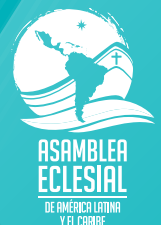


Second Sunday OF EASTER

PASTORAL CHALLENGE:

To reform the training itineraries of the seminaries including topics such as integral ecology, original peoples, inculturation and interculturality, and the social thought of the Church.



"The contemporary situation requires greater attention to formation programs in seminaries since young people are victims of the negative influence of postmodern culture, especially the mass media, bringing with it the fragmentation of the personality, inability to take on irrevocable commitments, absence of human maturity, weakening of spiritual identity, and so forth, which impede the process of forming authentic disciples and missionaries." (DAp 318).



Encounter with the Word to illuminate life*



From the Holy Gospel according to Saint John 20, 19-31

On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord. Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." And with that, he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone's sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven."

Now Thomas (also known as Didymus[a]), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord!" But he said to them, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe."

A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe." Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!" Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. 31 But these are written that you may believe[b] that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

* For the biblical texts we use a translation offered by the Bible of the Church in America of CELAM.

“We let ourselves be illuminated”

And Jesus again said: “Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.” (Jhon 20,21)

Jesus never tires of encouraging us with his Easter greeting: “peace be with you” because *Our eyes too are incredulous on this Easter of war. We have seen all too much blood, all too much violence. Our hearts, too, have been filled with fear and anguish, as so many of our brothers and sisters have had to lock themselves away to be safe from bombing.*” (Pope Francis, 17/04/2022)

Jesus Christ gives his life to give us peace, “to have peace, to be at peace, to live in peace” (Ibid) in those “families” that seek dignity amid fragility; in “public policies” that need justice in the tangle of corruption; in our “Christian communities” with good speeches and frustrating pyramidal relationships; in our extraordinary “daily life” with painful experiences of the cross, disguised with affective “paracetamols”, superstitious, religious and political that offers us the shopping of appearance.



The Paschal peace that we receive from Jesus Christ transforms lives, but it needs insistent believing patience to *“reform the formative itineraries of the seminaries (in all clerical and lay ministries) including themes such as integral ecology, original peoples, inculturation and interculturality and social thought of the Church”* (AEALC 8), that favor *“their interaction with the People of God, to enter into dialogue with their needs and realities”* (Ibid). Because in Easter *“He is in those who give testimony to the struggle for justice, for peace, and the common good, sometimes even surrendering their own life,”* (DAp 256) it does not justify the status quo of the powers that dominate consciences or structures.

The Father sends his Son, He sends the Spirit, the Spirit sends his Church, and, living in synodality, all Christians are sent to be *“instruments of peace”* (cf. DAp 24), that is, to universal brotherhood and social friendship pervade in ethics, asceticism, criticism, aesthetics, and mysticism.

There are those who continue to kill Christ for the pacification of conflicts (increasing the dead), but there are Christians who continue to risk their lives for the Gospel to be *“community-oriented builders of peace”* (cf. DAp 328) in information, formation, communication and the transformation of Golgotha in Galilee, of the Cross in the Light, of “save yourself” to give your life for all... so that all may have life in abundance.

The social doctrine of the Church (cf. AELAC 23), the ethical use of technologies (cf. AEALC 26), and the dialogues that seek the truth (cf. Message from the Pope, 01/01/2022) help to continue *“advancing in a prophetic communication, with a transforming social incidence”* and *“promoting a Church that goes forth, prophetic and synodal”*, with the culture of peace (cf. DAp 522)

The peace of Jesus Christ, in addition to the absence of war and violence (personal and systemic), is the irruption of the Spirit of Jesus Christ’s love, the Way, the Truth, And the Life.



Reflection to impact life from the Pastoral Challenges

The formation of future priests has been a widely discussed topic at the Episcopate Conference held in Aparecida (n. 314-327). The various houses of formation are considered a privileged space to prepare the hearts of those who will be brothers and pastors, disciples, and missionaries.

The current reality demands greater attention to the formative projects of the Seminaries. It is important to refer to the text of the Preparatory Document for the Synod on the Pan Amazon region, which addressed the subject of the formation of ordained ministers, making a clear proposal to reform the structures of the seminaries to favor the integration of candidates for the priesthood in the communities (cf. IL 98. 2). Likewise, in the Final Document of the Synod, Chapter V entitled: New paths of synodal conversion, the need to reinforce inculturated formation itineraries is assumed, promoting a formation that takes into account the ethical and spiritual quality of life from an integral vision (cf. n 75). The itineraries of inculturated formation are highly relevant (cf. 107-108). The document states that formation for the ordained ministry must be that of a community school of fraternity, experiential, spiritual, pastoral, and doctrinal, in contact with the reality of people, in harmony with the local culture and religiosity, always close to the poor.

It is necessary to prepare good shepherds who live the Good News of the Kingdom so that they are compassionate and as similar to Jesus as possible, whose practice is to do the will of the Father, nourished by the Eucharist and Sacred Scripture. That is to say, a more biblical formation in the sense of assimilation to Jesus as shown in the Gospels: close to people, capable of listening, healing, consoling, being patient, and showing the tenderness of the Father's heart.

Today it is necessary to offer future priests a formation inserted and adapted to reality, contextualized and capable of responding to the many pastoral and missionary challenges. For this, it is important to include in the academic content, disciplines that address integral ecology, eco-theology, the theology of creation, Indian theologies, ecological spirituality, and the history of the Church in the various cultural realities where they are present or exercising ministerial service. etc. Formation centers for the priesthood and consecrated life should preferentially insert themselves into the various realities, to favor the contact of the young person with their reality, while preparing for their future mission, thus guaranteeing that the formation process does not distance itself from the vital content of people and their culture.





The challenge we all face to influence life

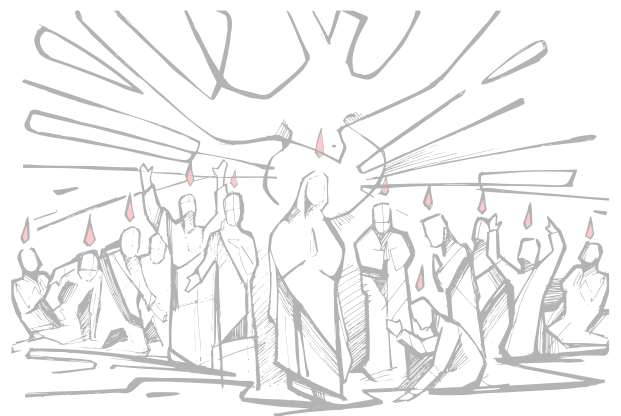
To face this challenge implies that during this Lent, we review our conversion process at the personal, community, pastoral and synodal levels with sincerity, recognizing that conversion must be practical, accompanied by concrete works, and not a mere speech

Bearing in mind and heart seminarians from our communities:

- What attitudes of Jesus do you think we should have, to promote the formation of priests?
- Do you remember any words of Pope Francis that guide us in the challenge of priesthood?
- What new defies does facing this challenge pose to the pastoral care of your community?
- What could you personally commit to, to support seminarians on their journey to the priesthood?

Let us take one more step in our conversion process, regarding our commitment to support seminarians in their formative itineraries:

- **From our conversion:** Commit ourselves to helping our seminarians by understanding their journey as missionary disciples of Jesus.
- **From our community conversion:** understanding that Seminaries and houses of formation are no doubt a special setting, the school and home for the formation of disciples and missionaries. (Cf. DAp. 316)
- **From our pastoral conversion:** We recognize the effort of those who are chartered with the formation in seminaries, teaming up with them in the formation itinerary of future priests (Cf. DAp 317)
- **From our synodal conversion:** There must be a seminary formation plan that offers seminarians a truly comprehensive process, human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral—centered on Jesus Christ, the Good Shepherd. (Cf. DAp. 319)





Celebrate life

Good Shepherd, Risen Jesus.
We pray for those who are
going through their training process
for ordained ministry.

Just as in Nazareth,
you learned from your parents, humanity, and closeness,
We pray for the seminarians of our Continent,
a shepherd's heart that never separates from the people and reality.

May they widen the confines of the heart to the whole world,
be passionate about that which "closes", which "opens", which "makes one find".
May they always mistrust experiences
that lead to sterile intimacies,
and of gratifying spiritualisms,
that although they seem to give comfort,
instead, they lead to closure and rigidity.
We entrust them to your heart. Amen

Prayer inspired by the Audience of Pope Francis at the Pius XI Seminary of Ancona
(21.06.10)

ACRONYMS

- AEALC: Ecclesial Assembly of Latin America and the Caribbean, 2021
- CV: Christus Vivit, Papa Francisco
- DAP: Documento of Aparecida, 2007.
- DC: Document for the road. Ecclesial Assembly of Latin America and the Caribbean, 2021
- DDC: Document for Community Discernment, Ecclesial Assembly of Latin America and the Caribbean, 2021
- DI: Inaugural Speech, Aparecida.
- EG: Evangelii Gaudium, Pope Francis
- IN: Evangelii Nuntiandi, Pope Paul VI
- QAm: Dear Amazon, Pope Francis
- SA DF: Amazon Synod, Final Document.
- SN: Narrative Synthesis. Listening to the 1st Ecclesial Assembly of Latin America and the Caribbean, 2021



Throughout formation, an effort shall be made to develop a tender and filial love for Mary, so that each candidate comes to have spontaneous familiarity with her and “takes her into his home” as the beloved disciple. She will provide priests strength and hope in difficult moments, and will encourage them to be untiringly missionary disciples for the people of God. (DAP 320).

Our Lady of Caacupé, Paraguay