

## **APPROACH TO THE REALITY OF VOCATION AND YOUTH PASTORAL AGENTS**

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### 1. Desirable profile of the youth and vocation ministry agent

This first section is inspired by an article by the Valencian Salesian José Joaquín Gómez Palacios, who simply and accurately outlines the profile of the pastoral agent that is needed today.

#### **Introduction**

The development of youth ministry requires the presence of pastoral vocation agents who, in the name of the Christian community, encourage and give life to processes of integral growth lived in groups. In the Salesian Family we call them "animators" / "animators". Why? Because that name comes from "*anima*" = soul. They are the *soul of all youth ministry*.

The pastoral agent is a person aware of his human and Christian mission, in a continuous process of maturing, sent to educate children and young people situated in a concrete historical moment, proposing deep values and endowed with updated and effective means.

But the v also has a specific characteristic: he is a witness of faith. If the example of the educator is fundamental in any educational process, it is to a greater extent in the case of the animator of a faith group. Essential to him are Christian living, insertion in a Christian community of reference, coherence between the faith that he proclaims and the life he lives ...

The profile of pastoral worker proposed below may seem utopian. However, it is convenient to know what are the goals towards which to move. Although the specific animators are not "perfect", nor do they fulfill all the desirable parameters, it is necessary to draw a horizon towards which to look, guide efforts and program the training.

The following lines contemplate two diverse but complementary areas: personal maturity and Christian living. Although they are two dimensions that must be lived in unison, they are broken down into two large sections for better reflection.

#### **1.1 Personal maturity**

Current anthropology presents the person as a relational being and in a

continuous process of maturation. There is no ideal and finished person, but the person on the way and in the process of growth.

Despite the complexity of the issue of human maturation, some guiding criteria are selected following this criterion: a person called to have a positive relationship with himself and with others.

### **1.1.1 Pastoral agents with “personal density”**

The pastoral agents must be, above all, people with “personal density”. That is, men and women in a constant process of maturing. But it is not an easy task to place the person on a progressive line of growth in depth. There are several current difficulties.

- *One of the many characteristics of our culture is dispersion.* It offers multiple offers of "distraction" and few spaces for reflection. The centers of interest are located outside the human being, leaving little room for internalization.

- To this must be added "the lack of historical importance." The prevailing social system, while putting the future in parentheses, proceeds to a devaluation of the past. All that remains is a present “suspended between the sky and the ground”, fleeting and fragmented.

- Faced with a society that advocates happiness for all and indefinite progress, the harsh reality rises: such expectations are unattainable. This is how "the society of deception" arises from which we try to escape by increasing the spaces for parties and consumption, and ensuring that everything is fun.

However, a fatigue is beginning to be perceived by this type of culture based on having, doing, exhibiting, consuming, enjoying the present ... From different places, another way of life centered on post-materialistic values is claimed: attention and care of the person, more human relationships, union with nature, development of spirituality, growth ...

In this cultural context, it is convenient to enhance some features to facilitate “personal density” of the pastoral agent. Among the many desirables, some are presented:

- *Has an adequate structuring of their own ideas and opinions.*

In a society of "cultural miscegenation", such as ours, where diverse ideologies, plural views of the person and diversified behavior patterns are intermingled ... it is essential that the pastoral agent structures an open, but essentially coherent way of thinking with the values derived from the gospel and Christian humanism.

- *He has formed and assumed a constellation of values.*

Values are those great principles that guide human behavior. They are specified in attitudes. The pastoral agent of the faith group must be a person with an adequate structuring of values. This gives him personal density and enables him to be an educational reference in the human and a witness in the Christian.

The values assumed by a person are not something static, but a dynamic set of great principles in continuous interaction. More than "hierarchy of values", it is convenient to speak of "constellation of values".

- *Know his own temperament, character and personality.*

Temperament, character and personality are essential elements of every human being. They are the scaffolding on which the person is built.

Temperament is a person's way of being. A considerable part is inherited. Character is made up of acquired personal characteristics. It is influenced by circumstances, education received, experience, feelings and emotions, environment ... Personality is the interaction of temperament and character.

The pastoral agent of an itinerary group must dedicate time to knowing their temperament, character and personality and how to act on them through the will.

*-He positively accepts his own corporality and personality, the situations experienced, his own family, the human group of reference and the cultural and historical environment in which he lives.*

It is not enough to know yourself; it is necessary to accept yourself. As important as accepting your own temperament, character and personality is accepting your own body as it is, and not as we would like it to be. Otherwise, the body becomes weight that prevents relationships.

In every personal story there are also positive and negative situations. The latter, when accepted and integrated, lose their possible negative influence. The pastoral agent joyfully recognizes his own existence, with his qualities and limits.

- *Has the capacity to deliver, avoiding narcissistic or interested positions.*

A person presents a "narcissistic" attitude when he seeks to be the center of everything and everyone. There are pastoral agents who use the group as an interested platform for their own fulfillment. That attitude doesn't help the group grow. The pastoral agent, as a reference that he is, must ensure that the recipients perceive in him the capacity for generous dedication.

- *He properly manages emotions and feelings.*

Emotions are intense affective states in response to a stimulus. It is usually

accompanied by bodily reactions: blushing, tears, tachycardias ... They are temporary and short in time. He is hard to control.

Feelings are affective states in which rational processes intervene. Unlike emotions, they last over time.

The pastoral worker of a faith group must be a sensitive person. But he must know how to control his emotions, mainly states of deep sorrow or uncontrolled euphoria.

- *He is able to express himself and communicate his inner experiences.*

The pastoral agent of a faith group accompanies the members of his group. Accompanying consists of "being or walking with someone", participating and exchanging feelings, wishes, hopes and concerns. For this, it is essential to have previously entered the story itself and have personalized it. Only in this way can you communicate your own interiority and immerse yourself in that of others.

- *Has the capacity for work and effort.*

Nobody is born with the capacity for effort and work. They are habits that the person consolidates progressively. The pastoral agent of an itinerary group must be aware that its task requires time of preparation and effort in carrying it out... even if it is a mission born from the Christian vocation.

### **1.1.2 Pastoral agents who know how to relate positively**

If every person is a "being-in-relationship", the pastoral agent must be to a high degree. The process of education in the faith is carried out in a group, not only to educate the associative and relational dimension, but also to begin to make the Christian community a reality, as a seed. This idea-force is based on principles that the pastoral agent must take into account.

- *Involves in personal encounters with respect*

Meeting someone is much more than meeting to share tasks and activities or to reel off moments of conversation or reflection. The authentically human encounter implies accepting the diversity of other people who have their own originality and intimacy. There are pastoral agents who try to mold the group in their image and likeness. This is not the best way. At a time when personal autonomy has become a paradigm, the pastoral agent respects each person, approaches with simplicity, delicately carries out the proposal of offers ... Any attempt to manipulate, possess or dominate should be avoided.

- *Boost the educational presence*

The pastoral agent must be present among the members of the group to share vital aspects that will help them understand the existential universe of the recipients. This presence will be prudent and respectful; avoid censoring; it will be done with affection and sympathy ...

He will participate in the concerns, illusions and tasks of the group members; you will know what they like; they will talk about what interests them; you will accept his lighthearted and spontaneous style; you will know your concerns and thoughts; you will understand your difficulties and problems ...

Physical presence is very important. It is not enough to "remotely direct the group" or to be present only during meeting times.

- *Actively listen and embrace*

Many people, even being immersed in the powerful means of personal and social communication, have become "daughters of information and orphans of communication." Our culture presents a deficit of communication in depth.

A pastoral worker actively listens when he manages to transmit to the other person that at that moment only, he exists; when he knows how to use the appropriate gestures and words so that the other person feels comfortable, listened to and invited to communicate freely.

To make active listening a reality, the faith group educator schedules times and spaces for conversation. She never looks at the clock. Avoid doing other things while talking ...

- *Has a positive outlook on life and youth*

Many social sectors, by letting themselves be carried away by "the society of deception", have lost that trust in the human being that personalism once advocated. Something similar occurs with the socio-political analyzes of young people: they distort youth reality by highlighting its negative elements.

The pastoral agent makes the option of having a positive look: he highlights those things that the group members do well, no matter how insignificant they may be; criticize negative actions and situations, but always support the person; she offers the "deserved self-esteem", that is, that derived from effort, interest and achievement.

This positive vision is also manifested in the sense of humor that helps to de-dramatize situations and generates joy.

- *Knows how to show affection*

Demonstrating that the other person is important and worthy of affection is an essential element in the educational relationship. The pastoral worker will

become a significant person for the children or young people of the group if they perceive a sincere appreciation in him.

You must be able to show the other person that they are important: listening to them, spending time with them, knowing their concerns, sharing their doubts, feeling their sufferings ... appreciating their positive values, showing them the desire for them to be happy and at ease.

Balanced affect should not be confused with those attitudes of immature pastoral agent who, to alleviate their affective deficiencies, saturate the group with false sentimentality.

*- Accept, value and respect others*

The pastoral agent who seeks to relate properly, accepts each one as he is, favoring attitudes of openness and reciprocal trust. He is an understanding person. He avoids rigid, intolerant or disqualifying postures. Aware of the process in which children or young people live, he understands them in their evolutionary stage without demanding levels of maturity that are not typical of their age. His educational proposal is gradual and flexible.

He integrates all members of the group, avoiding that no one is excluded or marginalized. He cares, in a special way, for those who have greater deficiencies or suffer from difficult situations.

*- It attaches great importance to the **ACCOMPANIMENT** of young people, from maturity and according to the profile of the companion outlined in Chapter III of the second part of the Final Document of the Synod on Young People of 2018, entitled "The mission to accompany":*

*[https://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/synod/documents/rc\\_synod\\_doc\\_20181027\\_doc-final-instrumentum-xvassemblea-giovani\\_sp.html#La\\_misi%C3%B3n\\_de\\_acompa%C3%B1ar](https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/synod/documents/rc_synod_doc_20181027_doc-final-instrumentum-xvassemblea-giovani_sp.html#La_misi%C3%B3n_de_acompa%C3%B1ar)*

## **1.2 Committed believer from the Christian community**

Along with human maturity, "personal density", the capacity for interpersonal relationship and pedagogical preparation, the pastoral worker is a witness of the Christian faith and manifests evangelical attitudes in his work. He feels, in the words of Pope Francis, a missionary disciple of Jesus.

"Contemporary man listens more at ease to those who give testimony than to those who teach. Any project of new evangelization, any project of proclamation and transmission of the faith cannot do without this need: to have men and women who, with their own conduct of life, sustain the evangelizing commitment

they live” (Lineamenta. New Evangelization Synod, n. 22).

### **1.2.1 *In and from the Christian community***

Faith cannot be lived alone. Every Christian experience calls for a community called by the Lord Jesus. In it the faith of the witness is nourished, and from it he is sent on the evangelizing mission. The pastoral agent must be an active member of a Christian community.

Within his community:

- You will deepen your faith; you will learn to account for it and you will be formed.
- He will share life and the path of following in fraternity with other brothers and sisters.
- He will celebrate the faith, share the prayer and live the presence of the Lord in the sacraments.
- He will commit his life to the task of making the Kingdom of God present here and now.

And he will always feel sent by the Lord Jesus, present in the community, to proclaim the Gospel. His mission will be a "round trip." The witness is sent by a community to announce life and faith. Those who accept and mature the Christian experience should not be left out in the open, but will progressively integrate into the Christian community.

### **1.2.2 *Pedagogical icons of the gospel***

If the mission comes from the community, the manual for the disciple, committed to being a pastoral agent of a faith group, will be the Gospel. Below are some evangelical icons seen from their pedagogical perspective. Tracks for reflection and action are described for the witness-pastoral agent of a faith group.

#### ***First icon. Belen. The house of life (Lk 2,1-20)***

The narrative of the birth of Jesus, as presented to us by the Gospel of Luke, is a hymn to life. Jesus begins his journey through this world in Bethlehem (Bet-Lechem: house of bread). This place gets its name from being on the edge of the desert and being the last place where cereal was grown, a sign of life. Before the people of Israel arrived in the Promised Land, the inhabitants of Canaan already knew Bethlehem as a place of life. Traces of rituals related to life have been found in the caves that surround the lower part of the town. Jesus was born here so that “everyone may have life in abundance”.

The educator of a faith group must take care of life. For it:

- Facilitates physical, emotional, religious, intellectual growth ... his educational action is comprehensive.
- He educates the eyes so that they learn to look at life with depth.
- Create an environment rich in values.
- Deepen solidarity, respect and gratuity.
- He contemplates human existence with eyes of faith and Christian hope.
- He tries to be simultaneously a witness of faith and wisdom.

***Second icon. The house of Capernaum (Mk 1.29; 2.1; 3.20; 9.33 ...)***

The idea is commonly held that Jesus was an itinerant prophet with no fixed place of residence. He probably spent seasons going from one place to another without having a place "to lay his head."

However, in the first chapters of Mark's Gospel, "the house" of Capernaum is mentioned as the habitual residence of Jesus and his disciples. There is a good chance that the home of Peter's mother-in-law was the center of Jesus' mission. In this house, located in the city of Capernaum, Jesus consolidated the community of disciples, strengthened ties, forged the new people of God on the foundation of the love and mercy of a God.

The pastoral agent of a faith group overcomes the coldness of the meeting places and makes of them a common and shared home. He strives to make his group a reflection of the Christian community: the "new family of Jesus":

- Promotes the family spirit with personal closeness, unconditional welcome, active presence; loving what they love; understanding and demanding at the same time.
- He makes the parish or center where the group is based, something more than a place where doctrine is taught. He transforms it into a place of interiority and prayer; space to manage the contents of faith and celebrate life and faith; home where fraternity, the positive meaning of life and joy are lived.

***Third icon. Some anonymous characters (Mk 2,1-12)***

In the city of Capernaum there is a paralytic. Several anonymous characters do the unspeakable so that he can meet Jesus. The Gospel does not give details of these "anonymous characters", but their commitment is vital so that the paralytic can come into contact with the Master of Nazareth.

These anonymous characters: they move, they look for a creative solution so that the sick person can access Jesus; They do not hesitate to raise the roof of the

house of Peter's mother-in-law and take down the sick with ropes ... Jesus, seeing the faith of the bearers, forgives the sins of the paralytic and, in the face of criticism from the scribes and those responsible for the institution religious, verifies its power by curing the handicapped.

The pastoral agent finds in this icon a model to facilitate the encounter of children or young people with Jesus. For it:

- Avoid immobility and do not settle for lamenting the present difficulties.
- It does everything possible, and the impossible, to facilitate the encounter of children and adolescents with Jesus.
- Like those anonymous characters, he gives his time, dedication and presence.
- He overcomes the difficulties with the support of his community (None of these characters in the story would have been able, alone, to facilitate the encounter of the paralyzed man with Jesus).
- Puts creativity and imagination.
- And it avoids the attitude of the scribes who were "seated", occupying a vital space and preventing the access of the simple and needy to Jesus.

#### ***Fourth icon. Hopeful sowing (Mt 1,13-23)***

Jesus proclaims the parable of the sower. Part of the seed falls on the road and is trampled; another portion is lost in the scree; some seeds go to the brambles and they suffocate it. Most of it falls on good soil and bears abundant fruit.

This text is a reflection of the first communities on their evangelizing action. The hope that animated them was greater than the difficulties. The future harvest comes loaded with promise.

The pastoral agent knows himself to be a sower of the Word. He encounters difficulties, but he fills his lungs with the breath of the Spirit and trusts in God's action. Following the dynamic of "hopeful sowing", he seeks:

- He analyzes the difficulties to give adequate answers.
- He has a positive outlook to discover the emerging values of children and young people. He trusts them. He considers them "good land" and suitable to welcome the life plan that God has for humanity.
- You know a sower; a tireless worker who puts the trust in God that will make the seed sprout at his time.

#### ***Fifth icon. Make "talents" bear fruit (Mt 25,14-30)***

This parable appears towards the end of the Gospel of Matthew. The first

Christians, after the death and resurrection of Jesus, waited for the definitive coming of the Lord.

The evangelist, through this parable, encourages his community to be alert and vigilant, without being overcome by comfort and routine.

When Christianity spreads through the cities of the Mediterranean basin, this parable applies to the heads of Christian communities. The Lord has entrusted you with a treasure: his Christian community. They are due to her. For it they have to work hard to take care of it and increase it. The parable harshly criticizes the attitude of the lazy servant "who buries the received talent."

The pastoral agent has received a treasure: the boys and girls who have started a path of human and Christian maturation. He must avoid laziness and apathy. For it:

- Take care of your group in general and each member in particular.
- He attends to them with "pastoral charity", giving himself to the entrusted mission.
- He prepares himself with adequate training that includes: intensity in Christian living, human maturity, use of pedagogy and psychology, updating of teaching methods ...
- He accompanies and personalizes, preventing any child or young person from getting lost along the way.

***Sixth icon. A leadership like that of Moses (Mt 2,14-15; 4,1-11; 5,1ff; 10,1-5)***

The Gospel of Matthew presents Jesus as a "new Moses" who walks in front of the new people of God, the Church.

Matthew, a profound connoisseur of the Old Testament, expresses this idea by establishing parallels between Moses and Jesus of Nazareth. Both are presented as guides who join their luck to the luck of the people. They are liberators from slavery and sin; creators of unity; Alliance mediators; prophets; intercessors of mercy on behalf of the people; legislators of a law of Life ...

The pastoral agent of a faith group must be situated in this dynamic. He assumes the mission of being a guide for a village of young people; he leads processes that facilitate maturation in faith. For it:

- It is known to be called to be a "mediator" between God and a people of young people.
- He deepens his vocation as a Christian educator.
- He frees children and young people from current slavery.
- He builds bridges between God and young people: he is a pontiff.

- He shows them the attitudes of the Christian and leads them towards the Covenant and the encounter with God.
- He facilitates a vision of the Church-people of God, "understandable" for children and young people.
- He assumes the values that emerge in today's youth with an attitude of hope.

***Seventh icon. The pedagogy of the Good Shepherd (Lk 15,4-7. Jn 10,1-18. Ez 34,11-31)***

The Gospel of Luke presents, in three short verses, the story of a shepherd as good and merciful as God, who when he loses a sheep, he searches for it until he finds it.

The Gospel of John, which dedicates its 10th chapter to this topic, establishes a parallel between the prophecy of Ezekiel, who presents Yahweh as the Good Shepherd of the people of Israel, and Jesus of Nazareth, the good shepherd who gives his life.

All the texts referring to the Good Shepherd drink from the fountain of Ezekiel (Ez 34,11-31). In a masterful page, God is presented as the best of shepherds. It is very interesting to read the structure of the story. More than forty verbs break down the positive actions that God performs on behalf of his people.

The pastoral agent of the itinerary group finds in these verbs his vital project. Among the most important, we highlight:

- It gathers children and young people and serves them with its educational presence, going to the front.
- It is, for them, a place of reception.
- It frees those who suffer exclusion: it heals the wounds of life.
- Nurture children and young people with an environment rich in human and Christian values.
- It defends them from the dangers that hinder their human, moral and religious growth.
- It prepares them to make a friendship alliance with God.

**2. The temptations of the pastoral agent (Pope Francis)**

*In Evangelii Gaudium*, nos. 76-101, Pope Francis points out some temptations that pastoral workers suffer (we suffer) today. I think it is very important to take them into account and honestly discuss which ones affect us the most. I am sure that in the different continents and countries the situations are different, and also

the strength of each of these temptations.

### **2.1 Identity crisis and fall of fervor**

Today we can see in many pastoral agents, even consecrated people, an exacerbated concern for personal spaces of autonomy and relaxation, which leads to living tasks as a mere appendage of life, as if they were not part of their own identity.: individualism, identity crisis and fall of fervor. They are three evils that feed each other (EG 78)

... Act as if God does not exist, decide as if the poor do not exist, dream as if others do not exist, work as if those who did not receive the announcement did not exist. It is striking that even those who apparently have solid doctrinal and spiritual convictions tend to fall into a lifestyle that leads them to cling to economic security, or to spaces of power and human glory that are sought by any means, instead of giving their lives for others in the mission. ***Let's not be robbed of missionary enthusiasm! (EG 80)***

### **2.2 Pastoral acedia (= laziness, reluctance, apathy ...)**

Escaping from commitments, priests who obsessively take care of their "personal time" ... a "psychology of the grave" ... clinging to a sweet, hopeless sadness that takes hold of the heart ... ***Let us not let ourselves be robbed of evangelizing joy! (EG 81-83)***

### **2.3 Sterile pessimism**

"Consciousness of defeat that turns us into pessimists complaining and disenchanted with the face of vinegar (EG 85), in" prophets of calamities "(John XXIII, Concilium opening speech, 11.10.62) (EG 84). There is a lot of DESERTS, yes, but "there we are called to be people-jugs to give drink to others. Sometimes the jug becomes a heavy cross, but it was precisely on the cross that, pierced, the Lord gave himself to us as a source of living water" (EG 86). ***Let's not be robbed of hope!***

### **2.4 Individualism**

Today individualism, isolation, the tendency to escape from commitment and fraternal and community life abound, not to accept others as the mediation of Christ ... "hide and get rid of others" ...

We must "learn to suffer in an embrace with Jesus crucified when we receive unjust attacks or ingratitude, without ever getting tired of opting for fraternity" ... ***Let us not allow ourselves to steal the community! (EG 87-92).***

## **2.5 Spiritual worldliness**

It hides behind appearances of religiosity and even love for the Church, it is seeking, instead of the glory of the Lord, human glory and personal well-being. This is what the Lord reproached the Pharisees... “taking care of one's appearance” ... It occurs in two deeply related ways:

1. ***The fascination of Gnosticism, faith locked in subjectivism:*** the subject is closed in his reason or his feelings.

2. ***Self-referential and Promethean Neo-Pelagianism*** of those who deep down only trust in their own strength and feel superior to others for complying with certain norms or for being unswervingly faithful to a certain Catholic style typical of the past. It is a supposed doctrinal or disciplinary security that gives rise to a narcissistic and authoritarian elitism, where instead of evangelizing what is done is analyzing and classifying others, and instead of facilitating access to grace, energies are spent in controlling ...

***Let's not let the Gospel be stolen! (EG 93-97).***

## **2.6 Wars between us**

Within the People of God ... how many wars! Christians at war with other Christians who stand in the way of their quest for power, prestige, pleasure, or financial security. More than belonging to the whole Church, they belong to such a group that feels different or special ...

It hurts me so much to see how in some Christian communities, and even among consecrated people, we consent to various forms of hatred, divisions, slander, defamation, revenge, jealousy, desire to impose one's ideas at the cost of anything, and even persecutions that seem like a relentless witch hunt. Who are we going to evangelize with these behaviors? **Let us not allow ourselves to steal the ideal of brotherly love! (EG 98-101).**

## **3. To overcome these temptations: be “Evangelizers with the Spirit”**

Faced with the undoubted force of these temptations and difficulties, Pope Francis recommends that we **BE EVANGELIZERS WITH SPIRIT (EG 259-288)**. These numbers are worth rereading and meditating in depth. Among other things, there we are asked:

- “A person who is not convinced, enthusiastic, confident, in love, does not convince anyone. United to Jesus, we seek what He seeks, we love what He

loves" (EG 266-267).

- "The mission is passion for Jesus, but also a passion for his people" (EG 268).
- "Sometimes we feel the temptation to be Christians by keeping a prudent distance from the Lord's wounds. But Jesus wants us to touch human misery, to touch the suffering flesh of others. He hopes that we will give up looking for those personal or community sheds that allow us to stay away from the knot of the human storm" (EG 270).

#### **4. Essential need for quality training for pastoral workers**

Only with quality training can the mentioned temptations be overcome and we set out to be "evangelizers with the Spirit" and good "missionary disciples".

Chapter IV of the third part of the Final Document (DF) of the Synod on Young People (it is the last of said document) deals with the INTEGRAL FORMATION of youth ministry agents. I recommend you reread it calmly:

[https://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/synod/documents/rc\\_synod\\_doc\\_20181027\\_doc-final-instrumentum-xvassemblea-giovani\\_sp.html#Formaci%C3%B3n\\_integral](https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/synod/documents/rc_synod_doc_20181027_doc-final-instrumentum-xvassemblea-giovani_sp.html#Formaci%C3%B3n_integral)

Among other things, the following is requested:

- DF 157. Faced with dispersion, the need to guide towards the integration of perspectives, in order to become unified people who, grasp the nexus and core of the problems
- DF 159. Take care of some fundamental criteria for a current training project:
  - Spiritual, intellectual and existential contemplation of the kerygma,
  - Dialogue, I always dialogue.
  - Search for trans disciplinarity
  - "Create networks" to share and train.
- DF 160. To form missionary disciples without improvising... To create formation centers for evangelization aimed at young people and young couples through a comprehensive process that ends by sending them on mission.
- DF 161: "The Synod proposes with conviction to all particular Churches, religious congregations, movements, associations and other ecclesial subjects, to offer young people an experience of accompaniment for discernment. This experience, the duration of which must be determined according to the contexts and opportunities, can be defined for a time destined for the maturation of adult Christian life.

It is an experience of fraternal life shared with adult educators, essential, sober and respectful of the common home; a strong and significant apostolic proposal to live together; an offering of spirituality rooted in prayer and in the sacramental life" (DF 161)

- DF 163. The formation of seminarians and consecrated men: provide a solid cultural and theological formation for consecrated men and women... according to these priorities:

- 1) Careful choice of trainers.
- 2) Varied educational teams (with female figures, even for seminarians, by synodality).
- 3) Ability to exercise their role of guide with authority and without authoritarianism, without clericalism, as a team, with the poor, transparency of life, allowing oneself to be accompanied.
- 4) Seriousness of the initial discernment.
- 5) numerical consistency of the formation communities.

- DF 164. Three proposals for renewal:

- 1) Joint formation of laity, consecrated persons and priests... with the presence of female figures and Christian couples.
- 2) Training for youth ministry.
- 3) Possibility of verifying the formative path in an experiential and community sense, especially in the last stage of the path ...

## **Conclusion**

The pastoral worker is not a perfect person, contrary to what could be deduced from reading these pages. The ideal pastoral agent does not exist. The best pastoral agents are those real and concrete people charged with faith, enthusiasm and good will, but aware of their limitations.

The enunciated proposals are a help to guide the formative journey, because the pastoral agent must first initiate and travel his "own itinerary", where human maturity develops. And where the Gospel is read as "the disciple's manual" that has made the follow-up and evangelization mission and task.

On the way he will count on the strength of the God who called him to evangelize; with the support of his Christian community that sends him to be a witness; with human maturity and a pedagogical sense; with the affection of those children, adolescents or young people whom he accompanies on an Itinerary of life and faith.