

adoration and uniting in the most holy heart of the Divine Master: then you will have great joy from the common life! We are at common life because we all abide in Christ and we all want to be equal to him: to have a heart equal to his, a mind equal to his, a life equal to his» (AP 1957, 174 and 176).

## 5. From the Word to Life

The challenge par excellence for the man of today - caught up in a thousand commitments and possibilities that life offers, especially in the realm of the internet and social media - is to be able to stop and become aware of the immense gift of life he is living, of the mystery in which he is embedded and by which he is enveloped, and at the same time to recognize the enormous risk he runs of seeing his life pass by in the blink of an eye, caught up in a thousand urgent but unimportant and essential things, and of failing to grasp the presence and gift of God, savouring his company and that of his brothers and sisters, feeling that they are one family, helping each other, living relationships in love, with gestures of attention and esteem toward each other, recognizing their very high dignity as children of God, creating and living more and more in a culture of encounter, adding their own piece in building the "civilization of love".

- Does my relationship with God help me build more fraternal relationships?
- Are my relationships with brothers and sisters marked more by generosity or self-interest?
- At what point am I on the path of seeing in my brother's face the face of God?

## 6. Prayer

Behold, how good and pleasant it is  
when brothers dwell in unity!  
It is like the precious oil upon the head,  
running down upon the beard,  
upon the beard of Aaron,  
running down on the collar of his robes!  
It is like the dew of Hermon,  
which falls on the mountains of Zion!  
For there the LORD has commanded the blessing,  
life for evermore (Ps 133).



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## THE METAMORPHOSIS OF BROTHERHOOD

*Point "2" of the Superior General's Annual Letter – after having spoken of the "metamorphosis" the world is experiencing – the crisis of the growth myth, the challenge of artificial intelligence and the various questions the Church is experiencing – confronted on the other metamorphosis to be accomplished and which puts us personally at stake: to make ourselves promoters of the "culture of encounter", to live in brotherhood, to build new friendships so that they can become "vehicles" of the scheme God addresses to every man. These demands an exit from ourselves, from our own narcissism, in order to live the "mystique" of living together, learning to act together, being "weavers of communion", especially towards poor and those seeking meaning in life.*

### 1. From the Superior General's Letter

«"...A humanity so changed and a Church that makes the culture of encounter its own challenge us in concrete terms, they ask us for new paths and a new vision of society and of the people of God which cannot be fixed by modern criteria of development or progress and even less about globalization or well-being. Pope Francis' Encyclical *Fratelli tutti* he says it clearly: there is a need for brotherhood, to look at the face of others in a different way, to weave new friendships so that the life of the Christian becomes a vehicle for the proposal of friendship that Jesus addresses to everyone. This is the time of transformation also of relationships so that humanity's encounter with Christ is promoted in a new way. transformation that takes the form of a process of going out of ourselves and our patterns, requires that we raise our gaze to see new horizons and new faces, to start something new in which to invest our best energies. ...» (*The Metamorphosis of Brotherhood* [2]).

## 2. The encounter with the Word of God

*St. Paul invites us to encounter the other starting from within, from the heart, from the thoughts and feelings, thus laying the groundwork for the concrete encounter could be under the banner of welcoming, listening, friendship, and communion. In truth, Paul advises us to begin even before we start from the heart, begin from the source - God. Indeed, it is from the experience of Trinitarian love, from his unconditional forgiveness, man is qualified for a loving encounter with his brother and sister, filled with the desire that he wants to contribute to their joy and well-being.*

«Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassion, kindness, lowliness, meekness, and patience, forbearing one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all this put-on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teach and admonish one another in all wisdom, and sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs with thankfulness in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him» (Col 3,12-17).

## 3. The Magisterium of the Church

*The art of loving our brothers and sisters is the highest act; there are no more urgent and essential goals for any person. To fail in this one goal that God gives us, that our conscience gives us, that life itself gives us, is to plunge into emptiness, into nothingness. Without communion, without the brother and sister, life becomes stunted, lacking. And by reflex our joy, our inner and outer peace and harmony will be affected. In the brother and sister God is present, friendship and communion with them is an experience of intimacy with God.*

«The Christian ideal will always be a summons to overcome suspicion, habitual mistrust, fear of losing our privacy, all the defensive attitudes which today's world imposes on us. Many try to escape from others and take refuge in the comfort of their privacy or in a small circle of close friends, renouncing the realism of the social aspect of the Gospel. For just as some people want a purely spiritual Christ, without flesh and without the cross, they also want their interpersonal relationships provided by sophisticated equipment, by screens and systems which can be turned on and off on command. Meanwhile, the Gospel tells us constantly to run the risk of a face-to-face encounter with

others, with their physical presence which challenges us, with their pain and their pleas, with their joy which infects us in our close and continuous interaction. True faith in the incarnate Son of God is inseparable from self-giving, from membership in the community, from service, from reconciliation with others. The Son of God, by becoming flesh, summoned us to the revolution of tenderness...

There indeed we find true healing, since the way to relate to others which truly heals instead of debilitating us, is a mystical fraternity, a contemplative fraternity. It is a fraternal love capable of seeing the sacred grandeur of our neighbor, of finding God in every human being, of tolerating the nuisances of life in common by clinging to the love of God, of opening the heart to divine love and seeking the happiness of others just as their heavenly Father does. Here and now, especially where we are a "little flock" (Lk 12:32), the Lord's disciples are called to live as a community which is the salt of the earth and the light of the world (cf. Mt 5:13-16). We are called to bear witness to a constantly new way of living together in fidelity to the Gospel. Let us not allow ourselves to be robbed of community!» (*Evangelii Gaudium* 88, 92).

## 4. Thought of the Founder

*A life of relationship with our brothers and sisters is in God's plan for our lives. Living with others and for others is the path God shows us to find the truth of ourselves and live the gift of life to the full. Fr. Alberione mentions the various advantages of living together: it keeps us away from danger, there is mutual edification, we grow in humility, goodness, and charity, and we are better formed intellectually, morally, and religiously. Ultimately, however, it is in Christ, in the Eucharist, that the mutual help and fellowship of one with another reaches its climax.*

«Living together also has invaluable advantages: that together we are saved from many dangers, together we are edified by good examples. And, then, together we pray, together we work. And so it was of the apostolic college, which was a true religious institute, but in the highest sense, with that certain breadth and with that certain goodness that Jesus knew how to use in a divine way with his apostles, while at the same time, he led them to the practical exercise of all the virtues, especially of humility, goodness, charity... In common life, we are better formed both intellectually, morally, ascetically and religiously... If you understood God's gift of common life! Then more and more demand that we love it and want to live it and understand it by entering all together in the morning Communion, in the same Sacrifice, entering all together to attend the Sacrifice of the Cross renewed here, entering all together to make