

Conferencia Episcopal Puertorriqueña
Obras Misionales Pontificias



Working Instrument for the CAM6

America,
**with the power of the Spirit,
witnesses to Christ**

November, 19 to 24, 2024
Ponce - Puerto Rico



SIXTH AMERICAN MISSIONARY CONGRESS - CAM6 PUERTO RICO

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PRESENTATION OF THE WORKING INSTRUMENT

America, with the power of the Spirit, witnesses for Christ!

With great joy and enthusiasm we are preparing to celebrate the Sixth American Missionary Congress in Ponce, Puerto Rico, November 19-24, 2024. We continue to move forward together towards this important ecclesial event that, as a Disciple-Missionary and Synodal Church, seeks to be a witness of Jesus Christ to the ends of the earth.

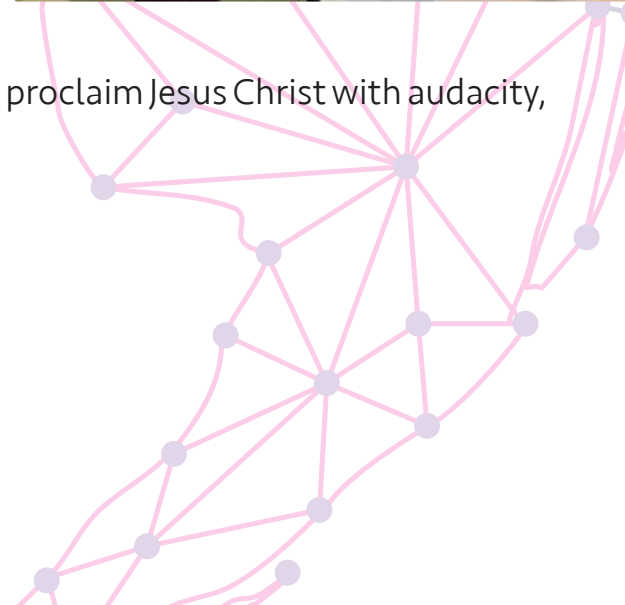
The present document that we offer you will serve as a thematic guide to orient us in our preparation for CAM6. I encourage and invite you to study its contents in depth so that, as we prayed in the preparatory prayer, we may revitalize our missionary action by proclaiming the joy of the Gospel to the ends of the earth.

Courage! We are not alone on this journey. We are accompanied on this adventure by Our Lady of Guadalupe, the woman of the burning heart, the one who gave a generous yes, the mother of the true God for whom we live.

Forward, missionary Church of America! Forward! Let us proclaim Jesus Christ with audacity, and may our voice resound to the ends of the earth,

in communion of life and mission,

Bishop Rubén Antonio González Medina, CMF
Bishop of the Diocese of Ponce
President of the Puerto Rican Episcopal Conference
President of the Sixth American Missionary Congress



Delegates to CAM6:

Receive the Instrumentum laboris of CAM6. Since we received in Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia (2018), the task and responsibility of being the host Church of CAM6; three are the main attitudes that accompany us: 1. prayer; 2. docility; and 3. parrhesia. In prayer, we contemplate the Mission of God, which comes to us in the Person of Jesus, and is perpetuated in the Mission of the Church; docility in the action of the Holy Spirit, which inspires us with new ardor, a joyful desire to “rediscover our vocation as baptized”, and in parrhesia, attribute of the Spirit, which gives rise to the audacity to be “Evangelizers with Spirit”, that is, as Pope Francis affirms: “... evangelizers who open themselves without fear to the action of the Holy Spirit”. (EG 259).

This Instrumentum laboris is the fruit of a whole work of listening, illumination, reflection and discernment in a synodal missiological key, in three main ecclesiastical instances: 1. From the Church of Puerto Rico, 2. From the National Directorates of PMS of America; and 3. From the collaboration of the Dicastery for Evangelization in its second section: First Evangelization and Oriental Churches, with the direct participation of the Superior Council of the Pontifical Mission Societies in Rome.

We dream of a “renewed missionary zeal” in our Particular Churches of America. We propose to work and deepen on three thematic axes: “With the power of the Spirit”, “Witnesses of Christ”, “To the ends of the world”, accompanied by St. Mary, model of every missionary disciple; that, from the expression of her titles in our peoples, the missionary mandate and the mystery of the inculturation of the Gospel, as Good News of the Kingdom, are renewed.

Fraternally,

Rev. Fr. José Orlando Camacho Torres, CSSP
National Director of the Pontifical Mission Societies of Puerto Rico
General Coordinator of CAM6 Puerto Rico



Mensaje de presentación al *Instrumentum Laboris*

With immense joy, and after a joyful work of cooperation and synodality, Puerto Rico presents us with this Working Instrument, as an anticipation and preparation for CAM6. It is an excellent opportunity to encourage our communities to participate in this momentous event. The themes and worksheets allow for reflection and prayer and encourage us to open ourselves to the action of the Holy Spirit, who continues to impel the Church “to the ends of the earth”. Let us take advantage of this valuable resource to be in tune with the objective of the Congress and to be united as a continent in the ever-perennial animation of the mission ad gentes, so that our local Churches may continue to assume their responsibility to bring the Gospel to all peoples, and to make everyone a missionary disciple of our Lord Jesus Christ.



Rev. Fr. Jafet Peytrequín Ugalde

National Director of Pontifical Mission Societies of Costa Rica
Continental Coordinator of the National Directors of OMP of the Americas



We present this guiding document as the fruit of a process of ecclesial reflection that we began with the launching, both nationally (Ponce, October 2019) and internationally (Mexico, February 2020), of the upcoming VI American Missionary Congress. We share this Working Instrument as a support for the reflection that each Particular Church will conduct in their countries prior to our meeting.

It has been the result of the contributions presented by facilitators from all over the Americas in the meetings held both virtually and in person. We understand that this itinerary that we have called “process towards the CAM6” has been an enriching path for all by resorting to dialogue and constant consultation with the different ecclesial instances that promote the missionary conscience among all the members of the Church.


From Puerto Rico, we wish to encourage you to share your missionary experiences. The words of the Bishops in Aparecida are enlightening for our efforts in the mission ad gentes: “We wish, therefore, from our

condition of disciples and missionaries, to promote in our pastoral plans, in the light of the Social Doctrine of the Church, the Gospel of life and solidarity.... It is hopeful what John Paul II said: "Although imperfect and provisional, nothing that can be achieved through the united efforts of all and divine grace at a given moment in history, to make human life more human, will have been lost or in vain"¹. Let us welcome Pope Francis' exhortation as a beacon of light when he refers to "evangelizers with Spirit" as those who pray and work: "From the point of view of evangelization, neither mystical proposals without a strong social and missionary commitment, nor social or pastoral discourses and praxis without a spirituality that transforms the heart are of any use."².

P. Baltazar Núñez Hernández

Coordinator of the Theology Commission of CAM6 Puerto Rico

May the peace of the Lord be with you:



The days of our CAM6 in Puerto Rico are approaching, and moved by the Spirit, I greet you with joy, hope and gratitude. With the joy of living the mission every day as a as children of God, with the hope that all may receive the proclamation of the Gospel and with the gratitude that we are called and sent to the Mission, we share with you these worksheets where we hope that you can also contribute from your experience and concerns what is in your missionary heart. The testimony that you give us, and that you give to the Church, becomes a seed so that others who are also concerned about the world in which they live, may also discover the Word who is incarnated in history and who continues to invite us to enter into a relationship of life with Him.

We thank you for your presence in this journey and hope that we will be agents of motivation for many to go around the world and preach the Gospel.

In Christ, our hope,

Floyd Mercado Vidro
Coordinator of the Methodology Commission of CAM6 Puerto Rico

¹ Document of the V Conference of the Latin American Bishops of the Caribbean - Aparecida #400. It refers to the exhortation of John Paul II in *Sollicitudo rei Socialis* #47.

² Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium* #262 (2013).



INTRODUCTION

During the process of the Sixth American Missionary Congress, through the Pre-Symposium and the Missiological Symposiums, we have taken as a guide the method of “See, Judge and Act”. In proposing this instrument, we recognize the contribution of the American Missionary Congresses as a “fundamental piece” for missionary animation and co-option in our ecclesial communities. We aspire to promote a “process that leads to a greater missionary maturity of our Churches”.

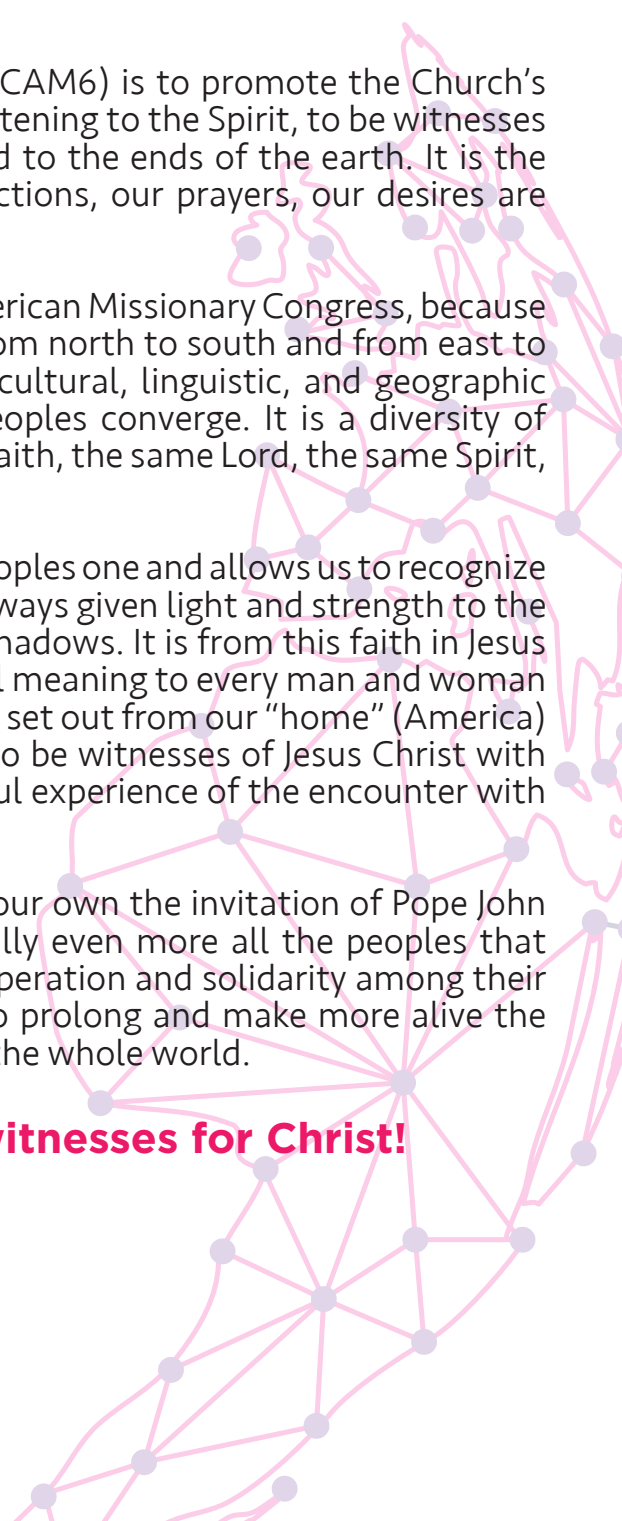
The purpose of the VI American Missionary Congress (CAM6) is to promote the Church’s mission ad gentes with new zeal, walking together in listening to the Spirit, to be witnesses of faith in Jesus Christ in the reality of our peoples and to the ends of the earth. It is the ultimate goal towards which all our intentions, our actions, our prayers, our desires are directed: what we propose to ourselves in this journey!

A journey together that is clearly expressed in every American Missionary Congress, because it unites all the peoples that make up the continent: from north to south and from east to west. It is a continent with a diversity of peoples: of cultural, linguistic, and geographic richness and variety, where millenary histories and peoples converge. It is a diversity of peoples, brothers and sisters, who, united by the same faith, the same Lord, the same Spirit, can therefore be called a single people.

This same faith in Jesus Christ is what has made many peoples one and allows us to recognize each other as brothers and sisters. The faith that has always given light and strength to the journey of our peoples in the midst of their lights and shadows. It is from this faith in Jesus Christ that is the great news: the only one that gives full meaning to every man and woman who welcomes it. All united and with renewed ardor, we set out from our “home” (America) to the ends of the earth. We are moved by the desire to be witnesses of Jesus Christ with every man and woman who has not yet shared the joyful experience of the encounter with God, with our brothers and sisters and with creation.

As brotherly peoples of the same continent, we make our own the invitation of Pope John Paul II (1992) to the inescapable duty to unite spiritually even more all the peoples that form this great continent, to increase the bonds of cooperation and solidarity among their particular Churches, sisters and close to each other, to prolong and make more alive the saving work of Christ in the history of America³ and of the whole world.

America, with the power of the Spirit, witnesses for Christ!



OUTLINE OF THE WORKING INSTRUMENT TOWARDS CAM6 PUERTO RICO			
METHOD	A LOOK FROM THE FAITH	VIEW-JUDGE	ACT
AXES	DRIVEN BY THE SPIRIT	WITNESSES OF CHRIST	TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH
UNIVERSAL SYNOD	COMMUNION	MISSION	PARTICIPATION
INTERLOCUTORS	LOCAL CHURCH		
CONTENTS	Theme 1: The Mission is born of the Trinity. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> From the missio Dei to the missio ecclesiae 	Theme 3: The Kingdom as the horizon of the Mission <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pathway for social transformation in a context of inequality 	Theme 5: Missionary Disciples: Initiates and Sent Ones <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Christian initiation as a missionary paradigm missio ad-inter gentes/cum gentibus
CONTENTS	Theme 2: Evangelizers with Spirit "to the ends of the earth". <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protagonism of the Spirit 	Theme 4: Witnesses of Christ in a context of differences <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reality framework Testimony of missionary experiences on the Continent Contributions from missionary institutes 	Theme 6: From America to the world and from the world to America <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Synodality - Missionary communion From the local church to the ends of the earth
SPIRITUALITY	ANNUNCIATION AND VISITATION	FROM CANA TO CALVARY	PENTECOST

	THEOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK	WORKSHEETS
CRITERIA	<p>Starting from the already existing contributions generated in the preparation process towards the CAM6.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thematic Synchronous Meetings and Forum - Ecclesial Assembly Biblical Itinerary Universal Synod Virtual International Missiological Symposium 2022 International Missiological Symposium in Canada 2023 Missionary Testimonies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guiding elements: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Biblical text Theme Motto Objective Anthem Specific objective of the meeting CAM6 Prayer Illuminating Text Brief summary of the Theological Framework Questions for reflection Shared synthesis Marian Prayer

PRAYER FOR THE SIXTH AMERICAN MISSIONARY CONGRESS

Puerto Rico, November 19-24, 2024

O merciful Father,
who revealed in your Son the «Good News»,
announced in these lands of America
by so many missionaries, in word and deed;
help us to rediscover our vocation as baptized persons
in order to give renewed life to our missionary activity
proclaiming, like them, the joy of the Gospel.

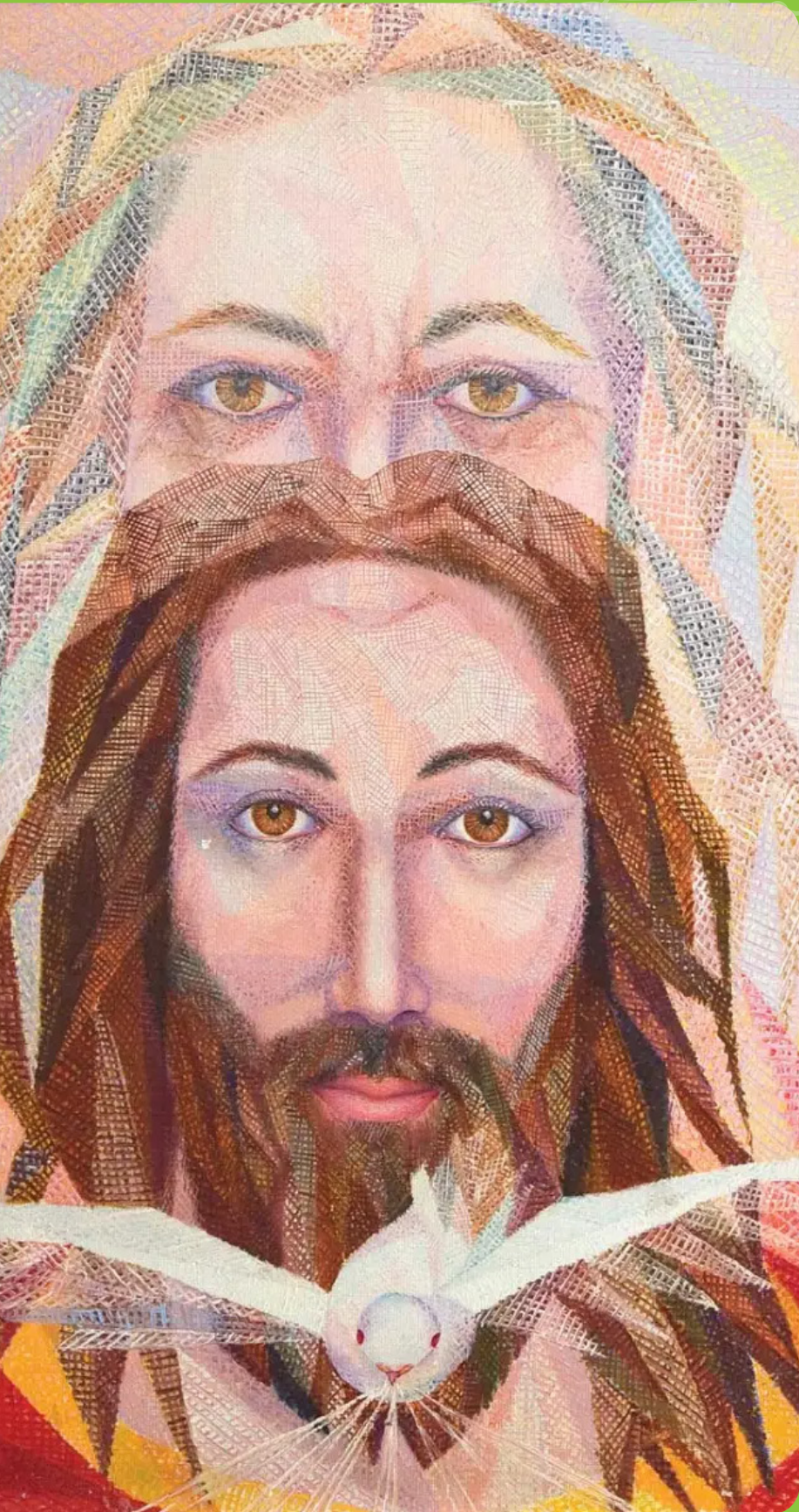
O God,
you pour out your Holy Spirit to renew the face of the earth,
wounded by injustice and suffering;
give us strength to walk, as God's people,
in synodality and mutual listening,
towards the next American Missionary Congress,
witnessing together the love that conquers the world.

O God and our Father,
you chose Mary as a model of evangelization
to offer Christ to all humanity;
grant that, imitating her example of dedication
and sustained by her maternal and providential care,
may we always be your missionary disciples
to the ends of the earth.

Amen.



Francis



TOPIC 1
MISSION IS
BORN OF
THE TRINITY:
FROM MISSIO
DEI TO MISSIO
ECCLESIAE

TOPIC 1

MISSION IS BORN OF THE TRINITY: FROM *MISSIO DEI* TO *MISSIO ECCLESIAE*

I. INTRODUCTION

In this theme we wish to propose some contents that allow us to deepen and meditate on what it means ***to affirm that the mission is born of the Trinity and how the mission of God is the point of reference for the mission of the Church.***

In this experience of CAM6, we wish ***to promote the Church's mission ad gentes with new ardor, walking together as we listen to the Spirit, to be witnesses of faith in Jesus Christ in the reality of our peoples to the ends of the earth.***

As inhabitants of the American continent, and baptized, we are part of the Church on pilgrimage in history. We wish, therefore, to recognize more deeply the meaning and content of the mission, in order to live with greater commitment and passion, what we are.

II. DEVELOPMENT

An event of the spirit: Vatican Council II

Throughout its history, the Church, animated by the Holy Spirit, has enriched its understanding of itself over time. The Second Vatican Council is an exemplary event in this ongoing process, for it set out to reflect on: who the Church is, her relationship with the world and her mission.

The Church received new light, confirming that the Trinity is the origin of the Church, the source from which it is born, the image that inspires it and the goal towards which it is directed in time.

The very mission of the Church is founded on the Trinity. That is, in the sending of the Son and the Spirit by the Father; these are what we call "Trinitarian missions".

The Decree Ad Gentes, a document on the missionary activity of the Church, which is part of the documents and pronouncements of the Council Fathers of Vatican II, will express it in these terms: "The pilgrim Church is missionary by her nature, since she draws her origin from the mission of the Son and the Holy Spirit, according to the plan of God the Father" (AG 2). In this synthetic way it is expressed that the mission of the Church, *Missio Ecclesiae*, is born of the Mission of the Trinity, *Missio Dei*. The Church assumes as her own this universal mission that springs from Trinitarian love.

The Trinity

By sending his only Son and the Spirit of Love in the fullness of time, God reveals his innermost secret.

THEOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK 1

MISSION IS BORN OF THE TRINITY: FROM *MISSIO DEI* TO *MISSIO ECCLESIAE*



In Jesus Christ, we receive the greatest revelation in history, a revelation that humanity had never even imagined. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, allows us to know that God is one God in three Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This is a real novelty in a polytheistic world, that is, a world that, in its search for meaning and fulfillment, establishes on its own initiative the existence of “divinities”, but also the God who makes himself present in history through Jesus Christ is not a solitary God, but a God of community, family, relationship. He is an eternal communication of love and has destined us to participate in Him (cf. CCC 221).

Jesus himself will say that the Father loves him (cf. Jn 15:9; Jn 5:20a). The Father confirms that Jesus is the Beloved Son (cf. Mt 17:5), and the love of the Father and the Son is the Holy Spirit. It is Love “made” Person. It is the love of God that has been poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit who has been given to us (cf. Rom 5:5). Jesus Christ will also reveal to us that the Father and He are one.

These expressions help us to understand that the three divine persons are related to each other, they are “going out” from themselves to the other, and this is the basis of their unity.

Contemplation of God the Trinity helps us to understand why the Father sends the Son and the Holy Spirit. God is love and will never cease to be love. He will never cease to love his creature made for love, with love and sharing in the life of God. Even if the creature turns away from God. God will never turn away from her. God is faithful to himself.

Faced with this proposal, humanity tried to participate in this divine life, but without counting on God. This led to the rupture of the relationship with God and with our brothers and sisters. Thus, the painful experience of sin, evil and death entered the world.

The sending of the Son and the Spirit by the Father

Understanding that “God is love” (1 Jn 4:8), we can point out that the *Missio Dei* offers a merciful response of God to the reality of sin and evil in the world; to the separation of man from God and from his brothers and sisters. God responds to the desperation of humanity, “bending down” and coming to meet them in the midst of sin, pain, and suffering.

Mission of the Son

The Father sends His Beloved Son to restore fallen humanity; to reestablish communion with Him and to harmonize fraternal society among sinful men in a new and definitive way. The Father sends the Son incarnate to wrest men from the power of darkness and Satan and to reconcile the world to Himself in Him.

The Son, for us “men, and for our salvation, came down from heaven and, by the power of the Holy Spirit, was incarnated of Mary, the Virgin, and became man” (Nicean Creed). By means of that path of true incarnation that Jesus followed in his pilgrimage in history, through his works and words, he showed us the Father and the Kingdom. He attained for us the participation of the divine nature and life.

THEOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK 1

MISSION IS BORN OF THE TRINITY: FROM *MISSIO DEI* TO *MISSIO ECCLESIAE*

He became one of us, even unto death, even death on a cross. He took upon himself our trespasses and sins, the evil of the world. He became poor, that we might be rich through his poverty (cf. 2 Cor 8:9). In the resurrection, the power of what such self-giving and such love meant is made manifest. In Christ and through the Holy Spirit we are new creatures. In Jesus Christ, we were able to return to the “house” of the Father. To receive anew our dignity as children of God.

Mission of the Holy Spirit

The “departure” of Christ through the Cross has the power of Redemption; and this also means a new presence of the Spirit of God in creation. The new beginning of God’s communication to man through the Holy Spirit.

It will inwardly carry out the salvific work of Jesus Christ

With the sending of this Spirit “into our hearts” begins to be fulfilled that which “the creation desires with all its heart”. It is the Spirit who gives life (cf. Jn 4:14; 7:38f; Rom 8:10f). He will interiorly carry out the salvific work of Jesus Christ in the hearts of men. But this salvation will not be only personal, but God willed to manifest it in a People, the Body of Christ. The Spirit vivifies the Church, as the soul of this Body. That People where the new relationships among men are manifested.

We recall the words of John Paul II in explaining the pneumatological action in the beginnings of the Church:

“...The Holy Spirit assumed the invisible - but in a certain way “perceptible” - guidance of those who, after the departure of the Lord Jesus, deeply felt that they had been left orphans. These, with the coming of the Holy Spirit, felt themselves fit to carry out the mission entrusted to them. They felt full of strength. It was precisely this that the Holy Spirit worked in them and continues to work continually in the Church...”⁴

Undoubtedly, the Holy Spirit was already at work in the world before the glorification of Christ. However, he descended upon the disciples on the day of Pentecost, to remain with them eternally (cf. Jn. 14:16). He dwells in the Church and in the hearts of the faithful as in a temple (cf. 1 Cor 3:16; 6:19), and in them he prays, and bears witness to their adoption as sons (cf. Gal 4:6; Rom 8:15-16 and 26). He guides the Church into all truth (cf. Jn 16:13), unifies her in communion and ministry, provides and governs her with various hierarchical and charismatic gifts, and beautifies her with his fruits (cf. Eph 4:11-12; 1 Cor 12:4; Gal 5:22). It is the power of the Spirit that rejuvenates the Church, renews her unceasingly (cf. LG 4).

The Holy Spirit will propel the Church towards its own dilatation

The same Spirit who will unite all believers in Christ will impel the Church to her own expansion. It instills in the hearts of the faithful the same missionary impulse that Christ himself had been the object of.

⁴ Dominum et Vivificantem #25 párrafo 4.

THEOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK 1

MISSION IS BORN OF THE TRINITY: FROM *MISSIO DEI* TO *MISSIO ECCLESIAE*



On the day of Pentecost, the Church also manifested itself publicly before the multitude. She began to spread the Gospel among the people through preaching. The ecclesial Body of Christ always receives the Spirit “anew” in order to give it “anew” in service.

From the *Missio Dei* to the *Missio ecclesiae*: Continuity of the Son’s Mission

The mission of the Church is, therefore, in continuity with the mission of the Son, not by virtue of a mandate that He would have given, but by an intrinsic necessity of the same: what He has accomplished is not only for someone, but for all, and therefore, it must be made available to all.

The mission that Jesus entrusts to his disciples is directly related to the mission that he himself has received from the Father: “As the Father has sent me, even so I send you” (Jn 20:21). Jesus says, addressing the Father: “As you have sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world” (Jn 17:18).

The content of the Church’s mission is the same as that of the Son’s mission: the Kingdom of God, namely, the reconciliation and unification of all. The Church exists at the service of this mission, as the sacrament of the unity of the human race and of the reconciliation of all with God.

As a people united in the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, the Church is sent to the ends of the earth so that more brothers and sisters may be integrated into this universal family and thus, at the end of time, lead her to the consummated union with her Bridegroom. Indeed, the Spirit and the Bride say to the Lord Jesus: “Come” (cf. Rev. 22:17).

Pastoral and missionary conversion of the Church

For the Church to fulfill the mission entrusted to her, which is the same as that of Jesus, she must live “going out”, overcoming the temptation to self-referentiality; she must act as a “field hospital”, open to care for all the weary and afflicted; It must be present in all the peripheries, where the poor and the discarded are found, with an explicit desire to welcome and include them; it must foster the culture of encounter, always ready to dialogue and avoiding the temptation to proselytize; it must serve the Kingdom of God without being primarily concerned with itself and its structures.... It must follow its Lord who, from within the Church, is knocking at the door so that it may open before him and go out to meet all those who are distant and indifferent. Universal evangelization is the task of everyone and everywhere.

Along these lines, Pope Francis’ desire is better understood: “I dream of a missionary option capable of transforming everything, so that customs, styles, schedules, language and every ecclesial structure may become a suitable channel for the evangelization of today’s world rather than for self-preservation” (EG 27).

It is a Samaritan displacement, an ecclesial decentering like the Samaritan who leaves his program, his fears, his tasks, to approach the wounded and care for him. The missionary

THEOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK 1

MISSION IS BORN OF THE TRINITY: FROM *MISSIO DEI* TO *MISSIO ECCLESIAE*

outreach is the movement and vital attitude that activates the conversion, renewal, updating and ecclesial transformation that the present times demand from the Church.

All of this finds its root in the life and mission of the Trinitarian God. Therefore, it is not the Church that does the mission, but it is the mission that does the Church. The interpellation made in Mt 28:18-20, Mk 16:15, and especially since Pentecost is frequent: the Church was born catholic, she was born going out, she was born missionary, setting out on a journey to the ends of the earth.

Within this logic, the centrality of the kerygma, of the proclamation of the Risen Christ, deserves to be valued: it is both the source of the joy that encourages the missionary disciple and the first thing that must be offered to all in any activity of the Church. The Paschal, Christological and Trinitarian root will always offer the sap for the missionary fervor of the Church.

Church, prophetic sign for humanity

The Church is united to the Trinity. Therefore, wherever there is a baptized person, that person is our brother or sister!

The Church is united to the Trinity, therefore, in our hearts vibrate the same desires of God: to gather and save scattered humanity. Wherever there is a person who does not know Christ, we must proclaim him! Through the witness of personal life, but also with the whole ecclesial body: "See how they love one another" (cf. Tertullian, 2nd century).

The Church with ardor, moved by the power of the Spirit, goes out to meet every person, every people who do not yet know God. Above all, with merciful love and without indifference, she goes out to meet those peoples who are discarded, marginalized, forgotten by all, except God.

The mission of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit is not a thing of the past. They continue their mission today and will continue it at all times. Thus, the Church is a prophetic and, at the same time, hopeful sign of the call to universal brotherhood. It is God's instrument to reach out to all his children and bring them together in unity.

One and only town

This People of God has the characteristic of being one and unique. Therefore, it extends to the entire world and in all times. It is a leaven of unity in the midst of humanity wounded by fragmentation, hatred, and war. The desire for all humanity to gather in unity. That humanity, which as in Babel, had been dispersed.

People present in all races

The Church is the People of God present in the entire world, in every race on earth. She gathers citizens from all of them. No matter what part of the world they are from, all the faithful scattered throughout the world are part of this same family, communicating with

THEOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK 1

MISSION IS BORN OF THE TRINITY: FROM *MISSIO DEI* TO *MISSIO ECCLESIAE*



one another in the Holy Spirit and thus, “whoever dwells in Rome knows that those in India are his members” (LG 13).

Enriches every culture

And since the Kingdom of Christ is not of this world (cf. Jn 18:36), the Church, at the service of the Kingdom of God and in dialogue with all cultures, does not diminish the temporal good of any people; rather, on the contrary, she fosters and assumes the capacities, riches and customs of peoples, in what is good in them, collaborating in their strengthening and purification.

Call to gather in unity

For she is well aware that she must gather together in union with the King to whom all the nations have been given as an inheritance (cf. Ps 2:8) and to whose city they bring their gifts and tribute (cf. Ps 71 [72]:10; Is 60:4-7; Rev 21:24). Thus, to fulfill the plan of the will of God, who at first created one human nature, and then determined to gather together his children who were scattered (cf. Jn 11:52).

Universality of the Church

This character of universality that distinguishes the People of God is a gift of the Lord himself by which the Catholic Church tends, effectively and perpetually, to serve in the recapitulation of all humanity, with all its goods, under Christ the Head, in the unity of his Spirit.

Each of the parties contributes with its own gifts

In virtue of this catholicity, each of the parts collaborates with its own gifts with the other parts and with the whole Church, in such a way that the whole and each of the parts increase because of all those who mutually communicate and tend toward fullness in unity. Hence it follows that the People of God not only brings together persons of different peoples, but is itself made up of different services, vocations, charisms, for the common good.

Bond of communion - sharing of gifts

From this, in the end, there are bonds of intimate communion between the various parts of the Church regarding spiritual riches, apostolic workers and temporal help. The members of the People of God are called to a communication of goods, and the following words of the Apostle can be applied to each of the Churches: “The gift that each one has received, let him put it at the service of others, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God” (1 Pet. 4:10).

Calls for Catholic unity - universal peace

All men are called to this Catholic unity of the People of God, which symbolizes and promotes universal peace, and to it they belong or are ordered in various ways, whether the Catholic faithful, or other believers in Christ, or all men in general, by the grace of God, called to salvation.

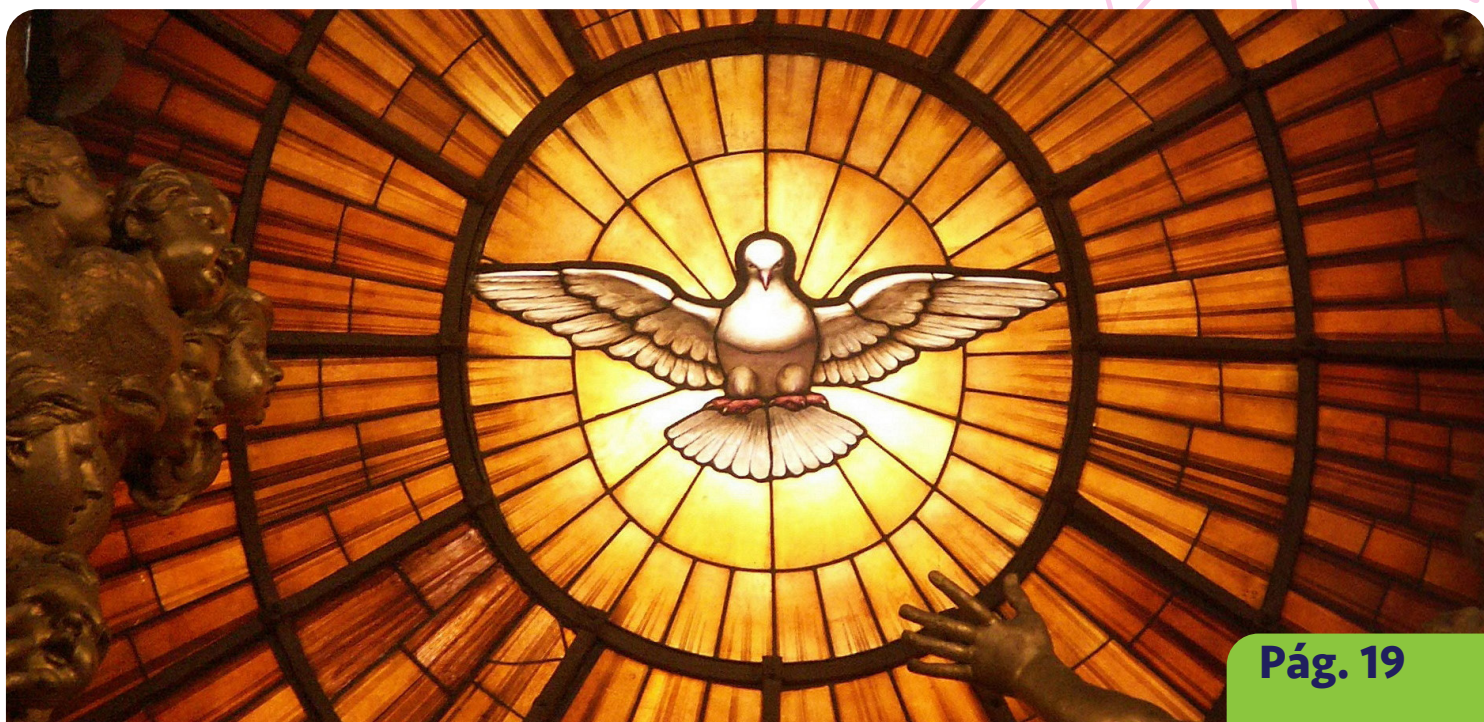
III. CONCLUSION

The Church thus appears as the result of God's plan, which is love, to make men sharers in his life and glory. Living as Church, according to the Trinity, we give continuity to the mission of the Son, we experience a genuine conversion, and we are a prophetic sign for humanity.

We are a credible sign of salvation:

- **To promote the Church's mission *ad gentes* with new zeal**, since it is everyone's task; missionary outreach is the paradigm of all the Church's work (cf. EG 15).
- **Walking together listening to the Spirit**, because we are the People that belong to God the Trinity.
- **To be witnesses** to what we have "seen and heard", experienced in first person.
- **From faith in Jesus Christ**, who has saved us, we have found Him, we believe in Him, and we want to take Him...
- **In the reality of our peoples to the ends of the earth.**

With the same love that the Father, sending the Son and the Spirit, sends the Church to be in the midst of men as a sign of communion, mercy, and salvation. The Church is you; it is me; it is every baptized person. We cannot remain impassive. The world needs. The world waits.



WORKSHEET 1

MISSION IS BORN OF THE TRINITY: FROM MISSIO DEI TO MISSIO ECCLESIAE



WORKSHEET 1: MISSION IS BORN OF THE TRINITY: FROM MISSIO DEI TO MISSIO ECCLESIAE

I. GUIDING ELEMENTS OF CAM6

- **Biblical text:** Jesus said to his disciples: "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth". Acts 1:8
- **Theme:** Evangelizers with Spirit to the ends of the earth
- **Motto:** America, with the power of the Spirit, witnesses to Christ
- **Objective:** To promote the Church's mission ad gentes with new ardor, walking together in listening to the Spirit, in order to be witnesses of faith in Jesus Christ in the reality of our peoples to the ends of the earth.
- **Hymn:** Witnesses of the Living Christ
Let's sing the chorus together...
Look how they love each other! Look how they walk!
America, with the power of the Spirit.
America, witnesses of the Living Christ.

II. OBJECTIVE FOR THIS FIRST WORKING MEETING

Specific Objective: To analyze the validity of our missionary mandate ad gentes and its Trinitarian dimension through participatory dialogues.

III. PRAYER FOR THE SIXTH AMERICAN MISSIONARY CONGRESS

We unite ourselves to the prayer that Pope Francis gave us for this Sixth American Missionary Congress highlighting what it implies for us in this meeting. In the highlighted fragments we can have a brief moment of silence to deepen the prayer. During or after the prayer, you can share some resonance that has touched your heart.

**O MERCIFUL FATHER,
THAT YOU REVEALED IN YOUR SON THE
"GOOD NEWS",**

announced in these lands of America
by so many missionaries, with words and
deeds;
help us to rediscover our vocation as
baptized people
to give a new impetus to our missionary
action
proclaiming, like them, the joy of the
Gospel.

Oh my,
that **YOU POUR OUT YOUR HOLY SPIRIT
TO RENEW THE FACE OF THE EARTH,**
hurt by injustice and suffering;
give us strength to walk as God's people,
in synodality and mutual listening,
towards the next American Missionary
Congress,
witnessing together the love that conquers
the world.

O God and our Father,
that you chose Mary as a model for
evangelization
to offer Christ to all mankind;
imitating his example of dedication, let us
and sustained by her maternal and
provident care,
let us always be your missionary disciples
to the ends of the earth.
Amen.

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MISSION IS BORN OF THE TRINITY: FROM *MISSIO DEI* TO *MISSIO ECCLESIAE*

IV. ILLUMINATING TEXT:

“The pilgrim Church is, by her very nature, missionary, since she has her origin in the mission of the Son and the mission of the Holy Spirit according to the plan of God the Father” (Ad gentes, 2).

V. BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE THEOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

The Church is born of the Trinity. She is sent into the world so that what she herself has received: salvation, and communion with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, she may share. This Good News of salvation is not only for believers in Christ, but for all humanity. Every man and woman are called to participate in the beatitude, the joy, the fullness of life in God, but not alone, but by a design of God’s Love, we are called to live it as one People, one Body. In Jesus, through the Holy Spirit, we are in communion with God and with our brothers and sisters. We are one in Christ.

The joy of returning to the “home” of the Father and of being brothers and sisters, which the Son in the Holy Spirit gave us, is not to remain “enclosed” in the Church but is an invitation to all humanity. God desires to reunite all his scattered children and the Church will be a sign and instrument of this. It is from God’s mission that the Church’s mission is nourished and has meaning. In and from the Church, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit continue to save humanity and bring it into full communion with the Father. To this we are witnesses to the ends of the earth.

VI. QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. “The whole Church is missionary, and the work of evangelization is a fundamental duty of the People of God” (AG 35).

How is the Church in America fulfilling its fundamental duty to take the Gospel to the ends of the earth?

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2. For the Church, proclamation is not an optional or marginal aspect, but a vital dimension, since it was born apostolic and missionary, shaped by the Holy Spirit as a community “going forth” (cf. Catechesis, March 15, 2023).

How does the local Church promote personally and communally its apostolic and missionary dimension?

3. Founded on the witness of life, the preaching of the Word, catechesis, and the celebration of the sacraments (cf. *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 40-48) and animated by the Holy Spirit, the first Christian community drew from them inspiration and vigor for the proclamation of the Gospel (cf. Acts 2:42-47). It is not a matter of proselytism, this is not Christian, the style is: to proclaim Christ first of all by the witness of life.

In our communities, where is the proclamation of the Gospel based?

4. The Church is the People of God present throughout the world, in every race on earth. No matter what part of the world they may be from, all the faithful scattered throughout the world are part of the same family, communicating with one another in the Holy Spirit and thus, “he who dwells in Rome knows that those in India are members of his own”. From this, there are bonds of intimate communion between the different parts of the Church, with regard to spiritual riches, apostolic workers, and temporal help.

How do you understand that the Church in America is sharing its “spiritual riches, apostolic workers and temporal help” with the other brethren in the world? Are all its members aware of this? What can we do to be, as the People of God in America, a greater “gift” for the other brethren in the world?

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VIII. MARIAN PRAYER

Magnificat

"My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,
my spirit rejoices in God my Savior;
for he hath looked upon the humiliation of his handmaid.
Henceforth all generations shall rejoice over me,
for the Mighty One has done great things for me;
his name is holy
and his mercy reaches his faithful ones
from generation to generation.
He does exploits with his arm:
He scatters the proud in heart,
he casts down the mighty from their thrones,
He exalts the lowly,
he fills the hungry with good things.
and the rich he sends away empty.
He helps Israel, his servant,
remembering mercy
-as he promised our fathers.
for Abraham and his descendants forever" (Lk 1:46-55).
(Lk 1:46-55).



TOPIC 2 EVANGELIZERS WITH SPIRIT TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH



TOPIC 2

EVANGELIZERS WITH SPIRIT TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH

I. INTRODUCTION

In this topic we wish to propose some content that allows us to deepen our understanding of the **life and action of the Holy Spirit in relation to the mission of the Church.**

In this experience of CAM6, we wish to ***promote the Church's mission ad gentes with new ardor, walking together as we listen to the Spirit, to be witnesses of faith in Jesus Christ in the reality of our peoples to the ends of the earth.***

In the fifth chapter of the Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, he inspires this expression that we will address here: "evangelizers with spirit means evangelizers who open themselves without fear to the action of the Spirit" (EG 259) and the Pope continues: "when we say that a reality has spirit, we usually indicate an interior movement that drives, motivates, animates and gives meaning to personal and community action" (EG 261).

Evangelizers with the Spirit are those who, welcoming the action of the Holy Spirit, embrace a life according to the Spirit. From this we distinguish two approaches: the action of the Spirit and life according to the Spirit. In the following, we propose to address these two approaches in detail.

II. DEVELOPMENT

1. The Action of the Holy Spirit

It is already a classic theme that, in our Latin Church, the Holy Spirit has been the great unknown. Even in theological studies it is difficult to find a proper space for reflection on the Holy Spirit⁵.

In the words of Bishop Raúl Biord Castillo, the Holy Spirit is "the mischievous one of the Trinity."⁶

If the Trinity is a family (missionary communion, intrinsic substantial relationship of three persons, source of life), we could say that the Holy Spirit is the mischievous one of the family. "Mischievous" in diferente ways:

1. He is mischievous because through Him differences and identities are overcome.
2. It is mischievous because as a spirit it traverses the materiality of all concreteness, always inviting us to ever new projects.
3. He is mischievous because he disrupts all personal plans and proposes new ones, as

⁵ Cfr. Bishop Biord Castillo, Raúl. "Theological approach: The particular Church impelled by the Spirit to the ends of the earth: its missionary responsibility". Paper presented at the International Symposium on Missiology in Canada (October 2024).

⁶ Ibid

happened to Mary, Joseph, and all of us. If so, when in the Church we have everything arranged, ready, the Holy Spirit undoes, disarranges, decomposes.... And after the initial bewilderment, he allows us to arrive at a new order that integrates what was unknown until then.

4. He is mischievous because he is a source of joy, as he was at Pentecost, allowing us to overcome the pain of the cross. Joy, with a bit of mischievousness, is one of his principal gifts, and indicators of his presence. "A sad saint is a sad saint," as St. Teresa used to say.
5. It is mischievous because it is the "traverse" that unites the Father and the Son in the same love and in the same mission. It is always the naughty means through which we can relate to each other and to the Church.
6. Finally, it is mischievous because it encourages the great missionary journey that unites two points of land or sea, allowing communication, communion, and missionary cooperation between local churches.

1.1 The person of the Holy Spirit

That the Holy Spirit is a person means that he is equal in dignity to the Father and the Son, but with his own uniqueness. His equality lies in his divine being: he is God. His uniqueness lies in the fact that he has his own mission in the plan of salvation.

The Holy Spirit is the protagonist in the paschal mystery of Jesus Christ, in and through the Apostles and the Church, of the realization of this work in the spirit of the human being and in the history of the world. He is the protagonist of the whole ecclesial mission, through the Apostles, and in the listeners, so that the Good News may take shape. The Holy Spirit is the giver of life.

The uniqueness of his mission helps us to decipher his own identity. In the New Testament we find some mentions that can bring us closer to this.

- a. *He is God 'for' us: Acts 1,4-5 (promise)* The whole Gospel is a great promise, centered on the Holy Spirit. The climax is that the disciples "will be baptized in the Holy Spirit" in view of the universal mission: to the ends of the earth. By virtue of this investiture of divine strength and power, the disciples will be able, like Jesus, to proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom of God to the ends of the earth.
- b. *He is the God 'in' us: Acts 2:1-4 (effusion)* Pentecost, or the "baptism in the Holy Spirit" of the Apostles, is Jesus' outpouring of the Holy Spirit, which he himself received from God his Father and which crowns the Passover of Christ. At Pentecost, the promise of the universal outpouring of the Spirit at the end of time is fulfilled in the Church. The gift of the Spirit had a very precise purpose: to proclaim the greatness of God, bearing witness to Jesus, to the residents of Jerusalem, who came from all parts of the world. They, too, were to hear the message of the Spirit; for them, too, it was the Good News of Jesus. This is the essence of the mystery of Pentecost.
- c. *God 'through' us: Acts 2:37-39 (God through us)* Once converted and baptized in the name of Jesus, the new believers receive the Gift of the Holy Spirit, which God himself has promised, for the Holy Spirit is not only for the Apostles, but for all listeners who

accept the testimony of Jesus, for his children and for all those whom the Lord calls. The promise of the Holy Spirit extends to Jews and Gentiles, to all places and all times, to the people of that time and to us today.

1.2 The mission of the Holy Spirit

The key point of the whole history of salvation is the Paschal event: death, resurrection and sending of the Holy Spirit. Redemption passes through the Good Friday sacrifice.

But what seemed to be the great failure was not the end. The resurrection of Jesus constitutes the turning point in the history of salvation. It is a dynamic that, far from belonging to a forgotten past, speaks to us of the future and therefore continues to press on the present with its liberating force.

The resurrection, beyond the differences in the New Testament versions, is an event linked to the Holy Spirit. In John's version, on the same day of the resurrection, Jesus appears to the disciples and gives them the Holy Spirit (Jn 20:19-23). According to Luke's perspective, the Risen One sends the Spirit fifty days later, hence the name Pentecost (Acts 2:1).

Thus, in intrinsic connection with the paschal mystery, it is possible to outline in detail the mission of the Holy Spirit:

a. *Expansion and universality* God's action through the Spirit is distinguished by its universality, multiplicity, and plurality. We can speak of an authentic polyphony. He is the one who provokes, enables, and channels an authentic expansion towards the universal, including more agents and areas of action, in openness and respect for their particularity and originality.

The actions of the Holy Spirit are experienced by all believers in every time and place. The effects of the Spirit encompass a multiplicity of phenomena: miracles, inspirations, ecstasies, gifts of tongues and prophecy, various charisms, and sentiments: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control (cf. Gal 5:22)

b. *Transformation and transfiguration* The mystery of Pentecost speaks to us of transfiguration and transformation. Above all, it is a gift of courage: from the cowardly fugitives of Good Friday, the apostles become courageous witnesses and missionaries of the Lord Jesus. The "parresia" makes one come out of oneself and overcome one's fears, it is audacity and strength, courage, and valor, it is strength and nourishment for the missionary outreach of the disciples.

c. *Creator of plurality and unity* The Holy Spirit is the creator of plurality and unity. Although it may seem paradoxical, it is so: he creates the unity that harmonizes plurality and, at the same time, the plurality that integrates and enriches unity. He spreads his gifts and charisms, allowing each local church to have its own face, illuminating the process of inculturation of the gospel in peoples and communities, according to the logic of the incarnation.

The Spirit is the soul of each local church and, at the same time, a factor of integration in the universality of the one Catholic Church. The different ministries and charisms serve the common good of the whole people of God.

We do not have to wait for the action of the Spirit, because the Spirit is already at work. We do not have to wait for marvelous events or grandiose prodigies. The Spirit has already come, already acts, already lives in us. To experience the Spirit implies taking a risk. We have to go out to the other, to travel to the different, to the absolutely unknown, to allow ourselves to be transformed and modified by it. We have to renounce ourselves and go out to others.

A community animated by the Spirit is a community open to the world, capable of seeing beyond its walls and sympathizing with the pain and suffering of others. It sees things with the eyes of the poor, of the victims, with the eyes of the least, of the discarded of society who are God's favorites. It is, therefore, a community that has emerged from lethargy and blindness, and is therefore capable of overcoming the narcissism of self-referentiality and is able to overcome the temptation of the "ghetto".

The mission of the Spirit speaks to us at Pentecost of a universal enlargement and inclusion, which is key to understanding the mission of the Church. The Spirit always acts in an invisible and surprising way, he pours out his charisms, he shows himself even outside the visible confines of the universal Church and the particular churches. "This time is marked by his presence and action. He is the protagonist of the Mission. Missionaries of God are those persons who, allowing themselves to be led by the Spirit, collaborate, and become accomplices of his Mission"⁵. To recognize the mission of the Spirit will lead us along the paths of mysticism, to enter into the ways of interiority, which are those of the heart, to recognize the God of the mystics. Mysticism will allow us to be "evangelizers with the Spirit" (EG 262-280) and at the same time to sustain the missionary force with the intercession of prayer (EG 281-283).

The mission of the Spirit introduces us into a process of divinization that is participation in the missionary communion of the Trinity. We come from the Trinity and go to the Trinity.

2. Life in the Holy Spirit

This second approach to evangelization with the Spirit refers to the inner motivations of the evangelizers themselves, which are certainly the fruit of the action of the Spirit, combined, however, with the response and surrender of people to the divine initiative.

The first motivation of an evangelizer is definitely the personal encounter with the dead and risen Christ, through the Spirit. The heart of the evangelizer is, first of all, a heart in the process of conversion.

2.1 Personal Encounter with Christ

From EG 164-165 we discover that the center of evangelizing activity and of every attempt at ecclesial renewal must be the first proclamation or “kerygma”. The “kerygma” is Trinitarian, since it is the fire of the Spirit that is given in the form of tongues and makes us believe in Jesus Christ, who with his death and resurrection reveals and communicates to us the infinite mercy of the Father. The centrality of the “kerygma” demands certain characteristics of the missionary proclamation that are necessary:

- God is love: he loves me unconditionally, he loves me because he wants to save me.
- Love makes us free: God in his love generates freedom in the heart of every person who accepts and accepts it.
- God dreams me happy: the hearts of those who know Jesus Christ are sealed with joy, encouragement, vitality, and vitality.

The Holy Spirit is the condition that the Father and the Son promise for their work of salvation to be realized.

The apostles confirm that they themselves, together with the Holy Spirit, are witnesses to the truthfulness of the “kerygma”: they confess themselves to be irrefutable heralds of the redemptive function that beats in the life, death, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus. We have a mission under the banner of courage, firmness, and a testimony in the name of Jesus that is uncomfortable and provocative.

The authenticity of the testimony does not come from the intuition or the knowledge of the disciples, but is born of the gift of the Spirit who gives them the capacity to become envoys of the Risen One (Acts 1:8; Lk 12:2), and therefore eyewitnesses of the greatness of the Trinitarian “kerygma”. Even if the consequences are scourging, Jesus did not guarantee easy success. Mission is always a risk.

2.2 The passion of God is the passion of the missionary

Mission is, in short, adherence to this ‘missionary’ God who has revealed himself in Jesus, who loves us all, who speaks to us all and who calls us all to participate in his life and glory, calling us to cooperate with him to build a new world, ‘a new state of things, a new way of being, of living, of being with others’. The missionary does not go on his own, he is sent. And this sending is possible because he has first been infused with the life of the Spirit that enables him to share God’s passion.

From this root, which we can call adherence to a “life according to the Spirit,” arises the passion and “the spiritual pleasure of being close to the lives of people, to the point of discovering that this becomes a source of greater joy” (EG 268). The mission leads us to a divinization that frees us, makes us a source of life, and fully humanizes us.

3. Witnesses of the Living Christ

To speak of evangelizers with the Spirit is to speak of authentic witnesses of the Living Christ. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Jesus. To live according to the Spirit is to share the life

of Christ in our own life, infused by the person of the Spirit who sends us to the ends of the earth as witnesses and envoys of that new life of the Risen Christ.

3.1 Witnesses on the way to the ends of the earth

The witness must be, by nature, a missionary in going out. Estêvão Raschiatti breaks down the term “boundaries” into three different meanings: boundaries as horizons, as frontiers and as margins.

- a. *Horizons of a movement of evolution, expansion, advancement, and discovery* - The Church is at the service of a humanity that travels further and further, sharing with it “the joys and hopes, the sorrows and anxieties, especially of the poor” (GS 1). Where is world society heading today, towards what end, towards what goal, towards what horizon?

The globalized world in which we live seems to have lost sight of its horizon, lowering its expectations, shrinking its dreams and hopes, living on short-term and fragmentary goals: “history - says the Pope - shows signs of regression” (FT 11).

However, to missionary disciples “nothing human can seem strange” (Dap 380). Francis continually invites the Church to overcome the temptation to close herself off, withdraw, condemn, and reactively face the complex problems that arise in today’s world. On the contrary, we must go out, create proactive habits⁷ (cf. FRANCIS, 2013), see opportunities and not only threats, discern with certainty, but walk in hope and “open ourselves to the great ideals that make life more beautiful and dignified” (FT 55).

The universal horizons of cultures, societies, knowledge, sciences, technologies and the various spheres of life are a continuous invitation to be open to everything and everyone, to the new, to the unexpected, to the unknown, to the subversive, recalling the adage of St. Irenaeus “what is not assumed is not redeemed” (cf. DP 400) and recalling also that the Good News of Jesus of Nazareth was also something absolutely disconcerting, new, open to everything and everyone, that sowed hope but also generated resistance and conflict.

- b. *Borders* - A second meaning of the term “boundaries” refers to borders, the threshold between our world and that of others. Confines are also lines of demarcation, separation, crossing and exchange.

The origin of borders in today’s world - whether geopolitical, socio-cultural, or identity-based - is less a matter of history, culture, or ancestry than of the process of colonization and domination of the West over the rest of the planet.

In fact, the hegemony of the West has created the frontier that is the mother of all frontiers: the abyssal line between modernity and coloniality. This frontier, with its subsystem of visible and invisible distinctions, is reproduced in a natural and articulated way to this day, in all aspects of daily life, in the organization of societies, in international relations and even in the churches.

THEOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK 2

EVANGELIZERS WITH SPIRIT TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH



With its universal, hegemonic, and salvationist pretensions, the West systematically imposed an asymmetrical relationship between a superior being (white, Christian, civilized, benefactor) and an inferior sub-being (Indian/Black, pagan, underdeveloped, needy). From the domination of souls, the imposition of an imaginary, the seduction of minds, the eradication of cultural identities, the hierarchization of races, the negation of the other, a world-system emerged. These processes of domination still define us today and are internalized/naturalized in us, in such a way that they constitute an identity frontier originating in the inspiring complicity of the Christian mission.

This mission needs to penitentially reopen the frontiers that it itself has created (*ad gentes*) in order to learn to unlearn a way of addressing others (*contra gentes*) and to relearn it anew in reciprocity with others (*inter gentes*). It is a matter of a profound interior conversion. Our Churches need to go to the frontiers of their knowledge, of their understanding, of their certainties, of their way of being, and seek new ways of evangelizing themselves and others, truly encountering others: "every time we encounter a human being in love, we are able to discover something new about God" (EG 272).

In this sense, mission needs to rethink, to redo theology. Mission theology is called to resume its double role of "frontier theology" and "frontier theology". It is worth remembering that the colonial approach to mission was not determined by the methods, inconsistencies, and attitudes of the missionaries: on the contrary, it was determined by the deductive relationship between theology and mission.

The "new confines" understood as "frontiers" constitute "front lines" for the Church today, where we can see reality from the reverse side of history, from the colonial, cultural, religious, and epistemic wounds of the crucified, impoverished, silenced, discarded, and denied peoples. Borders thus constitute both a historical reality and an ethical option that, in turn, implies an "optic", a fundamental "distancing" when it comes to perceiving, listening, and questioning reality from the point of view of victims and survivors.

- c. *Peripheries* - A third meaning of the term "confines", somewhat similar to the second, points to the margins, the peripheries, the remote, marginal, suburban, borderline places. They are the Galilee of today's world, mixed, syncretic, impoverished territories, marked by exclusion, expropriation, violence, and abandonment.

Pope Francis continually invites the Church to go out to the peripheries, so as not to run around the world without direction or meaning (EG 46). Unlike borders, existential peripheries are not between worlds, but within worlds, as forgotten, invisible, despised realities. If the frontier represents the place of (dis) encounter with the other, the periphery is the place of proximity with the poor.

Becoming poor is a radical requirement for following Jesus, because this condition is a participation in the divine life, it shows who God is, whom God prefers, with whom God places himself in his mission: "the encounter with Jesus Christ through the poor is a

constitutive dimension of our faith,” said Aparecida (Dap 257), and they are granted the condition of mediators of grace (cf. EG 197). Thus, it is not enough for the Church to claim to be the “house of the poor” and the marginalized, but she must first enter their homes as a pilgrim.

This also implies a learning process that leads us to inhabit the peripheries, to weave bonds of friendship (cf. Dap 398), to feel and think from the soil of the marginalized, to heart the hearts of the poor, to share their worldview, to live their daily lives intensely. In other words, to let the periphery dwell in us. To “inhabit” is much more than becoming a guest: it means to belong by immersing oneself, by touching with one’s hand the disenchantment, the divisions, the conflicts and the lacerations produced by the border diaspora, rooted in the history, the body and the daily life of violated women, of indigenous and black people, of dispossessed migrants, of workers condemned to precariousness, of those excluded for reasons of gender, of the millions of disinherited who live colonial violence in their own flesh. For this reason, the peripheries, like the borders, are not an easy place to live.

III. CONCLUSION

All the universality of the mission, extended to all nations to the ends of the earth, will end up being contextualized in a territory - which is not just any territory - and in a marginal, forgotten, excluded existential condition - which is not just any existential condition -. Mission is to assume, share and live this existential condition of exclusion and invisibility. Mission is to cease to be the center - mission is to “disappear”. “The disciple-missionary is decentered - says Pope Francis - because his center is Jesus Christ, who summons and sends” (FRANCIS, 2013). This center demands fidelity, detachment, disarmament, and the most absolute gratuitousness. Here lies the permanent synodal discernment and the penitential attitude of every “Church going out” to the peripheries.

WORKSHEET 2: EVANGELIZERS WITH SPIRIT TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH

I. GUIDING ELEMENTS OF CAM6

- **Biblical text:** Jesus said to his disciples: "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth". Acts 1:8
- **Theme:** Evangelizers with Spirit to the ends of the earth
- **Motto:** America, with the power of the Spirit, witnesses of Christ
- **Objective:** To promote the Church's mission ad gentes with new ardor, walking together in listening to the Spirit, in order to be witnesses of faith in Jesus Christ in the reality of our peoples to the ends of the earth.
- **Hymn:** Witnesses of the Living Christ
Let's sing the chorus together...
Look how they love each other! Look how they walk!
America, with the power of the Spirit.
America, witnesses of the Living Christ.

II. OBJECTIVE FOR THIS SECOND WORKING MEETING

Specific Objective: To rediscover the identity of the baptized of "being church" from the evangelizing being that, moved by the Holy Spirit, responds to go out to meet all our peoples.

III. PRAYER FOR THE SIXTH AMERICAN MISSIONARY CONGRESS

We unite ourselves to the prayer that Pope Francis gave us for this Sixth American Missionary Congress highlighting what it implies for us in this meeting. In the highlighted fragments we can have a brief moment of silence to deepen the prayer. During or after the prayer, you can share some resonance that has touched your heart.

O merciful Father,
that you revealed in your Son the "Good News",
announced in these lands of America
by so many missionaries, with words and
deeds; help us rediscover our vocation as
baptized persons
to **GIVE A NEW IMPETUS TO OUR
MISSIONARY ACTION PROCLAIMING,
LIKE THEM, THE JOY OF THE GOSPEL.**

Oh my,
that you pour out your Holy Spirit to renew
the face of the earth,
hurt by injustice and suffering;
give us strength to walk as God's people,
in synodality and mutual listening,
towards the next American Missionary
Congress,
witnessing together the love that conquers
the world.

O God and our Father,
that you chose Mary as a model for
evangelization
to offer Christ to all mankind;
imitating his example of dedication, let us
and sustained by her maternal and
provident care,
let us always be your missionary disciples
to the ends of the earth.

Amen.

IV. ILLUMINATING TEXT

Evangelii Gaudium: Chapter V: Evangelizers with Spirit 259, 261, 262.

259. Evangelizers with the Spirit means evangelizers who fearlessly open themselves to the action of the Holy Spirit. At Pentecost, the Spirit brought the Apostles out of themselves and transformed them into proclaimers of the greatness of God, which each one began to understand in his own language. The Holy Spirit also gives them the strength to proclaim the newness of the Gospel with audacity (parresia), aloud and in every time and place, even against the tide. Let us invoke him today, well supported by prayer, without which every action runs the risk of remaining empty and the proclamation finally lacks soul. Jesus wants evangelizers who announce the Good News not only with words but above all with a life that has been transfigured in the presence of God.
261. When it is said that something has a “spirit,” this usually indicates interior motives that impel, motivate, encourage, and give meaning to personal and community action. Evangelization with a spirit is very different from a set of tasks lived as a burdensome obligation that is simply tolerated, or endured as something that contradicts one’s own inclinations and desires. How I would like to find the words to encourage a more fervent, joyful, generous, daring evangelizing stage, full of love to the end and contagious life! But I know that no motivation will be sufficient if the fire of the Spirit does not burn in our hearts. In short, an evangelization with spirit is an evangelization with the Holy Spirit since He is the soul of the evangelizing Church. Before proposing to you some spiritual motivations and suggestions, I invoke once again the Holy Spirit; I beg Him to come to renew, to shake, to impel the Church in a daring going out of herself to evangelize all peoples.
262. Evangelizers with the Spirit means evangelizers who pray and work. From the point of view of evangelization, neither mystical proposals without a strong social and missionary commitment, nor social or pastoral discourses and praxis without a spirituality that transforms the heart are of any use. These partial and disintegrating proposals only reach small groups and do not have the power of broad penetration, because they mutilate the Gospel. It is always necessary to cultivate an interior space that gives Christian meaning to commitment and activity. Without moments of adoration, of prayerful encounter with the Word, of sincere dialogue with the Lord, the tasks easily become meaningless, we are weakened by fatigue and difficulties, and our fervor is extinguished. The Church desperately needs the lungs of prayer, and I am very happy that prayer groups, intercessory prayer groups, prayerful reading of the Word and perpetual adoration of the Eucharist are multiplying in all ecclesial institutions. At the same time, “the temptation of a hidden and individualistic spirituality, which has little to do with the demands of charity and the logic of the Incarnation, should be rejected. There is a risk that some moments of prayer become an excuse for not giving one’s life to the mission, because the privatization of the lifestyle can lead Christians to take refuge in some false spirituality.

V. BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE THEOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

Evangelizers with the Spirit are those who, welcoming the action of the Holy Spirit, embrace a life according to the Spirit. From this we distinguish two approaches: the action of the Spirit and life according to the Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is the protagonist of the mission. He is God “for” us, God “in” us and God “through” us. God’s action through the Spirit is distinguished by its universality, multiplicity, and plurality. It is he who provokes, enables, and channels an authentic expansion towards the universal, including more agents and areas of action, in openness and respect for their particularity and originality. The Spirit in his actions transforms each person to have the courage to go out of oneself, to overcome one’s fears and to allow oneself to be moved towards the peripheries. The Holy Spirit is the creator of plurality and unity. He spreads his gifts and charisms, allowing each local church to have its own face, illuminating the process of inculturation of the Gospel in peoples and communities, according to the logic of the incarnation.

The evangelizer with Spirit participates in a life in the Spirit. This is why to have this

life in the Spirit one must have a personal encounter with Christ that moves one to have a passion for the things of God. The Spirit enables each baptized person to become an envoy of the Risen Christ (Acts 1:8; Lk 12:2), and thus an eyewitness of the greatness of the Trinitarian kerygma.

The evangelizer with Spirit is therefore a witness of Christ. The Holy Spirit will move the missionary to the ends of the earth. These confines can be defined from the horizons of cultures, societies, knowledge, sciences, technologies, and diverse areas of life; from the geopolitical, socio-cultural or identity frontiers; and from the peripheries of existence as presented by Pope Francis.

All the universality of the mission, extended to all nations to the ends of the earth, will end up being contextualized in a territory - which is not just any territory - and in a marginal, forgotten, excluded existential condition - which is not just any existential condition -. Mission is to assume, share and live this existential condition of exclusion and invisibility. Mission is to cease to be the center - mission is to disappear. “The disciple-missionary is decentered - says Pope Francis - because his center is Jesus Christ, who summons and sends” (FRANCISCO, 2013).



VI. QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. How have we asked the Holy Spirit for our missionary action to be driven by Him? How does our spiritual experience motivate us to an action of Church going out and not to close in on ourselves?

2. What has been your experience of mission and evangelization? Have you fallen into a routine or lack of encouragement? What causes the loss of joy in bringing the Gospel? How have you recovered that joy in the Spirit to live the mission?

3. Can you recognize or think of people who are Spirit-empowered evangelizers? Who is or are they? What are the characteristics of these Spirit-empowered evangelizers?

VIII. MARIAN PRAYER

Mary, the Mother of Evangelization (EG
288)

Mary, Virgin and Mother,
you who, moved by the Holy Spirit,
welcomed the word of life
in the depths of your humble faith:
as you gave yourself completely to the
Eternal One,
help us to say our own "yes"
to the urgent call, as pressing as ever,
to proclaim the good news of Jesus.

Filled with Christ's presence,
you brought joy to John the Baptist,
making him exult in the womb of his
mother.

Brimming over with joy,
you sang of the great things done by God.
Standing at the foot of the cross
with unyielding faith,
you received the joyful comfort of the
resurrection,
and joined the disciples in awaiting the
Spirit
so that the evangelizing Church might be
born.

Obtain for us now a new ardour born of the
resurrection,
that we may bring to all the Gospel of life
which triumphs over death.
Give us a holy courage to seek new paths,
that the gift of unfading beauty
may reach every man and woman.

Virgin of listening and contemplation,
Mother of love, Bride of the eternal
wedding feast,
pray for the Church, whose pure icon you
are,
that she may never be closed in on herself
or lose her passion for establishing God's
kingdom.

Star of the new evangelization,
help us to bear radiant witness to
communion,
service, ardent and generous faith,
justice and love of the poor,
that the joy of the Gospel
may reach to the ends of the earth,
illuminating even the fringes of our world.

Mother of the living Gospel,
wellspring of happiness for God's little
ones,
pray for us.

Amen. Alleluia!





TOPIC 3
**THE KINGDOM
OF GOD AS A
HORIZON FOR
THE MISSION**

TOPIC 3

THE KINGDOM OF GOD AS A HORIZON FOR THE MISSION

I. INTRODUCTION

In this topic we wish to propose some contents that allow us to deepen our understanding of the relationship between the Kingdom of God and Christian mission.

In this experience of CAM6, we wish **to promote the Church's mission ad gentes with new ardor, walking together as we listen to the Spirit, to be witnesses of faith in Jesus Christ in the reality of our peoples to the ends of the earth.**

It is necessary to begin our proposal by recognizing that the Kingdom of God is not simply the horizon of the mission as a peripheral issue that can be visualized or not according to the circumstances or the simple desire of the ecclesial community. The Kingdom of God is the very heart of the mission, it is the reason for the mission. Let us remember that the mission is of God, and this mission takes us, as Church, and gives meaning to our existence.

St. Luke presents Jesus himself at the beginning of his public mission, located in the synagogue, a place of communal "listening" to God, assuming the prophecy of Isaiah as the framework and definition of his mission, let us read the text, Lk 4:14-21:

"Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and his fame spread throughout the whole region. He taught in the synagogues, and everyone praised him. Jesus went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up; and on the Sabbath he went as usual into the synagogue and stood up to do the reading. The book of the prophet Isaiah was presented to him and, opening it, he found the passage where it was written: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has consecrated me by the anointing. He has sent me to bring good news to the poor, to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed and to proclaim a year of the Lord's favor". Jesus closed the Book, gave it back to the helper and sat down. Everyone in the synagogue had their eyes fixed on him. Then he began to say to them, "Today this scripture passage you have just heard has been fulfilled.""

Jesus is the Kingdom of God, his person and his message, his word, his way of life, his capacity for relationship, and his fidelity to the plan of salvation that flows constantly from the heart of the Father, this is the Kingdom of God. We can simply identify, in the text of Isaiah, quoted by Luke, and put in the mouth of Jesus, some clear expressions that describe the Kingdom:

- The Spirit of God takes center stage and consecrates (anoints) Jesus for the mission.
- Jesus consciously assumes his condition as a sent one.
- The envoy has concrete interlocutors: the poor.
- The dynamics of the Kingdom is expressed in specific movements: liberation, healing.

These are the clear fruit of God's action in favor of humankind.

The final sentence, "today it is fulfilled..." allows us to understand that Jesus not only sympathizes with the prophecy, but that he assumes it as a way of life, thus concretizing the mission of the Son, sent by the Father, anointed by the Spirit.

Now, let us ask ourselves: what are the consequences of all this for us? The answer cannot wait: the mission that Jesus entrusts to us, the one that gives meaning and content to the life of the Church, is not only a continuity of the mission of Jesus, understood as a prolongation in time. Our fidelity to the mission of the Kingdom goes through a constant process of transformation that is not only translated into the proclamation of the faith to those who do not know the Gospel, but it is also a path of permanent conversion to the faith on our own part, the words of Jesus: "be converted because the Kingdom is among you" generate the necessary healthy tension in our believing experience, at the personal and community level.

II. DEVELOPMENT

The Kingdom of God: its nature and values

The message of Jesus of Nazareth about the Kingdom of God that is here in our midst is resounding. It points to the present. The true present is by definition constituted by all the pasts that made it possible and open to the future as a possibility.

If we could identify an ethical dimension of living the Kingdom, it is possible to observe the global experience of the pandemic, as a clear example: in many of us it has remained resonating as a challenge, a need to change

our lives. It is imperative to break the logic that sustains such a vertiginous way of living. This ethical dimension possibly challenges us to seek a lifestyle that embraces simplicity, that renounces appearances, the race for prestige and irresponsible and excessive consumption. But a proper understanding of the Kingdom goes beyond a mere ethical interpretation as a moralistic demand. Then, when we contemplate again the experience of Jesus through the Sacred Scriptures, we can understand that the possible moral demands of living the Kingdom are sustained in a much deeper learning experience where the missionary disciple, through the permanent encounter with Christ, progressively assumes his belonging to God, his belonging to the Church, and from this filial relationship, in which God is considered as Father and the Church as Mother, it is understood that the Kingdom of God offered to all humanity, served by the Church as sacrament of salvation, leads us to rediscover the vocation to unity, a unity that is not exhausted within the Church, but opens to the mysticism of belonging to the human family.

In the Christian faith the centrality of the person of Jesus Christ is decisive, let us remember once again that Jesus not only "speaks of the Kingdom", He "is" the Kingdom of God; consequently, believers must sustain a dynamic that allows us to return to Him always, and when we project ourselves to announce Him, we must try to do so by embracing the totality of His person and His message, for us and for our interlocutors we must seek the constant experience of the fascination with His person and His message.

It is common to meet people who share with us their own search for happiness,

even more, we ourselves seek to be happy. However, not infrequently these searches are focused on the satisfaction of needs or on the attempt to achieve minimal personal or family security, but do we find this kind of happiness in Jesus, in his mission? In a simple exercise of contemplation we quickly discover that Jesus does not come to us to give us some superficial message of consolation or to entertain us with some commitments to healthy causes in fashion at any given time, Jesus is not a pragmatic revolutionary, nor a mystic abstracted from reality, who sells a superficial happiness, nor does he even pretend to give a possible questioning message. Jesus lives, meets, listens, feels, speaks, serves, carries the cross, dies giving his life to save - redeem the world. The Kingdom of God is Salvation for the world.

The irruption of the Kingdom in history allows us to understand that everything can be redeemed, that the justice of God wants to reach everyone by saving them. A Christian is a person fascinated by the experience of being saved and seeks to approach every situation of pain and sin in order to offer God's salvation to all through word, witness, and the giving of one's life. For this to be possible, the discipleship dimension of our Christian condition allows us to enter always in communion with Jesus to learn his words, his gestures, his ways, and in turn, this same discipleship condition, complemented with the missionary dimension allows us to mature in the capacity of encounter with others, in such a way that reality also reaches us, enters into us, hurts us with its pain, rejoices us with its joy, engages us with its needs. It is an exercise of permanent decentering, where we give primacy to Jesus, master of humility, constancy, patience, and compassion, and we look from his gaze, with

the freedom of the children of God, this is the missionary movement that makes us servants of the Kingdom.

Spirituality of the missionary disciple of the Kingdom of God

Our condition of being called, anointed, and sent. The vocational dimension of our own faith journey leads us to discover that, because we are called to believe in God and open ourselves to the gift of his fatherhood, we are anointed and sent to offer this gift to all. Nourishing our awareness of being "sent" will always lead us to an exercise of purification that uninstalls us and drives away any pretension of superiority, triumphalism or missionary exitism. We do not have a mission, God's mission has us.

Our interlocutors are those of Jesus, the poor. A key to missionary discernment will always be the life of the poor, not as victims of a system, but as a theological place where God makes himself present and demands of us fidelity in the service of justice, truth, dignity and the common good.

The movements proper to the mission of Jesus, in favor of the people, continue to be the channels of the mission entrusted to us, this avoids possible deviant interpretations of the mission, which can have the aroma of moral, pious, doctrinal abstractions. The mission at the service of the Kingdom asks us for a spirituality of belonging to the Holy Faithful People of God, which celebrates, listens to God in the Scriptures and in reality, and serving compassionately, without arrogance or hidden interests, offers the way of salvation and recognizes the Reign of God.

For Jesus, the Kingdom of God, what he hoped for and announced, is what happens when God reigns instead of any other

power. In historical terms, that is, in terms of its realization in time, it means that peace, justice and love reign among human beings and in nature. The kingdom of Jesus, a kingdom of justice and service, seeks to grow in the midst of people and the world. Jesus did not flee from the world, nor does he invite anyone to flee from it. "My kingdom is not of this world", this word of Jesus should not lead us to be unconcerned and evade, falling into a spiritualization of evangelization, for we are called to serve in the expansion of a Kingdom that is not identified with the powers of this world but that becomes visible, tangible in it. That is what Jesus dedicated himself to: witness and service. Mission is not an exercise of power; power creates domination, uniformity, produces depersonalization and submission. The power of witness and service does not dominate, nor does it impose itself, nor punish, nor condemn, nor excommunicate, but accompanies and enamors, creates freedom and unity in diversity and equality, authentic communion. Of course, presented in this way, there could be those who point out that it is necessary not to lose sight of the fact that the mission also has a content that must be presented, and that those who intend to follow Jesus and call themselves Christians must accept. And it is so, the mission is not exhausted in a humanitarian action that seeks to solve the problems of social coexistence and the decisions of order.

The Kingdom of God is also the Kingdom of Truth. In Jesus, the truth of God and the truth of man are presented to us; the mission at the service of the Kingdom does not renounce this truth, much less negotiate it; the missionary witness includes the witness of the Truth, Christ (Jn 14:6). Authentic freedom is given to us in this truth (Jn 8:31-38). However, it will always be necessary

to distance ourselves from the temptation of legalism, understood as the eagerness to propose the way of faith as the mere fulfillment of laws and norms. Jesus does not disavow the moral norms of faith, the novelty in Jesus arises in the primacy of the commandment of love, which completes the law, overcoming the understanding of this, as a mere sequence of prohibitions and indications to become the demanding and liberating proposal to live in fidelity to God and in communion with the brethren. In Jesus, this is not just a discourse, it is his way of life, and our missionary discipleship involves assuming the same form.

Manifestation of the Kingdom: social transformation

A characteristic feature of the Kingdom of God that Jesus announces is its actual and permanent realization: he does not announce a utopia but a reality that he makes present (Mt 11:3-5) (Lk 17:21). "God has entered into human history...which has changed color and perspective...the world has not come to an end, but the old world has been transformed into a new one". Jesus reveals Himself as "God Himself under human condition: the awaited one of the nations, the savior of the world." He is the bridge between God and the human person, participating in an extraordinary way in a way of being God who shares with us His decision to be man. When Jesus announces the inauguration of that new world he always does so in terms of joy and hope. "It is a time for rejoicing and not for fasting" (Lk. 2:29). This is why Jesus identifies himself with the promised Messiah in the history of his people: his mission is to inaugurate the fulfillment of God's promise to people and to the world, and to show, with his humanity, the direction that traces the path to full happiness. Whenever Jesus speaks to us of the Kingdom, he involves

us as indispensable actors in its realization, because God expects the assent of our freedom and invites us to feel fortunate for it: to participate in the expansion of the Kingdom of God is our way of drawing closer to him and attaining the dignity with which we have been created. Jesus announces and summons at the same time: every announcement is a call to change; he calls us to conversion as liberation from the slavery and bondage that paralyze us (Mk 1:15).

A proper understanding of the person

Up to this point we have insisted on the historical dimension of the Kingdom of God, and it is impossible for us to do otherwise, however, the Kingdom of God itself is much more than just a response to any situation of injustice and disorder in coexistence. The Kingdom of God is "salvation", thus we notice that, in order to avoid a certain social or cultural pragmatism, or to submit ourselves to an ideological interpretation, we have the obligation to stop in the reflection on the transcendent dimension of the Kingdom of God, salvation projects us to God, to the Eternal Life, the Christian answers and commitments in time, coherently with the Gospel, surpass the only historical projection to reach the fullness of life forever. In order to embrace this dimension, we will make use of some considerations on the understanding of the mystery of the human person. That is to say, a brief anthropological development that includes the transcendence of which we are capable and avoids the temptation of immediatism. We will simply list some very basic principles.

1. God reveals himself. Our understanding of the human person has as its starting point the revelation of the triune God revealed in Christ. That is to say that if we wish to know the human being, we

must have recourse to revelation. We discover who we are in the light of Jesus Christ, the revealer of God. The Second Vatican Council points out that Christ, in the revelation of the Father and of his love, fully reveals man to man himself and makes known to him his highest vocation (cf. GS 22). As the recipient of revelation, the human being is its object. As the recipient of the Father's love, man comes to know to the ultimate consequences of who he is. In this sense, theological anthropology, always in dialogue with philosophy and the sciences that contribute their knowledge, contemplates all this from a conditioning point of view: the relationship of man with God, because we consider that this is the deepest dimension of our being and allows us to recognize ourselves as the privileged object of God's love and the only creature on earth that God has willed for himself (GS 24), and is called to the communion of life with God the Trinity himself.

2. What is proper to this understanding of the human being, which is made known to us in Jesus, is that relationship of love and fatherhood that God intends to establish with all humans in Jesus, his Son. We are called by grace to be sons, to participate in the Holy Spirit in the relationship proper only to Jesus, the Son.
3. This call and this gift presuppose our freedom. Our existence is given to us by God, who creates us in order to call us to the grace of communion with Him. We have our own consistency, not without relation to the Creator from whom everything is given to us; this consistency is necessary so that the call, which is addressed to each one of us, can be given.
4. We are marked by the experience of sin. Created out of love, we do not always

respond with love; to varying degrees we are capable of responding to God not only with indifference, but also with an explicit rejection of God. This is a negative dimension, because it should not be, because it is destructive of man himself, however, it is part of existence. And we cannot ignore it, especially because the New Testament teaches us that God's love, manifested in Christ, becomes forgiveness and mercy, acceptance of the sinner and justification.

5. By his death and resurrection, Christ has conquered sin and death. And our insertion into him through baptism is a decisive event in each of us. Through him we exist in faith, hope and charity.
6. Our very condition as creatures includes the social vocation, we are in relationship, capable of solidarity.
7. The entire world around us, in which we move and exist, is also God's work.
8. Our ultimate vocation is the state of fullness by God's grace.
9. We are body. We often hear people say "I have my body", in reality it is not about having a body as a possession but about recognizing ourselves as a body, and in fact we are a body insofar as we are in the world; the world is not for us a mere circumstance of place, but a constitutive element; we are in time, precisely because we are body we are immersed in the temporal dimension of continuous and successive duration, this leads us to think of our itinerant and pilgrim condition in which it is up to us to learn, correct, convert and repent; we are mortal, death de-worlds us and de-temporalizes us, it removes us from the temporal sphere that constitutes us. In this sense death indicates an end to the constitutive dimensions of body, world and time, which makes us think that we

must take it very seriously; we are sexed, it is clear in the conception of the human being offered in the creation stories, that we are realized in the complementary polarity of male and female. This sexual differentiation, implied in the corporeality, confers to the human being a double affective tonality, a double mode of human installation and of social relation correlatively different, because in the sexuality of man is projected his way of being in the world; we are a communicative expression, through the body we tell ourselves, the body is the mediation of every encounter, especially the face, which, as someone has said, is the place where, par excellence, nature becomes porous to the person; we are historical and creative, the historicity, as a transcendental structure of man, opens him to a commitment within history in which he must project his existence, personally and communally.

10. We are soul. This anthropological concept expresses the uniqueness of the human being and his or her constitutive openness to God, which underlies the biblical category of the image of God. By virtue of our created nature, we are in a position to encounter God.

The person is that gift and mystery that each one is for himself and for others.

The Kingdom of God for Jesus is the way in which God manifests his action in the midst of history. In this way, the Kingdom of God is a message of strength in the present and hope in the future for the poor, the hungry, the afflicted: for all the unfortunate. The Kingdom of God is translated into attitudes of welcome for sinners, respect, and vindication for stigmatized women, healing for the sick, liberation from "unclean

spirits". A historical manifestation of the Kingdom of the Father is fraternity among human beings. Accepting salvation in God the Father places human life under the real paradigm of mercy, which is not a feeling but a fundamental attitude, mercy "is made" in the day to day.

Another consequence of the proclamation of the kingdom is the ability to be inclusive. This derives from the practice of Jesus himself, who does not seek the renewal of Israel by reinforcing the laws of purity, but by announcing the nearness of a merciful God. What would help us to arrive at this conviction? How can we communicate that the Kingdom of God is among us and begins here and now? The Kingdom of God is in the human heart, what would help us to discover it?

Preferential option for the poor as a theological category

In our last section we would like to dwell on an always controversial topic, because we assume that it challenges us and makes us uncomfortable. In the same concrete community experience, we find different views and understandings. At the beginning of this chapter, we noted that the interlocutors of the proclamation, and we can say, of the life of Jesus, are the poor, which is why we feel obliged to stop and reflect on this aspect.

In the Puebla Document we can read:

"The immense majority of our brothers and sisters continue to live in a situation of poverty and even misery, which has worsened.... (DP 1135); they lack the most elementary material goods in contrast to the accumulation of wealth in the hands of a minority.... The poor not only lack material goods, but also on the

level of human dignity they lack full social and political participation". (Ref. DP 297) "The Church's evangelical commitment, as the Pope has said, must be like that of Christ, a commitment to the most needy.... For this reason alone, the poor deserve preferential attention, whatever their moral or personal situation" (DP 1141).

The option for the poor is demanded by the situation of institutionalized injustice in which we live, according to the expression of the Bishops of Puebla. Already before, at the Conference in Medellin, they had spoken of "institutionalized violence" (DM 16), and Pope John Paul II in his homily at the Shrine of Zapopan in Mexico (1979) referred to the "structure of sin".

The preferential option is directed to the poor as far as they are poor, because, as John Paul II says, the poor are the favorites of God, who sent his poor Son and constituted his Church with poor and needy humanity in view. The preferential option for the poor is an obligatory attitude of every Christian and also of the Church as a whole.

The pure rationality of an ethic today calls for opting for the oppressed even without explicit reference to the Gospel. It is incorrect to think that the option for the oppressed can only be based on the Gospel, which has led many to lose faith. Moreover, the concretization of the option for the poor in a given historical moment requires, in order to become operative, the social sciences and the situations that exist in each of them. This means that the option for the oppressed must be illuminated by the light and power of the Gospel,

The Bishops go on to describe the concrete faces in which "the situation of widespread

extreme poverty” is expressed (DP 31), as follows: children struck by poverty before they are born, frustrated youth in rural and suburban areas, indigenous people marginalized and living in inhuman situations, landless peasants subjected to exploitation, workers poorly paid and deprived of their rights, urban marginalized and overcrowded in the face of the ostentation of wealth, the elderly marginalized and abandoned... (DP 32-39). (DP 32-39). These concrete faces express “the situation of inhuman poverty in which millions of Latin Americans live”, which is judged as “the most devastating and humiliating scourge” (DP 29). Poverty is not mere lack, it is not mere difficulty in mastering life, but difficulty in living caused by others and added ignominy introduced by others. Poverty then is sin, “cries out to heaven” (DM, I Justice), “is contrary to the Creator’s plan and to the honor it deserves”, (DP 28).

In the same way, he also asserts the growing gap between rich and poor: “The truth is that the distance between the many who have little and the few who have much is increasing more and more” (DP 2). Poverty is thus not only a lack of life, not only an unjust lack of life caused by oppressors, but it is also the formal and most radical negation of fraternity, of the ideal of the kingdom of God. Since the roots of oppression are structural, this poverty, historical and dialectical, becomes massive and lasting; it is not accidental and demands profound changes in structures (DP 30). Poverty is then not only a lack of life, not only an unjust lack of life caused by oppressors, but it is also the formal and most radical negation of fraternity. It is certain that in our Mission experiences we will meet the poor. Therefore, it is important that we become aware of the reasons for the situation of the poor worldwide and where

we will go on Mission. We will encounter poor people and poor communities. They are our impoverished brothers and sisters.

The preferential option for the poor continues to be present in Latin American and Caribbean reflection, and we find it in the Aparecida Document in 391, ss.

III. CONCLUSION

Gustavo Gutiérrez (2007) shows us how the life of the poor is a situation of hunger and exploitation, insufficient health care and lack of decent housing, difficult access to school education, low wages and unemployment, struggle for their rights and repression. But that is not all, according to the author, being poor is also a way of feeling, of knowing, of reasoning, of making friends, of loving, of believing, of suffering, of celebrating, of praying. Why opt for the poor?

What should our attitude be? How can we dialogue with them about human rights and the rights of creation? What would help us to deepen our preparation? How can we open ourselves to learn from them, what small things can we give to awaken their conscience, to value their efforts of organization and commitment to claim their rights, to value their culture? They are our brothers.

WORKSHEET 3: THE KINGDOM AS A MISSION HORIZON

I. GUIDING ELEMENTS OF CAM6

- **Biblical text:** Jesus said to his disciples: "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth". Acts 1:8
- **Theme:** Evangelizers with Spirit to the ends of the earth
- **Motto:** America, with the power of the Spirit, witnesses to Christ
- **Objective:** To promote the Church's mission ad gentes with new ardor, walking together in listening to the Spirit, in order to be witnesses of faith in Jesus Christ in the reality of our peoples to the ends of the earth.
- **Hymn:** Witnesses of the Living Christ
Let's sing the chorus together...

Look how they love each other! Look how they walk!
America, with the power of the Spirit.
America, witnesses of the Living Christ.

II. OBJECTIVE FOR THIS THIRD WORKING MEETING

Specific Objective: To reflect on the Kingdom of God as the horizon of the Mission, considering that this is the main message of the Person of Jesus, so that our missionary action may be a follow up to Him, especially among the poorest.

III. PRAYER FOR THE SIXTH AMERICAN MISSIONARY CONGRESS

We unite ourselves to the prayer that Pope Francis gave us for this Sixth American Missionary Congress highlighting what it implies for us in this meeting. In the highlighted fragments we can have a brief moment of silence to deepen the prayer. During or after the prayer, you can share some resonance that has touched your heart.

O merciful Father,
that you revealed in your Son the "Good News",
announced in these lands of America
by so many missionaries, with words and
deeds; help us rediscover our vocation as
baptized persons to give a new impetus to
our missionary action
proclaiming, like them, the joy of the
Gospel.

Oh my,
that you pour out your Holy Spirit to
**RENEW THE FACE OF THE EARTH,
HURT BY INJUSTICE AND SUFFERING;**
give us strength to walk as God's people,
in synodality and mutual listening,
towards the next American Missionary
Congress,
witnessing together the love that conquers
the world.

O God and our Father,
that you chose Mary as a model for
evangelization
to offer Christ to all mankind;
imitating his example of dedication, let us
and sustained by her maternal and
provident care,
let us always be your missionary disciples
to the ends of the earth.

Amen.

IV. ILLUMINATING TEXT

Lk 4:14-21

Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and his fame spread throughout that region. He taught in the synagogues of the Jews, and all praised him.

He came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath, he went to the synagogue, as was his custom. He stood up to do the reading, and the book of the prophet Isaiah was passed to him. Jesus unrolled the book and found the passage where it was written:

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me. He has anointed me to bring good news to the poor, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and to the blind who will soon see, to send the oppressed free, and to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor. Jesus then rolled up the book, gave it back to the attendant and sat down, while all those present had their eyes fixed on him. And he began to say to them, "Today news is coming to you of how these prophetic words are being fulfilled."

V. BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE THEOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

What is decisive in Christianity is the person of Jesus Christ. For Jesus, the Kingdom of God is what happens when God reigns instead of any other power. It means that peace, justice, and love reign among human beings and in nature. A kingdom of justice and service that must grow in the midst of people and the world. Mission begins with that contemplative gaze that allows us to discover the signs of God's reign present in the world and that which opposes this reign.

When Jesus indicates that his kingdom is not of this world, he does not do so to distance us from it, but to discover that the logic of his action is different. His logic is the truth, "I have come to be a witness to the truth". A truth that overcomes legalisms, falsehoods, hatred, violence, exclusion, and all kinds of evils that alienate human beings from that which does not allow them to live their deepest reality: "made in his image and likeness" (Gen 1:26). A kingdom that seeks to liberate people from all that dehumanizes them and makes them suffer that responds to what they most desire: to live in dignity... Whenever Jesus speaks to us about the Kingdom, he involves us as indispensable actors in its realization and invites us to feel fortunate for it.

A Kingdom that recognizes the human person at its center, in which a seed is sown and becomes so large that thousands of birds come to take shelter in its branches (Mt 13:31-32). The one who waters this seed is the Spirit who pours love on the soil of our heart. A Kingdom in which God manifests his action in the midst of history. A message that gives strength in the present and hope for the future, especially for the poor, the hungry, the afflicted: for all the unfortunate. Where the preferential option for the poor is present. Poverty most of the time caused by others; sin, which "cries out to heaven" (Medellin, justice 1), "contrary to the Creator's plan and to the honor it deserves", (Puebla 28).

We will certainly encounter the poor in our Mission experiences. Therefore, it is important that we become aware of the reasons for the situation of the poor worldwide and where we will go on Mission. We will encounter poor people and poor communities. They are our impoverished brothers and sisters. What should our attitude be? They are our brothers.

VI. QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. What place does the theme of the Kingdom of God occupy in our reflection and missionary action?

2. Are the poor the object of our reflection and action? What elements reflect this option or non-option in our community or apostolic group?

3. What processes of discernment take place in our space of reflection and missionary action in which the dynamism of the anointing and sending spirit is present?

VIII. MARIAN PRAYER

Wedding at Cana

“Three days later there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Jesus and his disciples were also invited to the wedding. And when there was no wine, because the wedding wine had run out, his mother said to Jesus, ‘They have no wine.’” (Jn.2.1-3).

Jesus’ ministry begins at a feast where the wine is missing. Jesus himself compares the Kingdom to a wedding feast. Mary’s action allows the feast to continue. Let us ask Mary to intercede so that all people may participate in the banquet of the Kingdom of God.

Ave Maria

Hail Mary, Hail Mary,
full of grace;
the Lord is with thee.
Blessed art thou
among all women,
and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.
Holy Mary, Mother of God,
pray for us sinners,
now and at the hour of our death. Amen





TOPIC 4 CHRIST'S WITNESSES IN A CONTEXT OF DIFFERENCES

TOPIC 4

CHRIST'S WITNESSES IN A CONTEXT OF DIFFERENCES

I. INTRODUCTION

In this theme we would like to propose some contents that allow us to deepen and meditate on the meaning of the invitation made to us in CAM6 to **be witnesses of the person of Jesus in the midst of a world characterized by cultural, social, religious, economic, and political diversity.**

In this experience of CAM6, we wish to **promote the Church's mission ad gentes with new ardor, walking together as we listen to the Spirit, to be witnesses of faith in Jesus Christ in the reality of our peoples to the ends of the earth.**

II. DEVELOPMENT

The Witnesses of Christ

John the Baptist was the first witness cited by Christ. He was the forerunner who had prepared the way for the coming of the Lord in fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies (Is. 40:3-5). (Mal. 3:1). To the same John the Baptist Jesus referred when He said that he was the doorkeeper who was to open the door to the true Shepherd of the sheep (Jn. 10:1-3). We can recognize that John the Baptist is welcomed by the mission of God expressed in events and vocations that are part of the historical journey of the people of God. In Jesus, revelation and mission reach their culminating moment.

The disciples, having lived so closely with Jesus and having met him again after the Resurrection, are sent by him to offer their testimony. Mary Magdalene is sent to "go to her brothers" to announce the Resurrection. The women to whom Jesus manifests himself risen go to communicate to the apostles that they have seen him. On various occasions the Risen Jesus makes himself present in the midst of his disciples: on the road to Emmaus (Lk 24:13ff), when they are gathered in the Upper Room (Jn 20:19ff), by the lake (Jn 21:1ff). From these encounters in the word of Jesus, the disciples are now welcomed by the same mission.

It will be the Apostles who will have to proclaim the Gospel to the entire world, baptize and teach. They receive, therefore, the task of evangelizing. Thus, the whole Church, born of Christ's Passover, is set on mission. In Luke's Gospel, in the account of the Ascension, we find Jesus sending them out to preach "in his name conversion and forgiveness of sins" (Lk. 24:47). In Matthew's testimony, just before the Ascension, Jesus assures the apostles that he will remain with them until the end of the world (Mt. 28:30).

We too, the baptized, receive this invitation from the Lord to proclaim the Gospel by word and by the witness of our lives throughout the centuries. The Church, of which we are a part through baptism, offers the witness of Jesus, even to the point of giving her life for him.

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CHRIST'S WITNESSES IN A CONTEXT OF DIFFERENCES



Witnesses, men, and women, experience the transformation of their own lives through the work of the Spirit, they are receptive as far as they are willing and open to grace, and moved by the same grace they donate their own lives. Called to be witnesses of Jesus, Good News for humanity, we exercise ourselves in the constant knowledge of witness from the Scriptures and the life of the communities. In this sense, we know abundant missionary experiences in our continent, where the testimony and the surrender of life encourage us to deepen our knowledge and gratitude for them. In them, we learn that the coherence between the content of the proclamation and the way of life is the best missionary expression.

In the process that we have lived towards CAM6 we have had the living testimony of missionaries in different regions of the world that have given us keys to understand the mission today in the entire world. It is hoped that this reflection will encourage us to seek and know the testimony of the martyrs in each continent.

Context of differences: pluriculturality and interculturality

The plurality of cultural forms and experiences that coexist in the complex web of life of the peoples offers us the need to ask ourselves the question about the how of the mission. The intercultural scenario favors the exchange of different worldviews and the development of processes that can break down communication barriers and reduce social, economic, and other gaps. At this point we assume that we are dealing with a complex phenomenon in itself that involves different factors. We do not intend here to develop a deep analysis of the intercultural reality, recognizing the need for a constant exercise of observation and reflection.

It seems appropriate to recall the constant exhortation of Pope Francis who invites us to study “the signs of the times” in the perspective of evangelical discernment. That is, the readiness to examine the reality around us in the light of the principles and way of life formulated by the Gospel and the Spirit that animates it (cf. FRANCIS, Apostolic Letter *Misericordia et misera*, November 20, 2016).

The reality of our continent

Our American continent is a true geographical, cultural, social, political, and economic mosaic. The variety of situations shows a clear wealth of resources that are not always fairly distributed. As in other continents, it is easy to observe the progressive phenomenon of urbanization, which is causing a real cultural and social transformation that challenges the models of evangelization. As for the interrelation of people, ethnic groups, organizations and states, it is identifiable the plurality that does not always manifest experiences favorable to the dignity of people: social fragmentation, scandals of different kinds, weakening of institutions, increase of violence, drug trafficking and organized crime, are some of the strongest experiences. The significant change in the integration of families is highlighted, as well as the growing phenomenon of migration and the accentuation of poverty.

This brief overview of the Americas reflects regional trends (inequality, violence, impunity, citizen empowerment, political alternation, indignation, and social organization) but at the

same time shows us the very marked differences between countries, and between regions within the same countries.

The phenomenon of globalization

The reality and awareness that we are part of a single planet is becoming ever stronger and more evident. The phenomenon of globalization is that “web of relations at the planetary level”, which is “a sign of its profound aspiration to unity.” We are in a globalized world. This could raise some questions about how we are interrelated at the economic, social, and political levels, among others. Situations that may occur on one side of the world, in a perhaps unknown region, today touch us, affect us, challenge us on the other side of the world.

Events such as the pandemic (due to COVID-19) or the war in Ukraine, or phenomena such as migrations in various continents, the search to reduce inequalities between countries, growing awareness of the situation of poverty, repercussions of climate change, have a strong impact on us.

Our vocation to the service of the common good and our fidelity to the mission leads us to assume a responsible attitude of “going forth”, serving those causes common to the whole human family: “...the Church is in Christ as a sacrament or sign and instrument of intimate union with God and of the unity of the whole human race... The conditions of these times add to this duty of the Church a greater urgency, so that all men, united today more intimately by all kinds of social, technical, and cultural relations, may also attain full unity in Christ.”

Our belonging to the mission invites us to travel the road, as people of God, open to encounter and fraternal cooperation with all those who, believers or not, are committed to the transformation of the whole reality, moving towards a full life for all.

III. CONCLUSION

After having considered the strength of the testimony, the reality of pluriculturality and interculturality, and a brief observation of the continental and global reality, we dare to focus on what could be a possible response.

Evolution in missionary understanding and praxis: contributions of missionary institutes.

In the process towards the VI American Missionary Congress, the Institutes of Missiological Formation provided valuable contributions on the way forward in this missionary awareness of the Church. We gather some of their concerns and challenges: professional formation of pastoral agents, sharing of local missionary projects and experiences that can help at the international level, concrete projects that emerge from the Congresses, greater use of the virtual world for evangelization, among other challenges.

They also recommended broadening the vision and awareness of missionary identity,

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integrating the contribution of the disciplines of knowledge in reflection, creating communication that transcends borders, promoting international solidarity and uniting efforts, resources, and wills to enrich ecclesial life. As challenges and proposals, the following stand out:

- To encounter and embrace the reality of the Church in North America.
- To prepare missiologically and missiologically a significant number of agents that can impact the pastoral ministry in the continent.
- Open more and better channels of communication to know the reality of the sister Churches; and
- Establish concrete and real formation plans that include missionary experiences.

Witnesses to Christ in interreligious dialogue

We consider it opportune in this topic to recall the principles outlined by the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue that can serve as a guide for missionary awareness:

“In their commitment to fulfill Christ’s mandate in an appropriate way, Christians are called to adhere to the following principles, especially within interfaith contexts.

1. **Acting in God’s love.** Christians believe that God is the source of all love and, consequently, in their witness they are called to live lives marked by love and to love their neighbors as themselves (cf. Matthew 22:34-40; John 14:15).
2. **Imitate Jesus Christ.** In all aspects of life, and especially in their witness, Christians are called to follow the example and teachings of Jesus Christ, sharing his love, giving glory and honor to God the Father in the power of the Holy Spirit (cf. Jn 20:21-23).
3. **Christian virtues.** Christians are called to behave with integrity, charity, compassion, and humility, and to overcome all arrogance, condescension, and contempt (cf. Galatians 5:22).
4. **Acts of service and justice.** Christians are called to practice justice and to love tenderly (cf. Micah 6:8). They are also called to serve others and, in so doing, to recognize Christ in the least of their sisters and brothers (cf. Matthew 25:45). Acts of service such as providing education, health care, primary care, and acts of justice and public advocacy are an integral part of witnessing to the Gospel. Taking advantage of situations of poverty and need has no place in the outreach of Christianity. Christians should denounce and refrain from resorting to any kind of lure, including financial incentives and rewards, in their acts of service.
5. **Discernment in healing ministries.** As an integral part of their witness to the Gospel, Christian’s exercise ministries of healing. They are called to exercise discernment when carrying out these ministries, with absolute respect for human dignity and ensuring that people’s vulnerability and need for healing are not exploited.

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6. **Rejection of violence.** Christians are called in their witness to reject all forms of violence, including psychological and social violence, including the abuse of power. They also reject violence, unjust discrimination, or repression by any religious or secular authority, including the violation or destruction of places of worship and sacred symbols or texts.
7. **Freedom of religion and belief.** Religious freedom, which includes the right to profess, practice, propagate and publicly change one's religion, derives from the very dignity of the human person, founded on the creation of all human beings in the image and likeness of God (cf. Genesis 1:26). Therefore, all human beings are equal in rights and responsibilities. Wherever a religion is instrumentalized for political ends or where religious persecution takes place, Christians are called to engage in prophetic witness in denouncing such things.
8. **Solidarity and mutual respect.** Christians are called to commit themselves to collaborate with all people in mutual respect, jointly promoting justice, peace and the common good. Interreligious cooperation is an essential dimension of this commitment.
9. **Respect for all people.** Christians recognize that the Gospel both challenges and enriches cultures. Even when the Gospel challenges certain aspects of cultures, Christians are called to respect all people. Christians are also called to discern the elements of their own culture that are challenged by the Gospel.
10. **Renouncing false witness.** Christians should express themselves with sincerity and respect; they should listen in order to know and understand the beliefs and practices of others; they are encouraged to recognize and appreciate what is true and good in them. Any commentary or critical attitude should take place in a spirit of mutual respect, taking care not to raise false witness about other religions.
11. **Ensuring personal discernment.** Christians must recognize that changing one's religion is a decisive step that must be accompanied by sufficient time for adequate reflection and preparation, through a journey that guarantees full personal freedom.
12. **Building interfaith relationships.** Christians must continue to build relationships of respect and trust with people of different faiths to facilitate deeper mutual understanding, reconciliation and cooperation for the common good."

We conclude our theme with the following challenge: How to know the cultural, social, religious, economic, and political diversity in our own land and the global influence in our country and in the countries where we go as missionary disciples and witnesses of Christ?

WORKSHEET 4: WITNESSES OF CHRIST IN A CONTEXT OF DIFFERENCE

I. GUIDING ELEMENTS OF CAM6

- **Biblical text:** Jesus said to his disciples: "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth". Acts 1:8
- **Theme:** Evangelizers with Spirit to the ends of the earth
- **Motto:** America, with the power of the Spirit, witnesses to Christ
- **Objective:** To promote the Church's mission ad gentes with new ardor, walking together in listening to the Spirit, in order to be witnesses of faith in Jesus Christ in the reality of our peoples to the ends of the earth.
- **Hymn:** Witnesses of the Living Christ
Let's sing the chorus together...

Look how they love each other! Look how they walk!

*America, with the power of the Spirit.
America, witnesses of the Living Christ.*

II. OBJECTIVE FOR THIS FOURTH WORKING MEETING

Specific Objective: To reflect on the invitation made to us at the Sixth American Missionary Congress to be witnesses to the person of Jesus in the midst of a world characterized by cultural, social, religious, economic, and political diversity.

This meeting poses the necessary reflection on how to carry out missionary action.

PRAYER FOR THE SIXTH AMERICAN MISSIONARY CONGRESS

We unite ourselves to the prayer that Pope Francis gave us for this Sixth American Missionary Congress—highlighting what it implies for us in this meeting. In the highlighted fragments we can have a brief moment of silence to deepen the prayer. During or after the prayer, you can share some resonance that has touched your heart.

O merciful Father,
that you revealed in your Son the "Good News",
announced in these lands of America
by so many missionaries, with words and
deeds; help us to rediscover our vocation
as baptized people to give a new impetus
to our missionary action proclaiming, like
them, the joy of the Gospel.

Oh my,
that you pour out your Holy Spirit to renew
the face of the earth,
hurt by injustice and suffering;
**GIVE US STRENGTH TO WALK AS GOD'S
PEOPLE, IN SYNODALITY AND MUTUAL
LISTENING,
TOWARDS THE NEXT AMERICAN
MISSIONARY CONGRESS, WITNESSING
TOGETHER THE LOVE THAT CONQUERS
THE WORLD.**

O God and our Father,
that you chose Mary as a model for
evangelization to offer Christ to all
mankind;
imitating his example of dedication, let us
and sustained by her maternal and
provident care, let us always be your
missionary disciples
to the ends of the earth.
Amen.

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CHRIST'S WITNESSES IN A CONTEXT OF DIFFERENCES

IV. ILLUMINATING TEXT

1 Jn. ,1- 1-3

“What existed from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we beheld and our hands touched concerning the Word of life, for the Life was manifested, and we have seen it and testify and announce to you the eternal Life, which was turned to the Father and was manifested to us - what we have seen and heard, we announce to you, so that you also may be in communion with us. And we are in communion with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ”.

V. BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE THEOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

Mission belongs to the very nature of the Church. Proclaiming the Word of God and witnessing to the world is essential for every Christian. Through the scriptures we discover the testimony about Christ. This witness will be what Jesus will invite his disciples to share to all the ends of the earth. In this context Jesus presents himself as the Witness of the Father. He presents himself as Merciful, Just and Sent.

It has been mentioned above that the “ends of the earth” can be understood from the context of horizons, borders, and peripheries. Witnessing also implies dialogue with others across religions and cultures. In some contexts, living and proclaiming the Gospel is difficult, impeded or even forbidden. However, Christians have received from Christ the mandate to continue to witness faithfully to Him in solidarity with one another. The missionary is responsible for bearing witness to Christ and from there the Holy Spirit sends him to proclaim Him. This is why the missionary must recognize that the Spirit blows where He wills, as St. Paul discovered in the midst of the Areopagus (Acts 17:16-34).

The invitation to be a witness of Christ also implies having the ability to see, read and interpret the “signs of the times”. Pope Francis’ proposal is evangelical discernment. In paragraph 154 of the Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, he says about preaching: “the preparation of preaching becomes an exercise of evangelical discernment, where one tries to recognize - in the light of the Spirit - “a call that God makes heard in a given historical situation; in it and through it God calls the believer”. This invitation to recognize the voice of God in the midst of differences challenges us not to fall into exclusion or even exclusivity but to be able to enter into a dialogue that allows us to respond with a merciful and just heart to the reality of today’s world.

Our American continent is a true geographical, cultural, social, political, and economic mosaic. The variety of situations shows a clear wealth of resources that are not always fairly distributed. As in other continents, it is easy to observe the progressive phenomenon of urbanization, which is causing a real cultural and social transformation that challenges the models of evangelization.

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To be a witness of Christ implies acting in the love of God, imitating Jesus Christ from the virtues, from charity and justice. It is to live discernment from the healing of the wounds caused by division and violence. To be a witness is to promote freedom of religion and to work for every person from solidarity and respect in order to build relationships that make present the Kingdom of God.

VI. QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. How do we understand witnessing in today's world?

2. To whom and where are we bearing witness to the Gospel? Do we need to broaden our horizons, frontiers, and peripheries?

3. How have we lived the mission from the perspective of interreligious dialogue? What challenges and opportunities have we encountered?

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CHRIST'S WITNESSES IN A CONTEXT OF DIFFERENCES



VIII. MARIAN PRAYER

Jesus gives witness of love, fidelity, and obedience to the Father, just as Mary and John keep in the same line of witness before the Son who gives his life for the salvation of the world. The context of witnessing action takes place in a world that has rejected difference and is hostile to diversity. Let us invoke Mary so that, like her, we may remain faithful in our witness.

Excerpt from Pope Francis' prayer in *Evangelii gaudium* #288
Mary, Standing at the foot of the cross
with unyielding faith,
you received the joyful comfort of the resurrection,
and joined the disciples in awaiting the Spirit
so that the evangelizing Church might be born.

Obtain for us now a new ardour born of the resurrection,
that we may bring to all the Gospel of life
which triumphs over death.
Give us a holy courage to seek new paths,
that the gift of unfading beauty
may reach every man and woman.

amos po



TOPIC 5 MISSIONARY DISCIPLES: INITIATED AND SENT



TOPIC 5

MISSIONARY DISCIPLES: INITIATED AND SENT

I. INTRODUCTION

In this theme we wish to propose some contents that allow us to deepen our understanding of the disciple and **missionary identity of the whole Church.**

In this experience of CAM6, we wish to **promote the Church's mission ad gentes with new ardor, walking together as we listen to the Spirit, to be witnesses of faith in Jesus Christ in the reality of our peoples to the ends of the earth.**

The Risen One, in his appearances to the disciples after Easter, gave them a single command: "Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you" (Mt 28:19-20). That is Matthew's version. Other evangelists point out the same task but emphasize other aspects. Matthew speaks of "making disciples" in the imperative form. In the Greek text closest to the original, this is the only verb that appears in this mood. The other three verbs - go, baptize, teach - are participles that accompany the main command "make disciples" and describe the way in which the mission is to be carried out: walking, baptizing, teaching. But the heart of the mission, its goal, is to make disciples of all nations.

II. DEVELOPMENT

Mission is not proselytizing

It sounds like a proselytizing program, but in reality, it is not. To understand Matthew's missionary mandate, it is necessary to place it in the context of his Gospel and what he means by "disciple of Jesus". Pope Benedict XVI, in *Aparecida* (2007), affirmed that the Church does not grow by proselytism, but by attraction. Pope Francis reinforced this by affirming that "the community of Jesus' disciples is born apostolic, missionary, not proselytizing. The Holy Spirit gives it to go forth so that it does not remain closed in on itself, so that it may be an extrovert, a contagious witness of Jesus" (General Audience, 11/02/2023).

In fact, if we cross the text of Mt 28:19-20 with the difficulty of the first community to welcome non-Jews among its members, testified by Luke in the Acts of the Apostles and by Paul in his letters, we realize that this missionary sending cannot be interpreted from the perspective of conquest, but from the perspective of openness and welcome of all people of all races, cultures and ethnicities in the Christian community: no one can be excluded.

Matthew seeks to encourage his community to come out of complacency, not to be afraid of others, not to close in on themselves and not to be prejudiced against diversity. The disciples were not prepared for this task: for them, the messianic promises were reserved only for the people of Israel (Acts 1:6). Little by little, following the Spirit who opened the way, their minds and hearts had to learn that the Kingdom of God announced by Jesus was destined for all peoples and that the call to be his disciples was addressed to all men.

It all begins with the encounter with Jesus. What does it consist in “being a disciple” of Jesus? To answer this question, it is necessary to go back to the Gospel, especially from the baptismal catechesis of the Discourse on the Mount (Mt 5-7), where the proposal of Jesus and its importance for all humanity is precisely described. Everything begins with the encounter with Jesus who speaks to our heart (Dap 154), who “gives us a new horizon for life and, therefore, a decisive orientation” (Dap 243). This was the dynamic that we find already in the story of the first disciples (cf. Jn 1:35-49). This encounter is concretely realized through a person, a friend, a catechist, a missionary, through a living Christian community that prays, celebrates, witnesses, evangelizes (Dap 256), through contact with the poor, the afflicted, the sick, the marginalized (Dap 257), meditating on Sacred Scripture, participating in the liturgy, approaching the sacraments, and in a thousand other ways that the Spirit provides us, captivating us to pay attention, to stop our gaze, to enchant us with something profound and thrilling that can transform our lives.

Following Jesus is a process and is carried out in mission.

It happened to the first disciples on the Sea of Galilee: they were fishermen casting their nets into the sea. Jesus passed by and said, “Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men”. Immediately they left their nets, their boat, and their father, and followed him (Mt 4:19-22).

The account continues: “Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in the synagogues, proclaiming the Good News of the kingdom and curing all the sicknesses and diseases of the people” (Mt 4:23) and the disciples followed him. There was no seminary, no

novitiate, no house of formation. The mission of Jesus is the very school of discipleship. That is why we speak of missionary disciples, because the followers of Jesus learn by “going on mission”, accompanying and collaborating with Jesus in his mission of announcing the Kingdom of God.

Jesus proposes the project of a new man to the group that follows him on the road. For the evangelist Luke, too, this historical journey of Jesus from Galilee to Jerusalem becomes an ideal way, the “way of the disciples” who faithfully follow their Master. The group of disciples will continue this journey from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth (cf. Acts 1:8).

The mission is presented first of all as a concrete path of apprenticeship “to assume the lifestyle of Jesus, his motivations, to direct his destiny and to take up his mission to make all things new” (Dap 131). In the Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, Pope Francis affirms: “The Church’s intimacy with Jesus is an itinerant intimacy, and communion essentially takes the form of missionary communion” (EG 23).

Learning to be free and poor

Sometimes, however, the encounter with Jesus does not produce much. This is what happened to the rich young man (Mk 10:17-22). It was an intense, profound encounter, where Jesus looked at the young man with love (Mk 10:21) and entrusted him with a mission: “Go, sell all that you have, give to the poor, and then come and follow me. Note well: the “go” precedes the “come”, the following comes after the mission. Our young man, however, went away sad, because he had many possessions that bound him and prevented him from being free and available. He closed in on himself and did not open

THEOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK 5

MISSIONARY DISCIPLES: INITIATED AND SENT



himself to the risk of following Jesus. For this to happen, the first requirement is to learn to become poor: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Mt 5:3), says the first beatitude. Blessed is the one who voluntarily makes himself poor in order to enrich others, we could say in other words. It is this basic poverty that makes the disciple available for the Kingdom with full confidence and courage. The disciple is, therefore, a person who is free, faithful, and generous in his service to the community and to those in need. Jesus does not condemn riches per se: he condemns the rich who accumulate wealth only for themselves (Mt 19:24; 6:19), just as he condemns the idolatry of money (Mt 6:24). Now, if you have, you have to share, you have to offer a service, you have to give your life and your goods.

In this sense, becoming poor is the first requirement for following Jesus, who "became poor from being rich" (2 Cor 8:9). This is the fundamental step of Christian initiation that concerns the deepest secret of life and the most refined meaning of the word "mission," as described in the Aparecida Document:

Life is enhanced by giving it and weakened in isolation and comfort. In fact, those who enjoy life most are those who leave the security of the shore and become passionate in the mission of communicating life to others. The Gospel helps us to discover that an unhealthy care for one's own life undermines the human and Christian quality of that same life. We live much better when we have the inner freedom to give everything: "Whoever cherishes his earthly life will lose it" (Jn 12:25). Here we discover another profound

law of reality: that life is attained and matures as it is given to give life to others. This is what mission is all about (DAP 360).

This purpose applies not only to individuals. It also applies to communities and also to the Church as an institution. The Second Vatican Council declared that "the Church, moved by the Holy Spirit, must follow the same way as Christ: the way of poverty, obedience, service and self-immolation unto death" (AG 5).

Assuming the cross

The poverty of which the Gospel speaks to us has a sense of interior and exterior self-denial. It means becoming effectively poor, committing oneself to a sober and austere life, sharing the life of the most needy (GE 70), touching with one's hand the human misery, the suffering flesh of others (EG 270), learning to look at reality from the inside out, from the point of view of the victims and the crucified of history, struggling for a better world for all. To live intensely the daily life of simple people: "In the light of the Gospel we recognize their immense dignity and their sacred value in the eyes of Christ, poor like them and excluded among them" (DAP 398).

But there is also an interior poverty that must be learned and that manifests itself in tenderness and meekness: "Blessed are the meek, for they shall possess the earth" (Mt 5:4). Where pride and vanity reign, where everyone believes he has the right to elevate himself above others, where there is hatred and arrogance everywhere, Jesus proposes to his disciples to adopt another style (GE 71): to strip themselves of their ego, their pride, and make room for humility, which does not mean renouncing indignation,

courage and prophecy, but always nurturing a positive attitude of welcome, dialogue and understanding. The meek, says the Gospel, will see God's promises fulfilled and "will possess the earth". And this is what we try to live as disciples of Jesus, and we invite others to do the same.

The Scriptures make no apology for the poor and poverty. They resolutely condemn every situation of need, injustice, and oppression. Jesus does not teach to endure evil, but to fight to overcome it. To overcome evil, it is necessary to face it and not to run away from it. The world ignores suffering, escapes from painful situations, hides, covers up, dissimulates. However, the cross can never be absent! (GE 75). "Blessed are the afflicted, for they shall be comforted," says the third beatitude. Those who sympathize with the distress of others, those who "weep with those who weep" (Rom 12:15), those who touch the wounds of their brothers and sisters, those who "allow themselves to be pierced by affliction and weep in their hearts, can reach the depths of life and be truly happy" (GE 76).

Facing persecution

In this way, Jesus forms his disciples to participate in the divine life, to participate in God's mission. The Beatitudes continue to proclaim happy those who hunger and thirst for justice, the merciful, the pure in heart - for it is from the heart that our right intentions come -, those who promote peace and, finally, those who are persecuted for the sake of justice.

There is no following of Jesus without persecution. The Lord instructed his disciples a lot about the inevitable persecutions that awaited them (Mt 10:17-24): because the Good News to the poor, which announces

the release of prisoners, the recovery of sight for the blind, the liberation of the oppressed and a year of grace from the Lord (Lk 4:18), was bad news for the rich and powerful. Do not expect that the one who proclaimed, "the mighty have been removed from their thrones and the lowly have been lifted up" (Lk 1:52), that anyone could rejoice over it. On the contrary, those in power will do everything possible to repress this voice and this action that fights for the construction of a more just and united society. No one renounces their privileges. Therefore, persecution will always accompany the mission of Jesus and his disciples. They also become a criterion of discernment for the journey: if we are only receiving applause, something is wrong in the evangelizing action; if we are not bothering people, it means that we are probably leveling the Gospel down, adapting it to the tastes of the world. Acclamations, praises, and compliments are always a temptation on the disciplic journey!

Jesus invites us never to give up prophecy, the search for justice and hope for the poor, because "if there is no hope for the poor, there will be no hope for anyone" (PG 67; DAp 395). The Gospel, the message of Jesus, continually calls every society, every history, and every culture to a conversion from within (EN 19), while always seeking a positive, open, and non-condemnatory dialogue.

Called to shine

"You are the light of the world and the salt of the earth" (Mt 5:13-14), Jesus tells his disciples. In reality, the true Light is He, we are only called to reflect that Light, to remember that the Church can never shine with its own light. When the Church pretends to shine with her own light, she becomes worldly, loses her reference, and becomes self-referential. In fact, the

THEOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK 5

MISSIONARY DISCIPLES: INITIATED AND SENT



Dogmatic Constitution on the Church of the Second Vatican Council begins exactly this way: “Christ being the light of the nations...” (LG 1).

Be that as it may, the disciples of Jesus are called to shine, “so that the people, seeing your good works, may glorify the Father who is in heaven” (Mt 5:16). This radiance comes from conduct: discipleship is nothing more than a proposal of life from one who does not say “Lord, Lord!”, but from one who practices the will of the Father (Mt 7:21). The disciple of Jesus is fundamentally a practitioner of the Word. It is in this Word that Christian initiation seeks to forge a particular identity on the basis of “a gradual apprenticeship in the knowledge, love and following of Christ” (DAP 291). Therefore, “it is necessary to open the heart to make the Word food that, entering through the mind, touches the heart, nourishes the spirit, transforms life and is the criterion for community experience and missionary action” (General Guidelines for the Evangelizing Action of the Church in Brazil 2019-2023, n. 148).

For the disciple to truly shine with the light of Christ, he must respond to himself:

“If and how we allow ourselves to be challenged by the Gospel; if it is really the vade-mecum for daily life and for the choices we are called to make. It is not enough to read it; it is not enough to meditate on it. Jesus asks us to put it into practice, to live his words” (FRANCISCO, To Consecrated Persons. On the occasion of the Year of Consecrated Life, 2014, n. 2).

“When the Word of God enters into the lives of people, processes of

personal, community and pastoral conversion begin, leading them to be courageous witnesses who proclaim what the Lord has accomplished in their lives (cf. Mk 5:19). Just as it is proper that the encounter with the living Jesus Christ becomes a call to mission, the transformed life becomes a message” (NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF BISHOPS OF BRAZIL, Disciples and Servants of the Word of God in the Mission of the Church, 2012, n. 60).

Five steps

This learning progresses through five steps up the mountain of the Beatitudes, producing a cadence by the refrain: “they have heard that it was said to the forefathers ... but I say to you”:

1. “The disciples are called to live a radical **fraternity** towards all men, inasmuch as we are all sons and daughters of the same Father, intimately and consanguineously brothers and sisters of the same family. This is the worldview according to the Gospel.
2. “You shall not commit adultery,” but neither shall you look at the other with a look of harassment (Mt 5:27-32; 6:22-23): to develop a **capacity for human relationships** that guarantees the most absolute respect for the other, in the mastery of one’s own impulses, in responsibility for fidelity and in zeal for the dignity of others.
3. “You shall not perjure yourself...”: do not swear anything (Mt 5:33-37). Commit yourself to tell only the **truth** and nothing else, with open, honest, and sincere communication, without dissimulation or intrigue, in order to build relationships of trust, because if there is a need to

“swear”, this indicates that there is distrust.

4. “An eye for an eye...”: do not respond to evil in any way (Mt 5:38-42). The disciple is called to move from relationships of reciprocity (“an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth”) to relationships of **gratuitousness** that are non-violent, non-retaliatory, non-interested. This is one of the most characteristic requirements of missionary discipleship.
5. “You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy”: but I say to you: “love your enemies” (Mt 5:43-48). Living **universality** in love without hatred, without prejudice and without limits leads the disciple to be like the Father: “For if you love only those who love you.... What do you do that is extraordinary? Be perfect, therefore, as your Father in heaven is perfect” (Mt 5:46-48).

Sent to make disciples of the nations

With this last step, we stand on the summit of the mountain of Galilee, from where the Risen Lord sends his disciples out to meet all peoples (Mt 28:16). The living out of these five fundamental precepts - fraternity, humanity, truth, gratuitousness, universality - configures the disciple of Jesus, as well as projecting the path of the fullness of life for all peoples: the command to “make disciples of all nations” is, in fact, an invitation to each person to undertake together with the Church the ascent to the mount of the Beatitudes.

It is a path in the Spirit that models, elevates and opens relationships based on mercy, tenderness and forgiveness; it is an asceticism that makes life profoundly and fully human, the essence of the Kingdom of God; it is also a threshold where the salvation or condemnation of the world is at

stake, the fullness or failure of the existence of individuals and societies (Mt 25:31-46).

“Jesus Christ is the fullness who raises the human condition to the divine condition for his glory” (DAP 355), and he also “wants all to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth” (1 Tim 2:4).

III. CONCLUSION

Exiting was never easy

This is the life project for which Jesus' disciples were sent into the world. However, it took them a while to understand and to get out of their comfort zone. As we have said, missionary discipleship is a learning process. For the first community it was no different: their journey from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth was hesitant, dramatic and, at the same time, fascinating. They had to learn to face many challenges because they were not prepared for this task.

In the first place, they had not yet understood the proposal of Jesus when the Lord, in one of his appearances after the Passover, spoke to them about the Kingdom of God for forty days (Acts 1:3). On that occasion, they asked him: “Is it now the time when you will restore the kingdom of Israel” (Acts 1:6). In his understanding, the objective of the mission was the political restoration of the Kingdom of Israel, a people reconstituted and renewed in its entirety, where there was no place for non-Jews. The book of the Acts of the Apostles shows how they had to abandon this perspective when the Spirit pushed them out of Jerusalem towards the Samaritans, the God-fearers, and finally the pagans.

In the house of Cornelius, a pious and fearful pagan Roman centurion who was graced by a vision of the Angel of the Lord (Acts 10:2-3), Peter finally had to admit that “God is

no respecter of persons" (Acts 10:34). But the greatest surprise was when the Spirit suddenly descended on the host and his whole family, leaving the Jews accompanying Peter astonished, because the pagans were as deserving of God's grace as the Jews: "Can we deny the water of baptism to these people who have received the Holy Spirit, just as we have received the Holy Spirit" (Acts 10:47).

Change of mentality

This is the moment of the great turning point: to understand that the "others"-the poor considered "sinners," the Samaritans considered "impure," the God-fearing considered "handicapped," the pagans considered "idolaters"-could also be contemplated in God's promises to his people, without converting to Judaism. To us today, this seems natural enough. But for the Jews of the first century - and the apostles were all observant Jews - this implied a radical change of mentality, which consisted in renouncing the most sacred dimensions of their own tradition.

A mission to the nations was not undertaken by Jesus in his ministry before his passion. He gave no indication as to how to carry out this mission *ad gentes*. Certainly, however, he formed his disciples in a missionary consciousness based on the proclamation of the Kingdom of God and compassion for all the poor (Lk 4:26; 6:20), sinners (Jn 8:11), the sick (Mt 11:5), prostitutes (Lk 7:37), the excluded (Mk 1:41), enemies (Mt 5:44), pagans (Mt 8:10; 15:21-28). However, the apostolic community's hesitation in addressing the nations betrayed the fact that it was not sufficiently prepared for this task.

Mission as the action of the Spirit

The evangelist Luke attributes this missionary development to the action of

the Spirit. It was the Spirit who literally pushed the community outward: it was not a spontaneous initiative, nor was it born of a plan of expansion or proselytism, but arose from an attitude of listening, docility and perception of the irruption of God in the midst of others, which generated openness, recognition and acceptance on the part of Jesus' disciples.

The Church is born here as something different from any Jewish movement of the time. The Church is born historically as something new and original when it welcomes others and carries out and assumes the mission of announcing the Gospel outside its socio-cultural environment. Indeed, after some disciples proclaimed the Gospel not only to the Jews but also to the Greeks, "the hand of the Lord was with them, so that a great number believed and turned to the Lord" (Acts 11:20-21). From this boldness, an intercultural community was formed in Antioch between Jews and Greeks. It was there that the disciples received for the first time the name "Christians" (Acts 11:26).

The Gospel of Matthew was written after all these events had taken place. Its purpose was to invite a community that was still resisting the action of the Spirit to open up and go out on mission to all nations: for this is the characteristic mark of the Church, intercultural, open to all, excluding no one.

CARD 5: MISSIONARY DISCIPLES: INITIATES AND ENVOYS

I. GUIDING ELEMENTS OF CAM6

- **Biblical text:** Jesus said to his disciples: "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth". Acts 1:8
- **Theme:** Evangelizers with Spirit to the ends of the earth
- **Motto:** America, with the power of the Spirit, witnesses to Christ
- **Objective:** To promote the Church's mission ad gentes with new ardor, walking together in listening to the Spirit, in order to be witnesses of faith in Jesus Christ in the reality of our peoples to the ends of the earth.
- **Hymn:** Witnesses of the Living Christ
Let's sing the chorus together...
Look how they love each other! Look how they walk!
America, with the power of the Spirit.
America, witnesses of the Living Christ.

II. OBJECTIVE FOR THIS FIRST WORKING MEETING

Specific Objective: To rediscover the call of each baptized person to a personal encounter with Jesus, to be a disciple, challenged, initiated, and sent by Jesus to be a witness of the Good News in his or her specific context.

III. PRAYER FOR THE SIXTH AMERICAN MISSIONARY CONGRESS

We unite ourselves to the prayer that Pope Francis gave us for this Sixth American Missionary Congress highlighting what it implies for us in this meeting. In the highlighted fragments we can have a brief moment of silence to deepen the prayer. During or after the prayer, you can share some resonance that has touched your heart.

O merciful Father,
that you revealed in your Son the "Good News",
announced in these lands of America
by so many missionaries, with words and
deeds;

**HELP US TO REDISCOVER OUR
VOCATION AS BAPTIZED PEOPLE
TO GIVE A NEW IMPETUS TO OUR
MISSIONARY ACTION**

proclaiming, like them, the joy of the
Gospel.

Oh my,
that you pour out your Holy Spirit to renew
the face of the earth,
hurt by injustice and suffering;
give us strength to walk as God's people,
in synodality and mutual listening,
towards the next American Missionary
Congress,
witnessing together the love that conquers
the world.

O God and our Father,
that you chose Mary as a model of
evangelization to **OFFER CHRIST TO ALL
MANKIND;**
imitating his example of dedication, let us
and sustained by her maternal and
provident care,
let us always be your missionary disciples
to the ends of the earth.
Amen.

IV. ILLUMINATING TEXT

It happened to the first disciples on the Sea of Galilee: they were fishermen casting their nets into the sea. Jesus passed by and said, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men. Immediately they left their nets, their boat, and their father, and followed him (Mt 4:19-22).

Initiated and Sent: Beatitudes (Mt 5:1-16)

Mt 28:19-20 - Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded them.

V. BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE THEOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

At the basis of every call, of every vocation, there is a first stage that we cannot do without: the personal encounter with God in the Person of Jesus. It is precisely from this encounter that a process of knowledge, formation and call to follow a specific mission in the life of each baptized person is unleashed.

To be a disciple of Jesus is not only to say: "Yes, here I am", it is to enter into a process of personal and community accompaniment that will lead us to an inner change, a conversion and to live in a determined way the beatitudes, freedom and the acceptance of the cross. A process that will not be free of persecution. There is no following of Jesus without persecution. The Lord instructed his disciples a lot about the inevitable persecutions that awaited them (Mt 10, 17-24). He knew that the option for the little ones, the poor and oppressed, would not be well received by the rich, the great and powerful.

The encounter with Jesus

What does it consist in "being a disciple" of Jesus? To answer this question, it is necessary to go back to the Gospel, especially from the baptismal catechesis of the Discourse on the Mount (Mt 5-7), where Jesus' proposal and its importance for all humanity is precisely described.

Everything begins with the encounter with Jesus who speaks to our heart (Dap 154), who "gives us a new horizon for life and thus a decisive orientation" (Dap 243). This was the dynamic that we find already in the story of the first disciples (cf. Jn 1:35-49). This encounter is realized concretely through a person, a friend, a catechist, a missionary, through a living Christian community that prays, celebrates, witnesses, evangelizes (Dap 256), through contact with the poor, the afflicted, the sick, the marginalized (Dap 257), meditating on Sacred Scripture, participating in the liturgy, approaching the sacraments, and in a thousand other ways that the Spirit provides us, captivating us to pay attention. We are invited to stop our gaze, to be enchanted by something profound and moving that can transform our lives.

Following Jesus is a process and is carried out in mission.

It happened to the first disciples on the Sea of Galilee: they were fishermen casting their

WORKSHEET 5

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nets into the sea. Jesus passed by and said, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men". And immediately they left their nets, their boat, and their father, and followed him (Mt 4:19-22). The story continues: "Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in the synagogues, proclaiming the Good News of the kingdom and curing all the sicknesses and diseases of the people" (Mt 4:23) and the disciples followed him. There is no seminary, no novitiate, no house of formation. The mission of Jesus is the very school of discipleship. That is why we speak of missionary disciples, because the followers of Jesus learn by "going on mission", accompanying and collaborating with Jesus in his mission of announcing the Kingdom of God.

Learning to be free and poor

Sometimes, however, the encounter with Jesus does not produce much. This is what happened to the rich young man (Mk 10:17-22). It was an intense, profound encounter, where Jesus looked at the young man with love (Mk 10:21) and entrusted him with a mission: "Go, sell all that you have, give to the poor, and then come and follow me. Note well: the "go" precedes the "come", the following comes after the mission.

Our young man, however, went away sad, because he had many possessions that bound him and prevented him from being free and available. He withdrew into himself and did not open himself to the risk of following Jesus. For this to happen, the first requirement is to learn to become poor: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Mt 5:3), says the first beatitude. Blessed is the one who voluntarily makes himself poor in order to enrich others, we could say in other words. It is this basic poverty that makes the disciple available for the Kingdom with full confidence and courage. The disciple is, therefore, a person who is free, faithful, and generous in his service to the community and to those in need. Jesus does not condemn riches per se: he condemns the rich who accumulate wealth



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only for themselves (Mt 19:24; 6:19), just as he condemns the idolatry of money (Mt 6:24). Now, if you have, you have to share, you have to offer a service, you have to give your life and your goods.

VI. QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. What does it mean for me to let myself be found and initiated by Jesus to live his mission?

2. In light of the Gospel and our personal and community experience, how do we form new disciples?

3. What is Pope Francis specifically inviting us to do when he speaks of a Church "going out" and of "peripheries"?

VIII. MARIAN PRAYER

The Visitation of Mary to her cousin St. Elizabeth (2nd Joyful Mystery)

Mary, feeling challenged by God, allows herself to be totally transformed by the work of the Spirit and assumes her vocation as Mother of the Savior. With joy, although with sacrifice and difficulty, she went out to meet the other, she went out to meet her cousin Elizabeth, thus becoming the first missionary who not only carried the Son of God in her womb, but also went out to meet the other.

Psalm from Mary's yes

Mary, Mother of Yes,
I admire your example.

I admire you because you risked your life;
admires me because you didn't look after your interests
but to those of the rest of the world;
admire me and give me an example of dedication to God.


I would like, Mother, to follow your example,
and surrender to God's will like you.

I would like, Mother, to follow in your footsteps,
and through them bring me closer to your Son.

I would like, Mother, to have your generosity and devotion
to never say "no" to God.

I would like, Mother, to have your love
to be ever faithful to your Son.

Mother of yes,
ask your Son for me, to give me your courage.
Pray to your Son for me, that He may grant me
a heart in love with him.
Ask your Son for me, so that He may give me
the grace necessary to give myself and never fail him.



TOPIC 6
FROM
AMERICA TO
THE WORLD
AND FROM
THE WORLD
TO AMERICA



TOPIC 6

FROM AMERICA TO THE WORLD AND FROM THE WORLD TO AMERICA

I. INTRODUCTION

In this theme we wish to propose some contents that allow us to deepen our understanding of the **universal dimension of the missionary Church in terms of cooperation.**

In this experience of CAM6, we wish to **promote the Church's mission ad gentes with new ardor, walking together as we listen to the Spirit, to be witnesses of faith in Jesus Christ in the reality of our peoples to the ends of the earth.**

Mission corresponds to the Church's deepest identity, inasmuch as she is called to participate in the divine life of a God who is mission. In fact, God is like this: he goes out of himself, his love is not contained, his love overflows, he goes out to meet everyone so that everyone can live life to the full. The Church cooperates with God's mission: "In every form of evangelization the primacy always belongs to God, who willed to call us to collaborate with him and to impel us with the power of his Spirit" (EG 12).

II. DEVELOPMENT

To the ends of the earth

From this call, how do these words from the Acts of the Apostles resonate in us today: "You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8)? The contemporary globalized world seems to have erased all borders by interconnecting us through markets, communications, and technologies: where are the ends of the earth in today's world? Let us take up again some aspects addressed in the theme "Evangelizers with a spirit to the ends of the earth".

The peripheries

Pope Francis points us to a clue when he speaks to us of the "existential peripheries": the places of struggle for life, exclusion, marginalization, precariousness, transgression, informality, violence, like Galilee where Jesus lived, and where today live the victims and survivors of "a social and economic system that is unjust at its root" (EG 59).

Mission, yesterday as today, needs to situate itself prophetically in these contexts. To speak of mission is to speak also, and essentially, of territories, of contexts, of places on the margins of a system, where the Church experiences a fundamental shift in its perception of the world and an evangelical commitment to a project of a global world that is more just and in solidarity.

Borders

Beyond the peripheries are the borders. Borders are no longer margins, but boundaries

between one territory and another, thresholds between two identities, two peoples, two cultures. Although we live in a world without borders, for the poor these borders represent insurmountable barriers. Borders are real and cruel for millions of migrants and refugees, but they are also symbolic and imaginary for millions of other excluded people: (in)visible fences are erected to separate social classes, ideological segments, interest groups, cultures, races, genders, generations and all kinds of fragmentation and difference.

But it is also true that these vertical fences, once torn down, can become bridges: borders thus become a place of communication and reciprocity, a passage to come and go and build new links and new relationships.

The confines

The confines themselves go beyond the peripheries and borders: they are not within the perimeters, nor on the dividing lines, but beyond the horizons we know. The confines impel us to enter as pilgrims into the homes of others.

For the missionary disciples, “nothing human can seem strange to them” (Dap 380). This impulse impels us to go out of our worlds, not out of a desire for conquest, nor out of an adventurous whim, but out of the simplest spirit of service to life.

The Spirit of Christ gives birth to a “heart without borders, capable of overcoming distances of origin, nationality, color or religion” (FT 3), capable of abandoning “every desire to dominate others” (FT 4) and of dreaming together “as one humanity, as walkers of the same human flesh, as children of this same earth that shelters us all, each one with the richness of his faith or

his convictions, each one with his own voice, but *fratelli tutti*” (FT 8).

The mission today

Our ecclesial tradition offers us very rich elements that help us to face a mission to the ends of the earth in prophetic terms of insertion, proclamation, witness, option for the poor, liberation, inculturation, dialogue, participation and service to the Kingdom of Life. The “how” we go to the ends, to the frontiers, to the peripheries, concerns the evangelical quality of our mission, its coherence in terms of capacities and competencies, and the deepest motivations of our faith.

Ad Gentes: going to the villages

First of all, we must go out and go set out without delay and without hesitation (Mt 4:21-23)! There is no encounter with the poor and with others if there is no approach, if the missionary Church does not take the risk of “fearlessly taking the initiative, of going out to meet them” (EG 24). This “going out to others” (EG 46), this “ad gentes”, “not so much to rich friends and neighbors, but above all to the poor and the sick, to those who are often despised and forgotten” (EG 48), is crucial for the Kingdom to be realized in the transformation of a more human society.

The mission is this: we cannot wait for people to come to us, we have to go out to meet them and announce the Good News where they are. This principle seems almost obvious. However, in practice, the Church has always been tempted to wait for people to come to her, sending her delegates to call these people, without getting involved in an outreach movement and inserting herself in the situations she wanted to evangelize.

THEOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK 6

FROM AMERICA TO THE WORLD AND FROM THE WORLD TO AMERICA



Inter gentes: encounter between peoples
After the approach, the second challenge is to make the encounter happen: this encounter is always a great learning experience. Mission as learning is born of the conviction that the proclamation of the Gospel takes place in reciprocity with our interlocutors, because the grace of God is also at work in them. We do not know everything about the mystery of God, and the message of Jesus is always something below our understanding. The role of each interlocutor in the context of missionary dialogue implies the circularity of communication, welcome, discernment, witness, praise, where all the subjects involved learn and are evangelized from the life experiences of each one.

Our churches need to go to the frontiers of their knowledge, their understanding, their certainties, their way of being, and seek new ways of evangelizing themselves and others: "Every time we encounter a human being in love, we are enabled to discover something new about God" (EG 272).

The Document "Dialogue and Proclamation" of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue and the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples (1991) states the following:

"The fullness of the truth received in Jesus Christ does not give individual Christians the assurance that they have fully assimilated that truth. Ultimately, truth is not something we possess, but a person by whom we must allow ourselves to be possessed. It is, therefore, a never-ending process. Keeping their identity intact, Christians must be willing to learn and receive from and through others the positive values

of their traditions" (DA 49).

Cum gentibus: living with the people
After the approach and the encounter, the mission calls us to inhabit the confines. To inhabit means more than to stay: it means to weave bonds of belonging, to think from the ground of the other, to heart the reality of the other, to live intensely the daily life of the other, to render some kind of service to the other. In other words, to let the confines dwell in us.

To inhabit also means to immerse ourselves, to touch with our hands the disenchantment, the divisions, the conflicts and the lacerations produced by the border diaspora, rooted in the history, in the body and in the daily life of abused women, of dispossessed migrants, of exploited workers, of neglected elderly, of hopeless young people, of homeless families, of millions of people aggrieved for reasons of gender, race, ethnicity, social class who live in the flesh the colonial violence.

For this reason, the confines, as well as the frontiers and the peripheries, are not an easy place to live, because in these extremes those sent by Jesus are penitentially called to take off their shoes and disappear, living and learning to approach conditions of oblivion, injustice, and inhumanity.

Omnes gentes et omnes creaturae: all peoples and all creatures.

A mission to the ends of the earth cannot be adequately promoted without a connection to a universal mysticism, which arouses compassion for humanity as a whole, for all peoples and all living beings:

"The world, created according to the divine model, is a web of relationships (...) This not only invites us to admire

the multiple connections that exist between creatures, but also leads us to discover a key to our own fulfillment. For the human person grows, matures, and becomes more mature and sanctified to the extent that he enters into relationship, when he goes out of himself to live in communion with God, with others and with all creatures. Thus, she assumes in her own existence that Trinitarian dynamism that God has imprinted in her since her creation. Everything is connected, and this invites us to mature a spirituality of global solidarity that springs from the mystery of the Trinity" (LS 240).

It is not a question of promoting a false abstract universalism, as an alleged pretext for homogenizing, leveling, and dominating (cf. FT 100). The foundation of this universal mysticism is simply the human and the cosmic: "to realize how much a human being is worth, how much a person is worth, always and in every circumstance" (FT 106), and to nourish "the awareness that every creature reflects something of God and has a message to transmit to us" (LS 221).

Every mission incarnated in a reality must be connected pluriversally with the greater causes: care for Mother Earth, solidarity with other peoples and integration with the most diverse dimensions of life. In this sense, mission always seeks an insertion in the local in communion with the global (cf. FT 142), and an interconnection between the dimensions: personal, relational, social, and cosmic (cf. LS 91, 117, 138, 240).

Missionary Cooperation

Mission is an eminently ecclesial identity and action, never individual or voluntary.

It is always a communitarian sending and a participation-communion-articulation among diverse persons, entities, and organizations.

Today, the mission to all peoples is basically presented as "missionary cooperation": a pluriversal, synodal and inter-ecclesial outgoing mission.

Cooperation with God's mission

God is the first missionary: whoever is reborn in him becomes a missionary. Every baptized person, therefore, is called to enter into this "stream of supernatural activity" (CM 2): mission inserts our whole being in the divine mystery and the divine mystery, deeply lived, makes us truly missionary.

This means that the concept of "missio Dei" wants to reveal a Trinitarian God who is really active and effectively present in the history of humanity. The Church does not continue the mission of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit: the Church cooperates with the mission of God (cf. EG 12).

St. Paul affirms that "we are God's co-workers" (1 Cor. 3:9), while the last verse of Mark's Gospel says: "They went out and preached everywhere, and the Lord cooperated by confirming the word with the signs that accompanied it" (Mk. 16:20). There is a reciprocal cooperation between God and us because God too - Paul VI said - needs missionaries, since evangelizing is essentially human contact (cf. General Audience, August 6, 1969).

Cooperation between local churches

The greatest novelty of Vatican II was the recovery of the local Church in its fundamental essence and apostolic protagonism. In it is "the whole Church",

THEOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK 6

FROM AMERICA TO THE WORLD AND FROM THE WORLD TO AMERICA



even if it is not the whole Church. The Church exists concretely only from the local Churches (LG 23).

The so-called universal Church is not a Church above the others, nor a sum of local Churches, and even less the totality of the Church, but a communion of Churches, united by the spirit of catholicity and, therefore, of cooperation among them.

The Council also places the local Churches as protagonists of the mission, because in fact the mission ad gentes, although defined in its characteristic activity of first proclamation, is always the primary task of every Church, both in its socio-cultural context (AG 20a) and outside it, cooperating with other Churches (cf. AG 20h; LG 23). This defines a Church in a permanent state of mission within and outside its territory.

Cooperation between partners

In the past, “foreign missions” were actions planned by the universal Church from abroad. They consisted of sending “professional” missionaries from Europe to pagan lands, with the task of founding churches with a European face and culture.

In this sense, mission ad gentes was in fact the spiritual arm of colonialism. Pope Francis often insists on overcoming colonial missionary practice. Mission must not become an accomplice in the theft of peoples’ souls (cf. FT 14). Moreover, mission must establish a dialogue with the “interlocutors” and not with the “addressees” of the Gospel.

The guidelines for an authentic Christian mission are the following: to be pilgrim guests in the homes of others, to learn from our interlocutors, to listen, to ask permission, to recognize them as protagonists of their faith journey.

Synodal cooperation

The theme of synodality - walking together - is intimately linked to that of the missionary spirit. It is crucial to understand mission as the basis of the Christian proposal, where the essential is not a life shared among us, but a mission assumed in common.

“Walking together” is important because the contemporary world demands from us a witness of communion, fraternity, and dialogue, and we also need to ensure greater effectiveness in our actions with greater coordination and synergy.

But it is not only for this reason: the mission is called in the present times, not so much to place itself in the sphere of activity and great works, but above all in the sphere of relationships, because the fundamental task that we have to fulfill is to open new ways of listening and closeness, weaving bonds of trust and friendship, in alliance with the diverse life projects of the peoples, so that all may have life, and life in abundance.

Missionary synodality is an invitation to walk together with all peoples.

Universal cooperation

“The world expects from our Latin American and Caribbean Church a more significant commitment to the universal mission in all the continents. In order not to fall into the trap of closing in on ourselves, we must form ourselves as missionary disciples without borders” (DAP 376).

Each American church must find its own way without worrying too much about comparing itself with other churches that are more structured and have more resources. However, we need to find these paths, we need to work hard so that our communities deeply cultivate that Catholic spirit that is convinced that: “the grace of renewal cannot grow in communities if each one does not expand the field of its charity to the ends of the earth and care as much for those who come from afar as for those who are its own members” (AG 37).

Institutional cooperation

Certainly, to think of inter-ecclesial cooperation at the world level, looking at the needs of the Churches spread over the five continents, is to think of the need for coordinating and articulating organisms such as the Pontifical Mission Societies. These ecclesial organisms in charge of “directing and coordinating everywhere the initiatives and activities of missionary cooperation” (CM 3), inserted in the People of God, are called to encourage the ecclesial communities towards a co-responsibility with the universal mission of the Church through prayer, the communion of goods and the sending of missionaries.

The mission in its most challenging frontiers, where the local community is exposed to many difficulties, where it needs to help in countless situations, where it has minimal resources for its own subsistence, is always a burden to be assumed with the wider community. The Church, therefore, which chooses to be close to the poor and the excluded in the peripheries and in global existences, needs to have the minimum conditions necessary to make its presence and services viable, guaranteed by institutional missionary cooperation.

Cooperation as a life project

However, the most significant contribution to this ecclesial dynamic is the sending and commitment of missionaries from one Church to another. There is nothing more expressive than the witness of the gift of life.

In the Catholic tradition, consecrated religious life has always shone in history for its missionary dedication in the most difficult situations, which demanded a high degree of insertion and inculturation.

Today, it is not excluded for all people and all states of life to participate in the mission ad gentes and beyond borders, even for short periods, and thus have the opportunity to share the faith and love of God with other people of other peoples, participating in the journey of other Churches.

“Each of the baptized, whatever his function in the Church and the degree of enlightenment of his faith, is an evangelizing agent, and it would be inadequate to think of a scheme of

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evangelization carried out by qualified actors where the rest of the faithful people are only receptive to their actions” (EG 120).

III. CONCLUSION

From America to the world and from the world to America

The Encyclical *Redemptoris missio* of John Paul II insists on missionary cooperation as an inter-ecclesial participation of the whole People of God in the universal mission of the Church, a right and duty of all the baptized, promoting also a circular dynamic of reciprocity, so that the mission is not a one-way street between a benefactor and a beneficiary:

“Cooperating in mission means not only giving, but also knowing how to receive. All the particular Churches, young and old, are called to give and receive from the universal mission, and none should be closed in on itself” (RMi 85).

This reciprocity and exchange are typical elements of mission understood as cooperation. But this means much more: mission is realized only in a joint, eminently ecclesial and synodal work.

Our America needs missionaries from other continents, not only because the mission *ad gentes* and the ends of the earth are in our midst, but also because the presence of others enriches us greatly.

Our America also needs to send its missionaries to other continents, because there are Churches much more in need than ours and peoples who deserve all our attention, our affection, and our collaboration.

This circularity allows each local church not to close in on itself, but to collaborate in the realization of an effective universal communion and synodality, learning to work together, giving to itself, and receiving from others:

*“Faced with the temptation of communities to close in on themselves - it is a very frequent temptation, too frequent to close in on themselves -, preoccupied with their own problems, the task of missionary organizations is to exhort to the mission *ad gentes*, to witness prophetically that the life of the Church and of the Churches is mission, and it is universal mission” (Francis, Address of the Holy Father to the participants in the General Assembly of the Pontifical Mission Societies. Rome, May 17, 2013).*

WORKSHEET 6: FROM AMERICA TO THE WORLD AND FROM THE WORLD TO AMERICA

I. GUIDING ELEMENTS OF CAM6

- **Biblical text:** Jesus said to his disciples: "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8). (Acts 1:8).
- **Theme:** Evangelizers with Spirit to the ends of the earth
- **Motto:** America, with the power of the Spirit, witnesses to Christ
- **Objective:** To promote the Church's mission ad gentes with new ardor, walking together in listening to the Spirit, in order to be witnesses of faith in Jesus Christ in the reality of our peoples to the ends of the earth.
- **Hymn:** Witnesses of the Living Christ
Let's sing the chorus together...
Look how they love each other! Look how they walk!
America, with the power of the Spirit.
America, witnesses of the Living Christ.

II. OBJECTIVE FOR THIS SIXTH WORKING MEETING

Specific Objective: To deepen the new paradigms of mission: ad gentes, inter gentes, cum gentibus, omnes gentes et omnes creature, while recognizing that mission is a circular dynamic of reciprocity.

III. PRAYER FOR THE SIXTH AMERICAN MISSIONARY

CONGRESS

We unite ourselves to the prayer that Pope Francis gave us for this Sixth American Missionary Congress highlighting what it implies for us in this meeting. In the highlighted fragments we can have a brief moment of silence to deepen the prayer. During or after the prayer, you can share some resonance that has touched your heart.

O merciful Father,
that you revealed in your Son the "Good News",
announced in these lands of America
by so many missionaries, with words and
deeds;
help us to rediscover our vocation as
baptized people
to give a new impetus to our missionary
action proclaiming, like them, the joy of the
Gospel.

Oh my,
that you pour out your Holy Spirit to renew
the face of the earth,
hurt by injustice and suffering;
give us strength to walk as God's people,
in synodality and mutual listening,
towards the next American Missionary
Congress, witnessing together the love that
conquers the world.

O God and our Father,
that you chose Mary as a model for
evangelization to offer Christ to all
mankind;
imitating his example of dedication, let us
and sustained by her maternal and
provident care,

**LET US ALWAYS BE YOUR MISSIONARY
DISCIPLES TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH.**

Amen.

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IV. ILLUMINATING TEXT

"The Holy Spirit will come upon you and you will receive his power, so that you may be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (1:8).

"Cooperating in mission means not only giving, but also knowing how to receive. All the particular Churches, young and old, are called to give and receive from the universal mission, and none should be closed in on itself" (RM 85).

V. BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE THEOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

"In every form of evangelization, the primacy always belongs to God, who willed to call us to collaborate with him and to impel us by the power of the Spirit" (EG12). Starting from this primacy and from the fact that mission corresponds to the deepest identity of the Church, insofar as she is called to participate in the divine life of a God who is mission, it is important to let the words of the Acts of the Apostles resound: "You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8). In a contemporary globalized world, the borders, frontiers, and peripheries, which still exist for certain marginalized groups, must be reinterpreted. Pope Francis, for example, speaks of "existential peripheries", those places of struggle for life, exclusion, marginalization, precariousness, transgression, informality, violence, like the Galilee where Jesus lived, and where today live the victims and survivors of "a social and economic system that is unjust at its root" (EG 59).

Mission, yesterday as today, needs to place itself prophetically in these contexts, not waiting as perhaps for people to come to us, but going out to meet them. If we search a little in our ecclesial tradition we can find there very rich elements that help us to face this call to go to the ends of the earth in prophetic terms of insertion, proclamation, witness, option for the poor, liberation, inculturation, dialogue, participation and service to the Kingdom of Life.

Let us delve a little deeper into the elements that the mission must consider today in order to respond to the challenges of our world:

Ad gentes: Going to the villages

(Mt 4:21-23) There can be no encounter with the poor and with others if there is no approach, if the missionary Church does not take the risk of "fearlessly taking the initiative and going out to meet them" (EG 24).

Inter gentes: Encounter between peoples

After the approach, the challenge is to make the encounter happen, an encounter is always a great learning experience. Mission as learning is born of the conviction that the proclamation of the Gospel is done in reciprocity with our interlocutors, because the grace of God is at work in them as well. We do not know everything about the mystery of God and the message of Jesus is always something below our comprehension. "Every time we encounter a human being in love, we are enabled to discover something new about God" (EG 272).

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Cum gentibus: Dwelling with the people

After the approach and the encounter, the mission calls us to dwell with the confines. To dwell means more than to stay: to weave bonds of belonging, to think from the ground of the other, to heart the reality of the other, to live intensely the daily life of the other. In short, let the confines dwell in us.

For this reason, the confines, as well as the peripheries and frontiers, are not an easy place to live, because these extremes those sent by Jesus are penitentially called to take off their shoes and disappear, living and learning to approach conditions of oblivion, injustice, and inhumanity.

Omnes gentes et Omnes creaturae: All people and all creatures

Finally, a mission to the ends of the earth cannot be adequately promoted without a connection to a universal mysticism, which arouses compassion for humanity as a whole, for all peoples and all living beings:

“The world, created according to the divine model, is a web of relationships (...) This not only invites us to admire the multiple connections that exist between creatures, but also leads us to discover a key to our own fulfillment. For the human person grows, matures, and becomes more mature and sanctified the more he enters into relationship, when he goes out of himself to live in communion with God, with others and with all creatures... (LS 240).

It is also important to emphasize that mission is an eminently ecclesial identity and action, never individual or voluntary. It is always about a communitarian sending and a participation-communion-articulation among diverse persons, entities, and organizations, that is why it is currently presented as a “missionary cooperation”, cooperation with the mission of God, among the local churches, among the interlocutors, synodal, universal and institutional cooperation. Pope Francis tells us: “Faced with the temptation of communities to close in on themselves, a very frequent temptation, too frequent, to close in on themselves, preoccupied with their own problems, the task of missionary organizations is to exhort to the mission ad gentes, to witness that the life of the Church and of the Churches is mission, and it is universal mission”.



WORKSHEET 6

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VI. QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

Exhorting the disciples to be his witnesses, the Risen Lord announces to them where they are sent: "to Jerusalem, and to all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth," Pope Francis tells us (cf. Acts 1:8).

Ad gentes: Going to the villages

1. Are we aware of the need for mission within and outside our ecclesial communities?

Inter gentes: Encounter between peoples

2. Have we become aware that mission today cannot be seen as a process of "colonialism" but as a mutual richness that invites us to give and at the same time to receive from the other, in a spirit of reciprocity?

Cum gentibus: Living with the people

3. Listening to the current news of wars, immigration, injustice, exploitation, and poverty.

Are we aware of the importance and necessity of announcing the Good News to the people and of being able to "inhabit" those confines and peripheries from a total immersion?

VIII. MARIAN PRAYER

The Birth of Jesus (3.er Joyful Mystery)

The birth of Jesus not only represents a joy for the family of Nazareth, Mary, and Joseph, but is at the same time Good News for an oppressed people, the poor and excluded, which centuries ago had been announced by the prophets.

Prayer to Mary, Queen of Missions

○ Mary, Queen of the Missions,
pray for us and for all the children of the world.
Help us to know and love Jesus,
Help us to follow Him and to always trust in Him.
Help us to be attentive to the needs of our brothers and sisters.

Mary, Queen of the Missions,
we ask that your Son Jesus Christ guide us to be true missionaries,
praying for, sharing with, and learning from our brothers and sisters around the world.
Amen.



MOTTO

***America, whin the power of the Spirit,
witnesses to Christ***

THEME

***Evangelizers with Spirit
to the ends of the earth***

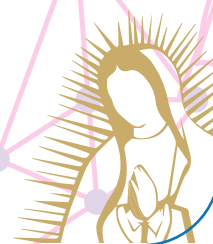
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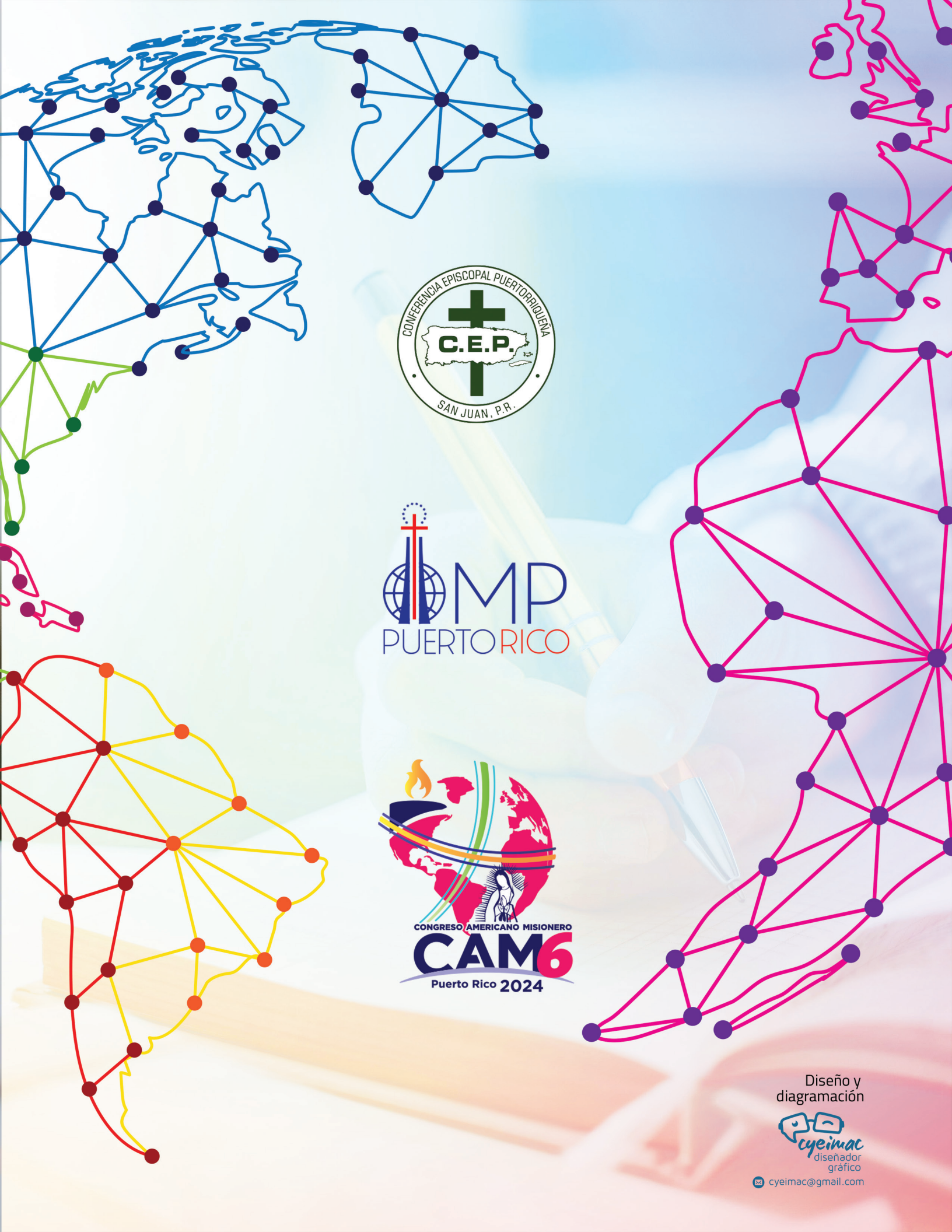
Acts of the Apostles 1:8

***“You will receive power when the Holy Spirit
has come upon you, and you will be my
witnesses...to the ends of the earth.”***

GENERAL OBJECTIVE

**To promote with new ardor the Church’s
mission ad gentes, walking together in
listening to the Spirit, in order to be witnesses
of faith in Jesus Christ in the reality of our
peoples and to the ends of the earth.**





Diseño y diagramación



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