to others and through generous self-giving to them: so also do cultures. Created by people and at the service



of people, they need to be perfected through dialogue and communion, on the basis of the original and fundamental unity of the human family as it came from the hands of God, who “made from one stock every nation of humankind” (Acts 17: 26).

The challenge of cultures

Dialogue and communion become even more demanding and challenging especially for pastoral counsellors when immigrants become our neighbour. The hardships they are facing could blur their distinct cultural traits that are a vital support to their endeavours of integrating in the new country.

A style and culture of dialogue are particularly important when it comes to the complex question of migrants, which is an important social phenomenon of our time. The movement of large numbers of people from one part of the planet to another is often a terrible odyssey for those involved, and brings with it the intermingling of traditions and customs with notable repercussions both on the countries from which people come and on those in which they settle. How migrants are welcomed by receiving countries and how well they become integrated in their new environment is also an indication of how effective dialogue there is between the various cultures.

In his Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, (the Joy of the Gospel) Pope Francis addresses at length the intertwining of cultures, particularly in the cities, and how to respond pastorally to them. “*Cities are multicultural; in the larger cities a connective network is found in which groups of people share a common imagination and dreams about life, and new human interaction arise, new cultures, invisible cities. Various subcultures exist side by side, and often practice segregation and violence. The Church is called to be at the service of a difficult dialogue. On the one hand, there are people who have the means needed to develop their personal and family lives, but there are also many ‘noncitizens’ and ‘urban remnants’... This contrast causes painful suffering*” (no. 74).

Blessed Bishop John Baptist Scalabrini, named “Father to the Migrants” by Pope saint John Paul II, invests the socioeconomic and political vision of migration with the values and convictions that come from faith and pastoral concerns.

Migration, with the eyes of faith, is a providential phenomenon. It interprets history, not from the perspective of dominant economy, but that of the wisdom of God.

Scalabrini is convinced that the goal of any pastoral attention, including counselling, should be “*to bring together the dispersed children of God into one family*”, and thus the perfect communion and participation in the local church, that would see itself enriched with a new life.

We could regard the cultures of others as an unwanted nuisance and even a threat to our peaceful everyday concerns. The effort of blending with them, motivated by faith and trust in human goodness, will result in unexpected growth and enrichment.

3. The Art of Pastoral Guidance

In the following chapters the terms counselling (counsellors) and guidance (guides) will interchange. I must clarify that with the term *counselling* I do not necessarily intend a specific service offered by trained professionals, rather a broad, generic assistance of healing and guidance freely offered by community’s leaders pastorally motivated; their aim is the gradual building of a community of faith where everyone feels understood, accepted, and appreciated.

Basic assumptions

Through the centuries community leaders have given care, support, and guidance during personal crises and losses. In our days of increasing personal and social disquiets ministers have a unique opportunity to offer both care and healing. We can say that pastors in particular are proper counsellors because of the inherent advantages of their position and role, their network of ongoing relationships with the people and their family. In the eyes of those experiencing stress and loss, the pastor offers a supportive and nurturing

image. It is within these advantages that he can effectively guide with the support of rituals with which the Christian heritage has surrounded the major human critical stages of birth, growth, and death.

Pastors, in particular, are unique among secular counsellors in their social and symbolic role. They are “*representative persons*” of the beliefs and values that enrich human experiences with Christian meaning. As religious authority figures, they easily trigger a variety of early life memories and emotions about God, family, church, and marriage. Those who leave the comfort of their offices and relate informally with the parishioners in their place of work and family’s setting soon become trusted members of the community. It is also true, we must admit, that ministers, seen as representatives of certain ethical values and religious beliefs, could prevent from seeking help some guilty and doubtful faithful.

Basic insights

Pastoral guidance is the utilization of a variety of healing methods to help persons handle their problems and crises and experience the healing of their brokenness. It has a reparative function needed when the growth of a person is more or less seriously impaired or even blocked by crises. Most of the opportunities for caring and counselling in a local community occur around two kinds of life crises: development crisis, occurring around the normal stressful transition in the life journey; and accidental crisis, triggered by unexpected stress and losses (sickness, accidents, natural disasters, unemployment, and displace). One goal of caring is enabling parishioners respond to these crises as growth opportunities.

Pastoral guidance requires a relationship in which pastoral caregivers use their expertise to structure and focus conversation, while encouraging the full participation of the counselee.

The Jesuit priest B. Tyrrell, in his two volume presentation of *Christotherapy* as a method of healing through enlightenment, suggests the method of existential loving as a

key factor for pastoral guidance. Pastoral care is effective only if it helps persons increase their potentials to relate in ways that nurture wholeness in themselves and others. To the degree that individuals become able to establish growing, mutually satisfying relationships, they will cope with their problems and responsibilities more successfully: they also increase a meaningful relationship with God and even help enter into a specific spiritual direction experience.

The counsellor, particularly in the short-term encounters, needs to adopt a healthy rather than an illness orientation, seeking to help persons build on their innate strengths, skills, and capacities.

4. Specific Pastoral Guidance

Many counsellors believe that theirs is an impartial helping profession through which they relate to the inner humanity in each client. In fact, we could say that the practice of pastoral counselling in the United States is rather biased. To be effective in counselling Latino and Filipino clients, counsellors must first become aware of their own personal experiences, orientations, beliefs that influence their interactions with persons from different back grounds.

Ethnic and linguistic diversity is a reality in the United States. Ethnic minority persons represent more than the 29% of the population. Counsellors are now more than ever confronted with having to deal with persons who are culturally distinct. Faced with this reality, the pastoral counselling has demonstrated an increased commitment to multi-cultural issues and training.

Overall, the literature evidences that generally immigrants are socially vulnerable. Contextual information is crucial in counselling. Could be that a counsellor who detects reluctance to disclosure from an immigrant might misinterpret such a behaviour (... *the client does not like me... does not trust me...*).

The world of immigrants

After the first short experience in the new country the immigrants suffer an all-encompassing nostalgia generally accompanied by sense of culpability, suicidal desire, and other varied psychic disorders. The process of integration is drastic. All changes are made up of gains and losses, benefits and risks. They are in need of an internal reorganization, a painful process that cannot be resolved by a good job and a stable legal status.

Immigrants experience complex feelings of alienation from home, culture, and even God. As a result, they build up emotional walls between themselves and the outside world; they even become strangers to themselves. Because of language problems they find difficult to express these confused experiences of their heart.

Separated from home, immigrants need to know that they have a place in someone's life, that someone and a community care.

With leaving home behind the immigrants are totally unplugged from familiar support system. It is a passage "*from within to without*". They come from a situation where they have experienced a sense of belonging: a common language and background, the existence and access to a support system. Now they go through a situation where all these familiar securities are suddenly missed with the risk of losing their sense of identity and their uniqueness. Studies have shown that for Latino and Filipino Americans the immediate and extended family are basic "*loci*" of identity formation, social learning, and role development.

Adjustment to the new environment is not easy. Immigrants are ill-equipped to encounter the new culture: they are not familiar with the new language and the new cultural ways. Feelings of isolation and loneliness are intensified. To mitigate this loneliness and isolation immigrants from the

same country of origin may band together to provide the needed social support system. This situation is helpful in organizing group-therapy.

Pastoral counselling to Latino/Filipino Americans immigrants

As we have seen, immigrants are in need of special guidance due to the experiences of loneliness and marginalization. Only trustworthy pastoral leaders should be entrusted with this special endeavour based on holistic approach aimed at real and concrete human and religious promotion.

We could say that the immigrant is error-burdened, existentially ignorant, in the sense that he is not fully aware of his present condition and those transformations which could bring healing and wholeness. According of the

Jesuit Tyrrell, one of the main tasks of the pastoral counsellor as a Christotherapist is to try to help the error-burdened migrant become existentially wise through an enlightening process.

As we have also stressed above, social scientists emphasize that the family plays a central role in the mental health of Latino/Filipino immigrants. On the other hand, Western culture prioritizes separateness, individuality, autonomy, and clear boundaries in relationships.

Family and friendship are very significant values among Latinos and Filipinos. The family is not identified only as the nuclear unit but also by the extended family.

Furthermore, immigrants tend to relate in a *high-context style* as the primary channel of communication. Direct and specific references to the meaning and content of the message are not given. They expect counsellors to rely on their knowledge and appreciation for non-verbal cues and other subtle signs for interpreting the content and the meaning of the message.



On the other hand, “*the Euro/American culture tends to focus on relating through a low-context style where words are the primary channel for communication: direct, precise, and clear information is delivered mostly verbally*” (Pederson et alii, *Counselling Across Cultures*, Sage Publ., Los Angeles 2008, p. 117).

Consequently, the high-context message style can be judged as an elaborate, subtle, and intricate form of interpersonal communication. In fact, any form of direct confrontation and verbal assertiveness might be considered rude and disrespectful. The use of direct eye contact is limited because it may imply confrontation and be taken as an impolite gesture. This predisposition is likely related to longstanding divisions among social classes throughout Latin America: for low class people, immigrants in particular, looking directly into the eye of an authority figure is considered as a sign of disrespect; the consistent avoidance of eye contact does not signify suspicion or lack of trust.

The careful management of authority relations and reciprocal trust may be facilitated by the sharing of the example of Christ who has embraced many of the immigrants’ experiences, as we will reflect in the following chapters.

5. Fostering a Basic Eucharistic Community

A comprehensive pastoral attention and more specifically the possibility of effective pastoral guidance require a welcoming and evangelizing community that is inspired and nourished in its generous outreach by a Eucharist lived and celebrated. This challenging pastoral effort must include a personal attention to the immigrants and also the building of a welcoming community towards faith motivated integration.

Attention to the immigrants

When immigrants seek help from counsellors, the pastoral service must be provided in a culturally appropriate manner. An environment that the clients perceive as

nonthreatening, informal, comfortable, and familiar is a good start. It is crucial for a counsellor to be culturally competent. Cultural competence is the on-going process that facilitates the counsellor’s awareness of his own identity, self-concept, and feelings, as well as his/her own perceptions of those who are different. Although it is impossible to know everything about an individual’s culture, the counsellor, motivated by a true pastoral concern, can gradually develop an understanding. Furthermore, he should remember that values and beliefs are not static but rather continually evolving. People change; cultures change as well. Culture competence is an ongoing process. It is a demanding challenge: the determination to dedicate time and energy to the immigrants with respect and empathy. Pastoral guides, in their effort of dedicating time, must be aware that Latino immigrants, in particular, could not be available for counselling sessions during regular business hours. A significant number of them work into late afternoon and evening: they fear losing their jobs if they miss work. True pastorally motivated leaders adapt and remain flexible and available after regular hours, or even weekends.

The more the counsellors interact with immigrants of diverse cultures in general, the more they will enlarge their cultural spectrum. To reach this goal they should expose themselves to Latino/Filipino migrants by visiting families, by attending festivals, cultural events, church services, and social gatherings. In doing so, they will gradually develop a better understanding of how these immigrants interact and behave and even improve the understanding and learning of their language.

Immigrants are the experts on their culture. Appropriate self-disclosure and questions about the migrants’ cultural heritage will enhance the beginning and process of counselling. Allowing the immigrants to share this information will facilitate rapport and partnership in the guiding setting, adding benefit of teaching the counsellor about his/her believes values, and traditions.

Finally, it would not be unusual for a Latino/Filipino counselee to share a small gift or prepare a typical dish for his/her counsellor. Despite ethical standards this is intended to enhance reciprocal trust and a more relaxed sharing.

Building a welcoming community

Pope Francis in his apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* (the joy of the Gospel) invites leaders and lay people to understand and live their evangelizing commitment particularly in communities both tested and enriched by the presence of immigrants and uprooted. Pope Francis stresses that the parish becomes alive and successful in its pastoral endeavours when leaders and faithful embrace creativity and adaptability sustained by dialogue, charitable outreach, and celebration. *“The parish is not an outdated institution; precisely because it possesses great flexibility, it can assume quite different contours depending on the openness and the missionary creativity of the pastor and the community...; if the parish proves capable of self-renewal and constant adaptability, it continues to be the Church living in the midst of the homes of her children and does not become a useless structure out of touch with people or a self-absorbed group made up of chosen few. The parish is the presence of the Church in a given territory, and environment for hearing God’s word, for growth in Christian life”* (no. 28).

The success of gradually shaping the parish into a welcoming community rests undeniably on the coordinated effort of the laity. Pope Francis echoes the clear message of Vatican II in his Apostolic Exhortation. *“Lay people are the vast majority of the people of God. The minority — ordained ministers — are at their service. There has been a growing awareness of the identity and mission of the laity in the Church. We can count on many lay persons, although still not nearly enough, who have a deep-rooted sense of community and great fidelity to the tasks of charity, catechesis and the celebration of the faith”* (no. 102).

Finally, Pope Francis underlines the characteristics of a community welcoming

immigrants. Clearly, his detailed suggestions apply to community’s leaders, pastors in particular. The one called to accompany others has to realize that each person’s situation before God and their life in grace are mysteries which no one can fully know from without. The Gospel tells us to correct others and help them to grow without making judgments about their responsibility or culpability (cf. Matthew 7:1; Luke 6:37). *“Someone good at such accompaniment does not give in to frustration or fears. He or she invites others to let themselves be healed, to take up their mat, embrace the cross, leave all behind...Our personal experience of being accompanied and assisted, will teach us to be patient and compassionate with others, and to find the right way to gain their trust, their openness and their readiness to grow”* (no. 172).

6. Meeting Christ for Pastoral Healing Guidance

In this final section I will offer some reflections about Christ’s human and religious experiences. I consider them an effective tool for the counsellor in his/her effort of accompanying the immigrants. The sharing of the experiences of our Saviour, the true companion of their journey, will facilitate the first encounter and the follow-through sections towards a clarification and resolution of the traumas experienced by our uprooted brothers and sisters.

The encounter with an immigrant in need of pastoral healing is a sacred opportunity for meeting the ever present God who accompanies both immigrant and counsellor. Both will more easily interact under the light of the divine denominator of God’s presence. This presence is powerfully experienced through the revelation of his Love towards his Son, who freely embraced and divinized all human experiences, giving them meaning and purpose. Pastoral counsellor helps the immigrant with looking at Jesus as he appears in gospel events and by letting him become absorbed in what he is like, what he cares about, and what he is doing. Christ communicates the truths that emancipate, and

the values which enrich and transform human existence, in many different ways. Above all through his life, death and resurrection, He incarnates and reveals those existential meanings and values which constitute and promote wholeness and holiness.

Immigrants looking for pastoral guidance vaguely know this redeeming Christ. Their catechetical education is usually rather limited. Nonetheless, their faith is deep, expressed through popular religious celebrations and traditions through which they experienced a Christ who is close, alive, and touchable. The following reflections will help the immigrants familiarize even more with some of the Divine Saviour's experiences through the guidance of the pastoral counsellor.

Many are the human-divine experiences presented in the gospels' accounts lived by Christ in a variety of choices, encounters, and reactions. I have intentionally selected some, those more frequently experienced by the immigrants, marking their relationship with God, their families, the world left behind, and the new world with its complexity and challenges. The task of the pastoral guide is to make the immigrants aware that the person they need to meet is not the Jesus of the past, but the present living Jesus, acting now in their lives, a companion on their journey.

The insights into Jesus' experiences offered in the following pages are undoubtedly familiar to the pastoral counsellor. Nonetheless, they will be better understood when they are viewed from the perspective of the lived reality of the immigrants. They become a very successful tool at the beginning and in the ongoing pastoral process of the healing pastoral guidance.

Jesus the Stranger

Jesus was always surrounded by people pressing him to be touched and healed. The gospels frequently talk of a constant throng of

people. Nevertheless, he was also a lonely man, looking for moments of solitude as to be in touch with himself and his mission. It is in this solitude that he lives his intimate union with his heavenly Father.

Jesus was meeting every person with genuineness and totality. Meantime, he was keeping for himself a reality that he will live alone. Very close to everyone, nevertheless he was keeping a peculiar distance.

He had close friends like Lazarus, Mary and Martha, but at the very depth of his soul he was all alone and never completely understood.

He had to journey up to Calvary all alone, without any comfort from his disciples who even abandoned him.

In choosing the adversities of being uprooted, the immigrants enter into a vortex of new encounters with people of different cultures and expectations. They are constantly surrounded by new values and ideas. From the isolation of a small town or rancho they find themselves immersed into a whirl of new faces and experiences. But in their human hustle and bustle they are all alone, misunderstood, and even frequently rejected.

Behind their diverse feature lies a secret and painful soul's struggle that nobody is able to read, interpret, and accept.

They are all alone in their journey. New friends, even those with whom they share the same experience, are not capable to enter the sacredness of their intimate struggle.

In presenting the Lord Jesus, the companion on their journey, as a stranger, the pastoral guide will help the immigrants recognize and name the components of the aching loneliness and sympathetically help in overcoming them.

Jesus the Friend

Celebrations within the Latino and Filipino community are not lived as mere external experiences, rather as friendly moments when everyone may feel welcomed and appreciated.



It is the experience felt by Jesus' disciples during the Last Supper. Immigrants receive great consolation and encouragement when the counsellor presents Jesus as a true friend who remains close to them in their present life's experience of loneliness. He can fill the emptiness that comes from so many missed life-giving celebrations.

Jesus loved spending a good time with close friends and with anyone who would join in. This was not a one-time affair. In fact, it seems to have been so regular and ordinary during the earthly life of Jesus that the early Christians, who wanted to follow his way, made it one of the greatest characteristic of their own life. It was not a new teaching about God, rather the new experience of a unifying God who brings all people together in an authentic, festive, and loving way.

Forced to leave their families, immigrants feel guilty and blameworthy. There is a need for healing through the forgiveness of the loved ones left behind. Total forgiveness is assured by the Lord Jesus. The very first action of the risen Lord, in keeping with the very core of his offer of a new life, is to go to the very friends who have run away from him, and offer them complete forgiveness. They have betrayed him: he offered them peace. His love for them is so great that even when they abandoned him in the hour of greatest need, he did not stop loving them; he simply offers them peace.

Such unconditional forgiveness should be assured by the counsellor through the image and example of Jesus as a welcoming friend.

Jesus and Prayer

The immigrant's experience of prayer, particularly in the case of women, undergoes profound change and crisis. Separated from the soul-nourishing personal involvement found in prayer groups within his parish left behind and popular celebrations, he enters a time of lowliness and lack of group support. He is forced to experience an

unfamiliar God, a God of uncertainty and challenge, hidden within the sufferings and hardships of the experience of migration, particularly during the long and life-threatening journey through the desert crossing.

In the gospel of Luke Jesus is frequently presented as a man of prayers. He withdraws to deserted places and prays to the Father with trust and gratitude, sharing with him all his experiences. More and more he finds strength to fulfil his mission of suffering servant, overcoming the mere human expectations of his disciples and the crowds.

Prayer is the source of strength and guidance. Jesus was able to overcome fear through prayer. In the Garden of Olives he experiences loneliness and fear and is able to subdue them. Prayer brought him obedience to the Father and sustained his leap of complete trust in Him as he journeyed through his passion and death.

The pastoral guide, in presenting Jesus as a person of prayer, will inspire immigrants, men in particular, in overcoming a disconcerting experience of fear never known before, a painful blow to their macho world. They will experience a new inner strength and perceive a new presence of God as a companion on their journey.

Jesus the Compassionate

Compassion is a particular and frequent word in the gospels: "*he was moved by compassion... moved by compassion... he looked at him with compassion...*". The word represents the totality of Jesus' teaching about the Father. Compassion is the unique attribute of God and the central moral thrust of a life centered in the Father.



In every encounter Jesus reveals his attention and his tenderness. He allows the sinful woman to touch and wash his feet and responds with forgiveness, appreciation, and affection.

After resurrecting the twelve years old child,

Jesus lovingly reminds her parents to give her something to eat. He has compassion and sympathy for the widowed mother of Naim accompanying her only son for burial. He implores her not to cry.

Particularly in the celebration of the Via Crucis, Hispanic and Filipino immigrants are able to relive the infinite compassion of the crucified God. In their struggle to integrate into a new culture, a new way of thinking and of living, immigrants need to be comforted and consoled by the vivid presentation of the suffering Christ who shares their same experiences. In Jesus, the immigrants could sense that God is really caring, supportive, in solidarity with their suffering.

Jesus the Jew

Many Hebrew writers recognize Jesus as one of their own. He grew up as a Jew; he attended Jewish school, learned to pray with the Psalms, studied the history of the Jewish people as narrated in the Old Testament. He learned to think and live as a Jew.

Jesus was known as a carpenter. At his time for the most part buildings were not made of wood in Palestine. A carpenter will be engaged in constructing door, door frames, roof beams, boxes, yokes and plows. In term of social standing, a carpenter was at the lower end of the peasant class, more marginalized than a peasant who still owned a small piece of land.

The main reason that the majority of immigrants leave their country of origin is the hardships they had to endure, the often difficult and poorly rewarded manual work both in the fields and in construction. In sharing with them the person of Jesus embracing the same poorly rewarded labour as a carpenter or stone carver, the counsellor will remind the migrants about the dignity of work and its values over and above the standards inculcated by a wealth driven society.

Although proud of his Jewish heritage Jesus was able to interpret and critique it objectively, uncovering its authentic meaning.

As mentioned in a previous chapter, migrants suffer from an inferiority complex

when confronted with a society and a culture which they perceive as superior, affluent, and multifaceted. The temptation of completely denying and rejecting one's origin and taking on an artificial new self-image is quite appealing. In knowing with counsellor's help the person of Jesus as a Jew, proud of his own heritage, history, and culture, the immigrant will be encouraged to appreciate who he is and, at the same time, free him from any possible feelings of guilt in critiquing the world he was forced to leave behind.

Jesus and his Family

Family is by far the most valued part of any Latino and Filipino life. Immigrants do not look forward to their life ahead imagining themselves outside the family. Everything they experience is shared with members of the nuclear and extended family. There is love and treasuring shared by all the members, young and old. Clearly, to leave the family is a traumatic experience for a migrant.

Uprooted from their family's ambience the immigrants experience deep regret and even remorse. They are forced to migrate for a future welfare of the family they leave behind, their parents and elderly, their children, the "*hogar*" where they nurtured hopes and dreams, where they encountered the support and moral strength that carved out who they are and who they will be.

The example of Jesus will help the pastoral guide to at least soften the regret and the remorse of the immigrants planning their future with or without the approval of their nuclear and extended family. He will encourage them to embrace the solitude that accompanies their distressing experience.

Jesus and the Father

A deep faith characterizes the life of Hispanic and Filipino migrants within the frame of their familiar surroundings and the community at large. This faith is manifested, nourished and celebrated with demeanours rich in biblical content. "*Si Dios quiere*" (If God wills) is an expression frequently repeated whenever a future project or

encounter is planned. The destiny of individuals, of entire families, and that of the whole world rests upon the Providence of God.

All will come to fulfilment only with the blessing of this benevolent Overseer motivated by infinite wisdom and love. *“Resignarse a la voluntad de Dios”* (To humbly accept God’s will) is yet another familiar expression with which migrants react to misfortunes and adversities of any kind. It reflects a conscious surrender to God’s plan.

Jesus, the beloved Son of the Father, is constantly focused on permeating all human encounters with the sweetness and depth of his Father’s love. It is for this alone that he exists, searches, speaks, and heals. He aspires to witness only to this love, transferring it in the heart of each person.

From the very first encounter of pastoral healing and during the following sessions immigrants will deeply resonate and identify with this infinite care and love of God the Father as lived and manifested by the life of his Son.

Jesus and the Women

There are strong parallels between the immigrant women of today and the Middle East women of the first century, particularly the women of Israel. They are limited and confined in their social, political and religious endeavours due to a predominantly andro-centric culture. They are relegated to a life of submission. They fear of having the family’s private life exposed, misunderstood and judged and look with suspicion at any encounter with outsiders to the family.

In such a setting, the role of women within the circle of Jesus’ followers is remarkable. The stories of our Lord’s interaction with women are striking. They range from his defence of the woman who outraged the all-male guests by entering a restricted banquet with her loosed hair that she used to dry Jesus’ feet. He enjoys the hospitality of Mary and Martha, affirming Mary’s role as disciple. He is freely speaking to the Syro-Phoenician and the Samaritan women.

There is no doubt that women were part of the itinerant group traveling with Jesus as disciples something unheard of before. Indeed, they were the most devoted followers.

The evangelist Mark relates that at the moment of Jesus’ crucifixion all disciples left: nonetheless, *“there were also women looking on from a distance. Among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of the younger James and of Jose’, and Salome. These women had followed him when he was in Galilee and ministered to him. There were also many other women who had come up with him to Jerusalem”*(Mark, 15:40ss). These are the women who Jesus cured, touched in healing, reassured, and freed from devils, from low esteem and inhibitions. Jesus had given them back their dignity as persons. In their gratitude they were serving the Master not only with their offerings but also with their nurturing and caring talents, creating around Jesus and his disciples a space where the gospel message would blossom.

The opportunity for pastoral counsellors to assist Hispanic and Filipino migrant women is rather limited when confronted with their male counterparts. They are mostly involved with the care of the children and family’s undertakings. Hopefully, the above reflections could prove beneficial in the realization of such an opportunity.

Jesus the Slave

At the time of Jesus slaves would be entrusted with the washing of the soiled feet of the guests on the occasion of special meals. This was a rather necessary practice since most people would walk to the dinner in their bare feet. Only the wealthier would wear sandals: most of the guests would have their dirty feet bruised and injured as well. Slaves will both wash the feet and heal them with perfumed oil. This needed and revitalizing service provided by a slave was seen as honouring the whole individual as a guest.

In some publications, a pair of dirty and worn-out sandals or *“guar-aces”* allegorically represents the ordeal of many migrants. The long journey through the desert’s rugged and

tortuous paths causes them their bruised and swollen feet protected only by a pair of shabby, torn shoes. Besides the warm welcome that they dream about, many migrants need medical attention at the end of their journey. It is a disheartening experience: whenever the feet are tired and hurt one can easily give up and abandon the dream.

There is no more consoling and encouraging image than that of Jesus acting as a slave in the intimacy of his last meal with his friends. During the Last Supper he washes their feet and heals their bruises.

In embracing our human nature and dying on the cross, Jesus kneels before the disciples and all of suffering humanity and washes their feet.

When immigrants experience human fragility, Jesus, the slave, heals and purifies them with his loving touch. They feel refreshed and comforted with their dignity fully restored.

The reference to Jesus' powerful example of humility will facilitate the encounter with the immigrants as they journey together towards confidence and healing.

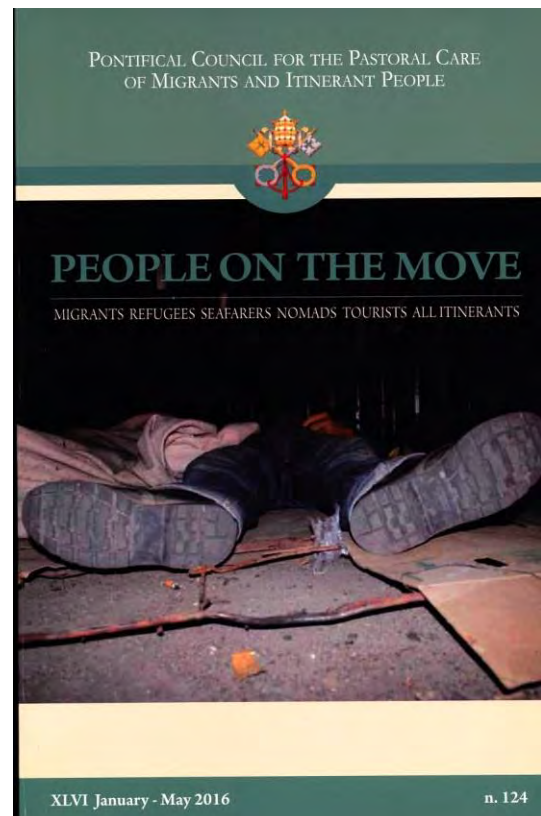
Jesus the Healer

All migrants suffer profoundly in leaving their homeland. Crossing deserts and rivers often causes much bodily harm. The very act of leaving behind friends and familiar environment causes them deep pain and spiritual distress; it brings utter solitude. They long for understanding, comfort, and healing. As always, the pastoral guide is empowered to initiate and facilitate a process of healing and comfort. The following reflections on the healing power of Jesus may assist in this process from the very first encounter. Jesus knows that a person with low esteem because of suffering may come to believe that no one

would really care. In such a case, as a perfect healer, he does not simply overpower the individual from the outside, but rather solicits from the sick person his inner potentials; he strengthens his will power and self-reliance as part of the healing experience.

These simple reflections about the sympathy and empathy of Jesus could motivate the pastoral counsellor in his delicate task of showing the healing power of the Saviour through a welcoming affection.

Ref.: *People on the Move* XLVI January-May 2016, N. 124, pp. 9-29)



Accogliere Famiglie con Bambini Disabili in Contesti Migratori.

Scenari inclusivi a Bologna

Introduzione

In Italia si è registrata nell'ultimo decennio una rapida ed intensa crescita quantitativa del fenomeno migratorio contraddistinto da una sempre maggiore stanzialità, come dimostrato dalla crescita della componente familiare e dall'aumento del numero di alunni figli di migranti, aspetti che hanno trasformato profondamente il paesaggio urbano, sempre più plurale e multiculturale. I flussi migratori infatti tendono a concentrarsi in alcune aree urbane del nostro Paese in particolare nelle principali città del Centro Nord, capaci di offrire maggiori opportunità occupazionali e una rete di servizi percepiti come più efficienti (trasporti pubblici, servizi socio-sanitari qualificati...).

Secondo il Ventitreesimo Rapporto sulle migrazioni curato dalla Fondazione ISMU (Iniziativa e Studi sulla Multietnicità), nel 2017 Bologna risulta essere la città con la più elevata percentuale di cittadini stranieri per numero di residenti e per numero di alunni. I dati evidenziano che sotto le Due Torri il fenomeno migratorio sta assumendo sempre più un carattere strutturale, destinato a modificare gli scenari delle politiche sociali. Emerge inoltre la necessità di rispondere ai bisogni emergenti di una “nuova” fetta di popolazione: si tratta di nuclei familiari migranti con minori disabili iscritti nelle scuole bolognesi.

Secondo la ricerca “Alunni con disabilità, figli di migranti” condotta proprio a Bologna - uno dei primi studi sul tema della disabilità in contesti migratori — per rispondere ai bisogni emergenti risulta necessario che le Istituzioni preposte alla presa in carico dei minori disabili — i servizi socio-sanitari e la scuola — conoscano le condizioni di vita delle famiglie e adottino strategie adeguate per migliorare le pratiche di accoglienza ed implementare interventi a tutela del diritto alla salute e all'istruzione.

Ho deciso di approfondire il ruolo delle Istituzioni nella fase di accoglienza e di accompagnamento del minore disabile e della sua famiglia circoscrivendo il campo di indagine all'area metropolitana di Bologna per due motivi principali. In primo luogo, come accennato sopra, nel 2017 Bologna detiene due primati statistici che la collocano in cima alla lista delle città più multiculturali del nostro Paese. Il capoluogo emiliano è dunque una realtà urbana chiamata, ormai da diversi anni, ad interfacciarsi con richieste avanzate da un'utenza sempre più multiculturale, dinamica che sollecita un ripensamento dell'organizzazione dei servizi alla persona e delle politiche sociali. In secondo luogo, è stata condotta proprio a Bologna la ricerca “Alunni con disabilità, figli di migranti. Approcci culturali, questioni educative,



prospettive inclusive” riguardante l’integrazione degli alunni disabili migranti. Si tratta di uno studio che ha indagato il ruolo dei servizi alla persona e delle istituzioni scolastiche nel percorso di integrazione, individuando criticità e buone prassi; di fronte all’odierna lacuna normativa a riguardo, la ricerca assume un valore paradigmatico e fornisce utili indicazioni generalizzabili anche ad altri contesti.

Nel primo paragrafo illustro dati e tendenze del fenomeno migratorio a Bologna. Nei paragrafi successivi mi concentro sui dati emersi dalla ricerca *“Alunni con disabilità, figli di migranti. Approcci culturali, questioni educative, prospettive inclusive”*, esiti che integrati con i recenti studi nel campo dell’antropologia, dell’etnografia e dell’approccio transculturale consentono di analizzare la situazione delle famiglie, le principali difficoltà, il ruolo delle Istituzioni e le buone prassi a sostegno dell’accoglienza e dell’inclusione.

L’esperienza migratoria a Bologna: dati e tendenze

Il report pubblicato nel mese di Ottobre 2017 dall’ “Osservatorio Regionale sul fenomeno migratorio” evidenzia alcuni aspetti interessanti. In primo luogo, l’Emilia-Romagna si conferma la regione con il maggior numero di stranieri residenti e con la più alta incidenza di cittadini provenienti da Paesi stranieri rispetto al totale della popolazione residente: con l’11,9% l’Emilia-Romagna supera la media nazionale (8,3%) e si piazza davanti alla Lombardia (11,4%). In secondo luogo, Bologna e provincia registrano un boom di richieste di residenza; nel 2017 risultavano registrati 118.013 migranti (ben 770 in più rispetto al 2016), con un’incidenza del 15,4%, la più alta della regione Emilia-Romagna. La comunità con più residenti è quella dei romeni (circa 89.000 residenti), pari al 16,7% delle presenze straniere — comunità più numerosa anche a livello italiano. Al secondo posto c’è la comunità proveniente dal Marocco (11,6%), al terzo posto gli albanesi (11,0%), seguiti da

ucraini (6,1%), cinesi e moldavi (entrambi al 5,5%)².

Nella maggior parte dei casi, le motivazioni che spingono i migranti a raggiungere l’Italia e a stabilirsi soprattutto nelle regioni del Centro Nord, come l’Emilia-Romagna, sono di natura economica, riconducibili alla ricerca di un lavoro e alla speranza di migliorare le proprie condizioni socio-economiche. In molti casi emergono motivazioni più urgenti dal punto di vista umanitario: la fuga da un Paese in guerra o da realtà dove sono negati i basilari diritti umani (rifugiati e richiedenti asilo); la prospettiva di ricevere un’adeguata assistenza in caso di parenti malati o disabili³.

Rispetto a qualche anno fa, i dati rilevano che in Emilia-Romagna il fenomeno dell’immigrazione sta assumendo un carattere sempre più strutturale e meno temporaneo. Un primo aspetto che conferma questa tendenza è rappresentato dall’aumento del numero di stranieri che hanno acquisito la cittadinanza italiana⁴. Si tratta di un cambiamento in parte riconducibile ad un trend generale riscontrabile anche nelle altre regioni. Se infatti fino a qualche anno fa il nostro Paese rappresentava per i migranti provenienti dall’Africa e dal Medio Oriente un Paese di passaggio per raggiungere i Paesi del Nord Europa al fine di unirsi a parenti e accedere ad un mercato del lavoro più appetibile, oggi l’Italia rappresenta sempre più il contesto dove stabilirsi definitivamente considerate anche le politiche migratorie restrittive adottate da alcuni Stati europei negli ultimi mesi. Il carattere stanziale della migrazione

² Osservatorio Regionale sul fenomeno migratorio. Rapporto *Cittadini stranieri in Emilia Romagna. Residenti e dinamiche demografiche*, p. 9-10.

³ Spesso le due motivazioni umanitarie possono coesistere; in questi casi la normativa prevede la possibilità di attivare dei corridoi umanitari per permettere ai richiedenti asilo in condizione di vulnerabilità (disabilità, gravi malattie) di raggiungere l’Europa con un regolare visto per motivi umanitari. Si tratta di un intervento volto a razionalizzare i flussi migratori e a sottrarre i richiedenti asilo al dramma dei viaggi clandestini per mare o per terra. In Italia i primi corridoi umanitari sono stati attivati nel biennio 2015-2016 attraverso un protocollo d’intesa tra il Ministero dell’Interno e la Comunità di Sant’Egidio (Codini, Ennio. Gli aspetti normativi, p. 106-107).

⁴ Osservatorio Regionale sul fenomeno migratorio, op. cit., p. 16.

trova ulteriore conferma in un secondo aspetto significativo: l'aumento del numero di alunni iscritti a scuola, dato che evidenzia l'intenzionalità della maggior parte delle famiglie migranti di stabilirsi definitivamente nel contesto di approdo.

Secondo il Ventitreesimo Rapporto sulle migrazioni 2017 curato dalla Fondazione ISMU e presentato a Milano lo scorso 5 Dicembre, Bologna è la città con le classi più multietniche d'Italia. Il capoluogo emiliano supera metropoli come Milano, Roma, Torino e Genova per presenza percentuale di bambini stranieri nelle scuole. In base ai dati forniti dal Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione, Bologna non solo risulta tra le prime dieci province per presenza di immigrati nelle scuole di ogni ordine e grado, ma è la prima per la concentrazione di stranieri che rappresentano il 15,4% degli iscritti. Una percentuale che supera il 14,7% di Milano, il 12,3% di Torino, il 12,1% di Genova e il 10% di Roma. Il Rapporto 2017 della Fondazione ISMU segnala inoltre che Bologna presenta la percentuale più alta — pari al 14% — di scuole che superano il tetto del 30% di alunni stranieri, tetto fissato dal Ministero dell'Istruzione in base al quale ogni anno l'Ufficio Scolastico Regionale consente agli Istituti delle deroghe per formare classi che ospitano un numero maggiore di alunni non italiani rispetto al tetto stabilito dal Ministero. Come nel resto d'Italia, anche a Bologna la percentuale maggiore di alunni stranieri si concentra nella scuola dell'infanzia⁵.

Le statistiche relative agli ultimi anni rilevano inoltre l'aumento del numero di alunni migranti con disabilità nelle scuole italiane. Secondo gli ultimi dati disponibili sulla disabilità in contesti migratori (anno scolastico 2014/15), gli studenti migranti disabili sono 28.117 (di cui 8.921 femmine) con un aumento rispetto al precedente anno pari a 1.491 unità (l'incidenza degli alunni stranieri sul totale degli studenti disabili è del 12%), con valori al di sopra della media nella

scuola dell'infanzia (15,2%), nella scuola primaria (13,8%) e nella scuola secondaria di primo grado (12,6%). Si tratta di un fenomeno vario per età, origini culturali, tipo di deficit e incidenza territoriale. L'Emilia-Romagna si conferma tra le prime regioni per numerosità di presenze, dopo Lombardia e Veneto⁶.

Per una famiglia migrante con un minore disabile, il modello di integrazione degli studenti con disabilità nelle scuole comuni e la possibilità di accedere ad un'adeguata assistenza socio-sanitaria — condizioni non sempre garantite nei Paesi di origine — costituiscono valide motivazioni per stabilirsi in Italia sebbene siano spesso molte le difficoltà da affrontare nella quotidianità, come evidenziato dalla ricerca "Alunni con disabilità, figli di migranti" di seguito presentata⁷.

La ricerca "Alunni con disabilità, figli di migranti. Approcci culturali, questioni educative, prospettive inclusive"

Condotta sul territorio bolognese con la supervisione scientifica e il coordinamento della Prof.ssa Roberta Caldin, docente di Pedagogia Speciale presso l'Università di Bologna, la ricerca si è svolta dal 2008 al 2010. L'indagine si presenta come una ricerca-azione finalizzata ad indagare le condizioni delle famiglie migranti con minori disabili e il ruolo degli Enti preposti alla presa in carico dei bambini con disabilità nel percorso di integrazione.

Come previsto dalla Legge 104/1992 (Legge quadro per l'assistenza, l'integrazione sociale e i diritti delle persone handicappate), "la scuola e i servizi socio-sanitari sono le istituzioni chiamate a collaborare per sostenere lo sviluppo del bambino disabile attraverso interventi congiunti di natura riabilitativa ed educativa, volti a promuovere l'acquisizione delle competenze necessarie per la socializzazione, gli apprendimenti e le

⁵ Corneo, Daniela. Alunni stranieri tra i banchi: Bologna supera Milano e Roma. Il rapporto ISMU: qui il maggior numero di classi dove si sfiora il tetto del 30%. *Corriere di Bologna on-line*. 09.12.2017.

⁶ Fondazione ISMU, MIUR. *Rapporto nazionale sugli alunni con cittadinanza non italiana*. La scuola multiculturale nei contesti locali, p. 37-40.

⁷ Caldin, Roberta, Argiropoulos, Dimitrios, Dainese, Roberto. *Genitori migranti e figli con disabilità. Le rappresentazioni dei professionisti e le percezioni delle famiglie*, p. 17-18.

autonomie”⁸. Ai fini della ricerca, di notevole importanza è stato l’impegno dei ricercatori e degli esperti coinvolti per esplorare un terreno ancora poco conosciuto, per riflettere sui dati e sulle strategie da adottare per garantire la qualità degli interventi nella presa in carico di un soggetto migrante con disabilità.

Caratterizzata da un forte taglio interdisciplinare, la ricerca ha visto il coinvolgimento e la collaborazione tra diversi Enti: il Comune di Bologna, la Facoltà di Scienze della Formazione Primaria dell’Università di Bologna, l’Ufficio Scolastico Regionale, l’ASL di Bologna, l’Istituto dei Ciechi “Cavazza” e la Fondazione “Gualandi” di Bologna⁹. Il gruppo di ricerca ha privilegiato l’analisi di alcuni temi: le condizioni delle famiglie nel Paese di approdo (Argiropoulos), i servizi sanitari e territoriali (Leonardi), gli approcci educativi e didattici (Caldin, Dainese, Gori).

Per conoscere le condizioni delle famiglie, le modalità di accoglienza e gli approcci didattici, la ricerca ha analizzato 304 questionari (docenti della scuola dell’infanzia, primaria e secondaria di primo grado), *focus group* e interviste (36 insegnanti, 7 docenti di sostegno, 4 dirigenti scolastici, 33 genitori, 6 operatori sanitari).

La ricerca è stata uno dei primi studi che a livello nazionale hanno analizzato il tema della disabilità in contesti migratori¹⁰. Ad oggi l’indagine “Alunni con disabilità, figli di migranti” costituisce il principale quadro teorico di riferimento per conoscere ed approfondire le condizioni delle famiglie e il ruolo dei servizi socio-sanitari ed educativi nell’ambito dell’accoglienza e dell’integrazione. Sul tema della “doppia diversità” non esiste infatti una riflessione consolidata a livello normativo sebbene il fenomeno sia in aumento. Esistono documenti

monotematici: Circolari Ministeriali e linee guida per l’accoglienza di alunni stranieri e Circolari Ministeriali e linee guida per alunni disabili; non esistono protocolli o documenti che si concentrano sulla “doppia diversità”. Di fronte alla lacuna normativa sul tema, le indicazioni fornite dalla ricerca bolognese costituiscono utili riferimenti teorici e metodologici che — integrati con i recenti studi nel campo dell’antropologia e dell’etnografia — concorrono a delineare scenari inclusivi e orientamenti operativi.

L’attenzione alla famiglia e al percorso migratorio, uno degli aspetti trattati dall’indagine, risulta funzionale sia per descrivere il contesto in chiave sociologica sia per costruire un’impostazione metodologica sistemica. La famiglia è infatti il contesto primario del bambino, l’interlocutore privilegiato nella costruzione del progetto di vita e parte integrante del lavoro di rete con la scuola e i servizi socio-sanitari; i professionisti che prendono in carico la disabilità di un minore devono tener conto delle condizioni in cui vivono le famiglie e della dimensione culturale per orientare interventi adeguati.

Genitori migranti con bambini disabili. Scenari di integrazione tra criticità e buone prassi

Le storie delle famiglie raccolte dai ricercatori che hanno partecipato all’indagine “Alunni con disabilità, figli di migranti” rappresentano uno spaccato significativo di un mondo ancora poco indagato che i servizi socio-sanitari e la scuola dovrebbero conoscere per migliorare la relazione con le famiglie ed implementare interventi mirati. Secondo la ricerca, il rischio di esclusione sociale e le difficoltà di natura linguistica ed interpretativa sulle diverse rappresentazioni culturali dei concetti di disabilità e di cura rappresentano le due principali aree di criticità che possono compromettere un sereno rapporto con le famiglie.

Di seguito, analizzo le problematiche individuate nel contesto “domestico”, nelle fasi di accoglienza e di accompagnamento. Di fronte alle difficoltà rilevate, illustro alcune

⁸ Bini, Emanuela. Famiglie migranti con minori disabili. Prospettive inclusive nel sistema sociosanitario e scolastico italiano, p. 209.

⁹ Caldin, Roberta. Alunni con disabilità figli di migranti. Intrecci, contrasti, prospettive, p. 28.

¹⁰ In Italia esiste un numero esiguo di s’: CALDIN, Roberta (a cura di). *Alunni con disabilità, figli di migranti. Approcci culturali, questioni educative, prospettive inclusive*. Riviste: Educazione Interculturale. Cui esperienze, progetti, v. 9, n. 1, 2011; Ricerche di Pedagogia e Didattica, v. 5, n. 1, 2010”.

strategie che nel corso della ricerca si sono rivelate particolarmente efficaci e funzionali, al punto da essere indicate come buone prassi, ovvero come azioni funzionali con un alto livello di condivisione generalizzabili anche in altri contesti.

Il rischio di esclusione sociale

Dalle interviste raccolte emerge che le famiglie sono spesso sole, alle prese con problemi di natura linguistica ed economica, sono disorientate e vivono in condizioni di disagio e precarietà abitativa e lavorativa¹¹. Le difficoltà di inserimento sociale e occupazionale tipiche della migrazione sono ulteriormente amplificate per le famiglie con bambini disabili che spesso non possono contare su una solida rete sociale¹². Come teorizzato dallo studioso argentino Carlos Sluski, la mobilità implica per il migrante l'impoverimento del "bozzolo sociale dell'individuo", ovvero il restringimento della rete sociale in cui è inserito. Quando gli individui migrano "devono necessariamente lasciarsi alle spalle una buona parte, se non tutto, il supporto sociale di cui godono, incluso il gruppo esteso di riferimento, fatto di amici e conoscenti, il mondo tranquillizzante della famiglia allargata"¹³. Dal punto di vista relazionale, la migrazione si presenta dunque come un'esperienza stressante a causa della dislocazione della rete sociale e dell'elaborazione del lutto che il migrante deve affrontare a causa della perdita dei legami primari¹⁴.

Il restringimento della rete sociale non garantisce un supporto di fronte ad eventi critici, come la perdita del lavoro o la disabilità di un familiare¹⁵. Dalla ricerca bolognese emerge che le famiglie migranti con minori disabili spesso non conoscono i diritti delle persone con disabilità ed entrano facilmente in conflitto con gli assistenti sociali, dinamica che spinge molti genitori al

fatalismo e alla chiusura progettuale¹⁶. Diverse famiglie coinvolte nella ricerca hanno inoltre scarsi contatti con l'associazionismo su base etnica e/o culturale, spesso non conoscono l'esistenza delle associazioni dei famigliari dei disabili. L'assenza di contatti con il mondo dell'associazionismo preclude la possibilità di tessere legami significativi, utili anche per avere un aiuto concreto nella gestione del minore in orario extrascolastico¹⁷.

Di fronte alle criticità sinora delineate, sarebbe opportuno intervenire sul fronte relazionale ed assistenziale per rispondere in maniera adeguata ai bisogni emergenti. Per favorire la costruzione di legami sul territorio e per garantire un sostegno alle famiglie in difficoltà, il ricercatore Argiropoulos indica alcune strategie inclusive: promuovere la formazione di gruppi cooperativi genitoriali (gruppi di migranti e gruppi misti con e senza la cittadinanza italiana); incoraggiare il coinvolgimento delle associazioni etniche e di volontariato in sinergia con la rete dei Servizi Territoriali; attivare il servizio di Assistenza Domiciliare nei casi di grave disabilità, con il coinvolgimento sia del settore pubblico che privato; introdurre a livello legislativo il rilascio del permesso di soggiorno "per motivi di sostegno alla disabilità" per favorire i ricongiungimenti familiari finalizzati alla cura e all'assistenza di parenti disabili¹⁸.

Difficoltà linguistiche ed interpretative: il concetto di disabilità nelle varie culture

Secondo la ricerca curata dalla Prof.ssa Caldin, i principali fattori che ostacolano una serena relazione tra le famiglie e i servizi sono riconducibili all'area della comunicazione: la scarsa conoscenza dell'italiano da parte dei genitori migranti e le problematiche di natura interpretativa. Si tratta di fattori interconnessi che denotano la facilità con cui il processo

¹¹ Argiropoulos, Dimitrios. Le famiglie, p. 143.

¹² Bini, op. cit., p. 205.

¹³ Sluski, Carlos. Migrazione: la prospettiva delle reti sociali, p. 157-158.

¹⁴ Ibidem, p. 164.

¹⁵ Bini, op. cit., p. 205.

¹⁶ Argiropoulos, op. cit., p. 143.

¹⁷ Leonardi, Barbara. Famiglie, associazionismo e reti sociali, p. 127-129.

¹⁸ Argiropoulos, op. cit., p. 145-146.

comunicativo rischia di sfociare in un fraintendimento¹⁹.

Di fronte alle difficoltà linguistiche dei genitori, possono essere introdotti alcuni strumenti: la traduzione nella lingua madre dei documenti riguardanti il funzionamento dei servizi e la documentazione relativa la presa in carico del minore, come il Piano Educativo Individualizzato (PEI); prevedere interventi di mediazione linguistico-culturale durante i colloqui.

Come rilevato dalla ricerca, le strategie indicate non sono però ancora consolidate e diffuse a livello territoriale; in particolare, la mediazione linguistico-culturale andrebbe valorizzata in quanto facilita la comunicazione tra due realtà diverse, non solo a livello linguistico, ma anche culturale²⁰. Spesse infatti esistono sostanziali differenze tra i concetti di cura e di disabilità, che ricordiamo sono culturalmente condizionati, variano da cultura a cultura e a seconda del contesto di riferimento, implicano un approccio diverso²¹. S infatti il modello clinico occidentale si fonda sull'aspetto performativo del corpo e considera la malattia con oggettività e razionalità, le medicine tradizionali e alcuni Paesi si basano su una visione olistica del mondo e dell'individuo²².

In alcune culture la malattia è vista come un'alterazione dell'equilibrio energetico (Cina e America Latina); come la "perdita dell'anima" determinata dall'intrusione di un'entità maligna nel corpo sano (popoli gitani) oppure come una punizione divina conseguente alla violazione di un tabù²³. Si tratta di rappresentazioni che influenzano il

modo di reagire alla disabilità (con paura, rassegnazione o senso di colpa), il metodo di cura (medicina tradizionale del Paese di origine e/o medicina occidentale) e le aspettative sulla qualità della vita del minore disabile²⁴. In questo contesto caratterizzato dalla tensione tra modelli culturali diversi che orientano verso la disabilità, l'utente migrante si avvicina alla medicina occidentale in base alle conoscenze in suo possesso, in base ai sentimenti che nutre (fiducia/diffidenza), in base allo status sociale (permesso di soggiorno, residenza, conoscenza dell'italiano)²⁵, a volte oscillando tra il metodo di cura occidentale e il metodo tradizionale del Paese di origine.



Nel momento in cui il migrante accede alle strutture sanitarie delle società occidentali, si possono dunque creare delle barriere in quanto il sapere scientifico e le metodologie diagnostiche usate dagli operatori non appartengono al sistema di riferimento a lui familiare²⁶. Si tratta di un aspetto molto importante che gli operatori socio-sanitari e gli insegnanti devono conoscere per evitare che emergano conflitti ed incomprensioni. Se infatti nella maggior parte dei casi i genitori migranti accettano le cure bio-mediche tipiche del mondo occidentale, potrebbe accadere che genitori senegalesi (cultura Sérère) con un figlio disabile intellettivo si oppongano alla terapia medico riabilitativa in quanto nella comunità di origine il comportamento "strano" del minore è considerato come il segno di vicinanza al mondo degli antenati²⁷.

Risorse inclusive per facilitare la comunicazione

Di fronte alle difficoltà linguistiche dei genitori e alla varietà di rappresentazioni culturali sulla disabilità, come possono

¹⁹ Leonardi, Barbara. Il punto di vista dei Servizi Territoriali, p. 154.

²⁰ Frascà, Valentina. Disabilità e migrazione: problematiche e sviluppi, p. 7.

²¹ Goussot, Alain. Disabilità, rappresentazioni e mondi culturali, p. 11-13.

²² Tognetti Bordogna, Mara. *I colori del welfare. Servizi alla persona di fronte all'utenza ci cambia*, p. 11.

²³ Picozzi, Mario, Sala, Roberta, Tavani, Mario. Riflessioni su medicina e multiculturalismo, p. 28-29.

²⁴ Bini, op. cit., p. 208.

²⁵ Cozzoli, Caterina, Regalia, Camillo. *Migrazioni e famiglie. Percorsi, legami e interventi psicosociali*, p. 217.

²⁶ Pasini, Nicola, Picozzi, Mario. *Salute e immigrazione. Un modello teorico-pratico per le aziende sanitarie*, p. 11.

²⁷ Goussot, op. cit., p. 13.

dialogare le conoscenze degli operatori socio-sanitari e dei docenti con il sapere dei genitori? Per promuovere il dialogo, occorre munirsi di nuovi strumenti, metodi interpretativi e strategie per interrogare il materiale etnografico di cui sono portatori i migranti²⁸; solo con uno “sguardo antropologico attrezzato” gli operatori dell’area socio-sanitaria ed educativa possono infatti definire interventi mirati²⁹.

In primo luogo è necessario prevedere percorsi di formazione interculturale per allenare gli operatori ad assumere un atteggiamento di apertura verso l’Altro. Di fronte all’aumento di utenti migranti, gli operatori dei servizi sociosanitari e scolastici sono chiamati ad acquisire competenze e metodologie dell’area antropologica ed etnografica. Risulta auspicabile acquisire un bagaglio concettuale che metta gli operatori in grado di interpretare i riferimenti culturali dei migranti, di costruire un dialogo per portare alla luce una cultura non astratta e generale, ma radicata nel singolo, con le sue contraddizioni e ibridazioni. Attraverso questo dialogo si può costruire “una sfera comune di significati” che conduce alla nascita di un mondo simbolico condiviso³⁰. In questi anni è inoltre emersa la consapevolezza che la formazione interculturale degli operatori è necessaria per favorire significative occasioni di scambio con le famiglie, spazi di incontro spogliati da pregiudizi e stereotipi per evitare di costruire una gerarchia tra i vari modi di pensare al fine di sostenere l’incontro tra culture diverse³¹.

Un’altra risorsa da valorizzare per conoscere ed interrogare il materiale etnografico dei migranti è rappresentata dalla mediazione linguistico-culturale. Il mediatore linguistico-culturale non è un semplice interprete né un traduttore; la specificità del suo ruolo professionale risiede nella capacità

di costruire un ponte tra il “qui” (la lingua, le persone, le istituzioni, le abitudini, la storia e le tradizioni del paese di accoglienza) e il “là” (la lingua, gli individui, la storia e le tradizioni del migrante). Il mediatore mette in relazione le persone decodifica e rende accessibile all’utente la comunicazione delle Istituzioni. Deve saper dunque intercettare gli interessi e le esigenze dell’utente decodificandoli in modo che i servizi li possano accogliere, ma deve anche chiarire all’utente il funzionamento dei servizi affinché possa utilizzarli autonomamente³². Le funzioni che sono assegnate a questa figura sono dunque notevoli: facilitare la comunicazione durante i colloqui con gli operatori; ascoltare; interpretare; tradurre; decodificare; sostenere, negoziare; orientare³³. Come accennato sopra, la mediazione linguistico-culturale non è però un servizio diffuso in maniera capillare sul territorio, spesso gli interventi sono legati a progetti specifici, a risorse e a tempi limitati. Le principali criticità (contratti di lavoro spesso precari, mancanza di un riconoscimento istituzionale univoco della figura professionale, numero esiguo di corsi di formazione e di aggiornamento ad hoc) inducono molti mediatori a decidere di cambiare lavoro³⁴. Garantire una maggiore tutela e un maggior riconoscimento professionale sono due requisiti fondamentali per evitare un ricambio continuo di figure e per costruire un servizio strutturato³⁵. I dati della ricerca bolognese sottolineano inoltre che grazie ad interventi di mediazione linguistico-culturale la relazione tra gli operatori e le famiglie migranti risulta essere più inclusiva e serena.

Il mediatore può inoltre rappresentare una valida risorsa per chiarire alla famiglia come

²⁸ Pennazio, Valentina, Armani, Samantha, Traverso, Andrea. Le famiglie migranti di bambini disabili. Progettualità e interventi educativi, p. 169.

²⁹ Lepore, Laura. Per uno sguardo antropologico sulla disabilità: i minori disabili stranieri, p. 104.

³⁰ Caputo, Barbara. L’etnicizzazione della malattia in contesto migratorio. Una prospettiva antropologica, p. 124-125.

³¹ Frasca, op. cit., p. 5.

³² Zanetti, Luisa. Famiglie straniere e servizi sul territorio, p. 180.

³³ Josi, Elisabetta, Palma, Lucia, Sciamplicotti, Fulvio. Il mediatore culturale nella giustizia minorile, p. 197.

³⁴ Morandi, Alessandro. Le buone prassi di mediazione linguistico-culturale e il ruolo di enti e associazioni nella promozione della mediazione in Toscana: esiti di un’indagine, p. 82-83 e 86-89.

³⁵ Albertini, Valentina. Gli ambiti della mediazione linguistico-culturale: aspetti positivi e criticità emergenti, p. 56.

funziona la presa in carico del minore disabile, specificando il ruolo dei servizi socio-sanitari (area medico-riabilitativa) e il ruolo della scuola (area educativa) nel percorso di integrazione. Per semplificare la complessità degli interventi gestiti dall'equipe medico-riabilitativa spesso "numerosa" (questo aspetto dipende dalla gravità del deficit di ciascun bambino; in genere un'equipe è composta da: neuropsichiatra infantile, logopedista, psicomotricista, educatore, assistente alla comunicazione, docente di sostegno e insegnante curricolare), sarebbe auspicabile introdurre capillarmente anche un'altra risorsa: la figura del *case manager*.

Il *case manager* è il professionista che nel team di lavoro, oltre a svolgere il proprio ruolo (ad esempio, logopedista o neuropsichiatra), in accordo con le altre figure del gruppo di esperti, ricopre la funzione di interlocutore diretto con la famiglia e fornisce periodicamente informazioni sul progetto didattico e riabilitativo del minore³⁶.

All'interno del lavoro di rete che coinvolge gli Enti preposti alla presa in carico del minore disabile, la formazione interculturale rivolta ad operatori ed insegnanti, la mediazione linguistico-culturale e la figura del *case manager* sono risorse che generano un nuovo orientamento metodologico, una pratica meticciasca che struttura la fase di accoglienza, di accompagnamento e di cura del minore con disabilità e della sua famiglia. Si tratta di un approccio multidisciplinare che permette di analizzare il fenomeno della migrazione e I della disabilità da più prospettive. La pratica meticciasca in campo riabilitativo e pedagogico si basa sul dialogo tra diversi punti di vista, tra diversi modelli culturali e tra diverse discipline (come etnografia, antropologia culturale, Pedagogia Speciale, Pedagogia Interculturale, etnopsichiatria)³⁷.

Conclusioni

³⁶ Caldin, Argiropoulos, Dainese, op. cit., p. 16.

³⁷ Goussot, Alain. Bambini stranieri con bisogni speciali: rappresentazione della disabilità dei figli da parte delle famiglie migranti e degli insegnanti, p. 22.

Il quadro delineato dalla ricerca svolta a Bologna evidenzia che attraverso la conoscenza delle condizioni delle famiglie e la mappatura dei bisogni emergenti, le Istituzioni chiamate a collaborare nella presa in carico del minore disabile e della sua famiglia possono adottare strumenti e risorse in grado di definire scenari inclusivi.

Di fronte a difficoltà di natura linguistica ed interpretativa, risulta necessario rinnovare le modalità comunicative (traduzione dei documenti, presenza del mediatore linguistico-culturale durante i colloqui), introdurre strategie per facilitare la relazione con la famiglia (formazione interculturale degli operatori, nominare il *case manager* nel gruppo di esperti, fissare incontri periodici), favorire pratiche interdisciplinari (promuovere il dialogo tra diversi modelli culturali e varie discipline) per generare un orientamento metodologico meticciasco. Solo un'impostazione globale, capace di affrontare il fenomeno da più prospettive, può infatti restituire un quadro approfondito della situazione e sollecitare risposte adeguate ai bisogni dei minori e delle loro famiglie³⁸.

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³⁸ Bini, op. cit., p. 209

Cardinal Antonio Maria Vegliò

The future of every society

To become 'Community' in order to integrate

Ladies and Gentlemen,
Distinguished Guests,
Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I am happy to have the opportunity to address you briefly, as members of this panel, gathered here to reflect on the theme: *"The future of every society: to become 'community' in order to integrate"*. Thirty years have passed since that historical Day of Prayer meeting, John Paul II convoked in Assisi. It was a particularly significant event, at which it was hoped that all believers in God would promote friendship and union among men and peoples.



In fact, in his Closing Address on that Day, Pope John Paul II remarked that when one speaks of peace and of its relationship to religious commitment, there is something that unites all believers, whatever their conviction or their creed may be. *"The challenge of peace, as it is presently posed to every human conscience, is the problem of a reasonable quality of life for all, the problem of survival for humanity, the problem of life and death."*³⁹

The Pontiff addressed this question and highlighted two things of supreme importance, common to all of us. In the first place, he indicated the inner imperative of the moral conscience that impels people to foster

life, particularly the life of the weak, of the poor and of the elderly, in other words, the imperative to overcome selfishness, cupidity and the spirit of revenge. Then, the Pontiff said, *"regarding the problem of peace and its relation to religious commitment ... two things seem to have supreme importance and both of them are common to us all in the present plight of the world ... the conviction that peace goes much beyond human efforts, particularly in the present plight of the world, and therefore that its source and realization are to be sought in that Reality beyond all of us"*.⁴⁰

Since this context serves to introduce our reflection and panel discussion on the integration and future of society in which peace will be a basic element, we can pose the following question:

Does integration start once peace has been achieved, or is it integration that leads to peace?

When a migrant arrives in a new country, he needs to find his place, naturally. However, this does not merely mean to find a lodging and work, it also implies culturally and socially fitting into the new society that receives him/her. Therefore in the process of integration, we can speak of two actors: the migrant him/herself with curious features and the challenges to be overcome, and the receiving society with its institutions and reaction to the new arrivals. In fact the interaction of the two components is what determines the direction and the outcome of this process.

* Introduction given by Cardinal Vegliò, President of the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People, at the International Meeting "Sete di Pace/Thirst for Peace", organized by Sant'Egidio Community, in Assisi, Italy, 2016.

³⁹ John Paul II, Concluding Address in the Lower Square, Assisi, 27 October 1986, *L'ORE*, n. 4, p. 3, 3 November 1986.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, n. 4.

Nevertheless, the migrant and the receiving society are not equal partners. In terms of the results of the process the receiving society has a greater say in the matter, depending on the influence of its institutional structures, and on the way they react to the new arrivals.

There is no doubt that, from the political point of view, the growing globalization of the labour market and trade calls for openness to the incoming migrants. At the same time, migration requires appropriate management of this movement regarding settlement in the host country. Neither of these two factors alone, nor a delicate balance between them will be enough to build a strong and stable society if there is no concrete plan of action as to the next step after the conclusion of the formal immigration process.

The challenge consists in how to perceive, and later, how in practice to incorporate the cultural and social differences into society in order that they be viewed as a resource and not as a threat. One of the key elements to integration is that neither party lose its identity, but that both mutually enrich the other: do not cancel the differences, but share them with respect and delicacy.

Obviously, the migrant cannot simply aim to satisfy his/her own needs or withdraw into him/herself or into a community from the same country. Assimilation into society requires an authentic inner effort on the part of the newcomer which will entail a certain modification of identity, in order to favour adaptation to the new social and cultural context. For example, we can indicate the practical need: to learn the local language; the need to show deep respect for the culture, the history and the patrimony of the host society. However on the other hand, the successful integration of the migrant into the host society requires that the latter respect the human values that permeate the migrant's relationship with God, with others and with the whole of Creation, and allow the migrant to become a constitutive part of the society in which he/she lives.

At this point, when we consider the need to become a community ready to integration, the most dangerous cultural weakness is to cede to distrust and fear, which bring confusion and division, indifference and individualism. It is of fundamental importance to foster a culture of encounter that promotes peace in order to overcome those setbacks which characterize relations in today's society. The imperative of the moral conscience and the relationship between God and man are elements of supreme importance, common to everyone. Now, let us ask ourselves whether religions have a specific contribution to make to open-mindedness, to dialogue, the reception of the other despite the differences?

In a global society with over 240 million migrants internationally, a new mentality must evolve characterized by closeness to people. This is basically the task of religion/s — above all Christianity — which share the vocation to receive and show solidarity: fundamental elements for integration.

St Francis' Prayer to the Lord echoes ever more timely: "*O Master, let me not seek as much ... to be understood as to understand, to be loved as to love, for it is in giving that one receives ... it is in pardoning that one is pardoned, it is in dying that one is raised to eternal life*".⁴¹

(Ref.: *People on the Move*, n. 125, XLVI July-December 2016, pp. 125-127; translated from Italian by Philippa Wooldridge.)

⁴¹ Prayer of St Francis.



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