

**INSTITUTE OF SPIRITUALITY AND RELIGIOUS FORMATION**

**TANGAZA UNIVERSITY COLLEGE**

**THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF EASTERN AFRICA**

**MERCY JEROTICH KIPRUTO**

**ADM. No: 1600688**

**EVANGELII GAUDIUM AS A TOOL FOR FRATERNAL LIFE AMONG  
THE SISTERS OF ST. JOSEPH OF TARBES IN NGANDO,  
NAIROBI ARCHDIOCESE**

**SUPERVISOR: DR. PETRI ASSENGA**

**A Long Essay Submitted in partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for a  
Diploma in Spirituality**

**NAIROBI, 2018**

## **DEDICATION**

I thank the Lord for the great and precious vocation He has granted to each and every sister of the sisters of St. Joseph of Tarbes unto His vineyard, to live together in communion and for communion towards evangelizing His word of Love, through Fraternity. This work is dedicated to these sisters as a gratitude to God for the gift of the vocation lived in community.

## EPIGRAPH

“Great was their Joy when they found themselves together” (*Les Quatre Cahiers*, The Sisters of St. Joseph of Tarbes, 6).

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I take this chance to thank God for the gift of good health; of mind and body. I also remain indebted to Him for His care, protection and abundance of graces, which have enabled me to carry out this research effectively. May His holy name be glorified always.

I would also wish to express my heartfelt gratitude to Hilton Foundation under the courtesy of Asec-Hesa fraternity, for having granted me the scholarship to pursue my studies, May God bless you abundantly. To my community Superior; Sr. Josephine Kwenga and Junior Mistress; Sr. Agnes Wanjiku, for helping me to carry out this research through their encouragement, I say thank you very much. I also admit the support received from the sisters in the congregation, more especially those with whom I live in Ngando community, in Nairobi, for their advice and ideas in bettering my writing. I also wish to recognize all the scholars of the books I cited and consulted.

I equally extend my gratitude to my Provincial; Sr. Anastacia Kamwitha and the councilors, for granting me the chance to do a Diploma in Spirituality and Religious Formation at Tangaza University College.

I am also grateful to Dr. Petri Assenga, for having accepted to supervise this research. It was tedious but with determination, he journeyed with me well. Thank you for the support, availability and advice in improving on my work. In the same way, I would like to thank Rev. Dr. Jude Chisanga, for having accepted to be the reader of my work. Thank you so much and God bless you.

I thank the Institute of Spirituality and Religious Formation, for the great support it gave me towards my personal formation and studies in various ways. I feel I have grown in different dimensions, that is: spiritually, intellectually and socially, as far as my religious life is concerned. I equally thank all the Lecturers who took me through the studies, together with my fellow students, for their support towards the achievements of my studies. May God bless you all.

**STUDENT’S DECLARATION**

I, the undersigned, declare that this long essay is my original work achieved through my personal reading, scientific research method and critical reflection. It is submitted in a partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Diploma in Spirituality. It has never been submitted to any other college or university for academic credit. All sources have been cited in full and acknowledged.

Signed:

.....

Name of Student: **MERCY JEROTICH KIPRUTO**

Date: .....

This long essay has been submitted for examination with my approval as the college supervisor:

Signed: .....

Name of the Supervisor: **DR. PETRI ASSENGA**

Date .....

**Table of Contents**

DEDICATION .....	i
EPIGRAPH .....	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	iii
STUDENT’S DECLARATION .....	iv
ABBREVIATIONS .....	vii
GENERAL INTRODUCTION .....	1
Background of the Study.....	1
Purpose and Aim of the study.....	2
Problem Statement.....	2
Justification of the Study .....	4
Scope and Delimitation of the study.....	4
Possible Research Questions .....	4
Methodology of the study .....	4
CHAPTER ONE .....	6
FRATERNAL LIVING ACCORDING TO THE SISTERS OF ST. JOSEPH OF TARBES.....	6
1.0. Introduction .....	6
1.1. A Brief History of the Congregation.....	6
1.1.1. Interior Dynamism .....	8
1.1.2. Simplicity.....	9
1.1.3. The Communitarian Aspect of Life.....	11
1.1.4. Hospitality .....	12
1.1.5. Solidarity with the Poor .....	13
1.1.6. Constant Search for Conversion .....	13
1.2. Life now as far as Fraternal Living is concerned .....	14
1.3. Successes.....	15
1.3.1. Living the Gospel Values .....	16
1.3.2. The spirit of sharing with everybody .....	16
1.3.3. Inner Freedom to serve others .....	17
1.4. Challenges that Blocks Fraternal Living .....	18
1.4.1. Culture.....	19
1.4.2. Materialism .....	21
1.4.3. Technology.....	22
1.4.5. Individualism .....	23

1.4.6. Competition and Comparison .....	24
1.5 Conclusion .....	25
CHAPTER TWO .....	26
FRATERNAL LIFE AS EXPOSED BY <i>EVANGELII GAUDIUM</i> .....	26
2.0. Introduction .....	26
2.1. Joy Ever New, Joy which is shared .....	26
2.1.1. A Church that goes forth.....	27
2.1.2. A Mother with an Open Heart .....	28
2.2. Some challenges of today’s world .....	29
2.2.1. Economy of exclusion .....	29
2.2.2. New idolatry of money .....	30
2.2.3. The inclusion of the poor in the society.....	31
2.2.4. The common good and peace in society .....	33
2.3. Time is greater than space.....	34
2.3.1. Unity prevails over conflict .....	35
2.3.2. Realities are more important than ideas .....	37
2.3.3. The whole is greater than the part .....	38
2.4. Conclusion.....	40
CHAPTER THREE .....	41
FRATERNAL LIVING ACCORDING TO THE SCRIPTURES, CHURCH AND CONGREGATION’S DOCUMENTS	
.....	41
3.0. Introduction .....	41
3.1. The Bible as a source of Fraternal Enrichment .....	42
3.1.1. The Old Testament.....	42
3.1.2. The New Testament .....	45
3.2. The Encyclicals of the Pope.....	47
3.3. The Teaching of the Church on Fraternal Life.....	48
3.4. The Sisters of St. Joseph of Tarbes’ Teaching about Fraternal Living.....	51
3.5. Conclusion .....	54
CHAPTER FOUR .....	55
EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS .....	55
4.0. Introduction .....	55
4.1. Need for Unity in Diversity.....	55

4.2. Complementing one another.....	57
4.3. Maturity in Technology Usage .....	58
4.4. Being Others' Centered.....	59
4.5. Reconciliation.....	60
4.6. The Passion and Interest of Reading.....	61
GENERAL CONCLUSION.....	62
BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	67

## **ABBREVIATIONS**

Jn.	John
Mt.	Mathew
Lk.	Luke
Eph.	Ephesians
Gal.	Galatians
1Cor.	1Corinthians
Act.	Acts of Apostles
Ez.	Ezekiel
Lev.	Leviticus
Ps.	Psalms
Gen.	Genesis
Ex.	Exodus
C.C.L	Code of Canon Law
R.M	Redemptoris Missio
V.C	Vita Consecrata
D.V	Dei Verbum
S.J.T	Sisters of St. Joseph of Tarbes
C.C.C	Catechism of the Catholic Church
XVI	Sixteen

## GENERAL INTRODUCTION

### Introduction

This study is done in the light of *Evangelii Gaudium*, aiming at finding ways and means of supporting the efforts made in improving the quality of fraternal living among the sisters of Saint Joseph of Tarbes, particularly in Ngando, Nairobi Archdiocese. This is because fraternity is in the heart of the Church in trying to express an ideal religious community.

The first chapter deals with the fraternal life of the congregation, from the past to the present time, with its achievements and challenges. The second chapter focuses on fraternal life in summary as exposed by *Evangelii Gaudium*. The third chapter endeavors to study the teaching of the Scriptures, Church's and the Congregation's documents in trying to understand fraternal life. The fourth chapter sums up the entire work and gives an evaluation and some recommendations on the ways and means of improving and deepening the spirit of communion/ fraternal living among the sisters in perspective.

### Background of the Study

The community of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Tarbes is located in Ngando in Nairobi Archdiocese. It is engaged in various kinds of apostolates. These are: teaching, medical care, social work and various responsibilities within the community. Fraternal life is fundamental to each institute as it unites all members into the special family of Christ (CCL 602; 109). This is true because where a community is, the spirit of God is there and vice versa, thus embracing the abundance of God's graces which necessitates individuals to lead a fraternal life. The Sisters of Saint Joseph of Tarbes, through their Charism live a fraternal life with their fellow sisters, cherishing and acknowledging their presence.

Communion as their charism, is the love of the father and brethren. It is through communion that as consecrated Sisters of Saint Joseph of Tarbes, they open themselves to others without any exception. Through different gifts, talents, strengths and limitations, they are able to compliment and appreciate one another. Faith, conviction and commitment will always impel them towards perfecting fraternity in the communities and various kinds of apostolates.

The sisters endeavor to live their commitment to God in the consecrated life with faith, conviction and humility in the daily events of life; they hold communion in high esteem. It is the love of God poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit from which religious communities take their origin and build a true family gathered together in the Lord's name. Thus, "we are called to recommit ourselves to living our consecration radically and fraternal life in faith."<sup>1</sup> In this way, the religious will be able to overcome the barriers and so strive to perfect this in community life.

### **Purpose and Aim of the study**

The main purpose of the research is to show what *Evangelii Gaudium* teaches on fraternal life. In addition, the study looks at the extent to which the teaching of the document could supplement fraternal living among the Sisters of Saint Joseph of Tarbes.

### **Problem Statement**

*Evangelii Gaudium* presents fraternal living as a fundamental value to all religious institutes. There is no religious life without fraternal living. In the modern time, there are many challenges which put fraternal living at risk. Competition, accumulation of material goods, struggle

---

<sup>1</sup>Sisters of St. Joseph of Tarbes, 3<sup>rd</sup> Provincial Chapter act of Kenyan Province, 10.

for power and self-centeredness impede the nurturing of fraternal living in general. This does not exempt the Sisters of St Joseph of Tarbes in Ngando, Nairobi Archdiocese.

Although it is their charism to live and build communion, the Sisters of St. Joseph of Tarbes face enormous challenges. There is a possibility that the Sisters might be divided by their cultural backgrounds, tribalism, negative effects of globalization (technology), consumerism and similar challenges which make individual sisters not to value the well-being of others. “As children of the same God and as people made in the image and likeness of God, we are to submit to one another in humility and love just as the triune Godhead is subject to one another.”<sup>2</sup>

### **Study Objectives**

**The following are the objectives of the study:**

1. To explore the understanding of fraternal living on the level of the Congregation;
2. To analyze fraternal living according to *Evangelii Gaudium*;
3. To look at the Scriptures, Church’s and Congregation’s teaching on fraternal living.

---

<sup>2</sup> Sisters of St. Joseph of Tarbes, *5<sup>th</sup> Provincial Chapter act Kenyan Province*, 7.

## **Justification of the Study**

“Fraternal communion is born out of our vital communion with God. Where there is no love, there is no community, for it is love that builds communion of persons.”<sup>3</sup> This is true because fraternity does not produce perfect relationships but welcomes limitations of all and takes them to heart and prayers like a wound inflicted on the commandment of love. I discovered that the sisters are bound to living fraternal life in their religious life. Therefore, it is my hope that the research from this study will help the sisters to deepen and share fraternal love through their vowed lives.

## **Scope and Delimitation of the study**

I shall mainly focus on the professed members of the Sisters of Saint Joseph of Tarbes - Ngando in Nairobi. However, my research will be limited to fraternal life according to *Evangelii Gaudium*.

## **Possible Research Questions**

The following are the possible research questions:

1. What is the understanding of fraternal life on the level of the Congregation?
2. How does *Evangelii Gaudium* address the issue of fraternal living?
3. How could the Scriptures, Church and Congregation help us to understand fraternal living among the sisters?

## **Methodology of the study**

In this research, the pastoral cycle method is used, especially in analyzing the Church document on *Evangelii Gaudium*. Likewise, various books relevant to the topic, internet,

---

<sup>3</sup> G. KAITHOLIL, *Communion in Community*, 23.

congregation's documents and the bible have been used. Having been in the religious life for some time, I shall also use my personal experiences.

## CHAPTER ONE

### FRATERNAL LIVING ACCORDING TO THE SISTERS OF ST. JOSEPH OF TARBES

#### 1.0. Introduction

It is in the community that the sisters are able to live the fullness of fraternal life. This is the reason why they have been called to share in the ministry of Christ. Good community life is as a result of the quality of relationships among members of the community, hence enriching the community. A “community becomes a place where we are fashioned and molded as we yield to the sculptor’s hammer of each other, to be transformed into the image of Christ”<sup>4</sup>. Through this, the charism of communion bounds the sisters to be witnesses of this reality.

#### 1.1. A Brief History of the Congregation

The Congregation of the Sisters of Saint Joseph of Tarbes was founded in the hamlet of Cantaus, in the sector of Tuzaget in the year 1843. The beginnings were as wonderful as they were modest. “When God wants to show that a work comes from Him, he reduces it to complete powerlessness and then he acts”<sup>5</sup>. This is so because He chose six young pious girls who responded to the call at the same time and wished to serve God in their lives. Their burning desire pushed them to share with the priest so that he could help them to realize their dream.

Indeed, the priest listened to their desire and this became the beginning of their journey in discovering the will of God in and through their lives. “Great was their happiness when they found themselves together”.<sup>6</sup> The spirit of communion sprung the very moment they came together and lived in the house of the priest which had been given to them. None of them was educated, all were

---

<sup>4</sup> J. MERCY, Re: Reflection on Joseph is the perfect model of strength and faith”.

<sup>5</sup> *Notes on the Origin of the Congregation of the Sisters of Saint Joseph of Tarbes*, 1.

<sup>6</sup> *Les Quatre Cahiers of St. Joseph of Tarbes*, 6.

naïve but God chose them to embrace contemplation and communitarian life in order that He could reveal to them the goodness of His love. Through this, they were able to “Share it in fraternal relationship in the image of the Trinity.”<sup>7</sup>

The foundresses lived and shared in the presence of God-Trinity which led them to fraternal communion. “They gave themselves to one another in simplicity and humility.”<sup>8</sup> They expressed this in words, actions and deeds which were not so great but in small ways. They made themselves available to the needs of the milieu which sprang from their experience of God. That is why they began to spread to other regions of the world; for the same mission of communion with all.

Just like a pumpkin plant which grows and spreads as it produces fruits, the congregation too not only rendered good services but also drew more girls to the vineyard of the Lord. They ventured into all continents. This enabled them to ensure that the mission of living and building communion with the vision “that all may be one” (Jn. 17:21) was realized not only in their lives but also among the many persons encountered for the glory of God. They believed that God was the beginning and the end of their mission.

As the grain of mustard seed sown in Cantaus grew into a big tree, the sisters affirmed that, “God calls us today as He did yesterday, in a very special way to be together with Christ in order to share in the transformation of the world.”<sup>9</sup> This deepened their zeal to giving the world in which they lived the sign of unity by their fidelity to the spirit which alone could affect their communion. This was realized in the activities they engaged themselves in, for instance, visiting

---

<sup>7</sup> *Extended General council* 2011, 15.

<sup>8</sup> *Extended General Council* 2011, 15.

<sup>9</sup> *Constitutions of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Tarbes*, 15.

the sick, more especially leprosy patients, teaching in schools, home visits and catechism, among others.

It was their joy to be in the midst of humanity, sharing the abundance of God's love through words and deeds for the purpose of evangelizing and drawing more souls to the Kingdom of God. This was so much realized in the very attitudes of Christ in the Gospel's concern for the other by: "Listening, understanding, and acceptance of what it was in her difference, respect for its own way of advancing and also tenderness and friendship."<sup>10</sup> Being one's sister's and brother's keeper was so pronounced among the foundresses of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Tarbes, which led them to living the fullness of communion among themselves and with all those they encountered in their mission. They lived this to the full for they were bound and guided by the characteristic traits of the Congregation. These traits are as follows: Interior dynamism; Simplicity; Communitarian aspect of life; Hospitality; Constant search for conversion; Seeking with the heart of the poor.

### **1.1.1. Interior Dynamism**

This was the core and source of strength in the lives of foundresses, which impelled them to respond to the needs of the milieu. The divine force in their lives enabled them to have the real possession of the true and living God and His gifts, through which they allowed themselves be conformed to the values of the Trinity. "In the light of faith and by meditation on the word of God can one always and everywhere recognize God in whom we live and move and have our being?"<sup>11</sup>

The foundresses deepened this reality for their own communion with the Trinity which in return enabled them to be others' centered through the call of a moment. It was also realized that their way of life was motivated by a humble response in faith to the divine grace which led them

---

<sup>10</sup> *Constitution of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Tarbes*, 16.

<sup>11</sup> *3<sup>rd</sup> Provincial chapter 2010*, 10.

to true communion with the Divine and experienced the joy of divine love. Their contentment of remaining at the service of God was so evident in the engagements of various activities which could not compromise their vocation.

Prayer was their fountain which enabled them to live together as a community, sharing everything in common and above all, being God's instruments of living and building communion from within and without. They were convinced that their community was a gift of the spirit, which was the love of God poured into their hearts by the Holy Spirit, from which they integrated their communion with the Trinity with all whom they shared life with.<sup>12</sup>

A community that adores, praises, thanks and intercedes together, receives abundance of graces. The word broken and shared in a community is as a result of the revelation of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Trinitarian communion); the life that Jesus promised us. Prayer in the community with persons who share the same charism, vision and mission, eventually grows. A community becomes the bread broken, shared and given for one another, and for the world.

The sisters are urged to recapture the spirit of the foundresses for the living of the uniqueness of the mission of communion. For this, there is a need to look at one's personal and community life and see whether they are living out of the interior dynamism or are giving heed to other promptings from reason, egoism, worldly distraction, ambitions, and their old conditionings.

“You must give up your old way of life; you must put aside your old self, which gets corrupted by following illusory desires. Your mind must be renewed by a spiritual revolution so that you can put on the new self that has been created in God's way, in goodness and in holiness of the truth.” (Eph. 4:22-24)

### **1.1.2. Simplicity**

---

<sup>12</sup> Cf. 4<sup>th</sup> Provincial Chapter, 12.

The virtue of simplicity according to the sisters, from the beginning seemed to have embraced the demands of the evangelical poverty<sup>13</sup>. This is very true because whatever their earnings, there was no rich or poor person among them, they learnt or unlearnt for they shared everything in common. Their relationship with others was always marked with delicacy and respect.

“A distinction, which is not that of the people of the world, gave the conversation, the gestures, the actions, of the sisters and indefinable something which was noble and demanded respect without eliminating affection.” (Hist.) “This resolute orientation towards God explains our Foundresses’ confidence in Him, their spontaneity, free from self-seeking, and their clear-sightedness regarding the line of action in the most disconcerting circumstances: In a word, their supernatural simplicity. It is one of their essential characteristics.” (Msgr. Lawrence)<sup>14</sup>

With simplicity and effacement, the sisters thought of developing their talents which they had received from the Lord, for the good of others. “We shall attempt to express in every practical way our desire to share between provinces, and with the least privileged through the intermediary of the community in the measure of our possibilities”.<sup>15</sup> This eventually brought about that connectedness, not only within the communities but also with the entire Church through various apostolates they rendered unto them.

The foundresses had embraced the virtue of simplicity to the extent of becoming like little children in the hands of their guide, practicing above all the amiable simplicity which was to be their special characteristic and of which Fr. Faber wrote in his “Bethlehem”: “Simplicity is to be in

---

<sup>13</sup> Cf. *Constitution of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Tarbes*, 72.

<sup>14</sup> *History of the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Tarbes*, 20.

<sup>15</sup> *Constitution of the Sisters of St. Joseph*, 31.

regions close to God”.<sup>16</sup> This clearly shows that they lived of God, close to God and for God throughout their religious life, until death.

The “Mission today, whether understood spiritually or in some other way, must always embrace global horizons; otherwise, we once again fall foul of suffocating reductionism, insularism, completion and violence. The ultimate horizon of all our outreach, and the core element in all our naming is relationship. It is here, and not in atomistic isolation, that life at every level discovers its true purpose.”<sup>17</sup>

Therefore the ideal of living simplicity in the way the foundresses lived and expressed it, may seem very lofty and some may see it to be very demanding. The sisters of St. Joseph are called to such holiness of life that one in Christ is turned to the Father in the Holy Spirit. Only then could the sisters live of God and for God and thus live the uniqueness of the mission in today’s world and their lives would become a mystery to the people.

### **1.1.3. The Communitarian Aspect of Life**

A religious community is in itself a theological reality; an object of contemplation. As a family united in the Lord’s name, it is of its nature the place where the experience of God should be able in a special way to come to fullness and be communicated to the other (cf. Mt 18-20). “Mutual acceptance always enables one to create an atmosphere favorable to the spiritual growth of each one”.<sup>18</sup> This leads to the promotion of fraternal love in the form of common life with an intense sense of solidarity.

It is also a sign of communion and hope of the Kingdom of God already present among people. The sisters’ charism of communion entails that they build relationships among themselves, with God and people. They acknowledge that in their apostolates, they are people sent by the

---

<sup>16</sup> *Les Quatre Cahiers*, 34.

<sup>17</sup> O. DIARMUID., *Poverty, Celibacy and Obedience*, 120.

<sup>18</sup> *15<sup>th</sup> Provincial Chapter Bangalore Province*, 27.

community in the sense that as they encounter others and share with them, they do not do it for their own sake but on behalf of the community. They too depend on one another; they work together as equal partners. They make discernment the normal process of their daily choices.

The Gospel of Matthew tells us that “Blessed are the merciful, blessed are the peacemakers (Mt. 5:5, paragraph 7). Through being loving and merciful, peacemakers make forgiveness, dialogue and discernment a way of life to building communion and God’s Kingdom on earth. This is what the foundresses strived to live in their everyday encounter, not only among themselves but also with their brethren. This promoted mutual understanding and togetherness which earned them peace and fulfillment despite the ups and downs of life.

Therefore, following the model of the communitarian mission of the Trinity which involves oneness, relationship, total self-giving and receiving, sacrifice and dedication up to the point of torture and death, became the strength of the sisters. However, for the sisters to maintain this in their daily lives, the quality of community life must be good, healthy, joyful, creative, attractive to others, tender and loving, caring, in faith and responsible.

A joyless community is one that is dying out, so without a loving relationship and faith in the respective communities, the communitarian sense of the mission is unthinkable.

#### **1.1.4. Hospitality**

The spirit of welcome is so pronounced among the sisters themselves and even to the many persons with whom they encounter or visit. I came to learn about them when one lady expressed to me how she was welcomed, to the extent of wishing she could have not been married, she could have found herself in the convent. The gesture of hospitality does not need to give out material goods, rather, one’s being is more important than anything else. This is because a word shared can

build a person, whereby he or she will not forget at all. The foundresses lived the fullness of this for they not only transformed their own lives but also the lives of many others, more so the rejected and those who found life meaningless.

#### **1.1.5. Solidarity with the Poor**

There is need for fraternal participation and collaboration of all in order to build the Kingdom of God. Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven (Cf. Mt. 5:3). We depend totally on God and surrender to His will. Through total self-emptying, we build the Kingdom of God. In the poverty of the spirit, we share responsibility with lay people, in mutual collaboration, even in the face of difficulties and risks, in order to build the Kingdom of God.

In many cases, the poor or disadvantaged people in the society are the ones who are looked down upon and taken advantage of, among many other things. These are the very persons God invites to Himself. “Apart from teaching, the sisters worked as best as they could for the poor and the sick”.<sup>19</sup> The foundresses found great joy in working in their midst for they were convinced that God had called them not for the few but for all humanity. They availed themselves with a zealous and loving heart to the extent of forgetting themselves on the expense of being with the people.

This spirit enabled them not only to experience the love of God but also finding Him in the midst of the poor. It is the reality that despite our uniqueness, whether poor or rich, learned or unlearned, healthy or unhealthy we are all created in the image and likeness of God. Therefore, respect and care of human dignity is more important than anything else.

#### **1.1.6. Constant Search for Conversion**

Constant search for conversion is realized in living God’s preferential choice for the poor. “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied” (Mt 5:6).

---

<sup>19</sup> *Les Quatre Cahiers*, 35.

The foundresses' involvement in the struggles of the poor enabled them to be open, and allowed them to be challenged to conversion. Living in the midst of people, they learned a lot of things to the extent of being challenged by their way of living. Through the experiences they encountered during their apostolates, they seized the opportunity to change their lives in order to live up to what God expected of them.

It was their desire each and every moment to live and lead lives worthy before God and ensure the well-being of their fellow human beings and draw them to God's Kingdom. We therefore see that faith is a call to an authentic and renewed conversion to the Lord, the one saviour of the world. In the mystery of the death and resurrection of Jesus, God has revealed in its fullness the love that saves, and calls us to the conversion of a life through the forgiveness of sin (Cf. Acts. 5:31). Through this gift of faith, in being at the service of humanity, "the newness of life shapes the whole human existence according to the radical new reality of the resurrection"<sup>20</sup>. This is very true since "faith working through love" (Gal 5:6) becomes a new criterion of understanding and action that changes the whole human life.

We grow as persons (which is the process of conversion) to the extent that we go out of ourselves, relate to others and are willing to serve, share and sacrifice ourselves for the betterment of the disadvantaged persons. But many are the times, we are afraid to let go of what we hold as our own, to venture out of our limitations, lest we lose everything. We are always invited to be open to embracing all humanity regardless of their states in order to embrace conversion constantly.

## **1.2. Life now as far as Fraternal Living is concerned**

---

<sup>20</sup> 15<sup>th</sup> Provincial chapter in Bangalore Province, 8.

Looking at the life of the sisters of St. Joseph of Tarbes in relation to their fraternal living, indeed they are doing their very best. As they draw their roots back from the lives of the foundresses, fraternal living among them is as evident as they relate with themselves and the entire humanity with whom they are working. A “religious community is a visible manifestation of the communion which is the foundation of the Church and at the same time a prophecy of that unity towards which she tends as her final goal.”<sup>21</sup> This is very true for members act as sign posts to the entire Church through their words, actions, and deeds.

Recommitting themselves every day to their vocations to live their consecration radically and fraternally in faith has enabled them not only to reach to themselves but also the entire humanity in order to awaken the face of God in them through life encounters. The gift of their consecration has set them apart for God who has called and chosen them for a purpose which continuously finds the love of God for others through their lives.

The commitment they have in making the spirit of fraternal living is always a reality in their lives and the community is promising because of “our commitment to religious life, which implies the gift of self through vows.”<sup>22</sup> Their gift of self-love reciprocated among themselves enabled them to rejoice and also endure obstacles and remain faithful to their commitment. This continues to grow due to their deep connection with the Trinity since He is the source and end of their mission. Without this connection, there can be no true communion without that unconditional mutual love which demands a readiness to serve others generously, welcoming them as they are among many others.

### **1.3. Successes**

---

<sup>21</sup> *Fraternal life in Community*, 21.

<sup>22</sup> *4<sup>th</sup> Provincial Chapter*, 11.

Having gone through the present life of the sisters of St. Joseph of Tarbes in living fraternal life within and outside the community, we shall now look at the achievements they have embraced.

### **1.3.1. Living the Gospel Values**

“God calls us today as He did yesterday in a very special way to be together with Christ in order to share in the transformation of the world. We have to give this world in which we live a sign of unity by our fidelity to the spirit which alone can affect our communion.”<sup>23</sup> The gospel values have been the source of light and strength towards responding to the demands of our calling and mission. Furthermore, our consecrated life has not only been promoting the dignity of humanity, for their own common well-being, desire for peace rather, “The recognition of supreme values, above all the faith whose source and end is in God.”<sup>24</sup>

Looking at the set-up of my community, prayer in common has always been considered as the greatest foundation of community life. It is in prayer that we have been able to discover the will of God and at the same time through the readings, the desire to emulate the values of Christ continues to shape our beings. Apart from community prayers, personal prayer has had an enormous effect for it deepens one’s relationship with God, hence nourishes the community through praise and intercessions. “A more intense spiritual life is a life of more intense presence. The more a man is present to God; and the more a man is with-God, the more present he is to the sacred in all things. Ultimately the fullness of human living will be complete presence to God and to all things in God.”<sup>25</sup>

### **1.3.2. The spirit of sharing with everybody**

The whole Church greatly depends on the witnesses of communities “filled with joy and the Holy Spirit” (Acts. 13:52). She wishes to hold up before the world the example of communities

---

<sup>23</sup> *Constitution of Sisters of St. Joseph of Tarbes.*

<sup>24</sup> *The consecrated life and its role in the church and in the world, 104.*

<sup>25</sup> M.B.HELLEN., *Living Community*, 142-143.

in which solitude is overcome through concern for one another. The sisters of St. Joseph of Tarbes need to be outstanding in sharing God's goodness to the entire Church through different fields of their apostolates. The sisters, through the nature of their Charism of Communion, have done their very best, directing energies towards contributing to the new evangelization as much as they disclose in a concrete way the fruitfulness of the new commandment.

In spiritual matters, prayers, faith sharing and responsibilities, among others, have enabled the sisters to value the importance of one another: "Communion originates precisely from sharing spiritual gifts, a sharing of faith and in faith, where the more we share those things which are vital and central, the more the fraternal bond grows in strength".<sup>26</sup> This has enabled the sisters to learn from one another and complement one another in their everyday encounters.

"Love of friendship and fraternal love tend to place in common the riches of the individual for the sake of mutual support and the blooming of the persons involved".<sup>27</sup> These are the experiences the sisters have been embracing from one another and at their working places towards harmonious and growth of the good, not only of one another but also of the many persons encountered in their missions. Thus, being consecrated persons, they become of one heart and mind through the love which has been poured into their hearts by the Holy Spirit impelling them always to experience the interior call to share everything in common.

Being part and parcel of the Church, "the whole Church, through the action of the spirit is missionary, a community of love and sharing" (RM, 28). The sisters become icons and signs of Christ to the whole world.

### **1.3.3. Inner Freedom to serve others**

---

<sup>26</sup> *Fraternal life in Community*, 29.

<sup>27</sup> G., KAITHOLIL; *Communion in Community*, 87.

“Freedom in the deepest experience of it, is love. To be free is to be for others.”<sup>28</sup> This sounds the reality of one’s existence for being consecrated and set apart for a purpose by God. It is nothing other than being at the service of the entire humanity. The Sisters of St. Joseph of Tarbes, mainly in Ngando have greatly succeeded in portraying this inner freedom in their service to people by their patience and interest in being fully in solidarity with them.

The religious, being engaged in different apostolates, it becomes a great opportunity for them to enter into the lives of other human beings. They have a special gift to give in the apostolate, compared to the laity, for example, the way a sister teaches in class is quite different from a lay person because their mission always, as Tangaza University College puts it is: “Teaching minds, touching hearts, transforming lives.” This is what many people have commented about the institutions the sisters are working in, due to the recommendable services they offer, whether to children, old, young or even the less disadvantaged persons in society.

The sisters are always invited not in big ways but in small ways to be signs of communion to all persons, witnessing and fulfilling the mission of Christ in their various apostolates. Through this, they bridge the gap between the religious and the laity, thus deepening their relationship by collaborating towards the growth and good of the Church. “The real purpose of any apostolate is the building up of the whole Church: There can be no complacency over one’s own achievements”.<sup>29</sup>

#### **1.4. Challenges that Blocks Fraternal Living**

In any community or family, one will always find one or two challenges which might be a source of suffocation of the spirit of fraternal life. The sisters of St. Joseph are not exceptional

---

<sup>28</sup> M.B.HELLEN, *Living Community*, 99.

<sup>29</sup> M.B.HELLEN, *Living Communion*, 182.

from this. Therefore, we shall look at some of the possible challenges which might be the source of poor fraternal living among the sisters.

#### **1.4.1. Culture**

We begin with the clarification of what the understanding of culture is. Culture is an integral part of every society. It is a learnt pattern of behavior and ways in which a person lives her life - It is a way of life. It is essential for the existence of a society because it binds people together. It sums up the beliefs, behavior patterns, objects, and other characteristics common to the members of a particular group or society. Through culture, people and groups define themselves, conform to society's shared values, and contribute to society.

Culture is the external expression of collectively internalized beliefs, values, dreams, vision, mission, goals, etc. of a group of people. External expressions slowly evolved from their internalized beliefs and vision. The culture of the sisters of Saint Joseph is based on 'communion,' which makes up their Charism. Therefore, first comes the Charism, then the spirituality, and from there flows their Culture. This, once rooted in one's life enables them to live and lead a life of communion.

Culture is indeed something good which each and every person feels belonging to in a certain community. Religious life is a blessed community in the sense of diverse cultures. No one chooses where to go, but the spirit is the one that directs the hearts of all who wishes to serve the Lord. It is a special calling that invites all to put aside their differences and learn from one another by appreciating their diversity and being open to learn from one another so as to beautify the community.

The goodness of culture, its beauty, has been reduced to the extent of categorizing culture in classes, superiority, educated, and famous. This has and can still water down the spirit of fraternal life among the sisters. That is why the theme of the 5<sup>th</sup> provincial chapter directs: “Contemplate the blessed Trinity, live SJT Charism joyfully and evangelize Cultures with the Culture of Christ”. This is so because they felt that without deepening this, there would be chaos among the sisters, more so as they go to faraway lands and outside their communities for mission.

“Each culture and social group needs purification and growth”.<sup>30</sup> Not everything in our cultures are good or bad, rather it is an invitation for each one to take that which is good and let go of that which does not promote gospel values. With all these, guided by the person of the Holy Spirit, the community will eventually be motivated by the love of Christ which always surpasses all other cultures. Furthermore, they will live in oneness despite their uniqueness.

The danger which has been experienced, and the sisters of St. Joseph are not exceptional, is the issue of language and food. Being an international Congregation, there is usually a common language which is communicable to all in order that all may experience the spirit and room for belongingness. But where the sisters, more especially a community of three or two are of the same tribe, and to make the matter worse, do not mind the third party, it becomes chaotic. Suspiciousness and feelings of rejection can always befall someone, and hence creating hatred.

This has been a great problem which the sisters need to be conscious of and think of the joy and happiness of the other sister or persons in order to maintain and promote an ideal community. Though each sister is responsible of her happiness, at times we can rob away their happiness too.

---

<sup>30</sup> *The Joy of the Gospel*, 43.

### **1.4.2. Materialism**

Religious values have been diluted by materialistic inclinations due to the great concern and desire for possessions and money. This has in a radical way mugged the importance of spiritual values in the lives of the religious in one way or the other. It is a temptation of wanting more and more for one's benefit and at times for the betterment of the family one comes from. There is no difference between contemporary societies and sisters in the convents.

The religious are seen mostly to be for the poor and marginalized but due to the selfishness of wanting more and more, they take advantage of them for their own benefit. This has greatly tarnished the values of fraternity through which we are called to live in solidarity with all by sharing everything in common. The first Christians shared all they had because of the one mind and heart they had for one another. There were no distinction between the poor and the rich. (Cf. Act 4:32-35).

This spirit has no place in the hearts of the religious, to the extent of wondering about the kind of impression we portray to the rest of humanity, yet our lives should always be conformed to Christ' who was generous the point of sacrificing His own life for the good of all. There was nothing that he termed as His own, rather everything was for the glory of His father so that the entire humanity could come to know, love and serve Him each and every moment of their lives, through their fellow humanity.

In our consecrated life, we are invited to "become aware of the worldly trends and strive to be a sign of contradictions to witness Christ's values" (V.C 45). Therefore, our communities will cease to be one's own business of achieving the fullness of materialism and consumerism, rather, they will become ideal communities, where everything will be for the common use and

benefit of all. Those who will desire to join will have a positive motive and desire to serve God in a more profound way, through the life the sisters live.

### **1.4.3. Technology**

Technology in the modern world is something of great treasure because of the big impact it has. It only needs to be used in the right way and for the right purpose. This makes work easy as it makes persons connected with other people within and afar. It has done awesome things, and the sisters, in one way or the other, are also informed of what is happening in the world.

On the other hand, technology has had a negative impact, not only in the growth of the community but also personal growth. I do understand that in every community there must be some rules to be followed for the smooth running of that particular community. These guidelines are not necessarily written down but one knows at what time she should be where and doing what. It is just like in our own families back at home, whereby rules are not written but it comes automatically that I should do this and that; for example, I need to be at home at this time, among many other things. Religious communities can or have fallen in the trap of spending a lot of time on the phone, either as individuals or as a community, even they spend lots of time on computers, chatting or even watching television, for example, during the time of prayers, community meetings, manual work, etc. This takes away the value of togetherness and oneness, thus breeding the attitude of ignorance of what matters in one's spirituality and community life.

Technology makes communication efficient but it has also become a tool of running away from one another in the community. There is no time for one another, and the situation becomes worse if there are commotions in the community. Instead of sitting down like mature women and dialogue, messaging on phones becomes the story of the day. Encounters with one another become so rare that one chooses to go to the dining room at her own time. This creates hatred and lack of

forgiveness, hence, a tattered community. But “there is perhaps no greater gift members of a community can give each other than acceptance which is totally for-giving.”<sup>31</sup>

Due to the availability of these electronic devices, some persons spend much of their time with outsiders than their own sisters with whom they are to share life. It sounds so bad to be interested in a parishioner who is not keeping well by visiting him or her frequently but not to bother to take a walk to the room next door to go and say hello to the sister who is not keeping well. This is total madness in religious life, for it is clear that there is a hidden agenda in the attitude of a person.

Having these gadgets has no problem but it is a great need for each individual to go deep within and renew the zeal of being one in mind and heart with our fellow sisters in the community. For the saying goes: “Charity begins at home.” This is why fraternal communion will always prevail if only the members of a community maintain unity among themselves, through an identity of goals and sentiments grounded in love.<sup>32</sup>

#### **1.4.5. Individualism**

A religious person who is serious with her life has some great moments of embracing solitude towards deepening one’s relationship with Jesus. However, an individualistic attitude has been blended and coated so much that it has become “I, me and myself,” a thing which brings about a great threat to the community.

This has greatly become the gate door for one’s freedom and interests rather than the common good of the entire community. The gospel values fade away and an anthropocentric attitude takes place other than a Christocentric one, thereby losing the primary reason for our

---

<sup>31</sup> B. MARIE. , *The Dynamics of Community*, 99.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. G. KAITHOLIL, *Communion in Community*, 44.

consecration. We eventually lose sight of the Trinitarian spirit, which always the light of the communion spirit that we are is invited to live by being all embracing. “Self-centeredness is the enemy of community life. The egoist is ever looking for an axe to grind.”<sup>33</sup>

Formation is and has been a vital process in the lives of everybody who desires to embrace religious life, but it is so difficult to understand some individuals, even after having lived in the congregation for so many years, they still swim in the same pool of individualism. This has blurred the mission and vision of the congregation towards nurturing the oneness of mind and heart. Their personal issues take the first priority against the needs and goals of the community.

Individualism is a kind of evil spirit which corrodes the spirit of fraternal living in the community. It begins like an infection and spreads slowly and hence, becomes untreatable. This leads into living a different identity, compromising all the religious obligations and their principles. It is an invitation for the sisters to watch out, otherwise individualism could eventually destroy communities’ values and spirit.

#### **1.4.6. Competition and Comparison**

Usually, the mission of the congregation carried out is for the good of the recipient, growth of the congregation and above all, for the glory of God. Each religious is assigned a duty, whether prepared for it or not. Rather, the interest and passion is all what is needed. Many have done what they were not prepared for but have done marvelously to the extent of wondering whether they are the ones who have done it or not. This becomes not only their joy rather the entire of the congregation.

---

<sup>33</sup> G. KAITHOLIL., *Communion in Community*, 37.

The great problem arises mostly because instead of appreciating and complementing one another, one seeks ways and means of finding the downfall. Some motives are so hidden that you find some religious doing one course after another, not because of the need of the congregation but to be above everyone else. In addition to this, they seek recognition. This is sad due to the fact that we use most of our energies in many things that earn us short term joys and contentment, instead of striving and finding ways and means of always putting us right with God.

## **1.5 Conclusion**

Consecrated persons in this contemporary world live in a phase of constant transition and transformation in the rapidly changing times, amidst the cultural diversity and the many challenges they face. Having gone through the achievements of the sisters of St. Joseph of Tarbes in living the spirit of fraternity, we have also looked at various challenges which they encounter. Consequently, they are invited to go back to their origin by deepening their charism of communion, that is, “by combining our being together and our being for others within and without at the same time.”<sup>34</sup> Living this way will always better fraternal living among them, thus radiating it outside the walls of their community too. If this does not take place, then there is the likelihood of remaining on the intellectual level, hence preaching wine and drinking water by contradicting their lives completely.

---

<sup>34</sup> *Extended General Council of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Tarbes*, 9, 2011.

## CHAPTER TWO

### FRATERNAL LIFE AS EXPOSED BY *EVANGELII GAUDIUM*

#### 2.0. Introduction

In this chapter, we shall look at what the Pope invites us to find once again; the delight of our vocation and fascination for Jesus, whom we follow day after day as far as the spirit of fraternal living is concerned. It is also a moment of renewing oneself by living with passion towards one another in the community, and above all, awakening the world for Christ's mission upon our lives.

#### 2.1. Joy Ever New, Joy which is shared

Consumerism has become a great enemy which steals one's interest for others, hence living a life of thinking about oneself only. "Whenever our interior life becomes caught up in its own interests and concern, there is no longer room for others, no place for the poor"<sup>35</sup>. As Christians and consecrated persons, we are to go beyond the box by living an exemplary life. This will enable us to live our being in the mission of Christ so that the oneness of the Trinity through our lives may be felt.

The joy of fraternal living lies always in being others' centeredness through our thoughts, words and actions, motivated by love. This will only be possible by renewing our personal encounter with Christ for it is with Him that the joy instilled in us is once again restored. With Jesus in our midst, we can do great things, but his absence becomes a chaotic life which has no reference. Therefore, it is a great moment for us to always come close to the resurrected Christ so that He may always inspire and impel us onwards.

---

<sup>35</sup> Apostolic Exhortation, *Evangelii Gaudium*, 7.

Each day's encounter with the Lord allows our love and friendship to blossom, not only with Him but also with the entire humanity. Our narrowness and self-centeredness is cut off, hence, having that opportunity to embrace everybody regardless of their tribes, position, and level of education, among many other things. Having this experience of God's love in our lives will always impel us to radiate it to others without any strings attached, thus fraternity becomes an everyday reality.

### **2.1.1. A Church that goes forth**

A Church is a community of persons who always take the initiative towards involving themselves in the needs of others. This community clearly knows that God has chosen them for a purpose in order to carry out His mission. With the love and strength of the Holy Spirit, they give themselves fully to seeking out those who have fallen, the sick, the outcasts, the rejected, and the homeless, among many others, who have diverse deformities.

Sharing the joy and the little we have with the above mentioned persons, brings about the oneness that Christ always desires upon humanity. An evangelized community is always ready to stand by people in every situation, no matter how hard or difficult it might look or sound. Patience is all that counts, because we are unique in responding to change. A community becomes a good school indeed, in guiding, helping, and at times correcting some personalities, not only for their own good but also for the growth of the community.

A community at large becomes evangelizing instrument in striving for the fruits which would eventually be cherished by many. This is the great joy which will always befall upon such a community, for God looks forth for a fruitful community. This will be so if only the community is attached to the true vine, for nothing great will happen when we are disconnected. Therefore,

evangelization is not only with the scriptures alone, but rather, integrating them with our daily life realities within the community and with our brethren through sharing the little we have.

### **2.1.2. A Mother with an Open Heart**

The word “Mother” is used metaphorically symbolizing the Church. A mother is always ready to embrace her children just the way they are. It does not matter whether good or a notorious thief, still she embraces that one as her own. She does not feel ashamed of how others will take it, rather she never tires in doing and giving what is best to her children for the glory of God.

Looking at the Church, she is like a mother who is always ready to embrace everybody regardless of their righteousness or sinfulness. She is ever patient in listening to the pains and joys of her own children in order to guide and direct them to the right path, where their lives will embrace a new look. The change of one’s life becomes the joy of the entire Church.

We are the Church at the present in that, having received the teachings of Christ to the extent of following Him, He calls us to constantly lead many other souls to His kingdom. This will be so only by letting our doors wide open through our words and actions, which will motivate many to desire to know, love, and serve God through their lives. Despite this, our being in the midst of our brothers and sisters will matter a lot for we shall enter into the reality of their lives, hence respond to the love of God in a concrete manner.

“If something should rightly disturb us and trouble our conscience, it is the fact that so many of our brothers and sisters are living without the strength, light and consolation born of friendship with Jesus Christ, without a community of faith to support them, without meaning and a goal in life”.<sup>36</sup>

---

<sup>36</sup> Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* (2013), 32.

This is why we are in the Church, to continue the mission Christ had begun, namely that all in our little efforts might be one in mind and heart in sharing God's goodness, just like the first community .(Cf. Acts 4:32-35)

## **2.2. Some challenges of today's world**

In our personal lives as well as on a global measure, we face some challenges that test our emotional determination; injury, grief, not loved, rejected and greed, among many other things. These challenges, if not embraced and dealt with in a positive way, can in a very dramatic way tear relationships and community life apart. The joy of living together in mind, showing interest for others, fades away and hence one's own fate. Consecrated persons are not exempted from this reality for in one way or the other, we find ourselves in the same ditch. We shall look at some of the challenges which act as a great block in living in fraternity as a family. These are the following:

### **2.2.1. Economy of exclusion**

Exclusion as an attitude of rejecting and seeing others as less or as having no importance at all, has greatly affected the reason of our existence as human beings, and much more as Christians. Jesus counts each one of us in His circle but due to our greed and jealousy, we find ways and means of eliminating others as not worthy to be part of our lives. For instance, taking advantage of the poor for our own prosperity robs us of that very heart of God which is full of mercy and compassion to all humanity.

The Church, through the person of the Holy Spirit is so rich with diverse Charisms which also in their own ways allow the spirit of fraternity to be felt in the lives of all. Whatever is carried out by groups of religious orders bounded by their Charisms is usually for the good of all. No one

is superior and inferior to the other, for the services rendered should be in accordance to the needs at hand.

The Charisms in the Church are not something inactive and rigid, rather, they are rivers of living water (Cf. *John* 7:37-39), which flow in the land of history to irrigate it and to have seeds of goodness sprout. This leaves an impact on the recipient and much more on the person who has chosen to live according to it. It is always a living reality and, precisely because of this, it calls for fructification, as the parable of the gold coins indicates, which the king entrusted to his servants (Cf. *Lk.* 19:11-26), to be developed in creative fidelity for the common good.

As consecrated persons, we are called to become prophets of our own time, beginning with our life animated by various Charisms given as gifts towards creating fraternity, communion, solidarity with the poorest and the destitute. We all need to always say ‘no’ to the economy of exclusion by not being culprits of it, and if need be, to protest against it through good ways of living with everybody. As Pope Benedict XVI well recalled, if we want to be authentically human, we must “make room for the principle of gratuitousness as an expression of fraternity”<sup>37</sup>

### **2.2.2. New idolatry of money**

Money is not everything in life, there are other things that are more valuable in life. It is only a tool or medium of triumph happiness, but it may not be the everlasting happiness in itself. It is very true that we cannot do without money but still we have the capacity of not allowing it to take dominion over us at the expense of fraternal living towards the good of all. This is all what the majority, if not everybody strives for, to earn more and be superior to others.

---

<sup>37</sup> Encyclical *Caritas Veritate*, 34.

In the current contemporary society, the story of the day is all about the corruption of money, which has in a great way entered all the doors and windows of religious communities. This has created lack of trust, insincerity and lack of transparency to the community, whereby one's apostolate matters more than community members. Life becomes more difficult, more so in the communities where some members earn nothing but only depend upon those who are working.

Knowing that without them the community cannot run, it becomes their own joy to raise the ego of pride in doing whatever they wish. There is also a great temptation of looking down upon others, not wanting to associate with them for they seem to have nothing to offer at all.

“The earnings of a minority are growing exponentially, so too is the gap separating the majority from the prosperity enjoyed by those happy few.”<sup>38</sup> This is the great danger that the Pope is trying to open up our eyes to in order that our existence should always be for the common good of all, especially the less disadvantaged persons in the society and even in our own communities. We should not take advantage of them. Rather, we should help them to transcend their level to somewhere they will live to appreciate themselves and hence strive for the growth of oneness.

This oneness should not only lie in spiritual matters, but rather, the respect of one's dignity and uniqueness. This will be achieved through complementing and being sources of support to one another, regardless of whatever differences that may bring. Money should not at any cost bring disunity, not only in the world as a whole but also in our religious communities. Instead, it should help us to meeting our daily needs and reaching out to all who need our services.

### **2.2.3. The inclusion of the poor in the society**

---

<sup>38</sup> Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, 36.

The poor are the people who are mostly forgotten about and neglected by the society and the Church. But these are the people that Christ identified Himself with. We are always called to be agents of God for the freeing and promotion of the poor towards enabling them to being part and parcel of the society. Our solidarity with them, not necessarily giving them something but our very being in their midst matters most. In Exodus, God said: “I have observed the misery of my people who are in Egypt; I have come down to deliver them...so I send you”<sup>39</sup> (*Ex. 3; 7-8, 10*).

The action God took on the Israelites became a model for us to emulate, not at all to turn our ears deaf to the poor but rather with a wide heart embrace them. This will eventually deepen not only our relationship with them but also with God. Poor solidarity affects our oneness with the trinity leading to lack of happiness and joy. Always being connected to God will impel one to “care for the deformed image of God on the faces of their brothers and sisters, faces disfigured by hunger, their culture despised, and indiscriminate violence.”<sup>40</sup>

The existence of the Church becomes the light towards heeding to the plea of the poor, guided by the mercy and love of God to the entire humankind. She always understands the needs of her children, and that is why she remains open to all with the mindset of communion and the priority of the life of all over the appropriation of goods. Once we make the spirit of Mother Church our own, our lives become a source of joy and happiness to all. Solidarity will always pave way in restoring what belongs to the poor. Their dignity and rights are put in place.

This spirit of solidarity will constantly allow us to transcend from “I” centeredness to others’ centeredness. Hence, searching with the hearts of the poor becomes a reality in our daily

---

<sup>39</sup> Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, 99-100.

<sup>40</sup> M; JOE, *A Radical Love, a Path of Light*, 92.

living. Living together and being passionate in knowing the well-being of the other person broadens one's heart and at the same time the spirit of joy is deepened.

“We need to broaden our perspective and hear the plea of other people and other regions than those of our own country. We need to grow in a solidarity which would allow all peoples to become the artisans of their destiny, since every person is called to self-fulfillment.”<sup>41</sup> It is an invitation for each one of us to be in solidarity with all, to be our own pattern of life in order that the mission of Christ, through our lives may become effective. We shall encounter joys, difficulties and sorrowful moments in our living together, but these should not discourage or boost our ego of pride, but rather they should be opportunities to deepen our fraternal living: “Those who have opened their hearts to God's love, heard his voice and received his light cannot keep this gift to themselves.”<sup>42</sup>

#### **2.2.4. The common good and peace in society**

The presence of the common good to entire humanity will eventually allow the radiation of peace in a spontaneous way. This shows that there is harmony and togetherness in the communities. Religious persons will find it easy to serve people, to the extent of going beyond cultures and religion: “Faith makes us appreciate the architecture of human relationships because it grasps their ultimate foundation and definitive destiny in God thus service to the common good.”<sup>43</sup>

Faith will always be a light, not only in building the interior part of a person or community, but rather gives one graces and strength to go beyond in order to reach the needs of the whole

---

<sup>41</sup> Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, 101.

<sup>42</sup> Encyclical letter *Lumen Fidei*, 39.

<sup>43</sup> Encyclical letter *Lumen Fidei*, 52.

humanity. This complements the beauty of God’s creation and enhances good relationships. This makes us become our sisters’ or brothers’ keepers: To be a “responsible citizen is a virtue, and participation in the political life is a moral obligation. Yet becoming a people demands something more. It is an ongoing process in which every new generation must take part: A slow and arduous effort calling for a desire for integration and a willingness to achieve this through the growth of a peaceful and multifaceted culture of encounter.”<sup>44</sup> This is very true because whatever we hand over to the young generation matters a lot. If it is well integrated, then the chain of peace, justice and fraternity will never break but will become stronger day after day. When this becomes part and parcel of all the religions, we remain models and agents of peace and oneness, wherever we are working in all the corners of the world. In the light of the above, we shall glance at the four principles which guide us in the development of life in society and in the making of a people, where distinctions are harmonized within a shared pursuit. These are the following: “Time is greater than space, Unity prevails over conflict, The whole is greater than the part”<sup>45</sup>

### **2.3. Time is greater than space**

Time is so precious that we need to value it in our life, for it gives us some moments of planning for the future, for the betterment of the community and the generation to come: “It helps us patiently to endure difficult and adverse situations, or inevitable changes in our plans.”<sup>46</sup> This is the reality of life in that not every time things are smooth because there are moments of difficulties that one needs not to lose hope. Situations come and go. Therefore, it becomes a great opportunity to finding means and ways of bettering the future of the community. “For Pope Francis, time is greater than space because the pathway to a realistic human progress is a “process,”

---

<sup>44</sup> Encyclical letter *Lumen Fidei*, 113.

<sup>45</sup> Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, 113.

<sup>46</sup> Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, 114.

which is itself a function of time. Since time is fluid and in motion, it symbolizes the key to escaping in order to get “stuck” in space. If we try to fill space with short-term solutions and plain and static answers to problems with no thought of how we can really move forward from that point, we short-circuit time itself and cut off ourselves from a more hope-filled future.”<sup>47</sup>

Space is not that bad but if one gives priority to it, it means that one will be thinking of the present for his or her own good, forgetting about others. This possessiveness retards growth in one’s life and to the entire community. Time always gives persons the opportunity to improve in fostering the future towards bearing abundant fruits for the welfare of the community. In order for one to change from certain habits which do not promote fraternal living, one needs to be given enough time to improve.

Change does not happen instantly but it takes a gradual process which needs patience and hope. It is a great invitation for us to always value time when dealing with situations and even personal growth for the authentic building of human existence.

### **2.3.1. Unity prevails over conflict**

Conflict cannot miss in any community for it is the reality of life due to our uniqueness in preferring things, and places different from others. Conflict arises when there are some disagreements or may be one’s opinion was not preferred. For example, “she did not say ‘Hello’ to me, and she looked at me badly....” These are the few petty problems which can lead to a cold war among persons or can even build blockades in the community, where one has nothing to do with the other.

---

<sup>47</sup> <https://aleteia.org/2016/05/24/Pope> -Francis-time-is-greater-than-space-what-does-it-mean.

Conflict is not always a violent confrontation. It can also be an opportunity to the understanding of others and transformation of our point of view. But if we see everything in a negative connotation, then unity will eventually become a vocabulary in our lives. Running away from conflict is never the solution, but rather the disposition to facing conflict head on, to agreeing and making it a link in the chain of a new process of being ambassadors of peace.<sup>48</sup>

Building communion will always be possible, however much the frequencies of conflict may appear due to the fact that each one is able to go beyond the surface of the conflict and see others in their deepest dignity. As human beings, chances of crossing one another's line are high, thus, forgiveness has to be part and parcel of our life style. This is because forgiveness heals after disruption. Through forgiveness, we win back one another, hence live in happiness and peace.

Unity is all what people look for whether in communities or in work places for it makes the atmosphere a favorable place to dwell in. Diversity of our natures and backgrounds are precious things we need to cherish, for through them, we come to acquire and know new ideas from others. We are "united in a common cause, in mutual affection, in sharing the same destiny and a single purpose."<sup>49</sup> With this, conflict will never be a block in achieving the set goals but rather opportunities in venturing to other new ways of doing things.

The unique universal mission even today is distributed among all. In order to co-operate with others, it is necessary to bring about unity within oneself to gathering all strengths and to be willing to share tasks. St. Paul writes to the Corinthians: "There are different kinds of spiritual gifts, but the same Spirit gives them. There are different ways of serving, but the same Lord is served. There are different abilities to perform service, but the same God gives ability to everyone

---

<sup>48</sup> Cf. Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, 115.

<sup>49</sup> Encyclical Letter *Lumen Fidei*, 47-48.

for their particular service. The Spirit's presence is shown in some way in each person for the good of all." (*1Cor.* 12, 4-7). We see here a strong sign to tell us how to live in the community, and in the Church. God's experience and fraternal living are intimately inter-linked that we ought to strive to make it our own. To build communion by making unity a unifying factor, we need to pull our efforts together by complementing and supporting one another. This will in a greater way get rid of the chances of division and conflicts. "Faith is one because it is shared by the whole Church, which is one body and one spirit. In the communion of the one subject which is the Church, we receive a common gaze. By professing the same faith, we stand firm on the same rock, we are transformed by the same Spirit of love, we radiate one light and we have a single insight into reality."<sup>50</sup>

Unity therefore, is the only way through our conversion of hearts and reconciliation that we shall be able to help not only our communities, but also the country as a whole in little ways, to develop. For this unity to have a strong foundation, faith is the secret of everything due to the oneness of God, the source of everything.

### **2.3.2. Realities are more important than ideas**

According to Pope Francis, realities touch the lives of individuals rather than ideas. This does not mean that ideas are bad but because they remain on the intellectual level. In most cases, you find persons with good ideas, which once put in practice can bring about some effects and growth to the community at large. The great danger in these personalities is that there is no commitment at all, hence beautiful ideas remain in words only.

---

<sup>50</sup> Encyclical Letter *Lumen Fidei*, 49.

In religious communities, in the Church and even on the government level, we have leaders with whom we feel they have the potential because we choose them. The expectation of the community is development and growth in order to meet not only their goals but also the mission and vision to be realized. The sad part is when they are full of ideas and cannot implement them at all, thus, arising commotions to the extent of causing division in the community.

Leaders always seek to uphold the good and growth of each one, more so the weakest and the forgotten. “Decisions are taken according to the mission’s priorities not according to what the superior likes. A good superior welcomes honest feedback and criticism, since his/her sincere desire is to do well.”<sup>51</sup> This is what it means by going beyond ideas in order to bring about change and a positive impact to the recipients, that is the community.

A problem or progress seen on the ground is the reality of the situation, whereby we need to tackle it as it appears through our rich ideas, to eradicate it for the betterment of the community. Realities cannot be thought of for they are in place for us to explore them not by one person but as a community, for they are for the common good. Words alone can do us nothing, they need to be accompanied by action; our dwellings can be another heaven to be experienced by many. “This principle impels us to put the word into practice, to perform works of justice and charity which make that word fruitful. Not to put the word into practice, not to make it a reality, is to build on sand, to remain in the realm of pure ideas and to end up in a lifeless and unfruitful self-centeredness and Gnosticism.”<sup>52</sup>

### **2.3.3. The whole is greater than the part**

---

<sup>51</sup> M. JOE, *A Radical Love, a Part of Light*, 65.

<sup>52</sup> Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, 117.

Human beings, more especially we the consecrated persons, many times choose an illusion as a reality in terms of the good and evil. We lose trust in the wisdom of God and the order He creates through. God creates through His spirit (Cf. *Gen. 1:1*). Humanity creates disorder-the disorder of duality and division putting himself or herself at the center of reality, the focus is “I” not God and His wisdom. This has terrible consequences on our everyday life, especially on our choices and decisions.

We see our lives and those around us in such a way that what we see as good is what is our right to have and everyone should give it to us and treat us in that way. What we consider bad for us is what everyone should avoid for us, then we become happy and this is our expectation; when it is denied, we become miserable and begin reacting negatively. This is the conditioning in which we live without our awareness.

The part of “I”, “my” becomes the story of the day clouding the horizon from seeing beyond ourselves. This is too much selfishness and individualistic attitude that we need to transcend it in order that our hearts can broaden for the greater good, which will benefit many. We will achieve this by going back to our roots in a deeper way to recapture the values of God, our identity and the reason of our existence. It will be a means to allowing everyone be inclusive in our life and what is good for us will be reciprocated to others.

The wholeness in any community makes one belong and be part of the story, whether joyous or sorrowful. This is the real beauty of fraternal living, which desires to pursue the common good, which has a place for everyone. As Christians, the Gospel binds us to live and be proclaimers of nothing else rather than its values. It has a core value of entirety which can never be compromised by our selfishness.

Community life is a life shared in love, service and hospitality which is full of generosity. The gospel values remain our daily bread as we embark on carrying out the mission of Christ. This project will be passed on, from one generation to the next until “It has healed and strengthened every aspect of humanity, until it has brought all men and women together at table in God’s Kingdom.”<sup>53</sup> This has to be our desire each and every moment in order that fraternal living in its fullness may become a reality to be experienced and lived.

## **2.4. Conclusion**

Having gone through the teachings and invitation of Pope Francis from the *Evangelii Gaudium* to the entire Church, and more so to the consecrated persons, we have seen the weight of it. Furthermore, the beauty of joy in enhancing fraternal living beyond our cultures, ethnic groups, color, nationality and professions, among others, will be experienced. Getting rid of the blocks we have mentioned above and embracing some good values, will also lead to a prosperous community, where good values will be handed over from generation to generation.

We are the public figures and models for the rest of humanity whereby everything we say and do has to be something unifying and leading others to the right path. Perfection should be our star to aim at in everything we do. Through this, we shall ensure that evangelization in and out of the community is geared to fraternal living, which is full of peace, joy, love and unity with all.

---

<sup>53</sup> Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, 119.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **FRATERNAL LIVING ACCORDING TO THE SCRIPTURES, CHURCH AND CONGREGATION'S DOCUMENTS**

#### **3.0. Introduction**

In any family, there are rules and guidelines which always lead to a good and harmonious living. These may not be written but they are automatically part and parcel of the members. This is equally the same with our Mother Church, in that everything is done and followed in an orderly way. She is not only concerned with the growth of the faith, but also good living of her children. Therefore, in this chapter, we shall look at what various documents of the Church and the Congregation tell us on how we ought to live. This will be a kind of a reminder as far as fraternal living is concerned, more so to the sisters of St. Joseph of Tarbes.

### **3.1. The Bible as a source of Fraternal Enrichment**

The Bible is a compilation of sacred scriptures which are an inspiration from God to the many authors. It contains the word of God, which is nothing other than love. The word of God is very important in a Christian's life, for it always puts us in the right path. The values and virtues of Christ become part and parcel of our life, hence the bond of our relationship with God and our brethren is strengthened. Furthermore, if this word becomes a vocabulary in our life, then darkness of selfishness, pride, hatred, competition and indifference, among many others fade away the beauty of God's love in our lives.

Jesus is our role model and if we lose sight of Him, we shall live as strangers to one another: "Ignorance of scripture is ignorance of Christ." (DV#25) (St. Jerome). It is high time we as religious, and more so the sisters of St. Joseph of Tarbes, started having a regular visit to the bible in order to better our living together in a fraternal way. This will eventually improve the interest and concern for one another, hence promoting life with the abundance of love for the entire Church. Therefore, we shall use the African Bible in our references.

#### **3.1.1. The Old Testament**

The Old Testament is the first part of the bible, which is so significant in nurturing our faith in God. It is so sad because some religious ignore readings from this part of the bible, preferring the New Testament, and so miss the touch of it. This is so because “the Old Testament is certainly relevant for our everyday lives, the Christian Church and the New Testament are both founded upon the laws of the Old Testament.”<sup>54</sup> We are encouraged to be-friend it for it nourishes our living together in broadening our hearts in embracing all as brothers and sisters, regardless of their weaknesses and strengths.

The word of God is like a spring which each moment nourishes us with His graces and virtues, impelling us to live together in oneness. According to the Prophet Ezekiel, God tells us the following words: “I will give you a new heart and a new mind. I will take away your stubborn heart of stone and give you an obedient heart” (*Ez.* 36:26). God had a great reason and good plan for the Israelites in order that they could live together without any string of indifference for one another. We are the present Israelites and share in the love of our Heavenly Father. We need to remain receptive to the person of the Holy Spirit who will loosen the hardness of our hearts by reclaiming back a heart which is full of love and ever ready to do His holy will. Community living will be so enjoyable in our services, not only among ourselves, but also to all who guide us and those whom we encounter. Revenge, hatred or selfishness will never be part of us. Rather, fraternal correction, reconciliation and complementation will be part of our beings. “The Lord told St. Catherine of Siena:

How sweet and glorious is that obedience which contains all other virtues! It is born of charity;  
on it is founded the rock of holy faith; it is a queen, and he who weds her will never suffer any

---

<sup>54</sup> <https://www.biblword.net/applying-the-old-testament-to-life-today>.

harm, but will experience only peace and serenity...Oh, obedience! You sail without effort and reach the port of happiness without danger! You are great and your greatness is so far-reaching as to stretch from heaven to earth, since you open heaven itself.<sup>55</sup>

This is what God wants of us to always experience in order that we may be the witnesses of this by our lives, first in our own communities, then to the entire Church. Happiness is all what we search for in life, and can only be achieved in living in accordance to the will of the Father. Loving and wishing ourselves well always, will guarantee us to love by being kind to others as our own fellow brothers and sisters (Cf. *Lev.* 19:34).

Our own communities are the best schools in striving to attain the true meaning of fraternal living. “The great love of the Trinity is born in us and the love of God and the desire to serve Him totally in His sons and daughters, even though this will entail struggles and sufferings.”<sup>56</sup> This is so because nothing good comes without challenges, and withstanding them will eventually lead us to that true joy and harmony within and from without. The psalmist says: “How wonderful it is, how pleasant for God’s people to live together in harmony.” (*Ps.* 133:1)

Fraternal living can never be lived by one person and that is why God saw that it was worth it (Cf. *Gen.* 2:18-20) to form a woman who was to be the companion of Adam, for animals did not give him joy. Creating them in His own image and likeness was because of the aspect of communion. God always reveals himself as love, trinity and communion to us so that we may enter freely into communion with Him and our fellow brethren.

I need to remain grateful for the gift of my sister in the community, for her presence plays a big role in my life, and my life is meant for the growth of the Church. Treasuring one another

---

<sup>55</sup> A., JAMES, *The great Virtues*, 75.

<sup>56</sup> [www.coindre.org/ENG/documents/circulars/circ-04-en.doc](http://www.coindre.org/ENG/documents/circulars/circ-04-en.doc).

beautifies our own communities, thus fraternity remains a touchable aspect wherever we go and work.

### **3.1.2. The New Testament**

The New Testament is the second part of the Bible, which mainly presents the person of Jesus who perfectly lived fraternal life inclusively. Everybody had a part in the life of Jesus for His main purpose was clearly put: “I came so that they might have life and have it more abundantly.” (*Jn. 10:10*). Jesus came to reconcile us with the father so that we might renew our relationship and communion with Him. This was His desire that we may always live and share in the same life as children of one Father.

The community of Jesus comprised all kinds of persons due to the broad heart He had, more so for the poor, the rejected and the down trodden, among many others. He remains a perfect model for us, especially we, the religious, in continuing the very mission He begun. Therefore, “When we are called to live together, our model is the model of the community formed by Jesus for a purpose.”<sup>57</sup> This is very true because our stay together is only witnesses the love and face of Christ in the mission:

Christ is the sole and real basis for the Church community. This spirit of Jesus is defined as a charity, joy, peace, patience, goodness, long-suffering, fidelity, mindless and chastity. Living in these virtues is what binds us into a community in such a way that we are immune from separation by distance, temperament, race, color, gender ideology, social status, history, creed or death.<sup>58</sup>

---

<sup>57</sup> M. INNOCENT., *Dimensions of Christian Spirituality*.

<sup>58</sup> M. INNOCENT., *Dimensions of Christian Spirituality*.

When Christ becomes the center of our lives and the community at large, that oneness will be experienced for the good and growth of one another. The love of Christ surpasses everything else in order that we may be His true instruments in evangelizing the Gospel values to the entire humanity. Whatever we do or planning to do should be for the interest of others and not for our own selfish motives. (Cf. *1Cor.* 10:24).

Going an extra mile in the community is something so encouraging for it earns us some blessings and graces from God. A charitable way of life to others is “Continually on alert, it does not complain of being overworked, and is not troubled by fear- but as a lively flame, it raises ever higher.”<sup>59</sup> We need to be at the service of our brethren, with a spirited heart which is zealous and enthusiastic for the common good of all. The Bible challenges and invites us to go beyond our likes, my, friends and family in order to serve and live together without discrimination (Cf. *Lk.* 6:34-36).

Forgiveness and reconciliation is something so precious that we need to make it part and parcel of our being since we are all human beings who are bound to fall. Without this, life in the community becomes unbearable to the extent of living as strangers. Jesus reconciled us with the Father and we ought to emulate His footsteps in order to embrace one another despite our differences and uniqueness. Knowing that the community is not made up of angels but rather of strong and weak human beings, it will not be a big deal to forgive and reconcile.

At times we might be tempted to count the many times one has offended us but let us have a pattern of counting the good and seeing the image of God in that sister or brother in order that we may be able to forgive. In the same vein, from the Ephesians, we read the following words:

---

<sup>59</sup> A., ALBERIONE, *The Great Virtues*, 37.

“All bitterness, fury, anger, shouting, and reviling must be removed from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, compassionate, forgiving one another as God has forgiven you in Christ.” (*Eph* 4:31-32). This is the only way for fraternal living in any community, whether in the Church, convent or in the family.

As we continue to focus on the true star, we always need to bend low and allow Jesus to be above us. This will pave room for respect, not only for our leaders but also our young sisters who might pass through our own communities. When this is reciprocated from the superiors to the young ones, the path of Jesus will be the light of our everyday dealings. Furthermore, we shall be in touch with the evangelical vows which each one professed, by living fully in the mission within and outside the community.

### **3.2. The Encyclicals of the Pope**

We are and will remain ambassadors of communion so long as being religious is our identity. Communion will not be experienced where a community does not exist, therefore, a “community is the first and most believable gospel that we can preach by humanizing our community.”<sup>60</sup> This is very true because our living together should always be motivated by the gospel values. We give that which we have since the richness of Christ is bestowed upon everyone with freedom in order to glorify the name of God.

Joy is what beautifies and edifies a community for union and growth. Sharing in the body and blood of Christ everyday should empower us to break and share ourselves for the good of others. This will be through our daily events, which eventually add value to their lives. Living together in communion remains the only way of radiating love and joy, hence a lively community.

---

<sup>60</sup> [www.vatican.va/roman-curia/congregations/ccsclife/documents/rc-con-ccsclife-doc-rallegratevi-lettera-consacra-ti-en-htm](http://www.vatican.va/roman-curia/congregations/ccsclife/documents/rc-con-ccsclife-doc-rallegratevi-lettera-consacra-ti-en-htm), no 9, pg. 25.

When a community is full of life, it signifies that Christ in their midst is active through the power of the Holy Spirit. “A joyless community is one that is dying out. A community rich in joy is a genuine gift from above to brothers and sisters who know how to ask for it and accept one another, committing themselves to community life, trusting in the action of the spirit.”<sup>61</sup>

Everyone desires and wishes to live in a joyful community, where fraternity through the power of the Eucharist always calls us together despite the frailties we have. Therefore, it is a challenge and a call for each one of us to exercise our motherhood by going beyond differences and allowing the love of God to prevail. Our presence will be felt far and wide, and thus growth in the life of Evangelization in and outside the community.

Life in the community can only be experienced when you and I value each other’s dignity for the common good of the community. But “it is impossible to further the common good without acknowledging and defending the right of life.”<sup>62</sup> This is the precious gift that God has gratuitously given us to respect and use for the good of all and for His glory. Therefore, we have no option, other than being promoters of the gift of life in the apostolates and within our communities.

Our joy should always remain grounded in sharing with everybody, thus growing in the culture of love and solidarity in developing the whole human society<sup>63</sup>. The Church calls us for this, since she believes that we are capable of making a difference in the entire world. It is our task to make this a reality each and every day.

### **3.3. The Teaching of the Church on Fraternal Life**

---

<sup>61</sup> [www.vatican.va/roman-curia/congregations/ccsclife/documents/rc-con-ccsclife-doc-no](http://www.vatican.va/roman-curia/congregations/ccsclife/documents/rc-con-ccsclife-doc-no) 28.

<sup>62</sup> Encyclical Letter *Evangelium Vitae*, no 101.

<sup>63</sup> Cf. Encyclical Letter *Evangelium Vitae*, no. 101.

The Church feels happy whenever she sees her children living together in collaboration with one another for its growth: “In as much as institutes of consecrated life are dedicated in a special way to the service of God and the whole Church, they are subject to the supreme authority of the Church in a special way.” (Can. 590 #1). There is no way that we can live and work in a parish or diocese without the consent of a Priest or Bishop. Our collaboration with them makes work easier and more efficient, especially in the various apostolates we carry out in the diocese. Team work should be used in bettering our services for the entire humanity and in a profound way deepen the zeal of giving the best. It will also continue in enhancing our fraternal living in the community. The joy of the Church is when we work with one mind and heart in a missionary spirit.

Communion should be an everyday breath to inhale in our various encounters with persons of different levels and personalities: “All the members are united together as a special family in Christ, this is to be defined in such a way that it becomes a mutual support for all in fulfilling the vocation of each one.” (Can 602) It is very true, if we are committed, each day there must be growth individually or as a community. This will enhance that concern and interest of the welfare and whereabouts of community members.

The beauty of being rooted in charity-based faith in our consecrated life will enable us to be true icons of Christ’s love in dealing with each other in and out of the community. Reconciliation will not be an issue for us, since we shall go beyond counting others’ limitations but rather treasuring the gift of one another.

We are also the pilgrim Church here on earth, looking forward to meeting God face to face in the world to come. This has to be the desire of each one of us. Still, this reunion with the father can be made an experience in our daily encounter with our fellow human beings. According to the Church teachings, “if one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice

together” (CCC#953). This will only be realized in our community, if only communion in charity makes each one loved, cared for, belong and valued, hence our living together can be another heaven here on earth. “For if we continue to love one another and join in praising the most Holy Trinity- all of us who are sons of God form one family in Christ-we will be faithful to the deepest vocation of the Church” (CCC #959).

There is nothing beautiful other than living love and remaining united as one family striving for the good of all. When everything is for the interest of all, chances of bearing fruits will be high, at the same time fraternal life among ourselves will be admirable and encouraging. Therefore, living heaven here on earth is possible if we want and it is the responsibility of each one of us to work on ourselves in order to bear these fruits with joy: “Because our life is communal, we live in relationship with God and others. Our good actions benefit them and our bad actions harm them. Each individual action can lead to the creation of a structure, either of good or evil, which makes future similar actions more probable. With this in mind, we need to act well in order to build good communities and set out good ways of behaving” (CC #304).

This is so because we are social beings who are weak and strong and that we need one another in this journey. Furthermore, one cannot manage alone without the other, so if this has not been part of me then it is a high moment to treasure one another, not only in difficult times but also joyous moments: “Communalism was ranked as a social value far higher than individualism in most African communities and the very structure of society dictated and favored this perspective of social life” (CC# 30).

If this was valued and lived long back in our own African communities by people who were unlearned and uninformed, “then what happens with us at times yet we know the importance of fraternal living?” This is a great challenge we ought to embrace in order that our living together

in our communities may improve. This will also make our foundresses happy in heaven for the continuity of their spirit. Therefore, as we continue bettering our fraternal living in the community, the Church, through our presence grows as a family.

### **3.4. The Sisters of St. Joseph of Tarbes' Teaching about Fraternal Living**

The sisters of St. Joseph of Tarbes are some among many other congregations but distinct by their Charism. The aspect of communion, as far as fraternal living is concerned, is being edified for they draw this model from the Trinity. Each person of the Trinity has the same divine attributes but their responsibilities are different. They grant us a great model for our lives and the community at large.

As I look at my community, we are many, diverse and unique from one another, yet we are called to embrace and live in communion by being at the service of one another since we are all equal in the eyes of God. The spirit of oneness will be possible, for Jesus does wish and pray to the father that we may be one as He, the Spirit, and the Father are one (Cf. *Jn.* 17:20-22). Submission in this matter to one another should always be soaked in love and humility. This will prevent us from the temptation to equality, power or positions, but rather work together in complementation.

The Trinitarian horizon of communion always embraces each and every human being despite our limitations, since we are children of the same father, created and fashioned in His own image and likeness. We too, by the power of the Holy Spirit, need to go beyond what may seem a block by embracing and living together in love as brothers and sisters. "There is neither Jew nor Greek; there is neither a slave nor free person; there is neither male nor female; for you are one in Christ Jesus" (*Gal.* 3:28).

The diversity that we experience in our culture, religion and way of life, cannot be God's plan for the whole world. How monotonous and boring the world would have been if it were devoid of any diversity and variety! Is it most fitting and proper then that we acknowledge diversity as God's precious gift and also accept and respect it? We are diverse yet called to be one just as the Holy Trinity is distinctly three and one at the same time. But we can be one only in as far as we accept and appreciate the other who is different from us. Let us remember that it is not uniformity which God wants but unity in diversity.<sup>64</sup>

Going back to the roots of the Congregation, reminding ourselves of what we ought to embrace and live in emulating the foundresses, "each one of them having contemplated and lived this love, they were able to share it in a fraternal relationship in the image of the Trinity."<sup>65</sup> This was very clear to them for it was a true experience that they have handed over unto us that the seed of faith and love may continue growing and spreading all over the world. In addition to this, was the mission of bearing fruits and drawing many souls to God's Kingdom.

Our awareness of being consecrated to God will always enable us to avoid forgetting our call and responsibility of living the charism of communion to the full. This too will enable us to remain receptive to God's experience from within, leading to others' centeredness in our relationship with our sisters and everybody else we work and live with. The spirit of dialogue and the capacity to forgive will have no strings attached to them since the love of God is hovering from within and without.

---

<sup>64</sup> *The 5<sup>th</sup> Provincial Chapter, Province of Kenya*, 3.

<sup>65</sup> *The Constitution of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Tarbes*, 1.

Being Christ's disciples, wishing and desiring always to follow His footsteps, "there can be no true communion without that unconditional mutual love which demands a readiness to serve others, willingness to welcome them as they are and ability to forgive" (V.C. 14, (Cf. *Mt.* 18:22). Therefore, we are to allow ourselves to be motivated by the love, compassion and mercy of Jesus in our everyday dealings with one another and even in the work places for fraternal living to prevail.

We, as sisters have willingly and deliberately professed the evangelical counsels to be our way of life. These counsels have "bound us to the Lord, they also welds us to the congregation, a cell of the Church, and they make us available to the apostolate which is particular to it."<sup>66</sup> These three counsels; Poverty, Chastity, and Obedience make a different pattern in our lives, for we have been chosen by God and set apart for a purpose.

Each of the vows plays a great role of valuing inclusiveness in what we do. Living contrary to the values makes us lose our identity as far as consecrated life is concerned. We are the icons of the Church in that Christians learn from us, for what we say or do is the gospel truth for them. Therefore, it is a great challenge and at the same time an invitation to live and lead others according to the Gospel values. Woe to us if we happen to contradict our words with our actions.

As we move and live with the signs of the time, let us not allow ourselves to be carried away from the mission of love, but rather, may the signs of the time help us in responding to nothing else other than fostering fraternal living. May the richness of the values of Christ and our foundresses be a light in the choices and decisions we make towards others and even towards ourselves.

---

<sup>66</sup> *The Constitution of Sisters of St. Joseph of Tarbes*, no. 57.

### **3.5. Conclusion**

Having gone through this chapter, we have discovered that the Church and the congregation's documents always put us on the right path, and more so, in our journey of faith. This is through our being faithful and committed to the vocation we have embraced. We want to thank our Mother Church and the congregation, for all the materials they have given us in bettering our fraternal living. It is not only our joy when we experience this fraternity but also the joy of the entire Church, for we are Christ's icons of compassion, mercy, love and peace.

Fraternal living in the community is so vital that we need always to remind ourselves of the essentials we need to adhere to, from the Documents of the Church and those of the Congregation. This will forever enable us to hand over what is right to the next generation; quality ways of living. Therefore, may this material not only remain in books but rather be blended into our everyday living. This will eventually make us true builders of communion from within to without, and facilitate a happy living with one another.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **4.0. Introduction**

Chapter four aims at discussing some recommendations, based on all the chapters we have dealt with.

Reflecting on the *Evangelii Gaudium* as a tool towards bettering fraternal living among the Sisters of St. Joseph of Tarbes in Ngando, Nairobi Diocese, the following points ought to be taken into consideration:

#### **4.1. Need for Unity in Diversity**

Unifying cultures matters a lot for there is no culture which is superior to the other. Appreciating and allowing everybody to become part and parcel of our being, will always enable us to live in fraternity facilitated by love. There should therefore, be a new paradigm of stressing unity in diversity rather than either conformity or individualism. Having the consciousness as individuals with diverse cultures, we shall have the power to build up our history, values, mutual affirmation and trust.<sup>67</sup>

Looking critically at what makes our cultures distinct from others in the 21<sup>st</sup> century has brought about discrimination, hatred and superiority, among many other things. We are not exempted from these attitudes, as sisters of St. Joseph of Tarbes, but we need to go beyond our differences in order to bring together all the cultures into the culture of Jesus. Our living together should always promote unity in diversity: “The generational gap, inculturation, multiculturalism, and interculturality which increasingly characterize institutes of consecrated life and societies of apostolic life can move them from one place of weariness to a milieu which challenges them to a true communitarian dialogue in the friendship and charity of Christ. Only in this way will everyone feel involved and responsible in the communitarian project”.<sup>68</sup>

As we realized in Chapter one, the Sisters of St. Joseph of Tarbes are encouraged to deepen their contemplation of the Blessed Trinity, living their charism joyfully and evangelizing their cultures with the culture of Christ. This was because they need to avoid chances of watering down their fraternal living, and instead, find possible ways of remaining focused on the vision and mission of the Congregation.

---

<sup>67</sup> Cf. C. JUHAUS. *Religious Life*, 32.

<sup>68</sup> *Apostolic Exhortation, New Wine in New Wineskins*, 38.

The sisters therefore, should be helped to embrace and build on the positivity of any culture at their disposal in order to allow each person to feel at home. This will enable them to venture into new ways of doing things by making them their own; hence, the missionary spirit will be deepened gradually. Furthermore, the sisters need to “bear a renewed and vigorous evangelical witness to self-denial and restraint, in the form of fraternal life inspired by principles of simplicity and hospitality.”<sup>69</sup>

#### **4.2. Complementing one another**

Our existence in the congregation or community is usually through the response made to God in carrying out the mission with love and zeal. Whatever we do in or outside the community is for the betterment of those with whom we are entrusted and for the growth of the congregation. “The complementarity and variety of gifts is the basis for the community and collaboration.”<sup>70</sup> This is what makes a community alive for we strive to appreciate the goodness of our sisters, hence enhancing fraternal living:

When the weakness of relationships breaks up and ruins the care of the human person, we are invited to humanize community relationships, to encourage communion of heart and spirit in the Gospel sense, because “there is a communion of life among all those who belong to Christ. It is a communion that is born of faith” that makes “the Church, in her most profound truth, communion with God, intimacy with God, a communion of love with Christ and with the father in the Holy Spirit, which extends to brotherly communion.”<sup>71</sup>

---

<sup>69</sup> *Apostolic Exhortation, Vita Consecrata*, 91.

<sup>70</sup> L. SOFIELD- R. HAMMETT- C. JULIANO, *Building Communion*, 70.

<sup>71</sup> Pope Francis, *Encyclical Letter, Rejoice*, 26.

In our second chapter, we saw how the sisters are tempted to working hard to be above others or how they compare themselves with others, for self-gratification. This automatically blocks one from appreciating others or even having humility to learn from others. It has been, and might be a constant disease blocking fraternal living. Therefore, the sisters are encouraged, in humility to always appreciate one another, and that way, they will come to discover their own giftedness. We also need to sensitize the community so that everyone could use her talents for the service of the Church.

### **4.3. Maturity in Technology Usage**

Technology is always good for it makes work more efficient and smart as far as time management is concerned. Some of the gadgets, like television, break monotony in the community, when we involve ourselves in the happenings of the world and be in solidarity with the contemporary world. This enables us to extend the spirit of fraternity through prayer or paying a visit to the affected persons. This deepens the reasons for our existence as religious persons in the Church, within and outside the community.

Looking at some gadgets as far as the fraternal living of the sisters is concerned, we discovered in Chapter one how this might rob much of the community's time if used in a wrong way or even with selfish motives'. A community where a sister is all the time on the phone or computer, not valuing time for prayer, among many other things, ceases to be a community. The interest of community life fades away, it begins to live with some mixed visions and missions.

To avoid reaching this far, in fear of watering down our spirit of fraternal living, the sisters should handle phones, computers and other gadgets with maturity and remain focused on their prayer life, community living and apostolic mission.

#### 4.4. Being Others' Centered

“When a community begins to focus predominantly on itself and neglecting its apostolic emphasis, it jeopardizes the right to be called Christian.”<sup>72</sup> This is what Pope Francis is trying to challenge us on, and at the same time inviting us to a fraternal life which is all inclusive despite our uniqueness. A life of sharing is something beautiful, it earns one fulfilment once done with a pure heart. The entire Church is gazing upon us for the belief that we can be the source of strength and hope in the lives of believers. For this very reason, “we are called to be bearers of this message of hope giving serenity and joy, God’s consolation and His tenderness towards all.”<sup>73</sup>

Having gone through the teachings and some of the life realities from the *Evangelii Gaudium*, much has been emphasized in order to better our fraternal living. The spirit of joy in our togetherness makes life enjoyable and surpasses our frailties’, positions and professions, among many other things. We are given the opportunity to retrieve this joy in our mission, like our foundresses were radiantly happy when they found themselves together in the community.<sup>74</sup>

Our togetherness too should always be geared towards the communitarian aspect, hence being agents of fraternity in all spheres of life. Furthermore, “authority must not be anything other than being at the service of communion-a true ministry for accompanying brothers and sisters towards conscious and responsible fidelity.”<sup>75</sup> This is not only for those in authority but for all the members.

---

<sup>72</sup> L. SOFIELD- R. HAMMETT- C. JULIANO, *Building Communion*, 102.

<sup>73</sup> Pope Francis, *Encyclical Letter, Rejoice*, 14.

<sup>74</sup> Les, *Quatre cahier*, 32.

<sup>75</sup> *Apostolic Exhortation, New Wine in New Wineskins*, 43-44.

The sisters too, through their own little ways are called to be the “leaven of communion at the service of the mission of the universal Church.”<sup>76</sup> This is the greatest reason why we have left everything that might have been a bother in order to follow the footsteps of our Master, our Lord Jesus Christ. Thus, the sisters are to be reminded of the fact that each one of them ceases to be the center of herself.

#### **4.5. Reconciliation**

The spirit of reconciliation is a great virtue which we need to fall in love with as far as community life is concerned. We are unique to one another, and rubbing shoulders because of one reason or the other, at times, has to be part of us. This therefore, should not be a block in our life of sharing, but should be an opportunity to learn from the failures of others, render a fraternal correction, and challenge one another with love. With this, good attitudes of an ideal community will be experienced.

A community which attains the spirit of peace, love and unity is usually that which has undergone an event of conflict: “Avoidance of conflict prevents the ultimate growth of the community.”<sup>77</sup> This is what we have seen in chapter two, how unity prevails against conflict, in that we could learn how to appropriately deal with conflict. We need to have a good disposition to face them with love and forgiveness. It is this struggle which makes the community and especially the concerned persons to begin to see the importance of the spirit of togetherness amidst the conflicts.

Therefore, the sisters are to be encouraged to always develop and deepen the spirit of reconciliation from the personal level to the community and to enhance the growth of fraternal

---

<sup>76</sup> Apostolic Exhortation, *Vita Consecrata*, 47.

<sup>77</sup> C. JUHAUS, *Religious Life*, 29.

living despite the weaknesses and strengths we have. To always “cultivate hearts which are restless until they rest in love; the restlessness of love is always an incentive to go towards others.”<sup>78</sup>

#### **4.6. The Passion and Interest of Reading**

Reading is a hobby that we need to make part and parcel of ourselves since we become informed, we own the message, we need to challenge ourselves, if need be. This will allow growth to be experienced, more especially in perceiving things as far as our interrelatedness within the cosmos is concerned. Our existence in or outside the community is for the purpose of carrying out God’s mission with love. Therefore, we have no other option rather than allowing ourselves to be conformed to His virtues and logic.

This is all that we have gone through in chapter three, on the Scriptures, Church’s and Congregation’s documents and the demands that they require of us in our day to day life’s encounters. If ignorance befalls us, we shall be living the opposite of how we are expected to be living as consecrated persons and as far as fraternal life is concerned. These documents are a reminder to us of the need to be living in the right way. Therefore, the sisters are to have the passion in reading and familiarizing themselves with the teachings of the Bible, Church and the Congregation in order that, their fraternal living could keep improving every day.

---

<sup>78</sup> B. KYALO, an Experience of Religious Life in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, 80.

## **GENERAL CONCLUSION**

This research tried to investigate the topic of *Evangelii Gaudium* as a tool of bettering fraternal life among the Sisters of St. Joseph of Tarbes in Ngando, Nairobi Arch-Diocese. It was divided into three chapters.

The first chapter dealt with the Congregation's understanding of fraternal life. Having looked at the history of the congregation and life at present, it has given us the image of how the communitarian life was lived before and how it continues to be lived now. Living together is never one's choice, but rather God's will. Therefore, embracing the six characteristic traits in our daily lives will enable us to live fraternal life among ourselves very well. The life of our foundresses

was such an exemplary one in that they remain models in life's choices as we try to allow ourselves to be evangelized in order to evangelize others with the fraternal spirit.

Many are the challenges in our contemporary society which might or have robbed the spirit of fraternal living. Several challenges have been highlighted in this chapter, of which the sisters ought to be conscious of in order to avoid chances of being their culprit. We need to counteract temptations by carrying out some charitable acts or uttering some encouraging words in order to promote fraternal living.

The sisters of St. Joseph of Tarbes are always called "to be truly faithful and creative in order not to weaken the prophetic call of the common life within the community and their solidarity with those living outside their community, especially towards the poor and the weakest."<sup>79</sup> This is all that we are called to. We are called to go into the shoes of the less disadvantaged persons in the society in order that they may feel cared for and loved.

The second chapter talked about fraternal life as exposed by *Evangelii Gaudium* to the consecrated persons, more especially the Sisters of St. Joseph of Tarbes in Ngando, Nairobi Arch-Diocese. The researcher discovered that the joy of the Gospel always fills the hearts of those who are open to receiving it and radiating to others in the mission. Pope Francis has highlighted different factors which could promote the joy of living fraternal life and the sadness of not living it.

Religious persons on the ground are the icons of Christ as they live among themselves in the midst of the entire Church. Our actions and words should always be fraternal building as discussed in this chapter. We shall never lose anything by being others' centered, generous,

---

<sup>79</sup> *Apostolic Exhortation, New Wine in New Wine Skin*, 33.

concerned, having a big heart to embrace all, regardless of who they are, solidarity with others, and we shall be fulfilled and contented for having done what is good.

Whenever we shall experience the joy of the Gospel and the joy of the mission, the Trinitarian spirit will impel us to respond to the needs of the moment with great love and enthusiasm. This will become a golden opportunity in deepening fraternal living in the community and all those we encounter and work with in the apostolate. Thus, our Charism of communion will always be beyond the boundaries of communities.

The third chapter stressed the understanding of Fraternal Living according to the Scriptures, Church's and Congregation's Documents for the Sisters of St. Joseph of Tarbes in Ngando, Nairobi Arch-Diocese. The word of God is the greatest weapon in our life as far as religious life is concerned. This is where we embrace God's values which enable us to live the fullness of fraternity. This illumines our thoughts which affect our actions towards others and ourselves.

Treasuring the word of God in and through our lives, we should always find some ways of spreading it to every corner of the world in order that the love of Christ might be experienced. In the Old and New Testaments, fraternal living was experienced, so we need to emulate the great virtues right from our fore-fathers to the community of Jesus. We are to allow the word to "keep us continually vigilant so that we can recognize the limitation and weakness that deter processes which are necessary for authentic and credible witnessing."<sup>80</sup> "The love is nourished by the word and by the Eucharist, purified in the sacrament of reconciliation, and sustained by prayer for unity, the special gift of the spirit to those who obediently listen to the Gospel. It is the Spirit himself

---

<sup>80</sup> *Apostolic Exhortation, New Wine in New Wineskins*, 19.

who leads the soul to the experience of communion with the Father and with his son Jesus Christ, a communion which is the source of fraternal life.”<sup>81</sup>

The documents are there to give us directives on how we are to go about life, whether in the Church or in our own communities. As we looked at different documents in the Church and Congregation, we discovered that they are rich and therefore, we need to be receptive to them. This will give us room to be challenged, encouraged and empowered towards living in togetherness in the fraternal spirit.

We also came up with various recommendations in Chapter Four, whereby, we are convinced that they will be implemented for the betterment of fraternal living among the sisters. Fraternal living is the core aspect in religious life as far as community life is concerned. It is in the community that each one feels a sense of belonging, loved, cared for and valued in the vocational pilgrimage as each discovers the will of God in every situation encountered. Each one should take responsibility in striving to live and lead a fraternal way of life despite the ups and downs in order that our existence in the Church may be something to refer to in drawing more souls to the Kingdom of God.

---

<sup>81</sup> *Apostolic Exhortation Vita Consecrata*, 43-44.



## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### Bible

*The African Bible Version, The Biblical text of the New American Bible*, Nairobi: Pauline's, 2005.

### Church Documents

BENEDICT XVI, *Encyclical Letter: Caritas Veritate; Charity in Truth (7<sup>th</sup> July 2009)*,

Nairobi: Pauline's, 2009.

JOHN PAUL II, *Apostolic Exhortation: Vita Consecrate*, to the Bishops and Clergy, Religious orders and Congregations (25th March 1996), India: Pauline's, 1996.

\_\_\_\_\_, *Encyclical Letter: Evangelium Vitae, The Gospel of Life (25th March 1995)*,

Nairobi: Pauline's, 1995.

\_\_\_\_\_, *Encyclical Letter: Redemptoris Missio, On the Urgency and necessity for*

*Missionary activities and endeavors in the world (7th December 1990)*, Nairobi:

Pauline's, 1990.

POPE FRANCIS, *Apostolic Exhortation: Evangelii Gaudium, The Church's primary mission of*

*Evangelization in the modern world (24<sup>th</sup> November 2013)*, Nairobi: Pauline's, 2013.

POPE FRANCIS, *Apostolic Exhortation: New Wine in New Wineskins, To the Consecrated life and its Ongoing Challenges since Vatican II (2018)*, Kenya: Pauline's, 2018.

\_\_\_\_\_, *Encyclical Letter: Lumen Fidei, The Light of Faith (29<sup>th</sup> June 2013)*,

Nairobi: Pauline's, 2013.

\_\_\_\_\_, *Encyclical Letter: Rejoice, To the Congregation for Consecrated Life and*

*Societies of Apostolic Life (2014)*, Kenya: Pauline's Publication, 2014.

*The Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Nairobi, Pauline's Press, 1994.

*The Code of Canon Law*, Landon, Theological Publications in India, 1983.

### **Documents of the Congregation**

*Constitutions of the Sisters of Saint Joseph of Tarbes*, 1984.

*Extended General Council of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Tarbes*, Cantaus, France, 2014.

*Les Quatre Cahiers of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Tarbes*.

MERCY, J., Re: *Joseph is a perfect model of silent strength and faith*, E-mail to the author, 14<sup>th</sup>,

March, 2018.

*Notes of the Origins of the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Tarbes*, Kenyan Province,

2011.

*Sisters of St. Joseph of Tarbes, 15<sup>th</sup> Provincial Chapter Act*, Bangalore Province, 2013.

*Sisters of St. Joseph of Tarbes' 3<sup>rd</sup> Provincial Chapter Act*, Kenyan Province, 2010.

*Sisters of St. Joseph of Tarbes, 4<sup>th</sup> Provincial Chapter Act*, Kenyan Province, 2013.

*Sisters of St. Joseph of Tarbes, 5<sup>th</sup> Provincial Chapter Act*, Kenyan Province, 2016

## **Books**

ALBERIONE, J. *The Great Virtues*, U.S.A, Pauline's Publication, 1985.

BEHA, M, *The Dynamics of a Community*, New York, Corpus Publication, 1970.

BEHA, M. H, *Living Community*, U.S.A, Bruce Publication, 1967.

BONIFACE, K, *A Journey of Faith, Joy and Love*, Nairobi, Kenya, CUEA Press, 2017.

INNOCENT, M, *Dimensions of Christian Spirituality*, Class Notes, Tangaza University  
College, The Catholic University of Eastern Africa, Nairobi, 2018.

JOE, M, *A Radical Love, a part of Light*, Nairobi, Pauline's Press, 2013.

JUHAUS, J.C, *Religious Life*, New York, Paulist Press, 1994.

KAITHOLIL, G, *Communion in community*, Bandra, St. Paul's Press, 2001.

O'MURCHU, D, *Poverty, Celibacy and Obedience*, New York, St. Paul's Press, 1999.

SOFIELD, L.-HAMMETT, R.-JULIANO, C., *Building a Community*, U.S.A, Ave Maria Press,  
1998.

## **Internet Sources**

CIRCULARS, [www.coindre.org/Eng/Documents/circ-04-en-doc](http://www.coindre.org/Eng/Documents/circ-04-en-doc).

EVANGELII GAUDIUM, Pope Francis-time-is-greater-than-space-what-does-it-mean, 24, may  
2016. <https://aletcia.org>.

FRATERNAL LIFE IN COMMUNITY, Fraternal life in common, [www.vatican.va/roman-curia/congregation/ccsclife/documents/rc-con-ccsclife-doc-Feb/2/1994-en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman-curia/congregation/ccsclife/documents/rc-con-ccsclife-doc-Feb/2/1994-en.html).

REJOICE, Pope Francis, a letter to the Consecrated men and women. [www.vatican.va/roman-curia/congregation/ccsclife/documents/rc-con-cosclife-doc-2014/02/02-rallegratevi-lettera-consacraati-en-htm](http://www.vatican.va/roman-curia/congregation/ccsclife/documents/rc-con-cosclife-doc-2014/02/02-rallegratevi-lettera-consacraati-en-htm).

The Old Testament Bible, applying to-life-today, <https://www.biblword.net>.