

AUXILIARIES OF THE MISSION



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HARMONIZER, DIALOGICAL, AND PARTICIPATORY

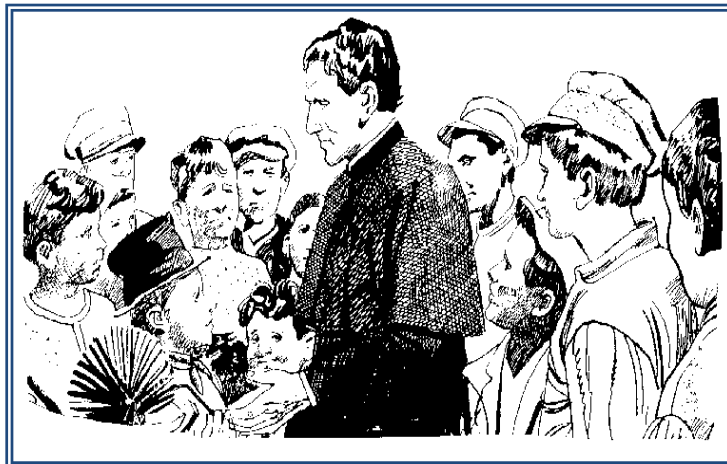
The terms harmony, dialogue and participation are essential elements in missionary volunteerism. They signify joint, agreement, concord. One may asked how these values are developed in a missionary setting. It all starts with yearning. It is the yearning of the young in the missions for life and love in their growth and formation. The missionary follows the way of Christ who comes to the world through self-emptying initiating harmony, dialogue and participation.

It is Don Bosco who first finds a concrete way to give it to the yearning youth in reference to such values. That concrete way is often called the "Valdocco experience" which took place in a specific cultural setting. In the same way the children of Don Bosco endeavors to offer the same experience to their fellow young by designing an effective way proper to their cultures. It is through Don Bosco that the Holy Spirit instills with the same gifts the people who are called to share the same mission of Don Bosco in missionary work.

These threefold values has several significance as applied to missionary work. First it is the Holy Spirit who is the principal agent at work and moves people to the salvation achieved by Christ. Secondly the experience of Don Bosco with his youth is a proof of the work of the Holy Spirit authenticated by the Church. Thirdly the expression of the harmony, dialogue and participation has a lot to do with the preventive system of Don Bosco. Whatever is contained in this term is not intended to be a closed system but indicates the free action of the Holy Spirit who shapes the world of youth towards an ever growing harmony in conformity to the Kingdom preached by Christ. It is the "free" nature of the action of the Holy Spirit that

demands participation and dialogue to recipients of Don Bosco's preventive system.

Every cultural setting reveals certain yearnings of the people. To these yearnings, missionaries must be able to respond with abeyance and action. It spurs them to offer the young love, harmony, solidarity, righteousness, peace, participation, unity and so on. There must be utmost care that dialogue among the recipients should find proper expressions for the "beatitudes" through the rich varieties of the culture in question so as to allow the beatitudes to animate, unify, purify, transform and regenerate the culture.



The true model of participation is certainly not that of confrontation but that of complementarity and harmony through proclamation, dialogue and witness of life. Education, according to Don Bosco, is a question of heart. It was the successor of Don Bosco in the person of Don Viano who was talking about the Valdocco experience that referred to the expression "cuore oratoriano" This is to stress the importance

of the heart as the center, source and power of re-inventing the same experience in different communities and is better applied in mission areas. When the heart is touched, it touches also many other aspects of life in the promotion of harmony, dialogue and participation. When there is a fusion of different cultural settings, harmony is the key to success. Thus, this is to be able to create dialogue and stand in the middle ground to invite participation and harmony in our respective stations and areas of concerns all intended for the salvation of the young.

S I M P L E H I N T S: H A R M O N Y, D I A L O G U E, P A R T I C I P A T I O N

1. Give trust as a gift to others. Give second chances to others in order to redeem themselves and to be redeemed.
2. Solve the problems on the table not in the battlefield.
3. "You must never grow weary of doing what is right, brothers ." 2 Thessalonians 3:11
4. Do not raise your voice, improve your arguments.
5. There are Two Commandments: The first commandment is "Do What is Right"; The second commandment is like the first.
6. Promote a culture of edification: build others than destroy, esteem than put down,
7. Be the First man: be the first to know, to do, to be, and to say yes.
Be the Last man: Be the last to leave, be the last to say no.
8. Speak well of others or none at all.
9. Be what you want others to be!
10. Share responsibility thru participation discernment and contributory work.

Love Truly, Live Fully

(Fr. David Buenaventura dropped by in town for a vacation from his missionary work in Italy. He has worked in several countries prior to his present assignment particularly in Papua New Guinea and Japan. Taking a much needed respite, Fr. Dave shares his missionary experiences in snippets with the Auxiliaries of the Mission, before he returns back to Italy in the start of this year's Holy Week preparations.)

Italy

My work at present is working for migrant Filipinos in Italy I have been designated as a chaplain for three communities namely San Lorenzo. San Donato and Milano Tre. The biggest group belongs to San Lorenzo with approximately 1350 Filipinos being administered to. This community is found at the center of Milan. The other two communities belongs to the suburbs or outside of Milan which have about 650 Filipinos in attendance for every gathering. I can characterize the Filipino migrants as belonging to the professional workforce. Some of them are noted doctors, nurses, lawyers, engineers or just professionals per se but as they gather here they are bounded by one common denominator which is working as a domestic helper. One sad reality that occurs when they work abroad is that they tend to regress from their intellectual capacity. They are eaten up by work with the desire to earn more. Ultimately, this has a share of consequences when families become divided leaving their children, misguided, prone to alcohol, gambling and even drugs. Parents. on the other hand who work alone experience tremendous loneliness seeking for companionship from another..

From this standpoint, I find my involvement in their lives by redirecting their priorities and focusing on their formation with regards to their **spiritual needs**.

I recall that when I first started my work for the migrants, I have observed that their Bible study was not very regular. I made it a point that my thrust will be their formation. This confirmed my perception when I saw there was really a hunger for the word of God. I started conducting bible studies with a small group. Once, when I was still establishing the work, I conducted a bible study in the house of one Filipino living in San Donato. The funny part of it was that in an adjacent room, there was a bible study that was simultaneously conducted by a born again with more participants than what I have. They had a majority of Catholics attending in contrast with only five of my attendees. The work started this way until the news spread around there is this priest conducting a bible study. Slowly but surely, I gained ground in getting all the Catholics back to the fold and from a house where we conducted the meetings, we approached the parish priest for permission to use a bigger hall where we can accommodate a much bigger group. The reception for these bible meetings was intense that the Couples for Christ also took part in such sessions.

These are among one of the many joys in mission work and that is to see that the spiritual progress of the migrant Filipinos begin to grow as they desire all the more to learn more about spiritual life. I make it a point that whether snow or shine, I would come faithfully even though there may be 2 or 3 attendees only. They seriously come to participate in bible studies and take their

formation seriously ever conscious and mindful if they are absent or even late during the said meetings.

The work remains to be as daunting as ever. There is the continued influx of illegal migrants among Filipinos arriving in Milan. They fill up suburbs looking for opportunities to be able to earn money and send it back home in the Philippines. At the center of it all, they have to be spiritually nourished with the urgency of religious formation not lost in them. That is why different sects like Jesus is Lord Movement, Ang Dating Daan, and the born again can make a killing in getting followers in their fold.

They say in parting that if ever I will leave them, they are grateful that my legacy for the group is to keep the hunger for the Word of God alive and wanting. Actually, this was somehow the same work I was doing when I also worked in Japan. Up to now I make it a point to send and update bible notes to the leaders who still continue to promote bible studies in their communities.

Japan

It was in 1995 until 2002 that I did missionary work in Japan. I primarily worked for women entertainers which did not seat well when Fr. Capelli was then the Provincial. As much as there were risks involved, however, the work itself proved that there are also positive points were of merit. The work I did began when a bishop appointed me to work for Filipino migrants as based on the need for a Filipino priest to work in a Filipino community. This happened to be a first in the history of the Japanese Catholic Diocese. I received the responsibility being appointed as a parish priest not with a designated territory but specifically in deference to language and culture of 21 communities made up of Filipinos. I had to work from Monday to Sunday where afterwards 3 priests had to change me when I had to leave the work for vacation.

Papua New Guinea

I began my missionary vocation in Papua New Guinea when I was assigned as a principal in Port Moresby. This was followed by different assignments in the different provinces. However, the most memorable work then was in the highlands together with Br. Ramon Dela Cruz who worked as my tandem and buddy. He was already in the mission station as youth director of the parish before I came where I will work as a parish priest. I was met by Br. Ramon when I just arrived informing me that our presence is not anymore needed. The people does not want us to work in the parish instead the people were clamoring for a school. I called Fr. Capelli informing him of what the people were asking about and the Provincial then advised us to go ahead with the project of putting up a school. I was taken aback given the fact from where shall we get the money. With such go signal from Manila, we went to the bishop and asked what land is available. The bishop proposed an 18.5 hectares of land which was intended for the



Polish businessmen who were about to build a food processing cannery. Although, the deal was intended for the Polish businessmen, it was not yet final and approved. Immediately, I prepared a feasibility study arguing with the local government that the youth of the place wanted to receive education through a school run by Don Bosco

I was given 6 months to be able to get signatures from different officials who can approve in awarding the land for us. All signatures were good as in except for one. Everytime, I would go to his office, he would always be out and not available. Yet in the missions, miracles do happen. It was the last day of the cut-off period for the six month reprieve to gather the signatures I advised the boys that if the school is for them, God will make a way, otherwise, I together with Br. Ramon would leave even without notice. Instantaneously, the official who has not signed the documents found himself standing at the empty lot where the school is to be built bemused. I ran over him telling the boys to wait while I talk with the official. The man told me "I never smoke outside but I just found myself standing here I really don't know why I am standing here. perhaps I have something for you". I brought out the paper and the official signed the documents there and then. I jumped for joy waving to the boys that you are going to have a school here. The rest was history.

Missiology

When I look at myself and the vastness of the work in the missions, I find myself handicapped. When one is sent to be a missionary, one will always entertain fear because work can be overwhelming; yet when one considers the work in retrospect one should realize that we are simply doing his work entrusted to us. One must give himself humanly possible and God will do the rest.

To sum up everything, a missionary involved in evangelization will be confronted with a lot of trials, similarly one cannot expect for fruits to come immediately, in fact even one leaves the missions, the fruits may never come. A missionary will just have to be persistent in planting and watering seeds of evangelization. It is a matter of loving truly and living fully.