

TRANSFORMED BY THE NOVELTY OF THE SPIRIT

Adore, walk, accompany/VIII GC.

Emili Turú. Sept 2020

I extend warm greetings to all the participants in this international meeting. First of all, I would like to thank you for inviting me to share some reflections on this interesting and challenging historical moment.

The first thought I would like to share is that it is on the theme of the General Chapter "**Transformed by the newness of the Spirit.**" Then I shall deal with the subtitles "**ADORE, WALK, ACCOMPANY.**" It is to define in the light of these three words the present moment in which we are living.

First of all:

ADORE

The present moment in which we live is unusual. We can apply this saying, "**can't see the forest for the trees.**" This moment we live in, is very intense with sensations of fear, anxiety, sadness, and the pain of loss. It seems to me, that we can go on living, by withdrawing ourselves a little from the reality that would prevent us from seeing the whole picture.

I think the first word "**Adore**" is very timely because it allows you to take a step back and see things in perspective. The one who adores is going out of herself and can see things differently. So your daily practice that has become part of your DNA seems to me, a very important point to comprehend the reality of the present time, in which we are living.

If we continue with the metaphor of the tree and the forest; perhaps, we could say that this situation of the COVID-19 is like an enormous tree that has fallen in the forest. It is just one important tree and yet; it is not all that is happening in the world. We can see that in this tragedy; roads have been cut off, made other trees fall, took away some of us, however, it is not the whole forest. If we look at the whole forest, we understand that the COVID-19 highlighted some points that were already present in our society that has now become prominent in our lives.

What do we perceive from this? Well, we perceive all the features of a historical moment that is the end of an era. We are at the end of a civilization of global culture, and we are waiting for a new era to be born again.

When we contemplate the history of civilizations, this always happens that it is born; it grows, develops, and reaches a time when a period of degeneration takes place.

Currently, we experience in this moment of decadence, expressed in so many signs that we dislike. We discuss over violence, corruption, incompetent leaders everywhere, fake news, extremely polarized societies, discontented people violently manifesting anger, destruction of the planet, the widening gap between rich and poor, and this list can be expanded. This description of things that you are familiar with, the daily situation in which, you are working such as human trafficking in persons. So this an era, a civilization that is dying and we have to read the signs from this perspective.

It will steadily continue further because for the new Civilization to be born, the present one has to die first, and today we are living within the signs of a dying civilization. I am not saying this with a pessimistic or alarmist tone but making us aware of the moment we are living in because it is a moment of opportunity.

The Pope has expressed this repeatedly. A priest philosopher *Tomas Halik* also has a very beautiful reflection which is: "*The sign of the empty churches*" in which he speaks "it is an opportune moment; **it is a kairos**, an opportunity to go deep into the sea and seek a new identity for Christianity, in a world that is changing radically before our eyes. "The truth is that many, if not all; Congregations were born in such turbulent times, certainly, in the case of your congregation too.

We do know, at present with all the signs of degeneration that are taking place, there appears also people like our founders. For example, some want to be creative and give a response to move forward. Adoration allows us to contemplate with a different perspective. What do we do in the face of this reality?

With this, we come to the second word

WALK, in your chapter document, it is often repeated that we're on the journey and speaks of a transformative process. The title, "Transformed by the newness of the Spirit:" what are we talking about? We are experts in words, but sometimes repeating such words, could end up saying nothing. So what do we mean when we talk about transformation?

Well, it is something much more profound than change. Transformation is practical as if we were talking about metamorphosis, which is something profound and a radical change. If we contemplate the world of living beings, we can see how these radical changes and these profound transformations gradually evolve.

Well, there is also a scientific concept called "**emergence**." These profound transformations in the scientific world, based on this scientific reflection, are called Emergence.

What does this mean? Well, that is the result of a process different from the elements that were part of the process. It is something different: it is much more than the sum total of its parts. We speak of emergence, for example, in the human being; the consciousness of the mind is much more than the total part of the whole human body.

If we look at the daily events of our life, we could say that it's like making a cake. I take water, flour, chocolate, and other ingredients to mix them. I put them in the oven and there appears a new product, which is different from all the previous ones.

Once this new product is "born", we cannot separate the water or the chocolate because everything is a new product. Once it emerges, it doesn't go back to its original state.

So there is also a parallel that can occur in societies. For example, the Society that has emerged may not be liked or desired very much.

The humanity that I described earlier with violence, lies, corruption, and abuse, has emerged into something new. As I was saying, it will decompose, but we really cannot change it anymore because we cannot go back.

What we can do is that we can with hope, set out to create something new that will give birth by a process of Emergence. In that sense, I believe that from the perspective of the religious life that we live in our communities, we have much to contribute.

There is a saying that in an institute that is guided by its reflections with this ideology, **"whatever the problem, the community is the answer."** For us, I believe that our communities are part of those elements that are put together to create a new world, a new culture, a newborn civilization. The Pope has stressed so many times that what we want as Christians is to change the culture, not different cultures but a new culture of listening, the culture of meeting together and where the culture of diversity and dialogue can live together with all its richness. The Spirit of God acts through our communities.

The perspective that there are so many other initiatives in the world is not only of a world that is breaking down. There are also so many committed young people, even some teenagers who are committed to climate change. We see demonstrations that are continually taking place, for democracy and freedom. We are part of that and we have to network with all these movements that want to bring about the birth of a new dawn, a new world.

If we are transformed by the Spirit, we would enter the process of transformation. The Pope in that article, that meditation that he sent to the magazine Vida Nova says: "let us collaborate with the Holy Spirit," which is the most beautiful expression. We are accomplices of the Spirit;

we want to enter into that dynamic transformation that leads us hopefully, in a network with many other initiatives in the world. Let us contribute to the birth of that new WALK.

And finally, **ACCOMPANY**. You who are in this reflection are leaders of this Congregation. What the world needs today is not more entrepreneurs or more technological advances. It needs leadership. Leadership in the direction that we are speaking of is to initiate more leadership that each sister of the Congregation can bring forth the leader that is in her.

Today we speak about the idea of "**leader-as-hero to leader-as-host**." Formerly the leader was considered a hero, as the one who takes the initiatives and the one who goes ahead. Today it is said that he is a host, he is the one who welcomes, the one who accompanies, the one who is next to her above all, so that each person recognizes the leader that is present within herself.

I believe that the invitation is to be part of that transforming movement of the Spirit in the world. It is to feel ourselves truly co-creators of this new world, that is to say, that each sister of the Congregation, including yourselves, can identify that you are honestly acting in the first person of this new world. I have a responsibility, and I want to carry it out right now, for if not now, when? And if not you, who?

There is a remarkable reflection that is a prophecy of the elders of the Hopi tribe of Indians in the state of Arizona, in the United States,

"...This could be a good time!

There is a river flowing now very fast.

It is so great and swift that there are those who will be afraid.

They will try to hold on to the shore.

They will feel like they are being torn apart, and they will suffer greatly.

Know that the river has its destination.

The elders say we must let go of the shore, push off toward the middle of the river.

Keep our eyes open, and our heads above the water.

We are the ones we have been waiting for".

The message ends with the dream that is a transmission from the elders, saying: "**We are the ones we have been waiting for**" that is, we don't have to wait for anyone else; we don't have to wait for an extraordinary leader to come forth. I don't know from where, but everyone has to take his responsibility and step forward. **We are the ones we have been waiting for.**

Conclusion

In summary, we come up with the following ideas:

Adore is to contemplate reality as it is, with its lesser or greater extent.

Walk because this world urgently needs committed people to help to give birth to this new civilization.

And then leadership, **accompaniment**, is joining with so many other initiatives that exist in the world, becoming, co-creators of a new world.

Being what we are, called to become with the authenticity that is the best contribution we can make with peace, serenity, patience, and joy. What and how I believe that, is what pertains to each person because the reality of each person is different that has a personal responsibility to exercise it.

I wish you all the best for these days that you are going to spend together. May it be a time of inspiration for the Congregation, a time of commitment also for each one of you.

Thank you very much.