

CELEBRATING A CHARISM FROM THE ALTERITY

By Rosa Maria Martins Silva, mscs¹

Celebrating the Missionaries Sisters Congregation's party of "Saint Charles Borromeo-Scalabrinians" and Saint Charles Borromeo's anniversary, it is a special moment to remember a productive past of work to rescue of the human dignity, bringing to our minds from the exercises, in the gestures and the attitudes, the humanism ideals which involved and motivated Saint Charles Borromeo, the Bishop John Batista Scalabrini, Father. José Marchetti and Mother Assunta Marchetti..

They were motivated by an extreme sense of responsibility by the alterity and they were sure of the God's presence in theses marked faces by the time and by the history, they were convinced that opting by God is the same as opting "indistinctly" by human being and with a bigger compassion by those whose the dignity and face were disfigured "on the way" because of the necessity of leaving their own homeland.

That's why it looks human and spiritually healthy pointing - in this so significant date that we remember the Patron Saint Charles Borromeo and the Foundation of the Congregation - some elements out to help each missionary keep "in the essential one", as a consecrated person in the Church, to become present in the land the Kingdom of God. The present history of the humanity with its worthy's crises, beliefs and human identity crises provokes us and stimulate us to be:

1. Consecrated women "of desire" – desire not to supply of an immediate need, but desire that exits of each one, provoked by the meeting with "*the other*", which happens through the word, the face-to-face, the look, his infinite mystery. It is the desire that exits each other without return, and is always ready to search the Infinite manifested in the face of "*the other*." This way, all action, all gesture will stimulate the "self" for outside always forward. The desire always calls for outside and always provokes the absence of something as impulse that move the exit of yourself, that only is filled when the other opens the heart. That desire makes you good, welcoming, and give the life to the martyrdom, if necessary, as answer of responsibility.
2. Consecrated women "of prayer" – in the sense of listening to God in the "*different one*", having him as religious space, where, from a meeting without pre-concept, but aware to his invocation, it is possible to arrive to the essence of the dialogue: *the prayer*. But that prayer only is achieved if you don't become the other your object of pleasure, of self-satisfaction, of domination, of power. The religion happens in this way, in the ethical *respect by the different one and, consequently, as religious space, the "different one"* becomes Divine contemplation place.
3. Consecrated woman "for the life" – To understand the biblical premise of the Old Testament, God's word that express itself in the face of "*the other*", in the lack of protection of his look that indicates the categorical imperative one to not leave him out: "you will not kill". The "other" faced with himself, in his bareness and in his misery, and without defense, he calls me to protect him with my welcome, to not leave him alone, to love him as I love myself, finally to understand the God's word written in his face. In the other's face is instilled this ethical-biblical statute: "You will not kill"! Hitler, Mussolini, governments of nations, Inquisitors, did not understand what it means; many missionaries do not understand when someone murders "*the other*" with their "indifference", with the prejudice, with their will of power, with the lack of charity. God's grace is nothing more than that gift of the divine presence to every instant around us, through the "Strange Other".
4. Consecrated women "for God" – Being a consecrated woman for God is being able to love the nearest one from the capacity of listening: "you will not kill" inscribed in his face. Assuming responsibility by the life of the "other" is submission to the alterity, which becomes the most severe name of love, submitting you to "other" even to die for him.

I would like that those elements, from today, became each missionary, more human, more defender of the people's rights, more opened to the relationships, to the humble and sincere welcome to "*other*", to the respect for the people's dignity with his different cultural wealth, and practicing the fraternity and of the justice. That is the realization of God's reign among us, so celebrate Saint Charles and the foundation of the Institution will make sense, it was established in the history for the service to "*other*", to the *alterity*. Divine Charisma!!!

¹ This reflection by Sister Rosa Maria Martins Silva, Mscs, results of the plan of integrated action between CSEM and the Sisters of Congregation MSCS.