

INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY... A NEW FUTURE

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The world is a global village: an all too familiar expression of our times. We observe it, we deplore it, or possibly, we rejoice in it. From the moment someone else's ways of being and doing intersect our lives more and more, very closely even, that person ceases to be a stranger and profoundly challenges the way we look upon him or her.

Every international meeting of our congregations, chapters or other, always ends by listing a few priorities. They are proposed to all our religious families as necessary avenues for updating our faithfulness. Nowadays, the question of international solidarity, if not universal solidarity, has become part of the movement of a humanity that, seeing what is happening, is not quite sure where it will lead. The consequences are staring us in the face and the means seem to have slipped through the hands of our leaders. While we cannot change the reality of the global village, we can certainly promote values in which the future belongs to those who choose to welcome it as anything but inevitable.

Awakening to the Inculturation of Life

The successive tragedies and calls for aid are conveyed through the channel of solidarity between humans so that the results are not temporary. Let's keep our cheque books in hand, some say. "The whole issue of solidarity has a strong scent of cash, does it not?" they add. So we have no choice: what do we cut back on in order to give more?

Adopting this perspective on the call for greater solidarity is to place oneself in the logic of need: a call, a response. The rules are clear: a donor and a recipient; those who dare to seek aid and those who agree or not to respond. And what if the call to develop universal and international solidarity made us transcend the level of needs and solutions to enable us to awaken even more to what is implied by the inculturation of the gift of life in a broader reality, that which goes beyond our immediate, all while including us! Doesn't inculturation represent the meeting of different cultures, a reciprocal movement, an exchange, a sharing?

We can rephrase the challenge of solidarity by saying that it is to develop a sense of responsibility that draws on a larger sense of belonging and generates, therefore, a different way of addressing all of our needs and providing appropriate solutions.

It is, ultimately, the discovery of a new form of belonging. The same as before but now with a broader sense, all protective barriers lifted. A whole without distinction? Certainly not! But a whole with different characteristics, organised, functional, for which we all bear a common responsibility. Consequently, human and financial resources are shared. The discovery of a new form of belonging and connectedness is the expected result.

The Foundations of Universal Solidarity

This call for greater international solidarity calls into question our perception of ourselves: Is the world community nothing more than the sum of its parts? Should it not rather be described as a dynamic space, a movement from which emerged much needed support and an overall responsibility in relation to the gift of life and its riches embodied in various cultures?

International solidarity is based on recognition and it establishes an interrelationship that places each person as subject and actor in charge of our loyalty to the collective future. Basically, this solidarity challenges our traditional ways of doing things by recognising from the outset every human community, its history, culture and the mystery of the inculturation of God's plan in it. Thus, a fruitful dialogue and healthy confrontation that foster mutual growth are established. The result is enrichment for us and for the world to which we are sent. This type of recognition changes, by definition, the position of the entities and creates a partnership that can no longer withstand classification into superiors and inferiors. One's experience is renewed through contact with the energy of others and hope is gathered as a gift that opens hearts and renews our mission.

Thinking of international solidarity in terms of an interrelation where people are subjects, actors and leaders allows each person to support, ask, give, and receive. The result is an altruism assured of the contribution of others. One-way solidarity is domination, it is imperialism. Conversely, receiving is first being prepared to give. Mutual recognition is the birth of an egalitarian interrelationship and opens us to a closer reading of the signs of the Spirit, of its action in our world and the calls it sends us. These are the challenges of international solidarity!

After all, if we put away our check book and allow ourselves be moved by the principles of international and universal solidarity, we realize, then, that it offers us a new future. It encourages the creation of a network of aware men and women, responsible and determined disciples, willing to work closely with others, who are different, to build the Kingdom of God. Is that not a fruit of Christian unity? Well beyond the review of our methods, although unavoidable, international solidarity is a privileged path to conversion and human maturity in view of an even more meaningful participation to the challenges of the world.

If a link exists between us and others, it is by choice that we call it solidarity and by conviction that we make it a place where the future is possible.

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