**UPDATING THE MISSION OF MSF TODAY**

**Conference of Msgr. Paulinus Yan Olla MSF for June**

After entering the age of 125 since its foundation, we should be grateful that our identity as missionaries may be refreshed. The universal Church through Pope Francis incessantly invites believers from all over the world to realize their missionary identity. Not only did he burn missionary fire through his teachings, as revealed in the Encyclical Evangelii Gaudium (2013) and other subsequent documents. He also took special initiatives by evangelizing various situations that required the presence of good news such as: visiting and defending refugees, drawing attention to conditions at inhuman prisons, asking for peace between hostility and conflict, asking for ecological repentance. In addition, at the end of last year, he set the month of October 2019 as a special month to commemorate the 100 years of mission documents, Maximum Illud (1919).

The situation of the universal Church above has aroused a passion that has flared up in various local Churches and, of course, in the Congregation of the MSF. In the Diocese of Tanjung Selor, in northern Kalimantan, where MSF missionaries are working, for example, we announced a whole year as Missionary Year, which starts from October 2019 to October 2020. This is because our area is vast and information and activities for missionary animation take time. Numerous initiatives have been undertaken by the Commissions of the diocese to make this year an opportunity to pray, do charity and help each other in financial matters and in deepening the faith. In these activities there is particular attention to the remote parishes of the Diocese which are accessible only with small planes and boats, as a form of missionary solidarity.

Missionary movements at the level of the universal and local Church or in the Congregation remind the Church of her deepest identity which is missionary (cf. Ad Gentes n. 2). The Church will deny herself if she is not missionary. The same is true of the Congregation of the MSF, whose essence (raison d'être) is missionary (cf. L'œuvre de la Sainte Famille, 10). In the name of MSF, it contains the missionary mandate that must be carried out. Loyalty to the identity is not just institutional loyalty, but loyalty to the encouragement from the Spirit of God that once inspired the founder, Fr. Jean Berthier, to found the Congregation. God himself wants that through this Congregation the missionary movement, that is, the announcement of the Good News, will reach more and more people who need it. The life and contribution of the Congregation for the Church is to light the missionary fire in the Church through the service of its members.

Fr. Jean Berthier even wants to emphasize that the preparation of missionaries is more important and more effective than the task of working directly in the mission area. This does not mean underestimating those who work in the mission area and praising those who work in the field of formation. Fr. Berthier just wants to emphasize that preparing / educating missionaries to produce true good missionaries will multiply that goodness in various places through missionaries (see Father Berthier's Thought, n. 198).

In the Gospel of Mark 16, 15-20 there is a commandment of Jesus which during the history of the Church has been obeyed by Christians. The history of spirituality shows that the primitive Church, starting from the Apostles themselves, was a very missionary Church. Anyone who is illuminated by the light of Christ's resurrection is encouraged to preach the gospel. Missionary fire cannot be restrained in people who are touched by the love of the risen Christ. It is not surprising that the first Christian Congregations were all missionaries. Jesus' commandment to preach the gospel to the whole world was truly carried out when they were in a situation of persecution (cf. Acts 11,19). Missionary zeal never ends, but it is even nourished by martyrdom that they experienced it.

Church history shows that when groups emerged that later called themselves "missionaries", they emerged institutionally in an unfavorable development of the Church. Most of the people of God (lay people) are no longer actively involved in evangelization. The birth of missionary Congregations seemed to replace the lay role in carrying out Jesus' commandment to preach the Gospel to the whole world. The Church took a long time to realize the need for everyone's participation, in particular the involvement of the laity in the proclamation of the Gospel as a basic spirit in the life of the Church. The missionary vocation of the whole community was renewed in Vatican II (cf. Lumen gentium, chapter IV) and subsequently in the magisterium (cf. Christifideles Laici, 4, 16-17).

In the development of the Church's mission history we see that theological ideas about mission have contributed to shaping the awareness and involvement of the Church in carrying out her missionary tasks. In the early stages, Jesus' commandment was obeyed by preaching the gospel to various nations. The content of missionary activity varies and concerns all the activities of the Church. Being a missionary is defined as the activity of proclaiming the Gospel in various foreign countries (missio ad gentes). Missionary assignments are considered in size by geographical distances and refer to the announcement in the midst of ignorance or to those who have never listened to the message about Jesus Christ.

The updated Constitution of MSF (1985) to accommodate the ideas of renewal of Vatican II can only accommodate missionary ideas of Vatican II such as Ad Gentes, 1965, up to the Encyclical Evangelii Nuntiandi (1975). So, there is a demand to live up to the missionary spirit of the present, adapting the various developments of the magisterium after 1975, in particular the concept of mission as taught by Pope John Paul II and the series of magisterium thereafter. In particular, the following can be noted.

First, the concept of mission promoted in the encyclical Redemptoris Missio (RMi), 1990, is no longer geographically restricted, which refers to the mission as an activity to leave the homeland to proclaim in a foreign country (missio ad gentes ). This mission is still recognized for its validity, but it is demonstrated that also in the concept of the mission there are connected various situations called the new areopagus that requires the presence of the announcement of the Gospel. There is a new world and new social phenomena such as urbanization and the growth of very large cities (mega polis), young people, migrants, as well as the cultural sectors and the world of communication (see RMi n. 37). The Congregation of MSF and the whole Church are called to proclaim the Gospel in various new socio-cultural situations and environments, where Christ is not yet known.

Secondly, the mission from the beginning of the birth of the Church is a movement born from the response of love for the risen Christ. Therefore, the proclamation of the Gospel becomes a movement of love that reaches everyone and must not be exclusive and form only an elite group called the Church. " Jesus did not tell the apostles to form an exclusive and elite group." (Evangelii Gaudium, n. 113). The MSF Congregation carries out its missionary work trying to involve as many people as possible to form a Church that reaches various nations.

Third, the mission of MSF and the Church today must reflect the announcement of the face of the merciful God who wants to reach all people and all ethnic groups. Pope Francis highlighted that missionary work is first and foremost the work of God. The initiative and the results are due only to the grace of God. The real mission is the work of God himself (missio Dei). The "first is grace" principle makes the missionary humble and experiences himself as an instrument in the hands of God.

Finally, to realize his missionary identity, the missionaries of the MSF together with the whole Church must apply the logic of the incarnation in the fulfillment of their preaching duties. The Magisterium of the Church recalls the need to preach the Gospel in the context of the cultures in which the Church is found. "Go to the whole world and proclaim the Gospel" is not a mandate to impose one's culture on other nations and cultures. It is recognized that the Gospel message is often mixed closely and it is difficult to separate from the culture of the preacher, but one must always realize that cultural diversity is not a threat to the unity of the Church. Through inculturation the Church brings nations with their culture (cf. RMi, 52). "We would not do justice to the logic of the incarnation if we thought of Christianity as monocultural and monotonous " (see Evangelii Gaudium, n. 117).

Today's MSF mission is only good news if it can reach the people today in their real situation. There are hopes and anxieties of people today who are confronted with the light of the Gospel to be enlightened and confirmed through the preaching and life of missionaries.