



ENLIGHTENMENT IN A COMPLEX WORLD: A CONTEMPLATIVE PATH

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INTRODUCTION

Dear directors, RSCJ, all of you friends. We have entered this room with a glowing light, let us start this event with the verb ENLIGHTENMENT, I start it by giving you a beautiful and brief quote from the great Uruguayan writer, Eduardo Galeano, that reads:

** A Man from the town of Negua could climb the sky. On his return, he described from his trip: he told how he had contemplated human life from on high and, he said we are a sea of tiny flames.*

The world is just that, a heap of people, a sea of tiny flames. Each person shines with his or her own light. No two flames are alike. There are big flames and small flames and flames of every color. Some people's flames are so still they don't even flicker in the wind, while others have wild flames that fill the air with sparks. Some foolish flames neither burn nor shed light, but other's blaze with life so fiercely that you can't look at them without blinking and if you approach, you shine in fire.

– The Negua is over (Galeano. E .2000)

SOPHIE BARAT is one of this flames that lit everyone who approached her, and who left us this flame of love as her most wonderful inheritance, and therefore we, Educators of the SH are those flames, we want all those who come near us to blaze. We live our mission to educate with all the flames we have in our hearts, let us keep it alive, capable of inflaming, of irradiating, of delivering the light. By doing so, we will be able to educate with the heart and enter into the same mission as Jesus, who came to the world bringing the flame of his love and told us: "I only want it to burn".

And this flame of Sophie Barat has spread in our interior the great dream: a world without frontiers in which all people can enjoy freedom and equal rights.

I. OUR WORLD HAS EXTINGUISHED THIS FLAME

I want to start by describing our world, known to all of us, and however; it is worth remembering some of its features that today touch us everywhere.

The **ACHIEVEMENTS** made impress us, particularly in the scientific and technological fields. This last quarter of the century has been characterized by remarkable scientific discoveries and advances, many countries have left underdevelopment, the standard of living has continued advancing at differing paces around the world. However, a sense of disenchantment seems to dominate and contrasts with the hopes that arose immediately after the last world war.

We can talk about the disillusion of progress, at economic and social level. The rise in unemployment and the exclusion phenomena in rich countries are a proof of this and the continuation of inequalities in development around the world confirms this. Certainly, humanity is more aware of the threats that weigh upon its natural environment, but it still has not provided means for remedying this situation, despite of many international meetings, the dire successive warnings about natural phenomena and technological disasters. Nevertheless, the «unfettered economic growth» cannot be considered as the easiest road to conciliation between material progress and equality, respect for human nature and the natural capital we must convey in favorable conditions to the generations to come.

But, how to learn to live together in this «planetary village» if we are not able to live in the communities to which we belong by nature: the nation, the city, the town, the neighborhood?

How to live together and in unity in our multicolor, multiracial, multi-religious world, a true rainbow we can't ignore? The multicultural composition of today's societies, favored by globalization, is a visible fact. The simultaneous presence of different cultures represents a great wealth when exchange is practiced as a source of reciprocal prosperity. But it can represent a major problem, when cultural plurality is experienced as a threat against social cohesion, against custody and the exercise of individual or group human rights. It is not easy to achieve a well-balanced and peaceful relationship among preexisting cultures and new cultures, often defined by contrasting customs and traditions. (MJ. Arana)

Today everything is global, achievements, crisis, and problems. We feel more and more interdependent; we perceive a fast and unavoidable shift that affects our awareness. In our world of immense complexity, complementarities originated among social players, sectors, countries; are evermore complex. There is a surplus of threats: climate change, environmental degradation, inequality increasing by the day, food crisis, social-political- economic instability and, what might be even worse, still nascent, the energy crisis that will have consequences we still do not expect. PROBLEMS are enormous and due to their severity, they threaten human coexistence.

When the world reaches the “peak” of oil drilling, it will become another world. Maximum output will be the point separating one world from “another”. Once we reach the peak we will descend through a steep downhill with the increase in oil and gas. (Hubert).

This outlook may cause distress, but also hope. In the first place; because today we face an overwhelming reality, a reality that is capable of causing an enormous individualist survival. Encouraging because a single new way of looking at reality; a more collaborative one, based on a culture of a human community of solidarity, will be the only safeguard guaranteeing the survival of our species. (Declaration ALBA Summit-TCP 2010- Cochabamba-Bolivia)

In 1992, over 1,600 scientists, most of the Nobel Prize winners, signed a historical document wherein they indicated that “*human beings and nature were about to collide... and this may alter the living world in such a way that it would be incapable of sustaining life*” (Alba – TCP-2010)

One decade later, there was another warning from 100 Nobel Prize winners stating: “*The danger for world peace in the years to come will not come from irrational acts by states or individuals, but from the legitimate claim of the deprived*”.

And just as they announced it, today we suffer the powerful opposing forces: climate change, depletion of natural resources, such as water and cheap oil, increasing world population and

the huge difference between the rich and the poor. All this converges into a crisis of the global system, originating the possibility of an evolutionary collapse in a few generations.

From this point, it is easy to determine that the face of our countries and societies gains plural colors... pluralism is not new, but the way of feeling and expressing it, and the awareness it raises today, are. There is a change of perspective in Humanity that provides us with a broader overview and vision. There is a remarkable transformation in attitudes and ways to relate among people... **we are interdependent**.

We are coming to a more evident perspective of our coexistence in a single space and, thus, we are becoming more aware of the fact that all of us, regardless of our culture or religion, we live together on this earth, in this “Global Village”, we participate of the same “roof” and therefore we are jointly responsible for taking care of the world. From there, whatever our religion is, we may better receive the call to form Human history together. (Arana, MJ. www.rscj.es/stículo id=145. Publicaciones. Barcelona- Spain)

The speed of the world’s demographic growth, which in a way is the backdrop of these issues, is extreme; even with a slight decrease in the fertility rate during the last two decades, world population has not ceased increasing following the previous trend: reaching 5.570 million individuals in 1993, it should reach 6.250 million in 2000 and 10.000 million in 2050.

This expansion in humankind; at a moment in history where technology reduces time and space, relating in an ever more narrow way the multiple aspects of world activity, which grants, without us necessarily having to be aware of it, a planetary scope to certain decision. Never had its consequences, good or bad, affected such a big number of individuals.

Towards a globalization of human activity fields

In the last 25 years, the phenomenon of activities’ globalization appeared in the first place in **economy**. In many places, an establishment of an economy without social responsibility; that privileges the market as its main value. The suspension of regulations and the removal of financial markets’ barriers, accelerated by advances in computing sciences, quickly gave a sense that the latter no longer represented sealed compartments within a vast world capital market, dominated by some major seats. Then, economies became dependent of the movements of an increasing mass of capital, which moved quickly from one seat to another based on the differences in interest rates and speculative forecasts. Following its own logic, which accentuates short-term concentration; these financial markets no longer render accounts exclusively regarding the restrictions of each real economy, but sometimes seem to impose their law to national economic policies.

Another feature of the globalization tending to exacerbate these disparities is the constitution of **scientific and technological networks** linking the research centers and big enterprises around the world. The main participants in the network are those who have something to contribute; information or financing, while the players of the poorest countries are excluded. This is how the knowledge gap broadens, whilst representing, from the excluded, a drift that keeps them away from the poles of dynamism and development.

This is the global stage where, want it or not, the fate of each of us lies. Planetary interdependency, imposed by the opening of economic and financial borders under the pressure or laissez-faire theories and instrumented by the new information technologies, does not cease accentuating in the economic, scientific, cultural and political fields. Ambiguously perceived by individuals, this interdependency has become a reality that imposes limitations

to governors. The generalized awareness of this «globalization» of international relations is, in itself, a side of the phenomenon and, despite the promises encompassed by the rise of this new world, difficult to decipher and even more difficult to predict, it creates a climate of uncertainty and even apprehension that makes the search for a truly global approach for problems even more uncertain.

On the other side, new technologies have made humankind enter the era of **universal communication**, eliminating the distance, they strongly contribute to forge tomorrow's societies which, because of these, will not respond to any past model. The most accurate and updated information can be made available to any person on the surface of the earth, often in real time, and reaches the most distant regions. «Interactivity» allows not only issuing and receiving information, but also dialoguing, conversing and sharing information and knowledge with no distance or operating time limitations. However, we must not forget that a neglected population, still very numerous, continues being excluded from this evolution particularly in regions without electricity.

This **free worldwide traffic of image and work**, which characterizes our world even in its disturbing aspects, has transformed both international relations and the world people understand the world, serving as one of the great accelerators of globalization. But it also has negative aspects. Information systems are still relatively expensive and hard to access for many countries. The proficiency of these systems grants to major powers and private interests that hold these, a real political and cultural power, especially regarding populations that, due to not having an adequate education, are not prepared for classifying, interpreting or criticizing the information received.

Although this fake «world culture» is uniform and, too often, its contents are poor; it continues being a vehicle of implicit rules and may cause, in individuals under its influence, a sense of dispossession and loss of identity.

Other significant phenomena are **international migration**. These large movements, population exodus, going a long way back in history, and which have taken varied forms according to the time and the region, remain today and will probably intensify. In fact, immigration pressures are accentuating: instead of reducing disparities among nations, unequal growth of the global economy aggravates them. Here, many other factors combine: the persistence of a quick demographic growth in a major part of the developing world, the continuance of the rural exodus, or the marginalization of rural spaces, accelerated urbanization; the attractiveness of the lifestyles and, sometimes, the values of the most prosperous countries perceived in the media, etc.

As a more severe threat, the phenomenon of globalization also extends to **criminal activities**. Borders that are more permeable to flows of information and currency facilitate clandestine traffic of things like drugs, weapons, nuclear material and even human trafficking, the incorporation of criminal and terrorist networks and the spreading of laundering of «dirty money». Moreover, racial, gender, cultural and religious discrimination; ethnic wars and generalized corruption in arms industry, including nuclear weapons, come from a generalized race towards the possession of the most effective weapons.

This world of ours has not yet defeated poverty, the huge gap between the rich and the poor that increases daily and constitutes the greatest scandal of this century. Planetary inequality: one billion individuals with less than 1 USD a day.

Here are some data by the FAO, regarding the first target of the millennium: to eradicate poverty:

- *Around 870 million people in the world do not have enough food for living a healthy and active life. One of every nine people in the world.
- *The vast majority of people who suffer hunger in the world live in developing countries, where 13.5% of the population are in a situation of malnutrition.
- *Asia is the continent with the highest number of people in the world who suffer hunger – two thirds of the total.
- *Sub-Saharan Africa is the region with the highest percentage of population suffering hunger. One out of every four individuals is in a situation of malnutrition.
- *One of every four children in the world suffers stunted growth. In developing countries, this percentage can be as high as one of every three.
- *66 million children in basic school age attend classes starving in developing countries. Only in Africa, there are 23 million.

Moral relativism: it is not known, or better to ignore, the frontier between good and evil: it all «depends» on the situation. This is a moral of circumstances, pragmatic and utilitarian. The «moral of Values» is left aside, a moral that guides, demands and encourages a comprehensive fulfillment of ourselves and taking care of our common home.

This entire reality fills us with uncertainty regarding the common destination of mankind.

Pope Francis talks about this in his encyclical letter “*Laudato si*” No.22 « “the most extraordinary scientific advances, the most amazing technical abilities, the most astonishing economic growth, unless they are accompanied by authentic social and moral progress, will definitively turn against man ».

God has not only entrusted the world to us men and women, but human life is itself a gift which must be defended from various forms of debasement. Every effort to protect and improve our world entails profound changes in “lifestyles, models of production and consumption, and the established structures of power which today govern society

“These problems are closely linked to a throwaway culture which affects the excluded just as it quickly reduces things to rubbish.” (*Laudato Si*, No.20)

All these have to do with the depletion of natural resources, where the habit of wasting and discarding has reached unprecedented levels. The exploitation of the planet has already exceeded acceptable limits and we still have not solved the problem of poverty.

Humankind has not only extinguished the flame, we have placed ourselves in a deep darkness.

The core of the Encyclical proposal is an **integral ecology** as a new paradigm of justice, an ecology «incorporating the peculiar place of the human being in this world and its relationship with its surrounding reality» (*Laudato* No.142).

An integral ecology is also made up of simple daily gestures which break with the logic of violence, exploitation and selfishness. (230) It also makes us promote a **new economy** that must be an ecologic economy, where the human being is the center the genuine concern of all. The **sense of politics** needs to be redefined. Politics, at large, is associated with human

cohabitation, the search and fulfillment of common good, which today is not only human. It is the common good of all individuals and nature.

Particularly, **youth are the most affected**: they live in skepticism before anything that sounds as a utopia. Distrust of politics, lack of energy to react. Everything was given to them completed, and they are not used to fighting.

- Exhausting work, not to «be more» in a better society, but to «have more» and live as comfortably as possible.

They can be very critical before all perceived by them as loss of freedom, but do not notice that they are slaves to the system.

- Stress wears them out. They do not have time, or desire, to interiorize what they live.

Their «self» becomes passive and they shelter in evasion.

- They feel rejected, without finding a job, without the possibility to walk towards a worthwhile future.

As characteristic behaviors of many young people we can highlight the following:

- Addiction to informatics (computer, tablets, smartphone) bombarding the mind with more images and more information than they can receive.

- Hence the mental fatigue and understanding blockage, with the consequent impairment of ideas. More information is received, but at the expense of much less reflection and inner dialogue.

- Cult of the body: for them it is a value, they care for it; they strengthen it through sports and gymnastics. They achieve a better appraisal of the corporal dimension of man.

- Their music- show is for them; the rite is almost sacred making them feel their body as transmitter of communication and delivery and enables them to express all their experiences.

- Some of them discover the path to solidarity in order to achieve an authentic identity. A magnificent verification is youth volunteering.

The reality of the world forces us to see the urgent need to educate in interiority and contemplation to so many young people God has entrusted us with.

II. THE PATH TO CONTEMPLATION: WE CAN LIGHT THE FLAME

Madeleine Sophie wrote in the Constitutions of the SH Society Schools, the following invitation: *“You will regard CONTEMPLATION as your most sacred and sweet occupation, to have profound knowledge of the internal stipulations of the HJ”, No. 22 of the existing Provisions capture this “This contemplative attitude permeates our whole being, helping us to live ever more united to Christ in our relationships, our tasks and our ministry”.*

General Chapter 2008 reads:

“Contemplation is a loving gaze which discovers, welcomes, nourishes, and fosters life. Contemplation leads us to discover the depths of our humanity and invites us to the depths of God.

We feel challenged to keep hope alive in a world of violence, fragmentation and woundedness that threaten the survival of our planet. We strive to witness that love, hope, justice and peace are possible.

From our contemplation of the Pierced Heart of Jesus in the heart of wounded humanity flows the desire to commit ourselves with greater passion and compassion to justice, peace, and the integrity of creation.”

There is no doubt that the call to “*contemplate the Heart of Jesus through the pierced heart of humanity*”, constitutes the core of our vocation, this path is not passivity, it demands from us a penetrating gaze, capable of finding in Him, that pierced humanity and at the same time, of perceiving it as the significant core for encounter and irradiation. Contemplation invites to trust and demands generous, daring and committed answers... This open heart shows us the situation of the torn, broken Body of Christ in the entire Humankind; thus, looking at reality in all its depth enables us to discover the Mystery that inhabits it and capture the identification of the Heart, in the same heart of the world. (MJ. Arana)

“To contemplate his Heart we have no need to turn away from this earth, the home of God made Man. Christ is present, hidden in the heart of the world. Earth could not hold him in death; he lives and the whole world of time and space is transfigured through his risen life. He is present in the unconscious waiting of creation in travail; he is at work in the efforts of man to build a world of justice and brotherly love. It is in this very humanity whose fear and loneliness and love he shared that his GLORY must shine forth”
(Gen. Chapter. 1970, p. 57).

We, the Great Family of the SH, recognize ourselves as “holders” of the spirituality of the Open Heart of Jesus, a gift received and a gift to be made, throughout all our lives.

What is the heart?

Father Arrupe says (2008) that “*the heart is one of those primeval, life-giving words, such as the words “bread, water, mother, father” . It refers to all people, its most intimate center. It is the point where we make the most profound decisions of life. It is where we feel the urge to give a complete response to love, to avoid banalities and to go to the essence. All our behaviors are shaped there.*”

The heart expresses our deepest and most interior aspects. The location of interiority. It synthesizes at the same time, the affective, the intellectual, the voluntary, the freedom and the tenderness, all our human dimensions.

The heart is the unifying center, the place for the relationship and transcendence of the self, the place from where we become interior men and women, capable of contemplating.

Understanding this symbol in this way, we can say that when we contemplate the pierced Heart of Jesus, his intimate center, his “source” of life, his love lived to the extreme, is made known to us.

This spirituality of the HJ connects us with the scene of the Gospel of Jn.19, 31-37; this is, with the core of the Paschal mystery: Humiliated and pierced servant who is the resurrected and exalted Son. From his pierced side came the Spirit that makes us the New Humankind, born from the Passover of Jesus. The place for contemplation is simply the heart of the world and it is precisely there where we discover the Heart of God, the heartbeat of God in Humanity. It is there where we capture the life of God on earth and the live of earth in God; it is there where his wounds and his wealth is shown to us: the different cultures and lifestyles, the diverse manifestations of God himself, in multiple ways and languages, to all human lineage. From there, we may capture the presence and the action of the Spirit in everything

and in everyone, also in other religions, confessions, cultures; it is precisely there, in any manifestation of his Grace. He offers us another way of contemplating and observing, He shows us, like this, a world profoundly inhabited, the reality filled with mystery, the God who is present in everyone and in everything (MJ. Arana)

The path to contemplation is not easy at all today, because modern and postmodern enthusiasm for spirituality participates from a powerful flow that takes us to center the self in itself and results in a self with few links. If we want to look into contemplation, shouldn't we put aside so much logic of the activity and strength and make way for the wisdom of passivity and weakness?

Today, there is also interest for the interior world; it is a sign of the times. There are many initiatives that explore deeply the grounds of interiority. We observe that our society is quite "exteriorized": we live too much "in the exterior" of ourselves. However, we perceive a call to contribute something that helps construct a road towards interiority and contemplation.

THE PATH TO CONTEMPLATION

In order to speak about contemplation and spirituality, we must make a brief anthropological consideration about, what human being is being shaped today? The existing human being has no time, and its space has reduced because the Internet enables continuous communication. Interiority requires time and space. It entails a process. The question is: how are we using our time? Because where we place our time, we place our heart.

Taking the path of contemplation implies us having to previously **take care of interiority**, a condition for being a person, for advancing in our own humanization, towards a fulfilled life. A person who only nurtures its interiority a little develops its personalization only a little. Working interiority is to inhabit ones' own interior space, inhabiting in oneself, this is, being outside of oneself. Taking explicit care of interiority has to do with the sound development of individuals, with being ourselves and with "happiness". Instead of often living "outside ourselves", what is lacking is "to inhabit ourselves".

"In our interior there are thoughts, emotions, intuitions, memories... and there is also an intuitive-relational-Transcendent-interior dimension that allows us to be and feel alive; it helps us to have self-awareness of being and that I am only regarding the others and the Other; definitively, it takes us to connect with the Mystery. It makes us contemplative of the personal, social, transcendent reality. It is the key for finding the meaning for living. "It is the space where I can experiment what human freedom is, and from where I can perceive myself as a self" received, as a gift, what enables me to fully commit myself, to every action, no matter how small it is. It helps me live the present time with attention and it is condition of possibility for personal transformation and for a truly transforming action." (D. Oller)

Taking care of the inner world means creating conditions for it to grow, for the heart to widen, for the eyes to open, for us to live from deeper inside, for us to go deeper, to like and taste life more, and to be more of a person.

Our society needs to be able to detect the waves that scoop us out of sea. We have to learn to **discern** in order to find God in everything and all things in Him. This is what contemplation is: **To make life go through the heart*, in order to transform and let us transform under the impulse of the Spirit, in daily life, choosing what brings us closer to God and to our brother/sister, and make a commitment with justice and peace in the middle of a world we want to serve as men and women of communion, compassion and reconciliation.

Called to “be on earth the Heart of Jesus” to be the living Heart in a world that has lost its heart, Jesus lets us chose, He asks us to respond to the dreams of God about wounded humanity.

Finding the heart is finding the “well”. The “well” refers to profoundness and interiority. It was a very dear symbol for Sophie; she spoke about taking care of the “interior life”.... The well of each one of us is different in the outside, different in form, in colors, in its registries... but if one comes down, one reaches its Deep Waters; there we all recognize each other.

This is what we receive in the Sacred Heart, the invitation to travel down the own well of the heart. A heart filled with doubts, filled with attempts, where we find shadows... and where there is lots of love, big reserves of love waiting to be discovered.

On a letter we received last year, for our celebration of the Sacred Heart, Kathy Conan, our Mother General, invited us to “go back again and again to the Source of Love, to that interior place where I feel accepted, loved the way I am, loved in my entire reality. In this space of safety and trust, where my life can unfold towards others without fear”.

***Discerning, looking at the world with the look of God.** It is said that the profoundness of a person can be seen in its eyes, and Sophie wanted us to have a contemplative look capable of seeing the interior, what hides beneath appearances, this life that hides behind the life.

These days are an opportunity to taste this good Water of Jesus that runs inside of each one of us, one that is often hidden by rocks, leafs, soil, but one that if we remove a little we are able to see emerge and we notice it because life rises, it embellishes and we feel the joy of living... The Fountain that flows in our interior opens..., we can hear inside: “I want an abundant life for you”.

We live in times of multiple spiritual recipes, but none of these replaces the adventure of going towards the well, towards that secret place in the heart. There are no recipes there, first there is contact with the mystery each of us are, in the silence, in intimacy. In your well, there is water so clear; Jesus tells us, and He wants to invite us to drink from it, like that woman from Samaria: Don't miss it!

Every human life, as damaged as it may be, hides a well somewhere and we are invited to find in others those hidden wells, and to free their soil so that the wells may flow. Daily discernment is lived in this well.

We cannot forget that contemplation does not encompass only silence, but that it is connected with **cultivating the exercise of virtues**. Precisely, today we are attending this conscious awakening from which values are born, the roots of the tree that make us capable of looking at reality from beyond.

For taking the path of contemplation it is not enough to find certain space and make silences, it asks for more...

This broader unfolding is the reaction before life and commitment. In the Good Samaritan parable, we are told that the Samaritan «showed mercy» for the wounded man, and «helped him». His interior process translated into action, this is contemplating. He did not watch the wounded passively.

Contemplation does not mean isolation; in our interior we find the joy and suffering of others. Contemplating means doing, watching and acting; looking at things from inside, from a clear, evangelized heart.

This itinerary can be started from silence or the values and very specifically, from humility. Today, however, it seems quite important to have a silence-gratuity experience that can make the sparkle that lights the interior flame flare up.

We are not interested in any contemplation. Before a contemplation that does not **seek for justice**, we would have to question if that is worth pursuing. Also, it has to be inhabited by Transcendence. A contemplation inhabited by the others and by the Other, where everyone is present, which enables us to start seeing them as intimately related to what I am, making me believe in mercy, compassion, warmth for them. A contemplative look has to do with justice, obviously, because it has to do with love, inseparable from justice, from a justice that is lived from God and in God who is merciful love.

Looking out for the inner world will become more and more urgent; it will be a growing demand. Assuming this task, knowing how to support it, integrating this task as a new advance which does not end up as a passing trend, this is a complete challenge. «The largest path is the path to the interior», wrote Dag Hammarskjöld, an individual committed to world development and peace.

This gift received by Sophie has not remained static. Over the course of our congregational history, the spirituality of the SH has been enriched by the life of the own Congregation, by changes in the world, by the needs of humankind. And today, the accent is not only in contemplating, studying, entering the well; but also in expressing the love of His Heart to the world. Listening to the cries of women, children, young people, and the poor and excluded of this globalized world.

Effects of Contemplation:

a) *It turns us into men and women of the heart

Knowing that loving our brothers and sisters first requires loving ourselves; this is, reconciling with our limitations, forgiving us our failures, accepting us with our lights and shadows. And all this, because we know that He “loved us first”.

From this place in the heart where our wounds become force of life, we can place an open table, Eucharist that embraces the entire life up to the cosmic reality of the cosmos. Working so that everyone has bread, without inclusion; convinced that the greater the difference, the greater the wealth of sharing (General Chapter 1994). We feel the need to communicate, with humility and audacity, the experience that transforms our lives, the pearl, the treasure, the project that is born from His Person and His Heart. Manifesting Jesus is offering others the possibility of growth, of experiencing freedom and plenitude of heart.

b) *It helps us achieve integration of the negative

We can understand this looking at how storks work: they make the nest out of any material they find, these materials are not perfect; on the contrary, any rubbish is useful for preparing the nest: fabric, plastic, cardboard, cans, branches, etc. They are not as worried about the purity of the materials as about adapting them well, weaving the nest for the life to come. They are worried about the life that will be born.

This is also interior life: fostering all past things, including what was rubbish in it; what you did not like much about yourself, or others; and having the humility and the patient wisdom of the stork; who is worried not about herself, but about the life she knows is about to burst. Weaving with all that happens in life a nest for the surprise of God (D. Aleixandre)

There are many itineraries, all partial, that may help travel and broaden the interior world. Each of us has to find its own.

We can grow in the interior world teaching to like silence; going deep in thought; educating the way in which we see others, everyday things, educating sensitivity; learning to ponder life or what we read or write, in the dialogue and in listening, or in the delicacy of small details.

Or also learning what modern psychology has made brought close to us: becoming aware of oneself, of the sensations, of the body in movement – corporal expression, dancing -, working emotions and relationships.

A privileged attitude in helping us grow is propitiating the fact of stopping to contemplate the gestures of human greatness (of love / generosity, of freedom, of dignity, of “telling the truth”, of forgiveness, of beauty...), or before the drama of suffering, of death and injustice or before the extreme poverty that sometimes life puts in front of us. From this interiority, joy, peace, kindness, compassion, appreciation, indignation, commitment; to summarize, contemplation can be born.

Eckhart said: *«God is in the bottom of the bottom»; caring for interiority helps going to the bottom of oneself*”.

Interiority is the place where the encounter with God, present on earth, echoes. And from the Christian perspective, when we look, from the bottom, at Jesus on the cross – outrageous anthropology – is when our profound interiority is revealed to us. And it enables us to contemplate ourselves, to contemplate the other with the look of God.

Contemplating the relationship with people

Contemplation also opens a space in human interaction, in a way that it enables respect of radical otherness.

“Without this containment, the other is confused with own projections. Its cultivation enables the other to be acknowledged in its unyielding mystery. This distance is not remoteness, but space that, when travelled, enables us to discover and respect the face of the other and capture, with more fineness and delicacy, its tones, its needs, the validity of its perspectives, even if contradictory to own perspectives. At the same time, it enables one to notice own reactions. This attention over oneself enables the same environment to clarify the outline of others’ individuation, and this heals interaction. We capture the profoundness of others proportionately to our profoundness”. (Melloni. X, 2013)

Care for interiority enables another access to everything around us. Instead of a predatory look, it teaches us to relate with the environment in a more gratuitous way. It is about transforming the arrow-look into cup-look: going from conquering to receiving, from demanding to accepting. “The paradox of our society is that we had never had so many things and we had never been so unsatisfied.” (Lluís Ylla)

Contemplating situations

Cultivating contemplation also affects our way of being in the world. *“Before the various situations, it enables us to discern them. Not from self-centering, but from a broader horizon. The perspective of the Kingdom that Jesus had originated in his contemplative capability. His alternations between the communities of Galilee and the time for prayer and meditation (in the dessert, Mount Tabor, by the bank of the lake) allowed Him this circularity between action and contemplation; essential for the lucidity before social and political commitment.”* (L. Ylla)

Inasmuch as interiority liberates from egocentric demands, it makes possible more free and liberating ways for being in the world and for contemplating it from the perspective of the Kingdom. Working on interiority and contemplation has direct consequences on solidarity and justice as it deactivates predatory instincts that throw us ones over the others and blind us. (L. Ylla, 2013)

All spiritual paths lead to the same horizon: the surrender of the self to a greater Whole, the surrender is the same. This progressive movement of going beyond ourselves; is what confirms that spiritual work is real. Contemplation is not an escape; it is taking distance from immediacy in order to gain in freedom and lucidity.

In Ignatian language, it is about becoming “contemplative in action”, living all situations from the perspective of the Presence that supports all and convenes all.

In words of Teilhard de Chardin: *«This Focus, this Source, is thus everywhere. God is infinitely close and dispersed everywhere “The Divine Milieu”, as immense as it may be, is really a Center. In the Divine Milieu all the elements of the Universe touch each other by that which is most inward and ultimate in them.* (Chardin, T. 2008)

Modern society has opted for “the exterior”. Everything invites us to live from the outside. Everything puts us under pressure to move fast, without even stopping for

anyone or for anything. We almost always live in the cortex of life. We are forgetting what savoring life from inside is like.

In order to be human, our life is lacking an essential dimension: interiority, contemplation. Many do not know what the silence of the heart is, living faith from inside is not taught. Deprived of the interior experience, we survive forgetting our soul. *“Young people demand change, Says Pope Francis; they wonder how anyone can claim to be building a better future without thinking of the environmental crisis and the sufferings of the excluded?”* (Laudato Si, 2015, Introduction)

For all this, *“we want to continue finding the face of God in our history”* (General Chapter 2008, p. 29)

III. FINAL INVITATION

To enter and move along the road of interiority, let us go to the Gospel that shows us Jesus as a “contemplative” who saw life as the Father saw it and knew how to decipher its mystery from the wisdom He communicated him. Thus, for Him being contemplative is to come into contact with reality as Jesus did; and this has to don, not only with watching, but also with listening, with feeling, touching, saying, with being silent. True contemplation invites us to

enter into a universe of new significances, to get used to handling, also in an evangelic manner, the language with which we express the reality.

But this entails developing the *capacity of astonishment*, which is something distinguishing of the disciple: only he who has the capacity of astonishment and receptivity alive is capable of learning. (D Aleixandre)

The invitation is to “CONTEMPLATE” the God who is present, hidden in so many faces of men and women not valued by this world. Faces of young people frustrated and depressed due to the lack of opportunities.

Young people staring vacantly and with their bodies deteriorated by drugs.

Hungry kids searching in landfill sites. And God wants to be found by us, by each one of us ”
www.rezandovoy.org. 24.09.2015

We have to be capable of making our Christian educational institutions privileged spaces for our kids, youth, professors, parents; everyone, to learn how to be contemplative, to see the reality from the light of the Gospel, detecting everything in our society that is contrary to the project of the Kingdom. Then, we will be able to be men and women who carry the light, and who light up everyone who approaches them.

Let us keep burning the FLAME Sophie has left with us.

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