

WOMEN OF THE WORD

LOVING WITHOUT MEASURE: RE-CONFIGURATION TO A LIFE OF HOLINESS AND FOR THE MISSION

Readings for the Mass

1 Cor. 1: 26-31 and Mt. 25: 14-30

The seventeenth General Chapter is calling the entire Canossian family to deepen your call to a life of holiness for the mission, following the charism of your congregation. The call to holiness and mission is rooted not in ordination and religious profession but baptism. The Church exists for the sake of her mission. This has been asserted by Popes and Theologians for the past almost 60 years. The central theological insight of the 16 conciliar documents is the universal call to holiness and the universal call to mission. Holiness and Mission are not new in the teachings of the Church. We are called to mission and holiness, to evangelize, and to share the Good News because we are baptized. The Church is missionary by nature.

Most religious congregations are today said to be crippled by a culture of maintenance. The culture of the mission is losing its focus. Maintenance culture focuses on meeting the needs of the members and the congregation. Maintenance culture is satisfied with sitting at a safe distance, and more concerned about our own needs and comfort. *The third servant* (the one who received one talent) in today's parable was more concerned about not losing what he had. He was sitting at a distance with the sole concern of his comfort and safety. He opted for security and not for risk. He just wanted to maintain what he had. But he ended up losing everything.

The missionary culture prompts us to go out to the periphery of society and to continue the mission of the Church. It is a call to present our charism to the people of God according to the vision of the Founder/Foundress. It is a call to proclaim God's love and mercy to the wounded and broken-hearted. Those *first two servants* in the parable represent the missionary nature of the Church. They used their talents (their life, health, call, faith, and the persons that formed their lives) very well. They took risks and worked hard to double them. They used their charism to reach out to others instead of burying it under the soil. Their reward was: 'to enter into the joy of the master'. "*Your being increases to the measure you give yourself away*" (St. JP II). Your joy increases to the measure you serve others. If you find yourself shrinking and losing fervor in your call to religious life, it is a wake-up call to give yourself to others. Your talent increases to the measure you use it to the service of others.

Is my congregation a missionary congregation or a maintenance congregation? Am I following the first 2 servants who allowed their talents to bear fruit or like the first one who is concerned about my security and comfort and not losing what I have? How do I present the charism of the Congregation to the growth of the mission of Christ? Do I bury my charism and keep it safe or do I generously use it for the mission of the Church?

Paul describes the overwhelming majority of the Corinthians as foolish, weak, low, and despised. But the fact is that Christianity spread so rapidly among those who were considered foolish, weak, low, and despised by society. God's choice is not simply a result of sociological factors but the result of God's plan and purpose for His Church. God chooses the less impressive, unattractive, weak, foolish, and unqualified to show the world that the so-called wisdom, power, influence, and qualification of the world amount to nothing in the end if it does not lead them to God. You may not have a lot of worldly wisdom and expertise. You may not have all that the world considers great and impressive. God wants you to possess deeper wisdom and access to greater power. God wants you to possess the wisdom from above so that you will not boast about yourself but you boast in the Lord. God wants you to possess Him and be possessed by him completely and totally. The wisdom of the cross of Christ and wisdom of the paschal mystery ultimately win over the wisdom of the world.

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