

Homily

Formation Council Planning Days August 13-14, 2018

Morning of Reflection, Our Lady of Guadalupe Chapel, MACC.

The gospel of the mass at the beginning of our academic year 2018-2019 starts with the affirmation of the final end of Jesus's life. "As Jesus and his disciples were gathering in Galilee, Jesus said to them,

"The Son of Man is to be handed over to men, and they will kill him, and he will be raised on the third day." And they were overwhelmed with grief.

Perhaps, in a different way, we are more aware than the same disciples of Jesus about the truth of these lines. However, sometimes we live like people who consider the understanding of these words as something granted.

In the midst of the simplicity of the Gospel, we are invited to be intentionally conscious about the conviction that we educators are called by the Master to form men to be configured with the mysteries of Jesus' life. "Oh Jesus living in Mary, come and live in your servants... in the communion of your mysteries..." It does not refer to a superficial identification with Jesus. Priestly formation refers fundamentally to a real understanding with mind and heart of what is the meaning and the implications of Jesus Christ the Lord and his mysteries for the salvation of the world.

It supposes being aware of our identity, our mission. But, in order to assure the success of that mission, we have to be committed in knowing each other, in being aware of the gifts of others. Today, at the beginning of our mission together, we are aware that we are people who come to work united by a mission given by the Church to us, ten people with different backgrounds, different experiences of faith and ministry, ten people with different vocations within the Church, but all of us captivated by the infinite love of a God who denied himself to give life to humanity. Here is our mission, his mission for this house of formation. As imitators of Him we have to deny ourselves to facilitate His divine work here and now. Allow me to suggest one step in this process that I consider vital for our mission at Assumption: Do not take anything for granted, but as a gift. Every person and every situation in this community has to be seen as a gift. It requires from us "being permanently aware of the other."

Since my arrival here I have asked Jesus to help in the experience of being aware of the gifts present in this corner of His Church in which He has asked me to work. Even when moments of this transition have been difficult, I have tried to restart again the exercise of being aware of the gift of other. It is not easy but it is the path today's gospel suggests to us. This simple and challenging exercise of basic Christian charity demands from us the conviction of being "learners." Life has been given to us to become learners, people who are able to discover the good of others, people with the capacity to read the signs of the times from the perspective of Jesus himself, putting Jesus in the middle of our relationships, recognizing that being aware of the good of others is the sign of "the perfection of his ways." We have to be 24/7 learners in order to have the capacity to discern things with the same heart of Jesus the owner of our life, and our mission of forming men to be His servants.

In doing the exercise of being a learner, I have learned many good things about you. I want to thank God for allowing me to see it, to learn from you all and in front of you, I ask God, on this day, that he might help me to continue learning from you, seeing the newness of every moment of working together in this ecclesial experience. Here the list of only some among many gifts I have received from you.

From you Tony I have learned that without diligence life becomes impossible. Constant dedication and careful reading of situations are required to be successful servants in the mission. Your capacity to see in a holistic way is amazing

From you Vincent I have learned that we have to be always ready to see how God surprises us with the work of His Spirit within us.

You Tony and Vincent come to this place after some years working together in the loved land of Menlo Park; there, I witnessed your patience in the midst of the storm.

From you Sr Dianne, I have learned that humanity counts, that beyond decisions to make, there are human beings to be loved and kept as the priority.

From you Martin I have learned your passion for the good of the people in need at the border. You have showed me that those realities, with many complicated social implications, challenge us to be authentic workers in the vineyard.

From you Marcos I have learned that in your ministry in Assumption you have seen the sun shining for your ministry as a Dominican friar in the service of the Church.

From you Servando I have learned many things since we share the time of your initial formation to priesthood. You have become learner in this local church without forgetting the simplicity of life or the roots of your ancestors, from which you have received the capacity to respect to one another.

From you Nam I have learned that complexities of the situations of this house or any ministry in the Church can only be overcome with the broader understanding of God's Plan.

From you Luis I have learned to keep peace in the midst of the storm. Peace sometimes looks like an obsession in your life. Thank you for being close to me in the moments in which I needed a confrere.

From you Rene I have learned, since many years ago, that Christian love is concrete. Your generosity with me has been unlimited and your patience infinite. Sometimes when I see you passionate in making decisions, I can see your love for your ministry as a Sulpician. Do not stop in the homework to help this community to find the Jesus of the Gospel.

For these and many other things you have showed me I thank the Providential God. The finest attitude of Jesus in today's Gospel impels us to avoid any offense to other people. We cannot consider ourselves better people because we know and serve and work for Jesus; once again we are equals, and it asks us to live every day in the simplicity of learning, learning from one another with diligent dedication and patient concern. Jesus did it; let us do it.

With the conviction that only by imitating Jesus "in the truth of his virtues" our ministry of priestly formation can become a help for the Church today, we entrust this academic year to the protection of the *Sedes Sapientiae* "The Seat of wisdom" and implore her heavenly maternal protection upon us and our community. May she help us to be learners.