

MISSIONARY SERVANTS OF THE POOR

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the Cross*

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THE PASSION OF CHRIST, SOURCE OF OBEDIENCE

THERE IS NO OBEDIENCE WITHOUT THE CROSS

The idea for this article came from a talk given by Fr. Giovanni Salerno in our Holy Mary Mother of the Poor House of Formation in Ajofrin, Toledo, Spain.

Father said the following in that talk:

“We must place ourselves at the Passion of Christ. We can’t become saints if we don’t understand the Passion of Christ, we will not even be able to understand and accept obedience if we don’t understand the Passion of Christ.”

Indeed, he reminds us of the scripture, “Although he was a Son, **he learned obedience through what he suffered**; and being made perfect he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him” (Heb 5:8-9).

The Letter to the Hebrews makes a clear connection between suffering and obedience. Obedience comes from the Latin *obaudire* which means “to know how to listen.” This is reflected in its definition in the Catechism of the Catholic Church: “To obey...in faith is to submit freely to the word that has been heard, because its truth is guaranteed by God” (CCC 144). For this definition we can deduce that man submits freely to (obeys)



the will of God because he listens to His word. However, this submission carries with it a dying to self, completely contrary to what the world offers us.

This dying to self is reflected in the words of Christ, "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross" (Mt 16:24). This denying ourselves is nothing more than rejecting everything contrary to the Will of God. However, since sin is deeply rooted in our being, such denial is still painful, though fruitful.

Obedience to the Will of God in most cases will be manifested through our superiors or those placed in authority over us by God. "Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God (Rm 13:1). Yes, it's difficult and it really costs us! We would a million times prefer obeying God directly to obeying those whom He places on our road to holiness.

Recall the Scripture where Christ reminds us that "the Son of man will be delivered into the hands of men" (Mk 9:31). Why is this passage important? Because we often hide behind the fact that we will be able to bear everything that comes to us directly from the hand of the Lord, but not from the hand of men.



Father Giovanni reminds us that “if we are really on the road to true conversion, we must love obedience. Conversion means obeying God and obeying one’s superiors because the rebellious person imitates Satan, even if he is a priest or someone widely instructed in the spiritual life” (Talk to the senior seminarians, 2016).

For example, when a superior tells us to do something, we begin to look at its defects, we try to find what does not fit our thinking. Everything becomes an excuse for not obeying from the heart and that is a great obstacle to our growth in God.

If we only looked at Christ Crucified, contemplated His Passion, settled into His wounds, no obedience would be difficult or impossible for us! Contemplating Him Crucified and listening to the beating of His wounded Heart, all obedience would become not only bearable, but also beautiful and pleasant.

May the beautiful book the Imitation of Christ serve us to sum up everything we have tried to express: Place before your eyes the image of the Crucified. You can be very ashamed looking at the life of Jesus Christ because you still did not try to conform yourself more to Him, although you have been on the path of God for a long time. The religious who meditates intensely and devoutly on the most holy life and Passion of the Lord finds there in abundance everything useful and necessary for himself; and there is no need for you to look for something better outside of Jesus. If Jesus Crucified came into our hearts, how quickly and thoroughly would we be instructed! (Imitation of Christ I, Ch. 25:6).





The poor need not only bread; they need love above all. They need Jesus above all. That is why the Indians of the Cordillera, when we visit them in their distant towns or hamlets, always ask us, "When is the priest coming to give us the Eucharist?"



FR. GIOVANNI SALERNO



THE CHARISM OF THE MSP

*The two great commitments of the MSP:
continuous conversion and
contemplation*

Every movement that arises in the Church is born with its own charism which defines its root and its characteristic purpose. The donum Dei, which constitutes the charism of the "Opus Christi Salvatoris Mundi" Movement, has Jesus as its single root and purpose. He is the Servant of God and Servant of the poor, Whose life we want to assimilate and make our own, Jesus the Savior Messiah, Servant of Yahweh, Man of suffering from which his humble, poor and silent spirituality must spring, rooted in meekness and obedience, that of Jesus, of Whom the Father says:

"Behold my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights" (Is 42:1).
"This is my Son, my Chosen, listen to him!" (Lk 9:35).

Our rule of life has been outlined by the prophet Isaiah in the four Songs of the Servant of Yahweh (Is 42:1-4; 49:1-6; 50:4-9; 52:13-53). Be servants like the Messiah Jesus Christ.

Here is how in these texts we find the foundation of our vocation.

For us Servants of the Poor, being servants of God translates into unfailing fidelity to these two programmatic commitments: **continuous conversion** and **contemplation**.

IN THE FIRST PLACE, CONTINUOUS CONVERSION!

When we contemplate Jesus, we see Him stripped of everything, poor and malnourished. His only desire was to obey the Father, to do His will, which was frequently hard and difficult, to the point that He was tempted to reject it. But He accepted even death, death on the Cross (cf. Hb 10:5-10).

It is a matter of stripping oneself of self and everything else, of humiliating oneself, and obeying even to the point of death. The charism of our Movement consists in this conversion and imitation of the Servant of Yahweh, the synthesis of our projects and our achievements.

We must carefully carry out in our lives this continuous conversion of heart. Seek God in every circumstance and embody Him in every act, even if this means that we must recognize day after day our weakness and insufficiency.

To be continued...

Fr. Giovanni Salerno



"We must carefully carry out in our lives this continuous conversion of heart and seek God in every circumstance."

NEWS FROM OUR HOUSES

Baptisms of our children

From the beginning of the Movement, when the natives would leave their children with Father Giovanni because they feared them being carried into the Peruvian jungle and sold as slaves, God inspired Father to open a Home for the most disadvantaged children. The Home would be put under the patronage of Saint Tarcisius, the child martyr of the third century who gave his life for the Eucharist.

The work of the Saint Tarcisius Home is not mere social work dedicated to simply providing food, clothing, and shelter to the children, but includes sowing the love of the Gospel in their souls. Our priority being the salvation of their souls, we joyfully report that during the last several months we have been able to baptize 14 of our children. We commend them to your prayers.

Mission and Education

The Missionary Servant of the Poor Sisters dedicate themselves daily to the care of poor boys and girls. They go to the most distant villages to evangelize all the people who need it. At the same time, they are aware that this work of evangelization must be followed by education.

As fruitful as a mission may be, without personalized follow-up, be it in the educational, religious, family, or moral sense, such an evangelizing mission would not bear fruit.

We invite you to visit this beautiful work that the Missionary Servants of the Poor Sisters do, daily surrendering and immolating their lives.





S.O.S

TO YOUNG PEOPLE

If you are a young man or woman or a married couple, or if you would like to form a support group in your own country or be an oblate, God is calling you. Say yes to Christ.

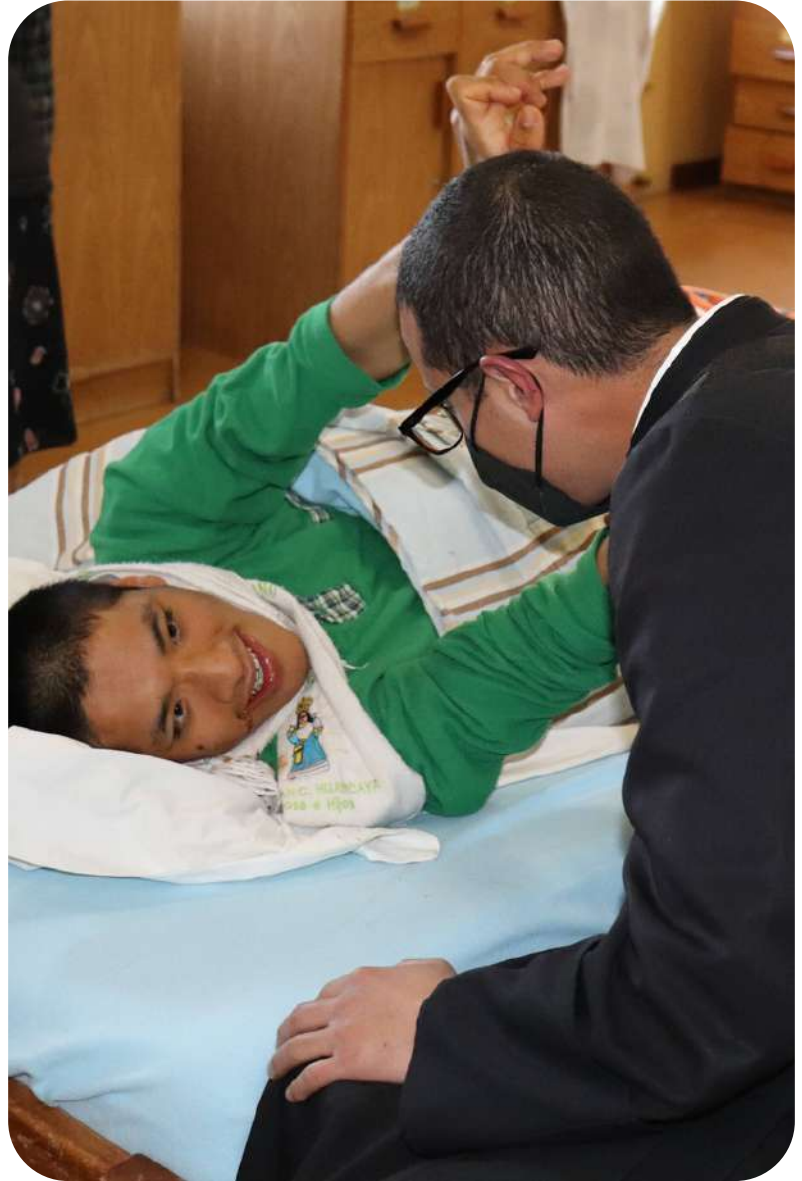
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WE NEED YOUR PRAYERS

THE MOST IMPORTANT HELP FOR THE MISSIONARIES IS YOUR PRAYER

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