

The Past, a Door to the Future: Reflections for the Journey

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The conditions brought by Covid-19 might be with us for a while, so the Church has to reflect and examine itself about what its role is going to be in the years ahead, perhaps in view of 2065, the 5th Centenary of the start of evangelization proper with the arrival of the Augustinians in 1565. For this reason, more than ever, there is the need for prayer and contemplation to make the local Church – both servant-leaders and the rest of the faithful – more open to listening to the Lord, to each other and to society, to arrive at an adequate response and programs for translating the response into action.

If the Church will be relevant as God's presence in the world, it has to shed the trappings of power and triumphalism and be the servant according to the spirit of the Beatitudes: a Church of the poor, for the poor and with the poor = not just the economically poor, but everyone who is in some state or form of dependency. It has to advocate seriously the issues involving justice, peace and the defense of the environment. This will be a great demand on the institutional Church (that's all of us), that will hope not to hear one day the words of the Savior: I was hungry and thirsty, imprisoned and sick, homeless and naked and you did not feed, give a drink, visit, give a home and dress me, because what you did not do to any of the least of my brothers and sisters, you did not do to me" (Mt 25:42-45).

Evangelization is an on-going reality. Even after the people have been evangelized, their growth in the understanding and appreciation of their faith has to be revealed in all aspects of life. The realization that today, the practice of the faith for many is "seasonal," compartmentalized and faith itself has not permeated the whole person and society, with a double-standard morality is a challenge to the whole local Church, so that the path that the new evangelization has to travel becomes unsure. This is where much prayer and contemplation will be needed both by the servant-leaders and the laity, to be able to undertake the path of a true Gospel-oriented community, a symbol of courage and hope for the people and even for the country at large. The testimony of the life of every baptized will make the true Christian a "light of the world and salt of the earth" (Mt 5:13-15).