

## GUIDE FOR FORMATION – 8

### THE WORD OF GOD – THE SOURCE OF OUR LIFE (3/3)

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#### 4. SOME FINAL REFLECTIONS.

I take them basically from the Guide for Formation (21-39).

- **The study of the bible in the plan of formation.**

It is good that the study of scripture be present in each step of initial formation: An initiation to the Bible and an introduction to the History of Salvation in the postulancy. In the novitiate it centers itself in the New Testament. In the scholasticate specific and complementary questions are given further scope.

It is important to have an adequate methodology in each stage and to be coherent throughout all of them. The professors have to clearly understand that they are presenting the Word of God to youth who wish to consecrate their life to God, and wish to have the Word of God as their first and principal Rule, and who are going to exercise the ministry of Christian education.

These three concepts: religious consecration, ministry of education, and the spirit of the Institute have

always to be present in the study and experience of the Word of God.

From the interdisciplinary point of view, the animators' team has to coordinate the study of Sacred Scripture, the presentation of the Rule, the study of the Founder, and the theology of the religious life. The personal accompaniment to each novice has to aid him to incarnate in his life, and to make a personal synthesis of the contents which he receives. Professor and formator coincide. Hence the importance of the team.

- **Initiation to prayer.**

It is another process which embraces all the steps of initial formation, and which the district formation plan, coordinated with the commission for formation, should take account of.

The Rule (67) tells us we must pray from the Word of God, from the liturgy, and from our life. These are the sources of inspiration.

The liturgy offers us the "ration" of the Word of God which mother Church has prepared for us her children for each day. To pray with the Church is to pray with life. It is our frame.

It isn't easy for novices to pray the liturgy. The letter frightens them. They don't sufficiently take in its spirit. A wise liturgical initiation is needed. There is too strong an image of the liturgy bound over to the rite. It must be clearly stated that we are not obliged to recite the divine office. It is simply a source of inspiration for our prayer. One cannot live the Word of God marginalized from the liturgy. A man of the Word of God is a man of the prayer of the Church.

It is important that the novices discover the nuclear role which our Rule gives to the **Eucharist** in the life of the Brother. "The entire life of the Brothers is animated by the Eucharistic mystery". (70) The Word of God, the liturgy, the community, and life find a living synthesis in the Eucharist of each day. Towards this vision of the Eucharist, and towards this living synthesis we have to orient our novices.

- **Initiation into the method of mental prayer of the Founder.**

There are two basic references: the **Cahier lassalien 50** which reveals how the method of the Founder is inspired by the Word of God, and the book of **Mazariegos**, "*Encuentro a solas con Dios*", which in current language puts within the grasp of the youth the dynamic of the Word of God in the Method of prayer of De La Salle.

Just two notes. First: we have to center ourselves in the nucleus. Prayer is an

**interior occupation, not just an intellectual**

**application of the soul to God,  
not just in the mind.**

**it takes place in the depth of the soul.**

It is good to initiate the youth in a less intellectual and more contemplative style of prayer. Teach them to make of study a prayer. Don't oppose, but transcend.

The interior application, application of the soul to God, arrival at the depth of the soul, has its rhythm. To pass from the hubbub of actual juvenile life to the serene rhythm demanded by prayer is slow work which has to be done "with profound respect for the rhythm of each". (R90)

Yes, it is in our hands to give out what the Rule demands: "The success of the objectives of the novitiate requires large blocks of time dedicated to prayer, to reflection, and to assimilation..." (R91d) To habituate oneself to long periods of profundization, to know

how to be with oneself and with God, even though it may oscillate between boredom and extasis, is an important experience in the novitiate.

- **To live according to the Word of God.**

It is the goal to be reached. "The most important and what has to be watched over with most care in a community is that all those who compose it have the spirit which is peculiar to it. Let the novices apply themselves to acquire it." (Rule of 1718, c. 2)

In the personal accompaniment on the part of the Director of the novitiate, this is the central theme: To initiate the novice in this knowing how to live with something in the heart, to know how to live in company...**to walk with God in life.** It is the dynamic of the Word of God, of the spirit of faith, of the presence of God, of the act of adoration, of the little prayers, ejaculations, or mantras as we would say today.. To arrive at structuring new values in the life of the novice, a new mentality, a new gaze, **a new man animated by a new spirit.**