

TANGAZA COLLEGE

**CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY
OF
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ITINERARY OF EDUCATION TO FAITH

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STUDENTS DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the material used herein has not been submitted for Academic Credit to any other Institution: All sources have been cited in full.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ornato Fulvio", written in a cursive style.

Signed: Ornato Fulvio

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INTRODUCTION

When we talk of education, each one of us has his/her own idea and view of it. Generally we base our educational skills, our style of presenting topics etc. on our past experiences at school where we saw a certain educative method applied on ourselves.

We can think of education in a static way, as transmission of a certain amount of knowledge acquired: I (the one who knows) teach you how to do things!. The school often is a good example of this method. It is based on the banking approach model.(Paul Freire) The teacher is seen as possessing all the essential information, and the pupils are seen as empty vessels needing to be filled with knowledge. The teacher teaches and the pupils absorb passively. Furthermore, to make it easier, the teacher tends to teach the results and not the procedure needed to get them. Since often this is the method we see applied in educating, we tend to follow the same method in our educative activity, in catechism classes, with youth groups, or in any other type of pastoral activity. The result for those who have tried this method in the pastoral field, is always destructive. Passivity and dependence for some, rejection and departure from participating in the activities of the parish for others. This happens especially when we are dealing with young people.

In this essay I want to suggest another line of action that, I believe is more in line with the need of the young people, more effective in the pastoral activity, and more closer to the teaching of the Second Vatican Council. "The first thing that is expected of all human education and true communication is that they facilitate and stimulate interior activity in the recipients. ...the pedagogy which requires an active response from the recipients is in accord with the Christian life in general. For Christians respond actively to the gift of God by prayer, by participation in the sacraments and the sacred liturgy, by taking on tasks in the Church and civil life and by the practice of charity."¹ In

¹ *Ad normam decreti*, General Catechetical Directory, (11 April, 1971), Art. 75.

the document to the lay catholics in schools we read: "An educative process involves a methodology, whose principles and techniques form together a consistent pedagogy. A variety of pedagogical theories exist; the choice of the Catholic educator, based on a Christian concept of the human person, should be the practice of a pedagogy which gives special emphasis to direct and personal contact with the students. If the educator undertakes this contact with the conviction that students have a fundamental active role in their own education, this will lead to a dialogue which will pave the way for a witness of faith offered by the teacher's personal life."²

The Emmaus event of the Gospel can be the flag of our educative system. Let us consider the way the risen Christ approached and started to walk with the two disciples: at first without a word, listening and accompanying them as they were going. (They were moving away from Jerusalem and this has a special meaning for Luke). Secondly, asking them and letting them express all the knowledge, feelings, experiences they had about the events of the previous days. Together with them Jesus in their journey helped them to discover the truth. He moved them to accept God's plan and to be enlightened with joy. The result of this educative process is the *metanoia*. The disciples changed life and after having discovered the truth, turned back to Jerusalem to bring the good news and become witness of Jesus' resurrection.

This is what should happen in our educative process. The text of the Emmaus event is a good insight in the style of education that I want to make present in our work. To educate for me means, "to share lovingly in the growth of individuals and in the building of their future".³ To opt for an educative journey with the youth means to put into question first of all our ourselves as educators. It means to walk with them in a journey of growth, accepting to be what we are with our own past experiences but with the openness to learn and

2 *Les laics Catholiques*, Lay Catholics in Schools: witnesses to faith, (15 October, 1982), Art. 21.

3 Acts of the General Council of the Salesian Society of St. John Bosco. *Educating Young People to the Faith*. Roma: Editrice SDB, 1990, p. 21.

change with them. By: "to educate" I understand there is a dynamic process: those who don't want to start to journey, those who have no interest for the adventure and the curiosity of traveling with young people will not be able to educate according to our own parameters.

It is not possible, according to us, to start from the sense of duty. Walking together must be an experience of freedom where the person discovers and chooses the motivation of his/her own behaviour. We cannot choose to educate only because the young people "need" it, or because we think that otherwise they could end up in dangerous situations. We don't start our journey because we want to repress nor to anticipate, but we start, because we want to explore and build together. We can start only if we recognize each person as a subject full of human experiences.

To set on a journey means to have in mind a path. The journey can be studied on the map, but those with experience, for example in trekking, know very well that what you see on the map is not always what you find. Sometimes the paths marked are no more visible in reality, because of the grass covering them and so on. The world changes, people change: the path is never the same. For this reason it is not enough to have a good knowledge of the different sciences in the field of education. An observing and listening attitude is required for a better knowledge of young people's needs.

In these few reflections about the Educative Pastoral Plan in part I, and about the Itineraries of education to the Faith in part II, I hope to contribute and give a ray of light to all those involved in the education of young people here in the African continent. Among the different perspectives for developing this work, I have chosen to examine what is behind the ready made recipe for educating the young to the faith. Too many times I found people involved in education using youth resources without having the right "mentality" to approach the material in their hands, consequently misusing these pastoral tools. Skills like tools are good and we need them and must know how to use them, but if we don't know how to use them they can be as harmful as a knife

in the hands of a child. For this reason I will spend a good amount of time in this work by looking at what is there behind the skills and tools, in clarifying and giving the reasons for our educative system. Only in the last chapter of the second part I will give an example of an Itinerary of education to faith for Youth in a urban context, without claiming that it will be exhaustive or perfectly functional in an African environment. I know my limits as a "guest" in the African culture. I throw the baton hoping that some local educator will take it up and will continue in the same line trying to prepare a system/process more inserted in the situation of the youth here in Africa. So my goal in the preparation of this essay is simple: to provide the information an educative community would need, to start planning a journey of faith for their youth!

In the first Part, I will deal with the Educative Pastoral Plan. If we want fully to understand the Itineraries of education to faith, we need to understand the frame of reference in which they work. We will discover little by little what is there behind it. In the second part I will deal with the Itineraries. Again our "journey" will be through the discovery of what is there at their background. Only at the end we will present an example of Itinerary.

As regards the sources, I have to say that in this field here in Africa there is very little, as you can see in the bibliography. I based myself for the majority of my work on resources coming from Italy, America, England and Ireland. With this, I don't mean to say that this work is again something that comes from abroad and is inserted in the African culture without any inculturation process. If it is true that with the encounter of two different cultures there is a process of acculturation, where each culture gives to and receives from the other what is positive (in values) and both come out enriched, so we should not be too concerned if the majority of the books quoted in this essay comes from different parts of the world, and not only from Africa. The local church, as part of the universal church, is enriched by sharing values with other sister churches. "The Catholic Church is not only a hierarchical Church, it is also a communion, and this community dimension appears both within and

between the particular churches. Within a particular church are found communities, some of which are culturally distinct. This is especially true of culturally heterogeneous churches like those of many African countries. Within the Universal Church the particular churches also constitute a communion, and they interact with one another in a mutually enriching manner. Thus contributions are made by particular churches at the World Church level, ...new currents of theology, new forms of spirituality, new movements in the Church are exchanged at the widest possible level. ...openness to other cultures is a mark of Catholicism. This implies being ready to learn from strangers. It is God who speaks through strangers, and this 'conditioning by strangers' is an important theme in the history of divine revelation."⁴

⁴ Aylward Shorter, *Toward a theology of inculturation*. Great Britain: Geoffrey Chapman, 1988, pp. 14-15

PART I:

THE EDUCATIVE PASTORAL PLAN.

1. WHY DO WE NEED A PASTORAL PLAN.

"The parish offers an outstanding example of the apostolate, on the community level, inasmuch as it brings together the many human differences found within its boundaries and draws them into the universality of the Church. The lay faithful should accustom themselves to working in the parish in close union with their priests, bringing to the Church community their own and the world's problems as well as questions concerning human salvation, all of which need to be examined together and solved through general discussion."⁵ In the parish the person can find a response to his needs of orientation and desires for personal relationships. As it is stated in *Christifideles Laici*: "The response to such desire can come from the parish, when, with the lay faithful's participation, it adheres to its fundamental vocation and mission, that is to be a 'place' in the world for the community of believers to gather together as a 'sign' and 'instrument' of the vocation of all to communion, in a word, to be a house of welcome to all and a place of service ...all of us, pastors and lay faithful, have the duty to promote and nourish stronger bonds and mutual esteem, cordiality and collaboration among the various forms of associations. ...so as to render thanks to God for the great gift of Church communion which is the reflection in time of the eternal and ineffable communion of the love of God, Three in One. We once again consider Jesus' words: 'I am the vine, you are the branches' (Jn. 15:5). The awareness of the gift ought to be accompanied by a strong sense of responsibility for its use... To be responsible for the gift of communion means, first of all, to be committed to overcoming

⁵ *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, Decree on the Apostolate of Lay People, (18 Nov., 1965), Art. 10.

each temptation to division and opposition that works against the Christian life with its responsibility in the apostolate"⁶

During my years of pastoral work I have noticed, in the different parishes where I worked, the lack of ability at concentrating one's own effort in a common line within the church community's activities. We know the value, and the way how to create and animate Small Christian communities, Bible groups, Sport activities, but not how to organise all these activities towards a common and global goal. The danger at the end is of having wasted an enormous amount of energies with little success, as having achieved nothing at all.

It is not by shooting at random that we hit our target, but by taking accurate aim before shooting. Divisions within the community and lack of collaboration are a big obstacle to achieve results.

The same can be said for our pastoral activities at any level. "It is necessary to keep always in mind the special character of the Church's communion in order that personal freedom, in accordance with the recognized duties and charisms of each person, and the unity of life and activity of the People of God may be fittingly combined."⁷ Often we see people and leaders at different levels in parishes organising "activities", but if one asks why this activity was chosen and not that one, a deep silence and an expression of confusion appear. Today more than in the past we need a better organisation for a better result in our pastoral activities. Repetition and contradiction in what we do are harmful and tend to leave the community even worse than before.

For these reasons I believe in the absolute necessity of an educative pastoral plan at the level of Parishes, Schools and Youth Centres, so that all the different activities may be concentrated towards a common goal. We don't do activities just to keep people busy, but we use activities as tools to reach a goal. From this there stems the need to know the goal and the needs of the

6 *Christifideles Laici*, Vocation and Mission of the Lay Faithful, (30 December, 1988), Art. 27, 31.

7 *Ultimis Temporibus*, The ministerial Priesthood, (30 November, 1967), Ch. II, Art. 3.

people in the parish before any planning of activities and setting of goal take place. This requires a deep attention to and reflection on the needs of the people in our own areas.

"Our mission as educators keeps us deeply united with the world and its history. To educate means in fact to share lovingly in the growth of individuals and in the building of their future. We approach this history in the light of the divine plan of salvation, guided by the Church's wisdom which is its sign and instrument. Current trends in the world emphasise the centrality of the individual in all the problems that mark human events."⁸ "We are witnessing the birth of a new humanism, where man is defined before all else by his responsibility to his brothers and at the court of history".⁹ In this context therefore the education of the individual becomes a matter of both urgency and priority. In Vatican II the "Church, guided by the Spirit, accepted the "signs" of the present time; it reawakened the awareness of its essential mystery; it renewed its internal communion and rethought its presence in the world in the light of its mission. As an expert in humanity, it felt itself called anew to educate man and remain at his side."¹⁰ For these reasons we need to reflect on the Educative Pastoral Plan.

Any technological, industrial or political process, is always the result of a previous plan. Having concrete goals, aims, ends, priorities, helps to co-ordinate the work in any field of life. To adapt our pastoral action to the need of the moment, we need to confront our experiences and intuitions of our educative work with the vision of person, and the values that our society present. To Educate to the faith is not a work that we can improvise, it requires reflection, precision, research of the meaning of what we are doing, so that we can answer with more precision to the needs of our receiver. "In all areas of Church life formation is of primary importance. People who have never had the chance to learn cannot really know the truth of faith, nor can they perform

8 Acts of the General Council of the Salesian Society of St. John Bosco, op. cit., p.21.

9 *Gaudium et Spes*, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, (7 Dec. 1965), Art. 55.

10 Acts of the General Council of the Salesian Society of St. John Bosco, op. cit., p. 22.

actions which they have never been taught. For this reason 'the whole community needs to be trained, motivated and empowered for evangelization, each according to his or her specific role within the Church'. ...The formation programme will especially include the training of the lay faithful, so that they will fully exercise their role..."¹¹

Questions and doubts are often presented by those refusing an educative plan.

They say that persons are not objects that you can twist, as it happens in industry. From this many questions arise: Can we talk of planning in the field of education, where each individual is a particular case, with a particular history? Or how can we have a unitarian plan with calculated results when the initial situations of individuals are so different?. How to have a plan that will not reduce and ruin the individual originality?. These are few questions that can help us in our reflection on the Educative Pastoral Plan.

The Educative Pastoral Plan helps us to define what we want to achieve. It helps us to establish the priorities to reach the goal that we have planned, taking into consideration our possibilities and environment conditioning etc. Elaborating, finishing and evaluating our plan will help us to set norms for the participation in the work as an educative community to establish a common interest and common criteria of action.

"As a Christian community grows in maturity, it should feel the need to make a thoroughgoing pastoral plan for its area. But there can be no question of sound pastoral planning unless the community truly knows the place for which it is planning. Merely living in an area doesn't supply the depth of knowledge about which we are speaking. Planning entails understanding the religious, political, social and economic realities of a situation as the ordinary people of a locality see them. To do this the members of the community need to make a careful study of the situation."¹²

11 *Ecclesia in Africa*, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation of John Paul II, (14 Sept., 1995), Art. 75.

12 James O'Halloran, *Signs of Hope: Developing Small Christian Communities*. Maryknoll, New York 10545: Orbis Books, 1991, p. 127.

2. FOUNDATIONS FOR AN INTEGRAL EDUCATION TO FAITH.

The Frame of reference for our pastoral Plan.

Before being able to give a detailed description of the elements of a Pastoral plan in this "journey" (we will deal more closely with the journey in the second part of the work) of the education of the youngsters to the faith, it is necessary to clarify some ideas behind it. We need to clarify our understanding of the Person, of the educative environment, of the model of the Church we believe in, that is necessary for the actualization of the plan, to avoid the separation between theory and reality. Only after having clarified this, will our pastoral Plan fully reach its aims in educating youngsters to the faith;

2.1. OUR UNDERSTANDING OF THE PERSON.

"We believe that God loves the young."¹³ This is the conviction which should motivate our pastoral activity. "We believe that Jesus wants to share 'his life' with young people: they are the hope of a new future, and in their expectations they bear the seeds of the Kingdom. We believe that the Spirit is present in them and that through them he wants to build a more authentic and human Christian community. He is already at work in individuals and groups. He has given them a prophetic task to carry out in the world which is also the world of all of us. We believe that God is awaiting us in the young to offer us the grace of meeting with him and to dispose us to serve him in them, recognising their dignity and educating them to the fullness of life."¹⁴ In this way all the youngsters are included in our hope and activities, especially those suffering from the consequences of any form of poverty. In each young person, God has placed the germ of "his new life". "This prompts us to make them aware of such a gift, and to take a lot of trouble with them so that they may develop this life in all its fullness"¹⁵

The point of departure will be the removal of any gap between us and them (a gap which can be physical, psychological or cultural), so that we will be able to approach them and get close to them. This does not mean expecting the youngsters to come to us, but going closer to them, making the first step. It means "going to meet the young where they are to be found, welcoming them into our environments with disinterested concern, attending to their requirements and aspirations."¹⁶ This is for us a fundamental step that precedes any other stage of education to the faith, and it is the base for any Pastoral planning.

In the process of education to the faith one should begin from the existential, human and spiritual situation in which the young person is, giving

13 Acts of the General Council of the Salesian Society of St. John Bosco, op. cit., p. 68.

14 Ibid., p. 68.

15 Ibid., p. 69.

16 Ibid., p. 70.

value to the patrimony every youngster has in himself/herself, and from this trying to bring to light with patient intelligence the values of the Gospel. This kind of reception will help to raise a "reciprocal friendship, esteem and responsibility, which eventually makes the young person aware that he/she has a value and significance as an individual that surpasses our wildest dreams"¹⁷

This journey to the faith must always keep in mind "two points of reference: on the one hand, the difficulties and suffering the young must face in forming their personalities; and on the other, the express reminder of Christ to build that personality according to the revelation manifested in Him. The life of the young is at one and the same time the obligatory point of departure for a journey of faith, a continual point of reference in its development, and the goal of the journey itself, once it has been transformed and set on the road to fullness in Jesus Christ. The proclamation of Christ, continually renewed, is the basic aspect of the whole journey; it is not something extraneous to or merely bordering on the experience of youth. It becomes in it the way, the truth and the fullness of life."¹⁸ This is really a journey of Faith in which Jesus Christ is recognised as the true Man in which the person can enter totally into life.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 70.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 72.

2.2. THE EDUCATIVE ENVIRONMENT.

This welcoming atmosphere has greater effect when it is a community that the youngsters encounter and not just an individual. It should be "a home that welcomes, a parish that evangelises, a school that prepares for life and a playground where friends can meet and enjoy themselves. We must not intend this setting as a specific educational structure, but rather as an atmosphere where the principal elements are confidence and family spirit, joy and festivity which accompany the work and the doing of one's duty, the many free expressions of youthful leadership, and the friendly presence of educators able to make suggestions in line with the interest of the young and at the same time to inculcate faith options and values. ...The educational process, in which the objective is the development of the whole person, is the best setting for presenting the faith to the young. The direction taken at this stage is decisive for defining the characteristics and content of the journey to be made. It is a setting in which due importance is given not only to "religious" events, but also to everything relating to the growth of the individual to maturity."¹⁹

In this setting the ecclesial community will not limit herself to the proclamation of the Mystery of Salvation, but will give to the young people also the possibility of experimenting it, joining faith and life. The community will be open to the many interests that the youth have, starting from being a place of free encounter where possibilities are given for experiences of faith and life. Young people are the protagonists of this educative journey. They are gradually and jointly responsible for the activities, with an ever deeper participation in the life of the ecclesial community.

In this journey the young are led to meet him, living an intense Christian life in the ecclesial community.

Because we are dealing with an educational process, that starts from the situation of the young person and guides him to the fullness of humanity

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 71

that may be possible for him, there could be a situation in which as a starting point an explicit proclamation of Christ may be difficult or impossible. In such cases reference to the Gospel is the source of inspiration and of human values. Because we are looking at the educational process as a Journey, some ideas are of basic importance:

a) The journey must be adapted to the condition of those setting out on it.

With a welcoming environment in a family style of relationship, the mystery of salvation becomes more accessible also for those who are at a distance.

b) The journey goes always ahead towards new goals. Starting from the situation in which the young are found, it moves ahead to higher levels of maturity and holiness.

c) Because the journey is adapted to each one according to his or her own capacities, the educator must be aware that every youngster has his or her own rate of progress, which is not the same for everyone; the result at each stage is not the same for all, and therefore the journey must be adapted to each individual. If faith is a dialogue of love with God; if it is a covenant with God made in the practical circumstances of daily life, there are no standard forms that are repeatable from one person to another. Constituted as we are by the Holy Spirit as friends of God and of the young, we commit ourselves to anticipate, foster and follow up their words and indications.²⁰

We appeal in our educative action to the interior resources that the youngsters carry in themselves: reason, love and the need of God. The young people will be helped by the community to mature through a synthesis of faith and life.

Fundamental to it is the creation of an educative environment where the right values are presented more by examples of life than by words. This environment becomes a vehicle and proposal of values.

²⁰ Cf. Emilio Alberich and Guido Gatti, "Educazione alla Fede", in *Dizionario di Catechetica*. Torino, Leumann: Elle Di Ci, 1986, pp. 235-237.

Some characteristics of this environment are: the family spirit, in which the relations between persons are inspired by serenity and simplicity, the joyful atmosphere and optimism as a result of our Christian view of life that point to the eschatological time. A continuous invitation for the young to creativity and spontaneity with artistic, recreative, cultural, social, religious activities as substance of our educative and evangelising effort. Reasonableness and flexibility make any activity and proposal to be adequate to the needs and capacity of the young people. We foster their own role/place (leading character) in their activities.²¹

This educative action is not only a proposal offered to a crowd, but with trust and a familiar spirit it must foster a personal encounter. Each person is unique, with his/her own personal history. It's a matter of empathy toward the world of the youth, of ability to accept them as they are and to dialogue with them.

Our method will be "preventive"²², in the sense that all the proposals that we offer to a person is to move him/her to have positive experiences of the good, so as to avoid the deforming situation of evil. It's a task of preparing the youngsters for their future, helping them to develop attitudes that will help them in future situations to overcome positively, negative conditioning of the society. From this we will try to help them to understand the meaning of their youth fully and to live their aspirations and longing fully.²³

"Since Vatican II, there has been a greater insistence on religious education in the sense of education: a lifelong personal growth in a community of selfless care and spiritual strength through solidarity and conviction, offering not just knowledge to be checked against experience but openness, values and (it is hoped) the experience of their goodness (life), as

21 Cf. Mario Midali, "Progettazione Pastorale" in *Dizionario di Pastorale Giovanile*. Torino, Leumann: Ette Di Ci, 1989, pp. 785-792.

22 Cf. Abraham Panampara, *A glimpse into Don Bosco's Educational Method in the light of modern guidance and counselling*. Madras: SIGA, 1983, pp. 33-42.

23 Cf. Dicastero di Pastorale Giovanile, *Elementi e linee per un progetto educativo pastorale*. Roma: Editrice S.D.B., Direzione Generale Opere Don Bosco, 1979.

against violence, coercion, hatred, over dependence, authoritarianism, and mental as well as physical imprisonment (death)"²⁴

24 Heinrich Beck, "Education", in Karl Rahner, *Encyclopedia of Theology*. Great Britain: Burns & Oates, 1986, p. 425.

2.3. THE MODEL OF CHURCH WE BELIEVE IN.

Because any educative pastoral plan is the reflection of the model of Church we have, (as a matter of fact our pastoral activity is nothing else than the multiform action of the ecclesial community, that develops the salvation project of God in an actual historical moment) so it is important to clarify in a few words the model of the Church we have, as something fundamental so as to ask ourselves which Church is operating, what type of salvation is announced and the model of Church are we forming.

The model of Church that can sustain our pastoral plan is the model of church presented by the second Vatican Council:

a) A Church, as a community of persons gathered together by the power of the Holy Spirit, where the only type of faith acceptable, is the faith in Jesus Christ and in his manifestation of the love of the Father.

In the Vatican Council as in the Fourth Assembly of the World Council of Churches at Uppsala "It was recognised that man is, in his innermost nature, a social being, and that, unless he relates to others, he cannot live or develop. Human life is essentially something shared with others. More important still, Christian revelation is being presented as a phenomenon essentially communitarian. The God, in whose image and likeness mankind has been created, reveals himself as a Trinitarian Community of abiding love. His purpose for mankind, revealed and effected through the life and death of Jesus Christ, is the reconciliation of all men and all things in himself, and the 'great commandment' bequeathed by Christ to his followers is the commandment of brotherly love. It is essentially in the local church community that God's loving presence manifests itself and that the Christian participates in the great movement of reconciliation launched by Christ"²⁵

25 Benazeri Kisembo L. Magesa and A Shorter, *African Christian Marriage*. London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1977, pp 197-198.

This love is spread among the members of the community. "...For this image emphasizes care for others, solidarity, warmth in human relationships, acceptance, dialogue and trust. The new evangelization will thus aim at building up the Church as Family, avoiding all ethnocentrism and excessive particularism, trying instead to encourage reconciliation and true communion between different ethnic groups, favoring solidarity and the sharing of personnel and resources among the particular Churches, without undue ethnic considerations. ...the Church as Family cannot reach her full potential as Church unless she is divided into communities small enough to foster close human relationships. ...primarily they should be engaged in evangelizing themselves, so that subsequently they can bring the Good News to others; they should moreover be communities which pray and listen to God's word, encourage the members themselves to take on responsibility, learn to live an ecclesial life, and reflect on different human problems in the light of the Gospel. Above all, these communities are to be committed to living Christ's love for everybody, a love which transcends the limits of the natural solidarity, clans, tribes and other interest groups."²⁶

b) A community of service. The Church has a mission of announcing the salvation brought by Jesus Christ through words and actions in the world. "In Jesus Christ God has shown us how every person and all peoples should live in this world, especially how they should relate to God as Father, and how they should relate to one another in brotherhood, compassion and love."²⁷

God wants His love to be witnessed into the world through the church. The church is the body of Christ through which God wishes to bring to men His love and compassion, and the unity of human kind in God. In realizing this desire God forms communities and sends them into the world.

²⁶ *Ecclesia in Africa* op. cit., art.48; 89.

²⁷ Cecil McGarry, "We are God's people: the Church as communion" in *Exploring our Christian Life, in the light of the African Synod*. Limuru, Kenya: Paulines Publications Africa, 1994, p. 86.

The members of the church should be conscious of their responsibility to the world, they should be dedicated to the cause of the Gospel. However, the most effective and efficient way of Spreading the Gospel is by witness of life. Their enthusiasm to be in the service of God will bring about a spiritual awakening in the church. 28

c) A charismatic community in which all the members are enriched by the gift of the Spirit, all the gifts are necessary in the building up of the community. "In virtue of this catholicity, each part contributes its own gifts to other parts and to the whole Church, so that the whole and each of the parts are strengthened by the common sharing of all things and by the common effort to attain to fullness in unity."²⁹

Our action will try to reach as many as possible, and not become a Church for the "few elected". Because any pastoral action is realised inside a community, the first step will be the building up of the Parish Community so that the parish become a place of encounter and dialogue, where all the members share the responsibilities in the education to the faith, as of all others services.

What is central to all Christian Revelation is the Paschal Mystery. Jesus who is the source of Christian Revelation brings life-giving water to the Christian community, so that it can obtain its existence and finds its identity. The Christian community drinks and constantly refreshes itself by the event of the Paschal Mystery, in order to remain immersed in Jesus Christ. This immersion allows the christian community and individual members of putting themselves at the service of others. In this way they communicate, proclaim to others the saving help of a world redeemed by Jesus.³⁰

The Eucharist will be the centre of the communion between the members and source of strength and inspiration in the pastoral work.

28 Cf. *Ad Gentes Divinitus*, Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity, (7 Dec., 1965), Art. 36.

29 *Lumen Gentium*, Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, (21 November, 1964), Art. 13.

30 Cf. Benezeri Kitembo, op. cit., pp. 199-200.

"The Christian community draws its strength and impulse from the celebration in its midst of the paschal mystery of Christ. Through word and sacrament Christians take part in Christ's once-for-all, redemptive self-offering and express this worship in their 'lives for others'."³¹ "Really sharing in the body of the Lord, and in the breaking of the eucharistic bread, we are taken up into communion with him and with one another. 'Because the bread is one, we, though many, are one body, all of us who partake of the one bread' (1 Cor. 10:17). In this way all of us are made members of his body, 'but severally members one of another' (Rom. 12:4). As all the members of the human body, though they are many, form one body, so also are the faithful in Christ (cf. 1 Cor. 12:12). Also, in the building up of Christ's body there is engaged a diversity of members and functions."³²

The parish will offer to the youngsters a pastoral plan that is fit for them, by using their language and their way of expression, with activities, in the way of encountering them and by being closer to the problems they are facing in their maturation of their faith. The parish will be a place of encounter and dialogue between the different ages and places where youngsters will find help in their search for meaning in life. The community will help them in maturing a synthesis of their faith and their life.

31 Ibid., p. 201.

32 *Lumen Gentium*, op. cit., Art. 7.

3. THE EDUCATIVE PASTORAL PLAN.

The educative pastoral plan defines what we want to obtain in our education to the faith of the youngsters. With the Educative Pastoral Plan we can concretize the theoretical aspects of education, to avoid a division between reality and theory. It is possible also to establish a hierarchy of values and give to them an order of priority, so that the vision of the world may be coherent and it may help the young to have an unitary development of their personality.

The Educative Pastoral Plan is indispensable to establish ways of participation in the educative process among the members of the educative community. It helps also to establish goals and aims to be achieved, according to the different situations and levels in which we find the persons. It helps to establish a way of evaluating our educative process and renewing our activities when this is demanded. The four main aspects of the plan are:

- 1) establish goals according to the needs of a particular situation or locality
- 2) give concrete tools to reach the goal established
- 3) establish roles and functions to ensure the efficacy of the tools and the attaining of the goals proposed
- 4) give criteria of evaluation of the work done.

This Educative Pastoral Plan has a validity of a project with a period of 2 to 3 years.

In any case it is important to clarify that the Educative Pastoral Plan is never a static plan, unchangeable and immovable, but something that needs constant revision, evaluation and reformulation according to the real situation of the place and persons. This is why we speak of educative plan as "Pastoral" in its finality and contents. For these reasons we cannot divide it according to

what is education and what is evangelization. Both are inseparable elements of it.³³

33 Cf. Riccardo Tonelli, "Progetto Educativo Pastorale" in *Dizionario di Pastorale Giovanile*. Torino, Leumann: Elle Di Ci, 1989, pp. 793-798.

3.1. AIM - GOALS OF OUR EDUCATIVE PASTORAL PLAN.

At the level of clarification, we will distinguish between aims and goals. Aims are the end we want to reach at the end of our educative process. They last for a long period of time, because of their nature. Goals are intermediate ends that will help us to reach our aim. They have a period of time shorter for their attainment. They are called also mid-term objectives which are different in number according the areas we consider in our plan.

The aim of the plan is at the same time human and Christian: it refers to the development and promotion of the human values and with them, develop a Christian and religious dimension. The person is considered in his totality and is at the centre of the plan. "...there are close links between evangelization and human advancement, that is development and liberation. There is a connection in the anthropological order because the man who is to be evangelized is not an abstract being but a person subject to social and economic factors. There is also a connection in the theological sphere because the plan of creation cannot be isolated from the plan of redemption which extends to the very practical question of eradicating injustice and establishing justice. There is, finally, a connection in the evangelical order, that is the order of charity: for how can the new law be proclaimed unless it promotes a true practical advancement of man in a spirit of justice and peace?"³⁴

The two essential elements of the vocation of a person, are the vertical relationship with God and the horizontal relationship with other persons. The openness to the Divine is the final intention of the educative process. It tries to build the unity of the person having as its centre Faith as vital and the unifying reason. In this way we foster a Christian and human maturity at the personal level, with attention to the real youth that we approach, in his/her individuality and personality; at the environmental level, we try to transform the social reality in which the youngsters are living. Solidarity, Justice, and Peace, are

31 *Evangelii nuntiandi*, Evangelization in the Modern World, (8 Dec., 1975), Art. 31.

some of the prevalent values encouraged. "Integral human development -the development of every person and of the whole person, especially of the poorest and most neglected in the community- is at the very heart of evangelization."³⁵

At the centre of our plan must be the person in his totality. For these reasons in the realisation of the Pastoral Plan our effort must be, to get closer to the reality of the youth so that we can make our educative action concrete. This is to clarify that we don't give direct and immediate education to the faith. The faith develops on the mysterious level of dialogue between God and the person. This part of life as we know it, is next to impossible to any human intervention and hence we must recognise the priority of the initiative to God.

The response of the person is on the level of acceptance. Faith as a gift, comes from listening and not from meditating and elaborating. Now our human intervention will be on the level of facilitating the person to be receptive to the initiative of God. Our educative intervention will help the young be tune himself to the gift of faith. The saving process implies two movements.

From one side there is God's call to a personal commitment, to a free and responsible choice. This call touches the depth of the person and is outside the educative intervention, because is God and one's human freedom. On the other side this call is expressed in human ways, and it becomes human word to be understandable to any person. It searches for a personal answer expressed in concrete gestures. The educative intervention has a fundamental role in education to the faith.³⁶ The experience of faith through which the believer and the believing community puts into effect a process of conversion and growth towards Christ, has a double goal.

³⁵ *Ecclesia in Africa*, op. cit., art. 68.

³⁶ Cf. Riccardo Tonelli, "Educazione/Pastorale" in *Dizionario di Pastorale Giovanile*, Torino, Leumann: Elle Di Ci, 1989, p. 294

First of all a goal attained on this earth, that is holiness and perfection, or growth in Christ. In other words the realisation of the image of God and Christ in the person. This holiness and perfection, can be called 'Christian maturity' only in a relative sense and it is not fully identified with what we normally call 'human maturity'.

Secondly, a celestial goal that is the eternal life, which constitutes the final and transcendent aim of each person. It is the world of the resurrection characterised by the definitive perfection of the person in Christ. This is the true maturity of a person and his final achievement. These are not two independent processes, in time, but it is one process. The process of conversion, growth and maturation in Christ becomes also a process of human maturation at the individual and communitarian level.³⁷

" For sacred Scripture teaches that man was created 'to the image of God', as able to know and love his Creator, and set by him over all earthly creatures that he might rule them, and make use of them, while glorifying God. ...Man, though made of body and soul, is a unity. Through his very bodily condition he sums up in himself the elements of the material world. Through him they are thus brought to their highest perfection and can raise their voice in praise freely given to the creator. ...Man is not deceived when he regards himself as superior to bodily things and as more than just a speck of nature or a nameless unit in the city of man. For by his power to know himself in the dept of his being he rises above the whole universe of mere objects. ...if man is the only creature on earth that God has wanted for its own sake man can fully discover his true self only in a sincere giving of himself."³⁸

37 Cf. Juan Vecchi and Jose PELLEZO, *Progetto Educativo Pastorale, Elementi modulari*. Roma: L.A.S., 1984, pp. 177-195.

38 *Gaudium et Spes*, op. cit., art. 12; 14; 24.

3.2. AREAS OF THE EDUCATIVE PASTORAL PLAN.

To attain the Aim of our plan : "the whole development (human and Christian) of the person" we need to distinguish some dimensions (key areas) of our approach.

I shall distinguish 4 areas, each one with a general objective (goal):

a) Educative-cultural dimension.

The aim of this dimension is to foster the maturity of the person, and to evaluate his critical insertion in the society and culture.

It's the whole promotion of the person, in his/her personal and social growth.

Our action as educators will consist in helping the youth to become protagonists in their own life and formation. It also involves us in helping them to develop their own personal and social conscience, to use their freedom, responsibility and the ability to grow in good relationships with others. It involves the capacity to be oriented to the service of others. In this process we must collaborate with the young in developing and maturing their resources, by helping them to acquire a set of values, and meanings, to become critical in front of the reality, and with the ability to choose and serve their sisters and brothers.

We will help them to develop a balanced personality able to perceive values, to relate to others with serenity inspite of prevailing tensions. To mature in freedom and the capacity of coherent decisions, able to take responsibility and plan their own future.

On the social level we will help them to develop attitudes of solidarity and dialogue, specially there where the social situation is filled with racial and tribal divisions. We need to help them to insert themselves (through the group life) in the community, and to participate in it by taking up their responsibilities.

We need to emphasize in them the need for justice and the building-up of a more just society, based on Christian values. By offering the Christian vision of the human dignity, of their rights and duties, of the common good and of one's concrete needs in the family, in groups, movements, and in the local Church we will help in the development of the social dimension.

An area of great importance will be the sharing of their experiences, of their own personality and the community living.

b) Evangelization and catechetical dimension.

The focus of this area is the religious dimension of the person and the education to the Faith.

Before going further in our reflection it is better to clarify what we mean with the term Evangelize.

I will suggest the following definitions for two key concepts involved in our discussion - evangelization and catechesis. "Evangelization is best understood, it seems to me, from two vantage points:

1. It can be understood as the initial proclamation of the Gospel to the uninitiated. Note that this most commonly and most effectively takes place through the lived witness of and relationships with convinced believers rather than through attempts at rational explanations of the faith. As has been so perceptively stated, faith is caught not taught. Evangelization is initially therefore, a free invitation to 'come and see'.

2. Because evangelization involves the authentic witness of the believing community, it is an ongoing need for all Christians. You and I as adults, but always growing and maturing Christians, never reach a point where evangelization is unnecessary or superfluous.

Rather, it is continual contact with faith-filled Christians that motivates and enables us to grow."³⁹ (cf. *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, art. 18-20.)

39 Thomas Zanzing, *Sharing: A manual for Program Directors*. Minnesota, Winona: Christian Brothers Publications, 1985, p. 45.

In few words Evangelization is the process through which the Church announces and witnesses by word and action the values of the Gospel.

We can distinguish three phases of the process of evangelization:

1) Announcement of the Gospel. Missionary Stage:

The goal of this stage is the conversion and acceptance of Jesus and his message.

2) Catechesis. Catecumenal stage:

In this stage those who have accepted the good news are called to a better understanding of it and interiorization of it.

3) Pastoral Action: Action realised by the Church community. Parts of this stage are liturgical actions, ministry of the word, charitable activities and promotion of the human person.

These three phases are not to be understood as static steps, but more in the line of a dynamic process where the different moments interrelate dialectically.

Catechesis (part of the evangelising process) is the ongoing education to the faith. "Catechesis as such presupposes a total acceptance of the Gospel of Christ, put forward by the Church. Often, however, it is directed towards people who, though belonging to the Church, have never given true personal commitment to the message of revelation. This shows that in certain circumstances, evangelization can precede or accompany catechesis as such. In all cases, however, it must be borne in mind that conversion is always part of the dynamism of faith and that every form of catechesis must involve evangelization."⁴⁰

The difference with Catechesis and evangelization is that it is "this reflective study of the Christian Mystery that fundamentally distinguishes catechesis from all other ways of presenting the Word of God. In view of practical difficulties, attention must be drawn to some of the characteristics of this instruction:

⁴⁰ *Ad norman decreti*, op. cit., art. 18.

- It must be systematic, not improvised but programmed to reach a precise goal; It must deal with essentials, without any claim to tackle all disputed questions or to transform itself into theological research or scientific exegesis. It must nevertheless be sufficiently complete, not stopping short at the initial proclamation of the Christian mystery such as we have in the *kerigma*; It must be integral Christian initiation, open to all the other factors of Christian life."⁴¹

This means:

- an organic initiation to the Mystery of Christ and the salvific project of God, taking into account all what God means for the life of the person.
- an initiation to the religious experience, to prayer and the sacramental life.
- a commitment to the mission of the Church.

The goal of catechesis is the confession of the faith, in which the Christian expresses the reasons of his/her hope from the depths of his/her being.

For us to start a process of evangelization of the youth would mean to become "Good News" for them. This is a task of an educative action that frees and humanises the person. Personal relations are of utmost importance to them. This is to be coupled with the ability to help them develop their answer of faith, with their whole person and be committed to it. The proclamation of the Good News will be the answer to their religious quest. Any salvific message presupposes the need that the receiver has, to be saved. This good News must be first proclaimed to the young people through the witnesses of the community. "This proclamation must be made above all else by witness. We envisage, therefore, a Christian or a group of Christians as people who, in the midst of the community in which they live, will show that they are capable of understanding and accepting others and of cooperating with all those who are seeking to protect what is noble and good. We envisage them radiating simply and spontaneously their faith in values which transcend common values and their hope in things which are not seen and of

⁴¹ *Catechesi Tradendae*, Catechesis in our time, (16 October, 1979), Art. 21.

which even the boldest mind cannot image. By bearing such silent witness these Christians will inevitably arouse a spirit of inquiry in those who see their way of life. Why are they like this? Why do they live in this way? Why are they among us? Witness of this kind constitutes in itself a proclamation of the good news, silent, but strong and effective."⁴²

This communication of our own faith experience is not to inform, but to help to live this communication and hence should include within it three stories, namely the story of Jesus, the story of the narrator and the story of the receiver. The goal of this proclamation is to give rise to a conversion and a deeper acceptance of the Gospel. Like in the Emmaus event, it implies acceptance of God, the will to follow Jesus and the insertion in the Christian community. This requires the creation of a setting that enable the youngsters to start this process of Christian formation.

To develop a pastoral action of evangelization in our parishes means giving to them a missionary attitude. This implies not being satisfied with receiving the youth only; but the Church community must become the centre of spreading the Gospel to the world, moving towards our young people. For this reason, a good deal of importance in planning must be given to Catechesis and to the first proclamation of the Gospel, to the intensity and quality of our liturgical celebrations, to the vocational direction, the S.C.C. and their intervention in the light of the Gospel in the society. (cf. E.N., art. 29 & 31).

Some practical suggestions:

- To give space to systematic catechesis in all forms and levels, having in mind the totality of the message.
- Sacramental catechesis in preparation for the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, Marriage etc.
- Particular care in the preparation of the Sunday Homily (cf. C.T. 48.)

⁴² *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, op. cit., art. 21.

- Support of the family as the first place of evangelization and catechesis, preparation of material for Catechesis in the family. (cf. E.A. 92)
- Neo-catechumenate for adults as a form to rediscover the faith. (cf. C.T. 43-44.)
- Bringing this good news to the neglected ones of our society: sick, disabled, lonely through different ministries and particular services in our community.
- A better use of the mass media. (cf. E.A. 122-126)
- Formation of catechists.
- Establish S.C.C. where the different groups, (in our case the youngsters) may have a deep experience of Church, and receive light from the reflection of the Word.

c) Vocational dimension.

This implies a journey with the youngsters leading to the discovery of their personal vocation and plan of life. There is no education, if we don't guide the person to consolidate his identity and relate it to God, the other and himself. "Therefore all in the Church are called to holiness, according to the apostle's saying: 'For this is the will of God, your sanctification (1 Th. 4:3). This holiness of the Church is constantly shown forth in the fruits of grace which the Spirit produces in the faithful and so it must be; it is expressed in many ways by the individuals who, each in his own state of life, tend to the perfection of love, thus sanctifying others... It is therefore quite clear that all Christians in any state or walk of life are called to the fullness of Christian life and to the perfection of love, and by this holiness a more human manner of life is fostered also in earthly society. ...Each one, however, according to his own gifts and duties must steadfastly advance along the way of a living faith, which arouses hope and works through love."⁴³

⁴³ *Lumen Gentium*, op. cit., art. 39-40.

There is no evangelization that doesn't lead the person to engage oneself in a concrete choice of service in the Church. The vocation is a call for the person to feel the realisation of himself/herself. And it can come through human mediation. For a believer, behind this call there is God. The vocation is part of a plan that implies the task of each one discovering his/her own call, and the commitment to realise it with his/her own decision. Through this vocational dimension, the educative pastoral plan wants to offer light, to help in the discovery of each one's call, and help in making the choice. In this guiding process of education, the main actor/actress of the process is the person that is searching for his/her own vocation.

The role of the educator in the process will be one of mediating and helping in this action of discernment. The goal is the maturity of the person. It is the realisation of the person. This is a continuous task for all the educators and not just a moment, or an occasional counseling session during the process of building up the person to become mature.

Starting from the more general types of vocation as the human vocation (Vocation to be fully a person) to Christian vocation (with baptism we became Children of God, members of the people of God, with a call to holiness in the Church) to the different other forms of vocation Lay, Religious, Priestly, Missionary etc. (Cf. O.T., art.2-3.; L.G., art.31-33).

d) Group and associative dimension.

We support any kind of group activities, that lead to a real experience of the Christian community, even as groups and movements, Small Christian Communities, Scouts and other associations etc. In interpersonal relationships the young have the possibility to have a real experience of Church.

"When people join such groups -for study, planning programmes, fun or fellowship- they become a vital part of that group. The kind of group and the dynamics that take place depend upon the interaction of its members. Everyone has had experiences with groups. They have known small ones (such

as the family) and larger ones (like schools, institutions, and organisations). Many do not realise that groups have stages of growth and maturity much the way individuals do. However, it takes a considerable amount of time testing, sharing, working and living together for groups to mature."⁴⁴

For those of us who have been in some groups, the first time you attended, especially if we didn't know anyone, we probably felt somewhat strange, even a little suspicious. After we've shared experiences together and knew others, we discovered that people accepted us and we contributed to the group. Group members showed concern about our needs as well as their own. After we had become part of that group for a period of time, we felt freer to express our opinions and were more ready to accept those of others. We and the others concerned ourselves, not only with the task before us but also with the well-being and feelings of group members.⁴⁵

Youngsters search for a group. In it they find an experience as in a family as in society, where there is the possibility of personal initiatives and creativity, a possibility to develop each one's personal leading character, a suitable place for the establishing of mature personal relationships, and an experience of Church. The life of a group has a development similar to human life. From a prenatal situation where the group is just a project, to a childhood situation where the group learn how to walk, to an adolescent situation where tensions between the members start to take place, to a situation of youth where the group gets stronger, to a stage of adulthood where the group becomes a community, to a situation of maturity where the adult relations between the members develop in new groups.

It is important in the parish, for parish leaders and the community to take into consideration, and foster/encourage the formation of spontaneous groups. In these groups one will find spontaneous leaders that usually have imagination, initiative and creativity. Generally they are composed

44 Anthony D'Souza, *Leadership A trilogy on leadership and effective managment*. Nairobi: St. Paul Publications, 1994, p. 179.

45 Cf. Ibid., p. 179.

according to affinity and the interest of the members. In the beginning, because of its spontaneous start, socialisation and friendship are generally at the germinal level, and so for these reasons it is important to help the group to shift from their spontaneous aggregation to a more structured group with aims and objectives. This must be done gradually and carefully, within the group and not from "above" by the community. Often this will require a certain amount of patience and time.⁴⁶

This passage is easily done if we gradually organise them, and foster helpful activities that create a sense of belonging. For this we develop in the members motivations, recruitment of new members and putting the group in contact with other groups.

Through these groups the young can come to know other youngsters, they learn to live and socialise with the other, even if they are of different tribes or colors. They need to learn the complexity of the reality, and the character of different personalities. Gradually they learn to work together for a common purpose, with a sense of friendship and unity in diversity. The dynamic of this group will be based on freedom and self-discipline of the individuals.

Briefly here is an "itinerary" (which will be dealt with exhaustively in Part II) of the growth to be developed in different stages:

- From the growth of union and friendship
- to establish and clarify aims and objectives of the group
- to a more active insertion in the activities of the community
- to a discernment and acceptance of the great values of the Gospel

This program can be developed through :

- informal encounters
- meetings on specific themes according to the real situation of the group
- recreational activities
- Prayer meetings (eg. S.C.C.), catechesis
- assumption of commitments and evaluation of the results

⁴⁶ Cf. Ibid., pp. 179-206.

In this process we consider the role played by the animator of the group to be of fundamental importance.

"The role of the educator is to present to the people in a challenging form, the issues they themselves have raised in a confusing form" (Mao Tse Tung).

Generally any adult that is open to the young, (not necessarily a religious or a priest). His/her role at the start can be of some help from the beginning in the formation of the group. His/her being among them and with them will help the young to fill the gap that generally exists between the adults and youngsters. His/her life example can be an example for them. The animator will make the youth responsible in their tasks.⁴⁷

We consider fundamental the relationship in which the animator puts himself at the level of the young, stays with them and takes part to their activities. "Go to the people, live with them, learn from them. Start with what they know, build with what they have. But with the best leaders, when the work is done, the task accomplished, the people will say, 'We have done this ourselves'." (Lao Tsu. China 700 B.C.) . The animator will work in a style of dialogue: "Dialogue presupposes a pluralistic situation, but it also assumes an optimistic outcome for the interaction that takes place between differing views and values. Dialogue starts from the premise that no one and no community possesses a monopoly of the truth. ...Dialogue is not the attitude of one who says: 'To know the truth you must become like me!' It is the more humble attitude of the one who says: 'Let us see how we can help one another to acquire a greater and deeper understanding of the truth!'"⁴⁸ Not a "teacher" from above, ready to "fill" the brain of the youngsters, but an enlivener ready to help and let them develop their serendipities. He will help each single person to grow according to his or her own capacities.

Paulo Freire gives us a good insight into this pedagogical approach. We can identify the "dominant class" as the wrong type of brain filler animator,

47 C'f. Ibid., pp. 198-204

48 Benezeti Kisembo op cit., p. 198.

and the "oppressed class" as the youngsters: "Some of the dominant class join the oppressed in their struggle for liberation. Theirs is a fundamental role and has been so throughout the history of his struggle. However as they move to the side of the exploited they almost always bring with them the marks of their origin. Their prejudices include a lack of confidence in the people's ability to think, to want, and to know. So they run the risk of falling into a type of generosity as harmful as that of the oppressors. Though they truly desire to transform the unjust order, they believe that they must be the executors of the transformation. They talk about the people but they do not trust them; and trusting the people is the indispensable precondition for revolutionary change. A real humanist can be identified more by his trust in the people, which engages him in their struggle, than by a thousand actions in their favor, without that trust." ⁴⁹

In the elaboration, development and revision of the Educative Pastoral Plan we will consider the totality of the 4 areas that I have just mentioned.

⁴⁹ Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. London: Penguin Books, 1972, p. 36, 41.

4. PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS AND HINTS FOR THE SETTING UP OF AN EDUCATIVE PASTORAL PLAN.

The community, composed of Leaders of the local community (as the main animators of the process), lay collaborators (as jointly responsible in the educative process), adults, parents of the youngsters (as these first responsible in the education of their own children), and the young, work together to make the plan a reality. This is what we will call an Educative Pastoral Community. It is the Educative Pastoral Community that is responsible for the elaboration of the Plan.

This especially here in Africa where "in traditional life, the individual does not and cannot exist alone except corporately. He owes his existence to other people, including those of past generations and his contemporaries. He is simply part of the whole. The community must therefore make, create or produce the individual. ...Just as God made the first man, as God's man, so now man himself makes the individual who becomes the corporate or social man. It is a deeply religious transaction. Only in terms of people does the individual become conscious of his own being, his own duties, his privileges and responsibilities towards himself and towards other people. When he suffers, he does not suffer alone but with the corporate group; when he rejoices, he rejoices not alone but with his kinsmen, his neighbours and his relatives whether dead or living."⁵⁰

To achieve this we need to form a community of persons motivated in their mission by their love for the youth.

This ideal Christian Community must present itself as:

- a true human community inspired by values of responsibility and respect for each other, with an ability for friendly encounter in a family atmosphere. The style of spontaneity, fraternity and kindness helps the youngsters to feel accepted and feel at home.

⁵⁰ John S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*. New Hampshire, USA: Heinemann international, 1990, p. 106.

- a community involved in various forms of service, with a particular attention to the education of the youth.

- a community of faith with the ability of proclaiming and witnessing the good news and the presence of God. "The truly Christian community does not cut itself off from society; it acts as an agent of reconciliation among men, a healer of social division".⁵¹

- a Church where the youth can experiment values of communion with their brothers/sisters and with God.

This type of community is an ideal to move forward towards. For this reason the community itself has to grow and develop towards this goal, if it wants to really be an Educative Community for the faith of the youngsters.

It is important to also form an "animating" team, that will represent each group, and that will move on to dialogue, to facilitate the sharing of experiences, exchange of opinions, to reach a common ground of understanding and agreement on the different viewpoints that will arise, toward the finality of the plan and in short the whole formation of our youth.

To leave the planning in the hands of an "expert" in the field of education, as teachers or priests or others, carries in itself many risks; probably the final plan will lack participation and identification from different groups in the community, with a consequent passivity in the action to be done. The plan will remain in the hands of a few and will not be a plan of the entire community.⁵²

51 Benezeri Kitembo op. cit., p. 200.

52 Cf. A. Prior and F. Lobinger, "Developing Shared Ministry", in *Training For Community Ministries, N. 18M*, LUMKO Institute of Missiology. Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 1992, p. 35, prog. M.

To elaborate a plan we need to consider the following steps:

4.1. ANALYSIS OF THE SITUATION.

a) In General.

This implies a good knowledge of situations, persons, problems of the area where we plan to intervene, etc. The knowledge of the experience that youngsters have, tendencies, ways of judging, a common way of reacting to problems. Knowledge of the different youth situations, etc.

The analysis of the situation implies also the interpretation of the deep aspirations, problems and tensions that are arising from this reality, so that we will discover the evangelical values of which the youth can be bearers, and the expectations that are more in keeping with the values of the Gospel.

The results of this analysis can become operative in the pastoral field and give hints for further action, only if it is reviewed and meditated in the light of faith. In evaluating the situation according to the possibilities of making the growth of the youngsters easier or more difficult, we will favor or jeopardise the results of our educative action.

b) In Particular.

A good analyses is the discovery of the degree of knowledge we have of our youth, the understanding we have of their problems, expectations, aspirations. This is fundamental for the pastoral and educative response we give. What type of person (Christian) is our plan creating?

The following are some questions that can help us to see our Youth Situation better, and how we are responding to their needs.

a) Our youth:

- What category of youth are we reaching out to in our pastoral activities?
- What is the level of religion and faith do the youth have?
- What they are expecting from us?
- What aspects of the surrounding culture is expressed by them?

- What kind of attitudes do they have toward our educative action?
- What is their attitude towards the visible signs of the faith?
- What are their questions regarding their faith?
- What is our reaction to what they think, their understanding of life, their fundamental decisions about their life etc.?

b) In our pastoral intervention.

- What dimensions of youth are we taking care of?
- What concrete proposals are we offering to the youth for their formation as human persons?
- In which way are the proposals we make, helping them to clarify the meaning of their life?
- Are we inviting the youth to take on responsibility in society, with an attitude of service?
- Are these proposals helping the youth to confront other models or style of life?
- What model of a Christian are we presenting to the youth by our life?
- How do we (as an educative community) witness to our dedication to the Christian life?
- What activities of the youth community are specifically Christian and how are these received by the same youth?
- What do we have to offer to those who are more open and ready to live a more intense commitment?
- What liturgical activities are we offering to initiate the young to encounter God?
- What are the different possibilities for one to serve and how many are offered to the young people?

4.2. PLANNING A PROJECT OF EDUCATION TO FAITH.⁵³

First of all, our action should be Educative, that means enabling the youngsters to make a personal choice based on mature motivations, that is to help them to make decisions in which they are main "actors/actresses", of their own life.

Secondly, our action as previously said, must be evangelising. The Educative Pastoral Plan must offer the testimony and the proclamation of Christ and his Mystery of Salvation. The educative pastoral plan does this in its invitation and call to faith (conversion), together with offering possibilities of growth and Christian commitment (process of faith education). All educative actions are a form of evangelization; motivations and finality must always be kept in mind, to avoid going back to doing a random activity. We evangelize by educating, and educate by evangelizing. These are the two fundamental dimensions of our plan.⁵⁴

To evangelise by educating means that we cannot expect an authentic evangelization without a preoccupation for human promotion. This implies:

- An interest for the totality of the young, and his/her various needs. An education that free from the many forms of social and cultural slavery and poverty, so that the youngsters may become honest citizens. For this reason we will not reduce our activity to catechetical or liturgical action but will extend it to all the areas of the youth.
- A personal skill as leaders of a community and as the educative community, regarding the educative activities we need to promote in our pastoral field.
- To assume a methodology of graduality based on the possibilities of the subjects. What we would like, very often is not what the young can achieve. To have all youth "holy" is a good intention, but we must start from the reality.
- Keep faith and life always in a close relationship.

⁵³ James O'Halloran, op. cit., pp. 134-138.

⁵⁴ Cf. Mario Delpiano, "Pastorale Giovanile (Progetti)" in *Dizionario di Pastorale Giovanile*. Torino, Leumann-Elle Di Ci, 1989, pp. 695-699.

To educate by evangelising means that our educative effort is always oriented to Christian salvation and is enlightened by the light of God's grace. For this reason we must always try to direct every educative action according to the values of the Gospel, with Christ as the source of inspiration. We should help the young people to discover their place in the Church and in the world, by developing a critical conscience, in the light of the Gospel. "The primary aim of an adopted son of God is, not to 'settle accounts' with God, but to surrender oneself more and more in faithful love to the merciful Father. What is needed above all is openness to grace and the desire to grow in love. In an ideal adult conscience, 'the compass of love would point the direction so unfalteringly that the external law is no longer needed. In such a person the law has been so fully assimilated, its deepest inspiration is so much a matter of personal experience, that it has become a conscious instinct and an infallible power of discrimination.' Then the 'Love and, what you will, do' of St. Augustine finds its fullest application. But, till that stage is reached (if ever it is fully reached in this world), conscience needs the prop of the law. Genuine maturity implies the humble acknowledgment of what has remained infantile in ourselves..."⁵⁵

The Pastoral Plan, of course, "must not just remain on paper. It must be resolutely implemented. And it must be frequently evaluated in all its aspects. It must, when necessary, be updated."⁵⁶

Our evaluation of the situation should help us to re-plan our educative action.

First of all in the establishment of our aim, and secondly choosing among the many possible goals the few to be privileged (as we expressed in the four areas previously treated). The four following points can help us in this process of selection.⁵⁷

55 George V Lobo, *Guide to Christian Living: New compendium on moral theology*. Westminster, Maryland: Christian Classics, 1989, p. 238.

56 James O'Halloran, *op. cit.*, p. 136.

57 Cf Anthony D'Souza, *op. cit.*, pp. 484-493.

1) A goal can be preferred to another because of its field and possibilities of application.

2) The time required for achieve the goal.

Some times it is better to choose in order, goals that comes first and are a precondition for a second or successive goals.

3) The possibility, through outlining the steps, for easy achievement of the goal.

These possibilities can be of different kinds: economical, personal capacities, the ability of the group with whom we are planning to achieve the goals etc.

4) We can have a look at the value that the goal carries in itself. For example, we can foresee that a prayerful attitude is a condition of an attitude of faith. If the second is lacking it is improbable that the first can be achieved.

"Clear goals are vital. Unity, commitment, and energy grow strikingly in a group when there is a clear goal which all believe in" ⁵⁸

To clarify the objectives (goals), we must have a look at the way the educative community (composed by priests, sisters, laity etc.) is operating.

Some questions can help in our reformulation.

- What concrete proposals help the development of relationships within the educative community?
- Have we clarified the different responsibilities among the members of the educative community? (adults, parents, leaders, young people etc.)
- What activities can we plan, for the formation of those directly involved in the educative process?
- Are there planned periodical meetings among the members of the educative community?
- How do we plan to insert our plan in the over all activities of the local church?

58 Anne Hope and Sally Tummel, *Training for transformation: A Handbook for community Workers*. Zimbabwe Mambo Press, 1984, Vol. 2, p. 102.

4.3. EVALUATION OF THE PLAN

"The only way forward, is to take one step back". (Paul Freire)

The theme of evaluation touches the educative pastoral plan in all its entirety. Evaluation gives us fundamental indications of how the plan is going, and clarifies the effectiveness of our educative action. This requires a constant procedure of control of areas, objectives, aims, goals etc.

Regarding the method to be used, the evaluation will reveal its validity. Regarding the contents, the evaluation helps the educative community to know the practicability of the contents and see if they really answer to the needs of the youth. These are some of the reasons why evaluation in the pastoral plan has a fundamental role. Unfortunately "most development workers are so totally involved with the day-to-day activities of programs, that it is very difficult to see what are the over all weaknesses and strengths. The result is that projects are soon run on a perpetual crises basis. Planning is forgotten, co-ordination is non-existent and resources are not used properly. How often have people from the same office gone to work in the same area, and not co-ordinated their efforts?

Evaluation needs to be a constant process built into all levels of programming:

- a. by the participants in all projects,
- b. by animators,
- c. by co-ordinators

The value of evaluation includes: seeing our successes, assessing our weaknesses, clarifying what needs to be changed or strengthened."⁵⁹

"What we learn we do, and when we do, we see what is wrong. So we learn also from our mistakes and achievements. The mistakes show where there are shortcomings in our knowledge, weak points which have to be eliminated. This means that it is in the process of producing that we correct our mistakes.... practice is not enough. One must also know and study. Without practice, without being combined with force, intelligence remain sterile.

⁵⁹ Ibid., pp. 119-120.

Without intelligence, without knowledge, force remains blind, a brute force... Study is like a lamp in the night which shows us the way. To work without study is to advance in the dark. One can go forward, of course, but at great risk of stumbling or taking the wrong path."⁶⁰

Questions such as the following can help the work of evaluation:

- Have we undertaken what was determined through the programmed targets?
- Have we realised the objective under examination? If not why? If yes how?
- Is there something to rectify?
- Do we need to make adjustments?
- Has there been progress?
- Are we united and organised?
- Concretely, is what we do illumined by prayer, and reflection on the Word of God and Church Documents?
- Has the wholehearted participation of all those whom the plan touches been encouraging?
- Are our interventions directed to the single person and his/her problems?
- To which of the needs of our youth do we respond?
- Are our pastoral actions adequate to their concrete situation?
- How are we helping the youth to discover the real values and aspirations of the human person?
- Are we giving space to them for their creativity and their need for gaining and sharing of experiences?
- What is our attitude as an educator of the young people? Do we trust their ability of growth and response to our pastoral actions?
- Can we say that our activities are making the journey and growth of faith easier?
- List the signs that indicate that our activities are helping in this growth.

⁶⁰ From a paper by Samora Machel, *The african liberation Reader*, London: Zed Press, 1982, Vol. 1, pp. 116-117.

- To what degree is the life of the young expressed in our liturgical celebration?
- Are problems, interests and needs of the young taken up in the liturgical celebration?
- Does our liturgical celebrations help the youth to mature and deepen in their faith?
- In what way are we helping the youth in their vocational discernment?
- Do we have groups in our parish as something necessary for a communitarian experience, vocational discernment and apostolic commitment?
- Do we follow them up personally?
- Are we trying to develop the groups gradually to have a true experience of Church? ⁶¹

⁶¹ Cf. James O'Halloran, *op. cit.*, pp. 138-139.

PART II

AN ITINERARY OF EDUCATION TO FAITH.

1. WHY AN ITINERARY OF EDUCATION TO THE FAITH.

Those who have read the first part of this work, most probably will have a question arising: "The idea of a pastoral plan is great, but now why this new "stuff"? Is it not enough to prepare a pastoral plan? Why are we now starting to talk of an itinerary? What is the relation of the pastoral plan to the Itinerary?". I think these are reasonable questions the readers are posing to themselves. In the second part of this essay I will try to answer them and make clarifications.

First of all the idea of an "Educative Itinerary" it is not something new. Already St. Bonaventure used to talk of a spiritual route, stages of Christian life, an itinerary of the mind to God. The liturgical year can be considered as an itinerary of the Church's faith. We talk of the Way of the Cross and so on. Also in our daily life, very often we express ourselves by metaphors and we talk allegorically. We talk of: Journey, Process, Stages, Project/Plan of life, Action plan etc. In pedagogy we read often of learning stages etc. The introduction of the adults to the catechumenate of the RCIA follows the same pattern.

Also in many African traditions the whole of life is considered a journey. "Physical birth is not enough: the child must go through rites of incorporation so that he/she becomes fully integrated into the entire society. These rites continue throughout the physical life of the person, during which the individual passes from one stage of corporate existence to another. The final stage is reached when he dies and even then he is ritually incorporated into the wider family of both the dead and the living".⁶² "Human life has another rhythm of nature which nothing can destroy. On the level of the individual, this rhythm includes birth, puberty, initiation, marriage, procreation, old age, death, entry into the community of the departed and finally entry into the

62 John S. Mbiti, *op. cit.*, p. 106.

company of the spirits. It is an ontological rhythm, and these are the key moments in the life of the individual." ⁶³

To avoid misunderstanding it is better at the beginning of this second part, to clarify that our interest in the preparation of an 'Itinerary' does not come from the ingenuous conviction that we can "manufacture" the educative recipe ready to be used. There is no itinerary that can assure us of perfect success in the field of education. Education to the faith carries with itself the risk of failure, because 'to educate' is always to enter in the mystery of a person and his/her freedom. The person is created as image of God, and this is expressed by intelligence, capacity of relationship and freedom. When freedom is true is an exceptional sign of the image of God in the person. Only in freedom the person has the chance to turn himself toward what is good, but freedom has been affected by sin, leading the person to different forms of slavery that can become an obstacle in the education to faith. Only by the help of God's grace the person can give his actions their full and proper relationship to God.⁶⁴

Our interest is that the failures are not attributed to carelessness or negligence. Our intention in this essay is to explain how to prepare an itinerary that can give reason to our educative action and help as a guiding instrument in the different stages of our educative process. With this itinerary we answer to the quest for a progressive journey to the faith. (Cf. C.T. art. 17).

The choice of working with itineraries means putting ourselves in a new mentality regarding the educational system. In the past the idea of education was static. Today sciences of education as pedagogy etc. tell us that this mentality is no more sufficient, we need to renew our mentality. Today the educative and pastoral praxis is considered more basically a dynamic process. "Creative pastoral approaches are needed today to adequately respond to the life-situations of our peoples and communities. Better methods must be devised to incarnate the Gospel message into the local customs of

⁶³ Ibid., p. 24.

⁶⁴ Cf. *Gaudium et Spes*, op cit., art. 17.

our people, e.g. feasts and celebrations performed at different stages of man's development."⁶⁵ Social and cultural transformation that in Africa are taking place have shown more evidence to this line. "In the traditional set-up where the African concept of time is mainly two-dimensional, human life is relatively stable and almost static. A rhythm of life is the norm, and any radical change is either unknown, resented or so slow that it is hardly noticed. But from the second half of the nineteenth century and swiftly gaining momentum towards the middle of the twentieth century rapid and radical changes have been taking place everywhere in Africa, and no study of African problems or concepts would be complete without some mention of them. Great emphasis has been put on the social aspects of these changes, but the changes are total, involving the whole existence of African peoples, and making their impact upon the religious, economic, political as well as social life. We have pointed out and demonstrated that in their traditional life, African peoples are deeply religious and experience this as a religious universe. This means that modern changes in Africa have come upon religious societies, affecting their religious attitudes and life and being affected by this traditional religiosity. Africa is caught up in a world revolution which is so dynamic that it has almost got out of human control. It is a revolution of man as a whole, and therefore no people or country can remain unaffected."⁶⁶

In the educative field a great attention is given to the process of growth and development, their dynamic is the centre of interest. The itinerary operates in this type of mentality. Its frame of reference will be the pastoral plan. As we said in the first part it is not just matter of "fashion" to operate in the field of education according to a Project (plan). The need of planning is of primary importance and the foundation for our educative action. Without it there could not be any educative action. The utopian ideal is made real by the process developed in the project and more by the itineraries. In other words, the itinerary is a middle way between the "theory" of the Pastoral Plan

⁶⁵ Aylward Shorter, *op. cit.*, p. 265

⁶⁶ John S. Mbiti, *op. cit.*, p. 211.

and the Educative Process we plan to have. The Itinerary helps us to put into practice the global objectives chosen in the Pastoral Plan. By nature an itinerary will be of a short time project (1-2 years), and will offer to the educator practical guidelines for his/her educative action.

2. WHAT DO WE MEAN BY 'AN ITINERARY OF EDUCATION'.

Everyone has experienced a journey, travel, tours in his/her daily life. We know that there are destinations to be fixed, a particular route to be followed, stop overs to be determined, instrument to be taken with us (map etc.). The same could be said of the experience of human growth and spiritual life, we can establish destinations, routes, stages and we can make an educative and spiritual journey. This is the idea behind an Itinerary of Education to faith.

Itinerary means the course of a journey that includes laps (stages). It is the route we want to follow to reach our destination. The description of the itinerary becomes our journey-map, a tool to guide those who want to follow the route. To question ourselves on the Itinerary of Education to faith, means in other words question ourselves on the route, stages, destination etc., we want to reach in our educative journey. This path will point to the aim established in the Pastoral plan by the community of the local Church.

To educate following this itinerary means in other words to act in a systematic way where all the elements involved are organised according to an organic plan, with criteria and norms that regulate the process. Finally, the Itinerary can be understood as a succession of stages that lead (at least in theory) to the achievement of a goal. It is the organic sequence of the stages to reach the destination of our journey. These stages have specific objectives, indicate formative contents, and methods to realise them and give rules of evaluation. From all this we must not read the different elements in the Itinerary as a set of isolated parts of a sequence, but as a dynamic whole in relation.⁶⁷

⁶⁷ Cf. Battista Bosco, "Ricerca pedagogica in prospettiva pastorale", in *Note di Pastorale Giovanile*. Torino, Leumann: Editrice LDC, 1989, N. 7, pp. 41-51.

3. ITINERARY OF EDUCATION TO FAITH AND EDUCATIVE PASTORAL PLAN.

As we have said the Itinerary has as a frame of reference the Educative Pastoral Plan. In this, the Community is the subject of the educative and pastoral action. Of some importance is the consciousness of the common mission within the members of the community, the development of joint responsibility and mutual collaboration. (Cf. *Ecclesia in Africa*, art. 89).

We already spoke of the need of an unitarian pastoral action and a common frame of reference so that all the efforts may be channelled to a common aim, to avoid fragmentation and dispersion of the energies and results.

The Pastoral Plan we said is what we suppose to be the answer. If we understand the itinerary as just a methodological tool, we can imagine a group of educators committed to "play" the itinerary to bring the youngsters to their side.

The itinerary it is not a big pedagogical game. The state of journey is something more serious and challenging.

I could easily connect it to the example of the Exodus. The people of God were dreaming of a land. This was the sign of God's blessing. But this was a dream, they were oppressed by the Egyptians. Finally they leave. The power of God called them to come back home God was with them during the journey, helping them in front of the enemies, holding them up in time of distress. In this long journey all the people of God were involved. Somebody led, encouraged and urged them. Difficulties, doubt, tiredness came to all. The rhythm is that of one of a crowd in a journey: for some too slow, for others too fast. But it was the only one that permitted all of them and kept them advancing as a "nation".

The same in the itinerary. Although the youngsters are the first to be of interest, it is the community that thinks of the itinerary. All the members of the community are on journey.

The whole community is walking toward a destination. But the community doesn't proceed on blindly. It is not a random walk wasting time and energies. The community has a plan. It is walking toward a far destination in hope and sees it only in the light of faith.

The educators and the ecclesial community reflect every day and make concrete proposals to their fellowmen, share their own dreams of the project. They rewrite what they have experienced in life and witness it.

In this common journey all have something to offer although some have the responsibility of witnessing in a deeper way, the hope and faith for the destination. In this journey nobody has already arrived. Although someone has the gift of seeing the destination better than the others, he/she reminds all of the destination. This journeying community is not only the ecclesial or educative community. It is the community of all people living in a concrete territory.

The itinerary is for all. The aim is the fullness of life. The journey of education to faith is not a tentative one, to get one more youngster inside the ecclesial community. The community starts a journey with all, to serve with truth, the life and hopes of all. The walking people of God (cf. G.S., art. 13-14) is made of adults, youngsters, believers, the hesitant, good and bad, strong and feeble. In this way, walking together means opening the horizon to embrace potentially all. For this reason it is not enough to arrive at the destination first and alone, but all must reach the goal together.⁶⁸

Our common mission becomes real because is translated in a tangible project of the community, an organic plan able to direct all the educative efforts of evangelization.

Now between the Pastoral Plan and the itinerary there is a strict connection. One refers to the other.

The plan is the systematic organisation of all the resources and operations. They determine the real situation and imagine the destination,

⁶⁸ Cf. Riccardo Tonelli, "Utilizzare gli itinerari con mentalità da itinerario", in *Note di Pastorale Giovanile*, Torino, Leumann: Editrice LDC, 1991, N. 10, pp. 70-81.

choose the materials needed and those we already have in order to reach the destination. The plan becomes the frame of reference of a more global type and the itinerary gives us a more specific way, a route to be followed to achieve the aims in our daily educative action. The Pastoral Plan is intended to be a global plan of action with operative decisions that organise in a more organic and systematic way: 'the aims of our educative process, the areas of attention in which we act, indication of methods and general lines of action, the organisation of structures to carry into effect the pastoral plan and finally, all the criteria of evaluation in view of a future re-planning'. The idea of a plan comes from two needs. On one side it is a matter of seriousness. A blind action moved by enthusiasm can be very dangerous in the field of education, because a person is involved.

On the other side, is an indispensable condition to allow collaboration, to stimulate persons to work in the building up of the Church together. According to this, the pastoral plan has to involve the whole educative community. In any case, the pastoral plan has limitations. It tends to be static. It cannot foresee everything. When we deal with the person we deal with a mystery where freedom and fantasy cannot be anticipated and contained in a box. For this reason the itinerary has an important role. The itinerary gives mobility to the pastoral plan.

The itinerary is understood as a map to point out the route. It will highlight objectives referring to the general aims and attention is given to the process and the dynamics of the educative action. It will define specific progressive stages to be followed; the attitudes and contents to be developed and will express in concrete experiences, what has been outlined. Thus an itinerary of education to faith continually refers to the Educative Pastoral Plan and to the goal set by it. For this reason it will follow the areas given in the plan and its objectives.

The itinerary tries to give dynamism to the Plan, in other words gives "legs" to the plan. The aim is articulated by intermediate aims that carry in themselves the global aim. The stages are not prepared as tools to be used in the process, so that progress may happen, but are lived experiences that help to proceed because of the aspect of the experience itself. The Itinerary is not in other words a box of tools where we pick and choose the tools we need in our educative intervention. In the itinerary what prevails is the subjectiveness of the youngsters that is guided by the loving and experienced presence of the educator. Adults and youngsters are walking together toward the destination.⁶⁹

Finally an Itinerary of Education to faith is a call to a spirituality and a plan, that presupposes a pastoral educative community. This community offers and witnesses a spirituality, formulates and puts into practice the project, following an unitarian itinerary.

So, it is not the case to start now with the itineraries as another thing separated from the first one, but to continue in the same line but at a more deep and effective level.

⁶⁹ Cf. Ibid., pp. 70-79.

4. BASICS OF THE ITINERARY

As in the Ch. 2 of Part One, I believe it is important to clarify the main ideas on which the itinerary works and is based.

4.1. INTEGRAL EDUCATION TO FAITH

The itinerary must be prepared according to the needs of education and evangelization. This means we need to understand the itinerary of education and education to the faith from a global point of view, without separate the human reality and the believing reality. What we want to achieve is the goal of an "honest citizen and a good Christian". In other words the goal point to an Integral education of the young.

The 1974 declaration of the Fourth Synod of Bishops "is the first official statement, to have used the term 'Integral salvation' of the goal which the church seeks: to save men and women not only from the consequences of personal sin, but also from the consequences of the sins of injustice that others commit against them. This is seen as a present realization of salvation: a salvation that is 'integral' because it involves both reconciliation with God with a view to a future fulfillment of communion with him, and also reconciliation of all classes of people with one another, on the basis of a just social order in which the human dignity and fundamental rights of all are respected"⁷⁰

Practically this means:

- to proceed in the integration of faith and life, of education and evangelization, of gospel values and culture.

The goal of the journey of educating the young to faith is to help them to build their own personality with the person of Christ. Thus we help them to see history through the eyes of Christ, to judge life as He judges it, to choose and love as He would.

70 Francis A. Sullivan, *The Church We Believe In*. New York: Paulist Press, 1988, p. 142.

In this way the young person also find himself part of the believing community, living out his faith joyfully and proclaiming his faith in his daily life. His faith is also expressed in attitudes and actions of self-donation. Thus he more and more becomes a 'good christian' and 'upright citizen'.⁷¹

When we say upright citizen we mean the promotion of personal dignity in the young person. "To live in a generous way in the family preparing himself to form it on the basis of reciprocal donation; fostering solidarity, especially among the poor; the development of one's own work with honesty and professional competence; promoting justice, peace and the common good in the political arena; respecting creation; fostering culture."⁷²

- to understand our educative action in term of project, process, of animation within, of organic plan of action.

- to help the youth to develop an attitude and a right disposition to act according to the values of the Gospel. This will be done by the proposing positive experiences meaningful to them. "The first is that the young person must be helped to acquire a sufficient capacity of judgment and ethical discernment. He must be able to discern good from bad, sin and its structures, the action of God in his person and in history. ...But it should be remembered that a Christian conscience is formed only when the youngster is helped to measure his own life against the Gospel and the teaching of the Church. In the educational process, openness to objective truth is a precondition for acceptance of the Word of God. This is a challenge which commits the educator to be faithful in the integral presentation of moral principles, while understanding the practical situation of the young."⁷³ ,

- to believe in the youth group as an educative place where they can grow in the faith and have experience of Church community.

71 Cf. Acts of the General Council of the Salesian Society of St. John Bosco, op. cit., p. 77.

72 *Christifideles Laici*, Apostolic Exhortation of John Paul II, (30 Dec., 1988), Art., 44.

73 Acts of the General Council of the Salesian Society of St. John Bosco, op. cit., p. 118.

- to use a language able to recall God and man's mystery together. To give a "human word" to God and make him present and acting in the life of the youth.

4.2. THE EDUCATOR

The itinerary finds its own mainstay in the Educator.

It is the educator who animates and sustains the journey. He/she is the one using the itinerary as a map for the journey, and tries to live it and incarnate it in the concrete situation of the youngsters. He/she needs to grow:

- in attention to the single person and accompany him/her in the process of human and Christian growth and maturation.
- in the ability to foster and sustain the protagonism in youth, so that each one may recognise himself/herself as an active subject of his/her own journey.
- in the ability of the group's life, to be open to the secular community, to the ecclesial community, by helping each one to take up his/her own responsibilities.
- in the openness to verification. This means an ability to see the signs of time in the cultural changes of the society.
- in the understanding of the mystery of life, where God looks after our personal growth.

"The primary educating role of the adult is accomplished through sharing their faith journeys. Because 'faith is caught, rather than taught', it is essential for teenagers to experience faith-filled people who are living the Good News. The adults are visible role models for adolescents who are searching for answers and evaluating possibilities for their futures. Catholic / Christian values, practices, and dogma are revealed through the lives of adults who are responding to God's call to holiness. It is important to include adults who represent the various vocations in the Church.

Young people need married men and women, and priests for inspiration. ...The way adults live out all the varied vocations speak louder to the teenagers than all the books, lecturers, and sermons on the call to holiness. Above all, the adult must be a lover, one who believes in the young people enough so that they can believe in themselves.

- Don't walk in front of me, I may not follow.

Don't walk behind me, I may not lead.

Just walk beside me and be my friend" ⁷⁴

⁷⁴ Jerry and Mary Mandry, *The New Antioch Manual: for a Parish Based youth ministry*. USA, Dubuque Iowa: Religious Education Division, 1986, p. 11.

4.3. THE LIFE SITUATION OF THE YOUTH

The starting point in the formulation of an itinerary is the concrete life of the youth in their situation, and the goal/aim is to help them to organise the different experiences of their existence around the person of Christ, the perfect man and Lord of Life. The human maturity of a person is measured on the quality of values that the person is able to recognise as meaningful and normative in his/her life. We should make all our effort to communicate moral values to young people, at the same time they must be made to take personal decisions. It is only when the young person discover and assimilate moral values it becomes his/her. We often prefer conformists rather than confronters who are able to think for themselves, but it should be our endeavor to make the conformists to think for themselves. The stress in our moral training should be on positive experiences that will enable the young to have a favorable start in their moral life.⁷⁵

At the centre of this process of growth there is Jesus Christ. "The kind of education which fosters an original interaction between evangelization and human advancement, calls for precise attention to certain points from the heart and mind of the educator: the acquiring of a pedagogical sensitivity, the adopting of an attitude which is both motherly and fatherly, the effort to assess what is happening in the growth of the individual and the group in the light of a formative plan which brings together in wise and vigorous unity the educational purpose itself and the will to find the most suitable means for attaining it. In modern society educators must pay particular attention to the educational factors of a human and social character which history has shown to be more important, and which are more greatly interwoven with grace and the demands of the Gospel. ...To be an educator today implies a true individual choice of a way of life, to which those who exercise authority in the ecclesial and civil Communities owe a debt of recognition and help."⁷⁶.

75 Cf George V Lobo, op. cit., p. 291.

76 John Paul II, "Juvenile Patris", Art. 17.

In this view the encounter of the young with Jesus and his message give a decisive meaning in the process of building his/her personal identity. Faith is not lived as something alternative to the human values but as a central experience with a truth that give light to all existence.

This ensures that the aim of the itinerary is based on the fundamental attitudes of Faith, Hope and Charity. These attitudes are a gift of God, that move the person to commitment. For this reason their progressive attainment is prepared by corresponding educative steps.

The itinerary will also consider human life and faith experience as a seed. The seed carries in itself the tree, but it grows gradually in a dynamic way. If the environmental condition are favourable the seed will develop. Human life and faith experience can be like seeds, that carry in themselves the tree. If the conditions are favourable, little by little the tree of life and the one of the new life of the believer develop into something new. Leaves, trunk, branches, are not added in a second moment but are already contained in the seed. The seed is already the tree that is realized day after day. Like this the life of the believer develops in Christ and in the Church.

4.4. LOVING KINDNESS

Another aspect that defines an itinerary is the way in which somebody is assisted to move forward, to proceed. The journey is toward a clear destination (aim), and some are called to witness it with more strength. The decision to reach the destination must be taken by those involved in the journey. How can we ensure this decision?

In the traditional method this is ordered with force, intimidation, anguish, with the promise of prizes or punishment. We believe in another way of doing this, and this comes from our daily experience. There are persons who when they talk, seem to be embracing the person they are talking to in a loving encounter. There are others who saying the same thing in their words judge, and condemn without pity. To be clear allow me to present two figures of the parable in the Gospel of Luke. (Lc 15:11-32). The father and the elder brother in the story of the prodigal son.

When the young brother after leaving his house, comes back, the father receives him with a deep embrace of peace and reconciliation. He doesn't complain nor allows the young son to beg pity. He doesn't act like this because he is indifferent or resigned, nor because he has fear to spoil everything now that the son is back. The son was guilty of a serious wrong. The father cannot close his eyes as if nothing happened! This is not the style of God towards human sin. To the one who has produced so much sorrow, the father's answer is a warm embrace of joy and a celebration of a feast.

Different from this is the elder brother's reaction. He shows his bad behaviour in front of his brother. He reminds him of his disobedience and stresses his betrayal. His word is hard, and his judgment is irreversible. The father receives the young son, the senior brother accuses him. This story helps us to understand the logic of the itinerary, where the young person is received, as the father did, in the journey at the level and at the speed he/she is able to

walk. No matter if on the journey he/she will fall or loose direction. The educative community will always be like the Father in the parable.⁷⁷

Finally, the itinerary should consider the integration of faith and life as a process that needs to be followed up in every person. Attention to the experiences of faith must be, joined with attention and motivation to life situations so that the young may develop a self-sufficient ability to judge and act according the values of the Gospel.

77 Cf. Riccardo Tonelli, "Utilizzare gli itinerari con mentalità da itinerario", op. cit., pp. 70-79.

5. THE FOCUS OF THE ITINERARY IN FOUR DISTINCT AREAS.

To be clear before the start in the explanation of each single part of an itinerary I will give a brief and schematic chart of the different levels of an Itinerary.

GLOBAL OBJECTIVE / AIM			
AREA 1	AREA 2	AREA 3	AREA 4
PROGRESSIVE STAGES 1-2-3	PROGRESSIVE STAGES 1-2-3	PROGRESSIVE STAGES 1-2-3	PROGRESSIVE STAGES 1-2-3
ATTITUDES	ATTITUDES	ATTITUDES	ATTITUDES
EXPERIENCES	EXPERIENCES	EXPERIENCES	EXPERIENCES

To develop a global objective / aim is a work of synthesis necessary to clarify to ourselves where we want to reach. To have a clear aim allow the persons to express in a better way how to be creative and the different possibilities of reaching the goal.

The global objective or aim is made clear in areas that integrate themselves in each one.

The areas are not to be understood as isolated sections, but each one is related to the others and is contained in the others as, each is integrated in the whole. To be clear we can compare it to the different dimensions: personal, social, and professional in the educative field. These are distinguishing aspects, but not separated from the reality. They integrate each other. The global objective of the itinerary is made clear in the respective areas that we will explain. Each area has its own specific goal, that expresses

one aspect of the global aim of the itinerary. The aim of each area codifies finalities and results that we intend to reach. From them we will develop progressive movements, objectives formulated in attitudes to be developed, experience the activities to be presented for achieving the objectives. Let us start with a view of the areas and the respective goals.⁷⁸

⁷⁸ Cf. Domenico Sigalini, "Elementi per costruire un itinerario", in *Note di Pastorale Giovanile*. Torino, Leumann: Editrice LDC, 1991, N. 5, pp. 41-49.

5.1. AREA OF PERSONAL IDENTITY.

The aim of this area consists in developing and promoting the growth of the person and being open to the transcendent, developing any resource till it reaches the full maturity of the young. It is an attempt to build a type of person with an ideal heritage of values, with positive attitudes toward his/her own existence and the existence of others, with the ability to make free and responsible choices, with an availability to solidarity and service. It is the idea of a person, inspired by the gospel.

This area has, as its aim the building up of a mature personal identity basing itself predominantly on the contribution of sciences of education and wisdom. It identifies problems and formulates solutions that the educator to the Faith will use such as human sciences and Education sciences (pedagogy etc.) but also his own wisdom gathered from reflection on his past experiences. In his action he is always inspired by his vision of faith. With his reason enlightened by faith he will direct himself in the variety of anthropological possibilities to choose the image of person from which will emerge the person of Jesus.

5.2. AREA OF THE ENCOUNTER WITH CHRIST.

The aim of this area is to help the young to accept Christ as the determining person of his own life. To live the experience of faith and life so that he grows in Christ as a new person.

(cf. G.S., art. 22).

This area is based on witnessing. I believe we Christians talk of the mystery of God revealed in Jesus of Nazareth as the foundation of our journey towards the fullness of life, salvation we do this more with our life of faith than with many empty words. Sciences and human wisdom are not sufficient to give reason to this good news. The life of the believing community based on the word of God becomes absolutely necessary. The point of reference will be

the Gospel, the document of the life experience lived and interpreted by the disciples of Jesus. In the narration of the first Christian communities we recognise the educative value of witnesses for the journey in following Jesus.

5.3. AREA OF THE ECCLESIAL BELONGING.

The aim of this area is to discover the value of the other and the others, starting from the last. The discovery of the civil and ecclesial community.

To promote availability to participate and feel responsible in living an experience of Church as communion and service and as a universal sacrament of salvation.

This area is centred on the logic of experience. Solidarity, sharing, ecclesial communion is the foundation stone of any effort to build up the person, and needs to be experienced more than talked. These values becomes real when they are concretely manifested in community life, and become expression of the deep mystery of communion. For example the experience in S.C.C. helps to find this kind of experience. "In S.C.C. the unity of people from different ethnic societies is itself a witness of how God's Word, love and grace can create harmony among individuals. The close association of Christians in SCC's breaks down some of the inherited prejudices existing between the different ethnic groups." ⁷⁹

The Church's life is the "document" to be considered: Acts of the Apostles, Letters, Fathers of the Church, the present history. In all this is manifested the working presence of the Spirit of Jesus in the different communities, and stresses also the fatigues of being faithful to the Gospel.

⁷⁹ Terese J. Zemale, "Christian Witness Through Small Christian Communities", in *Spearhead* 121. Eldoret, Kenya: AMECEA Gaba Publications, 1992, p. 41.

5.4. AREA OF LIFE AS VOCATION.

The aim of this area is to place every young person in front of his/her future in an attitude of availability for service. To help the young to perceive life as a mission and responsibility, to encourage them to formulate their project of life relating it to the call of Our Lord. To present all the types of vocation in the Church: Lay, Religious, Priestly.

This area introduces us to a new style of life for those who have encountered the Lord in their life. The Christian lives under the sign of the beatitudes, and manifests the Kingdom by proclaiming that true life and joy consists in the loving donation of self to the other. Life is gained only when we are ready to lose it. The authority to declare this new way of life comes only from the courage to take the radical message of the Gospel seriously and live it.

6. DIFFERENT MOMENTS OF THE ITINERARY.

6.1. STAGES.

The progressive stages express a set of situations that are a sign of a developing growth toward more mature, responsible goals and a clear attitude to life.

It is like saying, 'from... to...' It is the gradual passage, from a lower level, to a higher level of growth. At this higher level we find the fulfillment of the objective and a superior and new goal to be followed up. This moment of arrival and departure helps us to know the real stage and situation in which we are. It permits us to re-formulate in more organic way the goal of each area.⁸⁰

6.2. OBJECTIVES.

The role of the objectives are to direct our educative action. They guide us and give us the two extremes in which we operate. We can consider objectives as a set of qualifications to be fostered so that the person may grow. In its formulation we have to consider what type of attitudes we want help to develop and the knowledge we should ensure.

6.3. ATTITUDES

Attitudes are the connection between the cognitive moment (knowledge) and the expression of them in actions (behaviour). It is the creation in the subject, of dispositions to operate with motivated decisions. The subject is able to live his/her daily life according to the values he/she has received and discovered. The attitudes express the need for a gradual acquisition of the values of the Gospel. It is not only a matter of knowledge, but of growth that require time according to each individual. In an attitude

⁸⁰ Cf. Domenico Sigalini, *op. cit.*, pp. 41-49.

there is more that a force of behaviour that the person can have for different reasons. The attitude is already a concrete way of behaving that the person in freedom chooses according to the scale of values he/she has developed.⁸¹

6.4. EXPERIENCES.

Experiences or activities are the material actualization of the progressive stages and the objectives. They are a fundamental part of the itinerary because they help us to be concrete in our action and to join theory with praxis. It is necessary to determine activities that will help in achieving the goal. They will help us to realise the route we have planned. Also for activities we must always follow the principle of graduality. That means we don't start with activities beyond the actual possibilities of the youth we are working with. Experience has a great relevance to the educative process because they give concreteness to the itinerary. The experiences mark our educative journey. They must be the practical expression of attitudes.

6.5. EVALUATION.

Finally, we believe that the stage of follow-up or evaluation, is fundamental to our journey according to an itinerary. It is fundamental and absolutely necessary, because it offers us the opportunity of re-orientation and re-planning our journey. Anyway not everything in the educative process is verifiable, because we are dealing with the mystery of a person and his/her freedom. This is all the more true in the field of education to faith. The gift of God is not measurable by human categories. We are dealing with mystery.

81 Cf. Riccardo Tonelli, "Progetto Educativo Pastorale" in *Dizionario di Pastorale Giovanile*. Torino, Leumann: Elle Di Ci, 1989, pp. 793-796.

7. AN EXAMPLE OF AN ITINERARY OF EDUCATION TO THE FAITH FOR YOUTH IN AN URBAN SETTING.⁸²

We have thought of the itinerary within a pastoral plan, that believes deeply in education as a privileged place for evangelization. Now in this context those preparing an itinerary, have to consider some variables. First of all we must consider the different evolutive stages: preadolescence, adolescence, youth, young adulthood. Secondly we must consider different youth typology. Youth living in an urban setting are different from those living in a rural area. Those living in slum areas are different from those living in residential areas etc. Finally, we must consider the different activities available eg.: sports and free time, culture, catechesis, liturgical animation etc., and the resources eg.: educators, tools, traditions, structures. According to these variables the itineraries will be different, because we want to respect the centrality of the person. There are two preferential choices that must be kept for all.

First, on the level of maturity, we don't like to think of itineraries for the more gifted and itineraries for the less gifted. The preferential choice should be, and should privilege the last and the most poor.

"After Vatican II, the Church became more aware of her mission for service of the poor, the oppressed and the marginalized. In this preferential option, which is not to be understood as exclusive, the true spirit of the Gospel shines out."⁸³

This is a precondition to a real dialogue with all. The choice must not refuse the diversity, but we should strive to be on the side of the poorest, so that we really work for the promotion of all, although in different ways.⁸⁴

82 Cf. Note di Pastorale Giovanile, "Itinerari di educazione alla fede: I giovani", in *Note di Pastorale Giovanile*. Torino, Leumann: Editrice LDC, 1990, N. 9, pp. 65-77.

83 Francis A. Sullivan, op. cit., p. 147.

84 Cf. Desmond A. D'Abreo, *Group Discussion & Team Building*. Bandra, Bombay: Better Yourself Books, 1993.

Naturally for those who have already done part of the journey, we will not ask them to start again from the beginning. This is a false egalitarian principle so as to erase the differences. Those people have the right to proceed toward more compelling goals. The community will help and urge them to put their gifts at the service of others.

Second, is the subject of the preparation of the itineraries: the educative community. Every community has its own resources: traditions, educators, structures, educative tools etc. Some of these resources concern more the educative side, others concern the side of education to faith. All these resources must be put together in the achievement of the global aim.⁸⁵

They move toward unity starting from diversity.

85 Cf. Riccardo Tonelli, *op. cit.*, pp. 70-79.

<u>Area</u>	<u>Aim</u>	<u>Progressive Stages</u>
1 Personal Identity	Express one's own identity by a mature relationship with others and the environment, arriving at stable and meaningful choices.	<p>1 From the diversity of experiences, to a more organised unity of the person according to the values of the Gospel.</p> <p>2 From the unity of the person, to the consciousness of oneself and the others, in the daily experience of limitations.</p> <p>3 From the consciousness of oneself, to the responsibility for oneself, the others, the environment.</p> <p>4 From the responsibility, to the ability of stable and meaningful decisions.</p>
2 Encounter with Jesus Christ	To commit oneself to follow Christ in faith and the cause of his Kingdom.	<p>1 From superficiality and distraction, to examine one's life and the mystery of God.</p> <p>2 From the examination of one's life and the mystery of God, to the interest of the encounter with Jesus in a community that tell his story.</p> <p>3 From the interest, to the encounter and communion with Jesus Christ revealer of God the Father.</p> <p>4 From the communion, to the acceptance of the cause of the Kingdom.</p>
3 Ecclesial Belonging	Take part in a responsible and active way in the Ecclesial community, in the human community.	<p>1 From a diversification of belonging, to belong to a community of youngsters.</p> <p>2 From belonging, to the sharing of values and ideals of the Christian community.</p> <p>3 From the sharing, to the building up of the ecclesial community as sacrament of salvation for all.</p> <p>4 From the building up, to the communitarian celebration of the life in the signs of the faith.</p> <p>5 From the celebration, to the active and responsible participation.</p>
4 Life as Vocation	Understand our own life as a vocation and insert it into a personal project.	<p>1 From research of meaning of one's life, to the acceptance of it.</p> <p>2 From the acceptance, to the availability of giving one's self</p> <p>3 From the availability, to the comparison of the different vocations.</p> <p>4 From the comparison, to the choice of one's own project of life.</p> <p>5 From the choice, to the progressive actualization of the vocation.</p>

7.1. AREA OF PERSONAL IDENTITY

a) AIM

Express one's own identity by a mature relationship with others and the environment, arriving at stable and meaningful choices.

The aim of this is to stress some elements we consider more relevant in comprehensive education.

It means helping the young to deepen the consciousness of each one's identity as a unifying centre of the experiences of life. This means the ability to evaluate critically the messages, experiences and solutions. It means a serious search for the meaning of our own actions and of our being. "There are many young people who, on coming to the urban areas before marriage, are exposed to sex exploitation with the result that they develop little capacity for building the trust necessary for a life commitment." ⁸⁶

It is an acceptance with realism of our own person, of our own serendipities and of our own limitations. Finally, it means organising the unity of our life according to the values inspired by the Good News.

This area aims to develop in the young an ability to have mature relations with the others and the environment.

This continuous dialogue with others and the environment happens when there is an openness to accept the others as they are, in accepting their different ways of thinking and acting, in the ability to confront our own idea with the others and to express our convictions, in the sincere will to overcome our bias, and to collaborate in a spirit of solidarity. All of this helps to set up mature relations with the others and the environment.

The young has to be enabled to make personal decisions in the ecclesial and social context. Here the young develop gradually his/her own project of life. Starting from the understanding of the direction of our own life.

⁸⁶ Boniface Wa Lele, "Family Spirituality in Africa", in *Spearhead* 70. Eldoret, Kenya: AMECEA Gaba Publications, 1982, p. 5.

Being continually questioned by the Christian community he/she makes progressive choices that are stable in their orientation.

b) PROGRESSIVE STAGES

1. From the diversity of experiences, to a more organised unity of the person according to the values of the Gospel.

"It seems important to become aware of the rapid and profound changes which are taking place in traditional Africa today, particularly the family or household is one of the most affected parts of African life. J. Mbiti seems fully aware of the thoroughness of the changes brought about by modern life with its medicine, its schools, its technology. Urbanisation has severed people from the land to which they were mystically bound. With one family, two different worlds may coexist: children attending university studies, and illiterate parents concerned mainly with cultivating their fields. The change means that individuals are cut off, and, separated from corporate morality, customs and traditional solidarity. They have no firm roots any more. ...This revolution, which affected Europe and North America three to five generations ago, is now affecting Africa, but in a speedier way. This revolution makes the traditional extended family shrink and makes the individual discover that he is alone in the midst of many; surely, it makes the individual aware of himself, but without often knowing where to go to."⁸⁷

So the common experience that the young have in an urban setting is of a social fragmentation, and consequently a personal fragility.

Contemporary Africa is witnessing violent and far-reaching social changes. At level of the society the old is giving way to the incoming changes and development. This is a new horizon open to people. The traditional homogeneous society is becoming pluralistic. The structures of the traditional society are ending with the dawn of urbanization, and so they are no longer guarantees of social stability.⁸⁸

"a) Urban planning and living do not respect the fundamental cultural values of relationships, sense of community, and respect for elders and special

87 Jac Hetsen and Holmes Siedle, "Aspects of Christian Community Building in Africa", in *Spearhead* 75. Eldoret, Kenya: AMECEA Gaba Publications, 1983, p. 7.

88 Cf. Benezeri Kisembo, op. cit., p. 188.

treatment of in-laws. The place of toilets, the absence of culturally ritual animals and birds etc. create great embarrassment.

b) Urban areas as centers for copying imitating, confusion of practices and values leading to a value-vacuum among the youth.

c) Urban areas are for the undesiderables, escapees and those who seek licence to do whatever they like amidst a strange community.

d) Urban areas are full of people of dualistic or dichotomised lives. They belong to neither Western nor African cultures. They do not learn either deeply. They are rootless and very vulnerable and culturally poor. ...Because Africa is not undergoing an industrial revolution, many people come to the city to "share" in the affluence of the rich few, through dubious means: prostitution, crime, smuggling unlicensed businesses etc. ...Because African morality is essentially guarded by the community which cares about the individual and its own - well - being, city living has very few moral restraints against people who have just met each other in the new urban setting. ...The housing policy and reality are such that they undermine family morality. Parents and children living in one room!"⁸⁹

This cultural situation is particularly felt by the young people. Only search for meaning can help the young to direct their life around some fundamental values. "In the first place the young person must accept life. This means first of all that he must accept himself. For some youngsters this is something that happens spontaneously. Finding themselves in a world of people who love them, who talk with them easily and work to build their future, be it great or small, is a great help to them. But for others this is the first great hurdle. ... The educator of the faith must then stay at their side with mind and heart, until they recognise the inestimable value of life. In this way they come to see its double character as both gift and duty. This is an indispensable step if they are to become 'subjects' of their own history, and responsible for their growth. If they are offered positive experiences, if they are helped to discern the

89 John Mary Waliggo, *Urbanization in Africa. Challenges for the Church*. Panel Discussion 15-4-1994, Lecture during the African Synod.

structural, cultural, personal and collective conditioning effects which have so far marked their lives, they come to see that change is possible, that there is a future, that is worthwhile to go on hoping."⁹⁰ Like this the young person will organise himself/herself around a centre that will give meaning to his/her different experiences. The Gospel is the root for inspiration and key of understanding of our own life.

2. From the unity of the person, to the consciousness of oneself and the others, in the daily experience of limitations.

In this process of unification the young person increases his/her consciousness of himself/herself and the others. Becoming aware of the surrounding reality he/she build's up a positive concept of himself/herself. "A positive view of oneself leads up of interpersonal relationships, and makes possible communication with others, a recognition of their value, a willing acceptance of their diversity as well as of their limitations."⁹¹ The comparison helps him/her in the identification of his/her own personality and gives him/her the possibility to understand the value of the relationship with others and the environment.

"Here there is another step forward to be made and another set of experiences to suggest, in line with the meeting between life and faith. The adult is already able to express this idea for himself, while the young person still lives in a confused fashion and with a certain amount of personal suffering. The educator's task is to stay at their side and help them to be aware of what is happening as they live through enriching experiences, of a kind that enable them to realise ideals they have thought of intensely in their imagination, such as self donation, leadership, putting service of those in great need before their own convenience".⁹²

90 Acts of the General Council of the Salesian Society of St. John Bosco, op. cit., pp.82-83.

91 Ibid., p. 83.

92 Ibid., pp. 83-84.

3. From the consciousness of oneself, to the responsibility for oneself, the others, the environment.

In the dialogue with others and the environment the young clarify ideals and values, models of life and a vision of the person and the society. The assumption of his/her personal identity helps him/her to answer and give reason for his/her own actions. He/she becomes sensible to the needs of the others and takes the risk of a journey toward the future. "Within any group of young people leaders will emerge naturally and gradually. Their talents should be nurtured and utilised by giving them responsible leadership roles. Furthermore, it is equally important to draw out the potential that may be hidden under the quiet personality types or the late bloomers. This is a sensitive stage... so extreme care should be taken to insure that each one's leadership potential is tapped. It is helpful to create a variety of opportunities through which young people can learn and develop skills and confidence. They can be trained to handle a wide range of responsibilities and allowed to perform tasks with the gentle support of an adult."⁹³

City apostolate demands strong ecumenism and religious dialogue. It aims at bringing people together. Urban apostolate should emphasize human values and human development, before Gospel message is preached. The collective effort of women organizations, youth, workers, unemployed, students, the urban poor will bring a new meaning to the urban life.⁹⁴

4. From the responsibility, to the ability of stable and meaningful decisions.

In a context where there are different models of life available, the young person responds to them according to his/her own ideals and system of values. He/she overcomes the difficulties that comes from being a "sign of contradiction", he/she makes meaningful and lasting decisions, directs his/her own life and daily activities according a fundamental option.

93 Jerry and Mary Mandry, op. cit., pp. 9-10.

94 Cf. John Mary Waliggo, op. cit.

c) ATTITUDES

- Ability to search, identify and judge values.
- Love for the truth.
- Attention to the realities
- Encounter, solidarity, dialogue, participation, collaboration, flexibility in relationship with others.
- Ability to accept limitations.
- Search and consequently find answers to the meaning of life.
- Positive attitude toward the life.
- Critical awareness.⁹⁵
- Study of the problems of evil, death, life after death.

d) EXPERIENCES.

- Of silence.
- Encounter with adults.
- Critical understanding of the messages proposed by the mass media.
- Critical understanding of his own personal experience.
- Critical analysis of the problems of community and of society.
- Social analysis.
- Contact with situations of suffering, need, illness.
- Experiences of animation.
- Activities in which they are the first protagonist and occasions to express inner abilities.
- Retelling his own particular story.
- Group discussion.⁹⁶

95 Cf. Anne Hope and Sally Timmel, *op. cit.*

96 Cf. Desmond A. D'Abreo, *op. cit.*

7.2. AREA OF THE ENCOUNTER WITH JESUS CHRIST

a) AIM

To commit oneself to follow Christ in faith and the cause of his Kingdom.

The aim of this area is to help the young to develop an understanding that a personal encounter with Jesus Christ is decisive for his/her own personal life. It helps him/her to be open to the mystery of God who operates in the history of the humanity as a loving Father, as it has been presented to us by Christ. Consequently it helps the young to follow Christ and accept the cause of his kingdom. The core to achieve this consists in a personal encounter of the young with Jesus the Lord of life. This encounter has some particular aspects such as to live in communion with the Lord. Thus friendship becomes more and more deep so that a communion of ideal and life start in the young. Jesus becomes the point of reference for evaluating, judging and acting in the daily life. This encounter is celebrated in the dialogue of the prayer and in the sacraments. In this encounter with Jesus, the perfect man, the young grow in humanity and become more human⁹⁷ Christ reveals the face of the Father. The young person realises his presence as a good and merciful Father acting in his/her personal life.

To follow Jesus means to do the will of the Father. Like Jesus to open oneself to the voice of the Spirit and to be available to realise the project of God. "It helps teens to discover God's presence in their lives, while reflecting on its meaning in terms of their relationship to God and his plan for each one. The youth are not asked to be expert on God, but to know Him; not to memorise His words, but to try to follow Him. In order to know someone, we must personally encounter that individual. ...we are invited to discover God the Father, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit through the experience of everyday living. By sharing these experiences within the community, there is a

97 Cf. *Gaudium et Spes*, op. cit., art. 12-22.

deepening encounter with the Lord of Life. He becomes central to the community where this happens. When young people encounter, reflect on, and understand their own faith journey and are able to articulate its meaning to the rest of their community, significant education to the faith takes place. Once they have discovered God's gentle hand in their lives, when they meet Jesus as a friend, they can proclaim the Good News in words that are understood by their peers."⁹⁸

⁹⁸ Jerry and Mary Mandry, *op cit.*, pp. 5-7.

b) PROGRESSIVE STAGES

1. From superficiality and distractions, to the examination one's life and the mystery of God.

One of the dangers in our society, in the urban context is to become fragmented and live life as a mixture of different experiences. The danger is to remain on the surface. "Our service as educators to the faith certainly cannot stop at the level of human growth... Education to the faith requires to go further towards the meeting and acceptance of a revealed event: human life attains its fullness only in Jesus Christ. 'I came that they may have life' (Jn. 10:10)... But the encounter with Jesus is not just any kind of meeting. Education to the faith tries to prepare it, offer it, and deepen it so that it may be a personal meeting in faith. Quite frequently, in fact, one comes across young people who are attracted to the person of Jesus. ...but their contact with Christ is often just fleeting and superficial. ... What kind of path is needed to get youth into deep contact with Christ? Which aspects of his mystery should be emphasised?."⁹⁹ Human existence carries in itself seeds that reveal the mystery of a person and moves to question oneself on the meaning of things and life. What emerges is a search for the meaning of each one's experiences, events, and the wish to know more about God.

2. From the examination of one's meaning of life, to interest in the encounter with Jesus in a community that tells his story.

The fundamental role of witnessing by a community is clear from the starting of the Christian church in the Acts of the apostles. The apostles witnessed the risen Christ. This is a central mandate of our church also today. "Unfortunately, in practice, many Christians have not fully realised their role in the effective fulfillment of this mission. Most of them do not see themselves as being responsible for this mission of the church to witness to Jesus. Can the Christian community embrace its people, carry them and support them to the

⁹⁹ Acts of the General Council of the Salesian Society of St. John Bosco, op. cit., pp. 86-87.

degree that they can make the gospel values their own and act on them even to the point of risking their lives? According to the examples of witness in Acts, the early Christian communities were able to do that."¹⁰⁰

This dimension is strongly centred on the witness of Christians. The believing community has to live in faith her own life, enlightened by the Word so that can in truth instigate and sustain the faith of the youth. Coming in contact with a genuine evangelical experience the young person will desire and seek for it.¹⁰¹ Their need for answers on the meaning of life finds in Christ, the Lord of life, manifested through the daily happenings a response. The Lord Jesus becomes "the other" in which one confronts oneself. "One target, that requires a corresponding nucleus of content and experiences, is the recognition of the signs of Christ the Saviour, his presence in the believing community and his effect on human history. These signs can be found:

- in the persons who make up the community
- in the attitudes produced in them by the memory of Christ
- in Christian devotion celebrated in a worthy manner.

... The signs can speak and transmit messages. Pedagogical skill is needed to choose, prepare and present them in such a way that they speak strongly to the sensitivity of youth. ...Recognition of the signs can be a predisposing factor for understanding the witness of Christ's disciples. The human and faith-revealing gestures of people close to the young constitute the first call to faith. It is not a question only of religious actions, but also of the willingness to talk with young people and the ability to get involved in the salvation of the poor."¹⁰²

100 Terese J. Zemale, *op. cit.*, pp. 33-34.

101 Cf. Acts of the General Council of the Salesian Society of St. John Bosco, *op. cit.*, p. 89.

102 *Ibid.*, p. 88.

3. From interest, to the encounter and communion with Jesus Christ revealer of God the Father.

The encounter with Christ moves to a deeper relationship with him. In the communion of the prayer, in the listening of his word, in the sharing of the heart, in the openness to others, this encounter becomes more deep. It is in Christ that God reveals His mystery. "Adherence to the person of Christ follows from this proclamation and discovery: from Christ who is proclaimed. The journey of faith leads to Christ who is loved, contemplated, and finally followed with the attitude of a disciple. It is not a gradual process throughout. The Master may indicate new paths or shortcuts; he may call for a clear break in precise situations, departures from the past, and a relaunching line with the strong demands of the Gospel."¹⁰³

4. From communion, to the acceptance of the cause of the Kingdom.

True communion with Christ opens the young to the acceptance of his cause. The Father sends him to announce to the poor the Good News: The kingdom of God is among us. The Gospel of the beatitudes constitutes the centre of the life of the youth and move them to witness Christ to the other youngsters. Following Christ "...calls for a new understanding of reality and sharing of the overwhelming preoccupation of Jesus for the Kingdom of God. ...practising the faith implies, finally, the laying down of roots in the matter of attitudes and behaviour, sustained by corresponding convictions. ...The faith which recognises the presence and love of the Father flourishes in a filial attitude towards him. Prayer is the language given us by the Spirit to approach the Father, and must be developed in the various forms that Christian tradition has unfolded."¹⁰⁴

103 Ibid p 89

104 Ibid., p. 90.

c) ATTITUDES.

- readiness to search and listen.
- Esteem for the person of Christ and His challenges.
- Research, study, revitalizing one's life with the message of Jesus Christ through the newness of life.
- Listening and discerning the Word of God.
- Research, listening, and comparing one's life with the witness of the ecclesial community.
- Frequent celebration of the Sacraments.
- Reflection and prayer.
- Understanding daily happenings in the light of the Gospel.

d) EXPERIENCES.

- Small Christian Communities.
- Study and encounter with particular witnesses.
- Life of communion and concrete service in the community.
- Liturgical involvement and service in the community.
- Study of the bible answer to the different questions other denominations present to the Catholics.

7.3. AREA OF ECCLESIAL BELONGING

a) AIM

Take part in a responsible and active way in the Ecclesial community, and the human community.

The aim of this area is to help the young person at large to orient his/her life to a deeper belonging and a more active participation in the community. This implies:

- sharing of ideals, values, plans with the community.
- Building the community as a sacrament of salvation.
- Celebrating the sacraments as a feast of the realisation of the Kingdom.

To reach this aim, first of all, the young should feel themselves a living part of the ecclesial community and with the others also, in dialogue and discernment in a common search for ideals and values. The young person who grows in the community with special attention to the signs of the time coming from the society, is ready to receive, accept or refuse the values proposed. He/she assesses the values and give his/her contribution towards the promotion of the person and of the society.

Secondly, the young need to be guided in order to have an experience of Church in the Christian community which is a living cell of the local and universal Church. In the common listening to the Word of God, in the liturgical celebrations, in prayer, in charity etc., the community manifests herself as a sacrament of salvation. The young in this way are called to give testimony of their own faith, hope and charity. Their daily life, in the many situations of happiness and sorrows, of fatigue and rest, of success and failure finds in the sacraments significance and deep meaning. Life celebrated in this way becomes an epiphany of the Kingdom, that is realised here and now, as an anticipation of his everlasting feast.

Finally, the young are called to give their active and responsible contribution to the society and the ecclesial community. They are guided to

be protagonists in the community, putting at the service of all, their gifts and abilities, assuming with responsibility the tasks given to them by the community. They walk with the others in the building-up of the Church more and more, and by being faithful to the Lord, in building a more just society.

b) PROGRESSIVE STAGES.

1. From a diversity of belonging, to belonging to a community of youngsters.

In the social environment of a city we find many groups and movements as an answer to different interests. Not least is the participation in the different churches. This can be of danger for the identity of the youngsters. It is very necessary to educate them to the sense of belonging to the youth community, so that they may perceive the value of participation. In community the young learn to dialogue and encounter others and other groups. They learn to insert themselves in the community. "The membership of young people in the Church does not immediately attain its full maturity. If this is not well understood by educators and pastors and is not wisely developed, it will not get beyond the stage of a general interest, external adherence, combined with the autonomous maintaining of a certain distance. Today's youngsters are involved in a real but limited membership of many groups and organisations. Adherence to the Church can mature as union of mind and heart only if the Church is perceived as communion with God and fellow men in faith and charity, as sign and instrument of the Kingdom. Institutions, in fact, be they civil or religious, receive only partial and external adherence. It is taken for granted that the individual surpasses them in value and destiny. Only if the Church is seen as centred on persons- the person of Jesus Christ, of the believers, and of those to be saved - rather than on organisation and legislation, can it give rise to decisions of faith".¹⁰⁵

105 Ibid , p. 91.

2. From belonging, to the sharing of values and ideals of the Christian community.

The Church is the best environment to meet Christ. "Moved by the living witness of the Christian community or of some believer, the young person matures through a full sharing in the 'people of God'."¹⁰⁶ Today it is difficult for the young to accept values that are not a fruit of their personal discovery. They need a community of reference where their choices and decisions mature. In this decision-making process, the young are helped by the youth community. "...the need experienced by youth for friendship and deep interpersonal relationships, for sharing and solidarity bring out their sense of festivity and their taste for being together. The educators accept these values, deepen them, share them by taking part in youthful manifestations of them, and try to give them still greater depth. ...Another batch of ecclesial attitudes and content develop expression in the youth group, where the youngster feels personally at home and worth something. He frequently experiences the joy of sharing, and becomes open to communication and responsibility in an atmosphere of mutual trust. In this way he also learns understanding and forgiveness."¹⁰⁷

The youth community will offer them ideals and values, as fruit of a journey the community has done. The foundation are Gospel and Tradition. These are offered in an organic project/plan. The youth community live this plan in a bigger context of the ecclesial community. The ecclesial community lives this plan in a broader setting of the human community. "When these groups are inserted in broad educative or Christian communities, involved in a common project, they already constitute a practical experience of Church, and a greater awareness develops. Eventually comes the discovery of the Church as a deeper communion of universal service. But this happens only when in the community there are living signs of the ecclesial reality: the effort at communion by individuals, the complementary presence of different

¹⁰⁶ Ibid , p. 92.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., p. 92.

vocations, gospel assessments of events that take place, and the celebration of faith. Useful too are meetings with other believers, contact with other groups and communities with whom experiences can be exchanged, and common projects for social and apostolic involvement can be shared. It is also a help to have a sufficient knowledge of Church history which reveals the presence and action of Jesus who continually raises up in his Church new forces of renewal and holiness."¹⁰⁸

3. From sharing, to the building up of the ecclesial community as sacrament of salvation for all.

Generally the tendency is to leave to few the task of the community building. The Christian community is called in its totality to be a sign of the presence of the saving God, with a personal and communitarian testimony. The Church, missionary for all human beings, acts through the local community. The local community in the charity and service to the others becomes the leaven of the Gospel for the human community. The positive experience of young people taking part in the life of the Christian community increases the sense of belonging to the Church.

4. From building up, to the communitarian celebration of life in the signs of the faith.

Today more than yesterday there is need of celebrate life in its daily signs. The Gospel as Word of God become a way to discern and understand the events of our daily life. Some experiences as solidarity, forgiveness, sharing, difficulties, witnessing, love, sickness find in the sacrament their deep meaning, and become source of life.

An intense sharing in the mystery of the Church is realized through prayer, celebration of the Word and sacraments. The mediatory role of the Church becomes more clear in prayer and it is manifested in our daily life. We

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., p. 92.

celebrate these mysteries of Christ with the young. Young people need to be educated to participate in the sacramental life of the Church and its benefits on them, otherwise there would not be any appreciation of the great merit it has on the life of every Christian. The key to achieve this is to educate to the foundation's attitude of our Christian celebrations: silence, a listening attitude, praise and adoration. Due attention should also be given to the fact that there is a close relationship between the celebration of the sacraments and life in its actual state. Both education to celebration and education in celebration are in fact equally necessary.¹⁰⁹

Catechesis on confirmation and matrimony acquire an important function.

5. From celebration, to active and responsible participation.

The result of this journey is an active and mature commitment in the life of the community with a spirit of service. The young take part like this in the elaboration of the educative pastoral plan. The young careful to the signs of the times are available to take responsibility and participate in the ecclesial as in the social sphere. In this way they become jointly responsible as lay people involved in the building of the ecclesial community.

109 Cf. Ibid , p. 94.

c) ATTITUDES.

To know the needs of the area.

- Interest and contact with other groups and ecclesial or territorial associative realities (scouts, deanery meetings etc.).
- Interest and participation in the building-up of the communitarian life.
- Appreciation and esteem of the thinking of others.

d) EXPERIENCES.

- Assumption of ecclesial and civil responsibilities.
- Possibilities of encounter with other groups.
- Liturgical celebrations and listening of the word of God.
- Study and knowledge of the mission of the Church, of her social doctrine, and methodology of intervention.
- Concrete commitment toward solving problems of the territory.
- Voluntary service to those more in need in the community, eg: sick, lonely etc.
- Bible schools and catechesis for young people.
- Small Christian communities.
- Theological formation.
- Participation in feasts, meetings, encounters, congress.

7.4. AREA OF LIFE AS VOCATION

a) AIM

To understand our own life as a vocation and express it as a personal project.

The last aim stresses the need for young people to be oriented towards recognising their call to a mission in the Church and Society; to answer with faith and choose with courage and generosity; to live God's call in a prophetic way and to realize their own profession and ministry with ethical consistency. "We educate the young to develop their own human and baptismal vocation by a daily life progressively inspired and unified by the Gospel. Faith cannot be reduced to mere intellectual assent. The believer confesses the truth by committing his own life to the cause of God, the Saviour of mankind. The Christian vocation can be understood only with reference to the Kingdom, which is at one and the same time God's gift and the result of man's endeavour. God is the main agent. He wills the life and happiness of his children and realises his will in many different ways.

They in turn are invited to accept this gift in complete availability, even to the extent of putting their own lives on the line for the sake of God's plan. The Christian therefore lives his vocation recognising God's dominion and love, and committing his own powers in radical fashion. He acknowledges that everything is God's gift and that we are 'only servants'. But he also recognises the need for hard daily effort to overcome the power of death and consolidate life. He is therefore a true disciple and friend of Christ, because available to do with him the Father's will in serving men, even to the extent of the cross".¹¹⁰

110 Ibid., p. 95.

Feed with the choice of vocation the young must be helped to journey through these stages:

1 - Recognise what it means to be called.

He/she discovers his/her life as a gift, has knowledge of his/her personal gifts and is sensible to the call and need of the community. In this way he/she discovers the mission the Lord is calling him/her to.

2 - Answer with hope and a determinate choice.

Decide his/her project of life from among the different proposals in the ecclesial and secular sphere. To them he/she gives his/her personal answer.

3 - Live God's call in a prophetic way.

He/she is aware of being at the service of the God of life, and of the original contribution God is calling him/her to make. The young person puts his/her creativity, passions, gifts and so forth, in realising his/her vocation.

4 - To act with consistency.

In front of inconsistencies and wrong scales of values the young become strong in their convictions and judge according to the values of the Gospel.

b) PROGRESSIVE STAGES

1. From the research of meaning of one's life, to the acceptance of it.

The objective of this dimension is to help young people to discover their own niche in the building of the Kingdom and to will it with joy and determination. The young find in themselves and in all human beings the quest for meaning in life. Many answers are given, and often are contradictory. For us Christians life is a gift to be recognised and accepted. From the happenings of daily life the young person is called to understand the meaning of life and discover it as a vocation. This means to welcome, appreciate and develop this life till its fullness.

"Every youngster has something good within him, and by working on it you can get great results. In the first place the positive element has to be drawn out, through a patient work of attention to himself, comparison with others, listening and reflection. From this joyful discovery of his own resources, albeit with limitations and hurdles to be overcome, there arises the desire to bring to fruition the gifts he has received. They are: in the first place life itself, the guiding principle of the entire journey of faith, which must be learned and managed; health; intelligence and feeling; the human and religious patrimony of the family; friendships; material goods; the difficulties that help in overcoming oneself, etc. The youngster opens his eyes on himself and his surroundings, and discovers the bond of solidarity that links people with each other."¹¹¹

¹¹¹ Ibid., p. 96.

2. From acceptance, to the availability of giving oneself.

The response to the gift of life is the personal commitment in the availability of giving oneself. Following the example of Christ, the youngster develops this readiness by attitudes of generosity according the gospel saying "it is not anyone who says to me 'Lord Lord,' who will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the person who does the will of my Father" (Mt. 7:21).

The young person is also ready to make sacrifices in the development of a sincere and respectful personal relationship. Especially in regard to persons of the other sex. His mature life style inspired by evangelical purity is against any form of hedonism. In the spirit of the beatitudes he lives with the joy and trust that comes only from God, for the realisation and possession of the Kingdom. "It is not enough to have gifts and possibilities. With these gifts one has to attain true happiness. And this is where the first different experiences of sharing come in. The youngster trains himself to generosity and availability. These are two attitudes that give rise to joy: to gain life you have to give it. At the same time the foundations are laid for a solid Christian experience as described in the two earlier dimensions, founded on the meeting with Christ that can become a 'call and invitation', and on the perception of the Church as a mission in the world, carried out through many ways and means."¹¹²

3. From availability to the comparison, of the different vocations.

The openness of oneself to service in the church and in society takes concrete form in a life commitment. St. Paul reminds us that there are many charisms and ministries at work in the building-up of the Body of Christ. Similarly in the community of human being there are many tasks and functions. The young recognise the proposals of life around them, recognise the gift they have received from God, and from this they open themselves to concrete and generous answers. They face with courage all the different

112 Ibid., p 96.

situations they meet. With seriousness they are ready to discover, evaluate, and appreciate the possible and diverse vocational choices.

"And so we come to the point of a vocational suggestion. Through catechesis young people can be led through listening to the word and contact with models, to reflection on their own vocation. This enables them to see what is the common vocation of everyone and what different forms there are for serving the kingdom. The youngster gazes at this panorama with attention and responds: 'What shall I do Lord?'. He wonders along what paths the call to offer his own life will be realised. And this starts up an interior dialogue in which each one must both listen and respond. Explicit suggestions by the one following the youngster will help him to see new possibilities for his own existence. The call comes in fact for some from the presence of people whose lives are models of meaningfulness and who are richly endowed with gospel qualities. But there are others who declare that they would never have interpreted the call had they not been given an explicit invitation to commit themselves to a certain kind of life as lay Christians, religious or priests."¹¹³

4. From comparison, to the choice of one's own project of life.

In discernment and prayer the young start a journey to a definitive project of life. To facilitate in this choice he/she finds help in a spiritual guide and in the support of the community. This choice of the project begins to be realised in daily life and little by little comes clear. In this way the project of life becomes the existential expression of the call of our Lord. Supported by faith in the Lord the young are able to choose journeys that are not often common, for the building-up of society and the Christian community. "When vocational suggestions are listened to, they prompt a process of discernment. The young person assesses himself and the gifts he has received in relationship to the suggestions made to him and the services and ministries of which he has a basic knowledge. He does this not only through rational analysis. He lives the

113 Ibid., p. 97.

call with generosity as an invitation from the Lord, and tries to say 'Yes' from the depths of his conscience. He knows that the vocation will involve his whole person: his preferences, relationships, energies and dynamism. It is a delicate process. His whole personal universe is in upheaval and is reorganising itself around an option. This does not depend only on natural interests and aptitudes, but on his willingness to recognise the presence of God in his life and of the freedom he has to accept the invitation of grace. All the elements of the spiritual life concur in the discernment to produce a favourable result, but to some such as the following must be given greater weight:

- prayer and meditation which enable one to pass from a superficial view of life to something deeper within it: the individual comes to grips with himself and feels more easily the call God is addressing to him;
- personal guidance or spiritual direction which can suggest motives, helps the youngster to read the signs of his own life; provides light to see how the vocation fits into his life, helps him to verify his path for growth; and encourages to overcome his dependence on external stimuli and on the educator himself;
- the apostolic commitment which helps in the maturing of the love which becomes self-donation in the Christian community and in society."¹¹⁴

5. From choice, to the progressive actuation of the vocation.

The youngster finds the courage to progressively carry into effect his/her own project with correspondent choices. The faithfulness of the Lord's call find in the response of the young the same attitude he/she face with trust the difficulties that can come.

The young person faces daily experiences with optimism and joy. He/she is sustained by his/her own faith and is committed to the proclamation of the Gospel in the different situations of life.

114 Ibid., p. 98.

In the progressive development of his/her personal vocation, the young person realises that he/she is walking with other believers with different vocations and charisms to realise the universal vocation to holiness.

c) ATTITUDES

- Ability to believe in the positive values of life.
- Ability to wonder at life.
- Generosity, fidelity, gratuitousness, altruistic concerns.
- Ability to listen, question oneself, be informed.
- Promotion of one's own life and that of others.
- Discernment.
- Love for life.

d) EXPERIENCES

- Encounters, debates, discussions.
- Study and sharing on themes such as mission in the Church, Peace, Non-Violence, Vocation.
- Knowledge of the dynamics in the vocational discernment process, of the different state of life and charisma.
- Systematic vocational catechesis.
- Spiritual direction.
- Encounters with meaningful communities and persons.
- Premarital courses.
- Active presence in pro-life centres.
- Activities in all those centres helping problematic situations in the society as: Drugs addict centres, alcoholic centres, AIDS counselors centre, prisons.

CONCLUSION

Many educators had no idea either of an Educative Pastoral Plan or of an Itinerary, yet they have been educating young people. For some, it may be the first time that they hear or read about an itinerary. To them it might appear to be a difficult and problematic demand.

But it is to be borne in mind that an itinerary helps educators to be more efficient and enhance the quality of what they are doing or want to do.

I have neither the expertise nor the cultural background to dole out an educational Pastoral Plan or an Itinerary for the African context. My aim is simply to put forward a useful proposal that could be of immense help to any one who intends to be an educator of the faith. One thing is sure, that the itineraries are not a ready made tool to fit every situation, but they are to be modelled and remodelled according to given situations. The educative community is the heart of an itinerary as it progresses towards life in Jesus Christ. It is in the community that the educator lives his ministry with joy and responsibility.

The path described by an Itinerary must be followed in praxis. It would be of no use if an Itinerary remains only in paper. If we want to educate, then the role of the Itinerary cannot be ignored. This does not mean that by making an Itinerary we would solve all the problems that might be encountered; it would rather, call for a greater sense of responsibility, to get attuned to the voice of the spirit and a renewed faith in the gift of God.

The Itinerary does not guarantee success. To educate in general and to educate to the faith particularly, is an art. It calls for wisdom, discernment and knowledge. A person is a mystery. Since he/she is mystery it is not possible to plan every aspect of the educative process exhaustively. The mystery of the human person is the mystery of freedom rooted in the power of Love.

The proper use of the Itinerary requires also a right mentality. There should be an openness towards it, otherwise, we can fall into the wrong use of them as I have said in the beginning of this work. It requires openness to the challenges that will come out during the Journey, openness also to challenge ourselves and our preconcept.

A mere instrumental use of it will nullify its meaning and possible results. People use computers to solve their problems of daily work. It helps us to organize our resources and work effectively and efficiently. Somebody could say: "the computer does many things". It would be better to say the computer allows us to do many things if we know how to use it. A use of the computer that is merely instrumental will reduce a lot its capacities. The risk is to lose time and energy doing poorly a numerical operation that we could do rapidly with paper and pen. Used with the right "computer" mentality the computer becomes a precious help in our work. Therefore, a computer in the hands of a computer specialist becomes a precious instrument that can do things faster than otherwise. So, also an Itinerary in the hands of one who is willing to use it with the right mentality can be benefited much more than for a beginner.

Finally I consider the Itinerary as a map in which we can locate our position on the Journey, indispensable for today's faith education . It acts as a path that one needs to take to search for the destination in faith formation. It shows with clarity the path, and establishes the destination to be reached.

*"Some people will never learn anything
because they grasp everything too soon.*

*Wisdom, after all, is not a station you arrive at but a manner of traveling.
If you travel too fast you will miss the scenery."*

Anthony de Mello.

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