

## Walking together

Feb. 5, 2009 - Conference 2014 - Schoenstatt

Homily: Fr. Alexandre Awi de Melo, Brazil

Mass for Christian Unity - Memorial, St. Agatha, Virgin and Martyr

Readings for the Fourth Week in Ordinary Time (HE 12, 18-19. 21-24; MK 6, 7-13)

1. Schoenstatt's Centennial in 2014 should be:

a) a **celebration** of the fruits of sanctity in these 100 years of history;

b) a community **sending forth** for the complete fulfillment of the mission for which we have been called and for which we are far from realizing.

2. **Celebration** of the fruits of sanctity: this is described in the **first reading**.

"You have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, with its thousands of angels. You have come to the joyful gathering of God's first-born, whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God, who is the judge of all people, and to the spirits of good people made perfect. You have come to Jesus, who arranged the new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that promises much better things than does the blood of Abel."

\_feast of the saints, of our heroes, who sprinkled their blood, like the martyr Agatha whose feast we celebrate today. How many martyrs have we offered the Church and the world of today!

\_feast of the new Covenant, of the Covenant of Love with Mary, a new initiative from God which helps us to live fully the eternal Covenant in Christ. How many covenant partners, how many disciples of Christ have we offered to Mary and through her, to the Church and world!

Therefore: In 2014, we want to celebrate, rejoice, unite with the heavenly celebration and experience heaven on earth! For us Brazilians: we want to have a Tabor experience!

3. But the Gospel takes us out of the celebration. And from the heights of Tabor, plunges us to the bottom! In Brazil, we have made the expression popular: "desce do Tabor!" (Come down from Tabor!) It is the missionary **sending forth!**

A classic text which shows how **Jesus transformed his disciples into missionaries!** This was also what the Pope and our Latin American Bishops asked of us at Aparecida: that we be a Church of disciple-missionaries of the Lord! The Centennial also wants for Schoenstatt to be a moment like this. It is not enough to be disciples, we have to be missionaries for the Lord and Our Lady!

I was always intrigued by the fact that Jesus had sent out his disciples for the mission with **hardly anything**. In Mark's narrative, only three things are mentioned: *a staff, sandals, and a tunic*. But there is also a fourth thing which we often do not perceive: he sent them out in community, two by two. He did not send them out alone: each one had the other one to fulfill the mission. Speaking allegorically, what symbolic meaning can these realities have for us?

- the staff, symbol of the pastor, can remind us of the charismatic leadership of our **Father Founder**. “Cor unum in Patre.” He needs other pastors to carry his shepherd’s staff today. We (men and women) are these pastors, the leaders of his Schoenstatt Family. (father current)
- the **tunic** reminds me of **Mary’s mantle**, our Mother and Queen. Our mission is to cover the world with Mary’s mantle....it is to lead the world to the Covenant of Love with her and the Triune God....in all relationships and walks of life. (Marian current)
- the **sandals** want to be a symbol of the **missionary spirit** since they recall the footsteps of our **heroes** (Pozzobon, Mario, Engling, etc.). Pozzobon’s shoes traveled more than 140,000 kilometers! And ours? We need the sandals of missionaries to get out of ourselves and to use all of our strength for the realization of our Marian mission! As Fr. Kentenich said to Fr. Carlos Sehr: “Our Marian mission never left me in peace.....”. (missionary current)
- being sent forth in **community** wants to remind us that no one (and in our case: no community) can fulfill the mission alone; we need each other mutually. We have to walk together; get tired together; disagree and discuss together; strive, conquer and fail together; fight and reconcile together; love each other mutually and be able to demonstrate this love! (unity current)

In the first one hundred years of Schoenstatt, we need to consolidate our communities and therefore we are not always able to walk together. In the next one hundred years: or we walk together or we no longer walk at all! Either we are Family or we will be nothing! To divide ourselves is to divide Father! A “divided” founder will never be recognized nor canonized. To unite - not only in spirit, but also strengthening our federative structures - it is to return the living Father for the Church and the world of today!

To fulfill the mission of Schoenstatt in the next one hundred years, we need “very few things” (like the apostles in the Gospel): the staff of the leading presence of our Father, the mantle of the Covenant of Love with our Mother in the Shrine, and the sandals of the radical missionary consciousness of our heroes. But all of this will only be possible if we do it as a Family, in community! That is why we are here, experiencing this historic moment.....from different countries, from different communities. No one can fulfill the mission alone!

Perhaps for this reason, God had foreseen that today we would celebrate the **Mass for Unity**. I think that we have here an important key for the next one hundred years of Schoenstatt.

May they say of us Schoenstatters what Tertulian witnesses what was said of the first Christians: “See how they love one another!” Our Father thought of us as federation so that we could be an exemplary case for the Church in the experience of unity in diversity of the charisms. In Schoenstatt, we should pre-live what the Church should be.

I can **give witness** to how beautiful it has been to experience this in our Council of Leaders in Brazil and I know that this also takes place in many other places. This should be a sign of Schoenstatt in the new century. Publically, I

want to thank the leaders here present. In the “Cor unum in Patre” which we pray daily as leaders, we have learned to always **trust** each other more, valuing and loving each other mutually. Respecting and valuing the differences, fulfilling a common **strategy** in the boldness of **building together**, complementing each other mutually, reaching a consensus, foregoing particular perspectives in favor of the common good of the Work. This way is much slower and more difficult, but it is the only way to be what our Father dreamed for us as family: “one in the other, with the other, for the other, and together in the heart of God!” (It is easy to say when the other is Father or Blessed Mother, but when it is a leader (male or female) who I do not like....). I am convinced by a phrase of Dom Helder Câmara, an important bishop in the history of the Church in Brazil: “a dream which is dreamt alone, is only a dream, but a dream which is dreamt in unity becomes reality. Blessed are those who dream together because they run the sweet risk of seeing their dreams made into realities!”

The preparation for 2014 is a magnificent opportunity which God gives us to “run that risk,” to foreshadow in an exemplary form the Schoenstatt of the new millennium, to fulfill with all forces this dream: in Father, from the strength of the Covenant of Love, with a marked missionary spirit and as a family. 2014 wants to be a celebration of 100 years of faithfulness as disciples, but, especially, a community sending forth for 1,000 more years of action as a Family of missionaries.

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