

Contemplative and Evangelizing:

Apostles of the Kingdom
with the Heart of Christ



REGNUM
CHRISTI

This essay is part of a project from the Life and Mission department of the General Directorate of Regnum Christi, which seeks to promote a deep knowledge and heart-felt assimilation of the charism, stemming from what we find in the Statutes, to foster spiritual and apostolic renewal. In addition to producing content like this essay, the Life and Mission Department seeks to offer RC territories and localities programs for days of reflection and other means of support.

A prior essay, published on the Solemnity of Christ the King in 2019, presented the theme of Living and making present the mystery of Christ with our gaze fixed on Christ the Apostle who “goes out to people, reveals the love of his heart to them, gathers them together and forms them as apostles and Christian leaders, sends them out and accompanies them as they collaborate in the evangelization of people and of society” (SRCF 8). A second essay, published on the same feast the following year, focused on the significance that the Lord gave to the formation of his apostles and disciples: the establishment of the “Kingdom of God.”

Now we address a charismatic trait in all Regnum Christi members, being “contemplative and

evangelizing” (SRCF 20). This duality is not just one particular characteristic of the way a Regnum Christi member lives and acts among many others. It is a vital attitude that permits us to know, love, and follow Christ the Apostle and allow him to transform us. It is the path to make the spiritual characteristics and the missionary lifestyle which are expressed in the second chapter of the Statutes (“Spiritual Foundations”) and the first article of the third chapter (“Principles of Apostolic Action”) our own.

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I. Apostles of the Kingdom with the Heart of Christ

The encounter with Christ the Apostle transforms and integrates one's life

As Regnum Christi members we are called to open ourselves again and again to encounter Christ the Apostle of the Kingdom, who gathers us together, reveals the love of his heart to us, forms, sends, and accompanies us in the mission of evangelization (see SRCF 8). The center of our life is this personal relationship of love with Christ.

This encounter with the living Christ does not leave us unchanged. It gives us a new outlook on our history, our circumstances, and the people that surround us, changing us into apostles of the Kingdom. The experience of his “personal, real, passionate, and faithful love for us” (SRCF 12) gives us a sense of the joy of giving all for All, leaving behind a mediocre life of self-preservation, to begin to give ourselves in love. The person who has known the One who gave his own life so that we “might have life and have it more abundantly” (see Jn 10: 10) begins to align themselves with his convictions and attitudes when making decisions.



If we live the mystery of Christ the Apostle—allowing him to live in and through us—**everything that happens to us becomes part of our vocation and mission.** There is no longer anything that is “irrelevant” in the life of a Christian. All things, even failures and falls, have their place and meaning when a person has been touched by Christ.

An encounter with Christ engenders a way of life proper to the apostle of the Kingdom which is characterized by specific spiritual elements and expressed through a concrete way of living the mission and being an apostle, as summarized in the Statutes.

Living within the mystery of Christ the Apostle helps life become integrated as a vocation and mission. Are there aspects of my life where I experience living within this mystery, the mystery of Christ the apostle? How does this bring meaning to different circumstances in my life?



We are contemplative and evangelizing

The members of Regnum Christi are “contemplative and evangelizing.” (SRCF 20).

Because we wish to be contemplative, we look for daily times of intimate conversation with the Lord: Mass, the Rosary, moments of Eucharistic adoration, and ending the day with him in prayer. Because we wish to be evangelizing, we seek to do apostolate, become missionaries, organize acts of Christian charity, teach catechesis, etc., but above all, **we wish to fill all we are and do, wherever we carry out our daily activities, with the Good News of the Gospel.**

What does it mean to be contemplative and evangelizing, over and above concrete actions?



What does a typical day of living my life imbued with the Gospel look like?





What does it mean to me to let myself be evangelized by Christ?

What does being an evangelizer mean in light of this?



What characteristics of Jesus Christ have I experienced in prayer?

What characteristics of Jesus Christ have I experienced in apostolic activity?

How does Jesus Christ reveal himself to me in these different experiences?



Contemplation is not only “looking” at God, but above all accepting and receiving from him. Evangelization is not only “preaching” the Kingdom, but above all giving and communicating him. To be contemplative is an attitude that allows us to discover and embrace God’s presence in the different parts of our lives. To be evangelizing is knowing how to preach him with our lives.

What we accept and communicate is not, therefore, an idea or a thing, but a living person. That is why we could also define the two dimensions in this way: **the contemplative person allows Christ to evangelize them at every moment; the evangelizer allows Christ work through them to announce and bring about the Good News of the Kingdom.**

These two traits spring from a single identity, and at the same time they form that identity in us in a heartfelt and existential way. The apostle of the Kingdom is a baptized Christian who is immersed in the mystery of Christ the Apostle: they experience that Jesus goes out to meet them, reveals the love of his Heart to them, gathers them together with other people, forms them as an apostle, then sends them and accompanies them to collaborate in the work of evangelization. **To be “contemplative and evangelizing” is the existential attitude that enables us to enter into a relationship with Christ, to know him intimately, to love him, and to share our life with him in order to be his witnesses.**

Two sides of the same coin

The way to become contemplative and evangelizing is not by learning how to juggle two apparently different and even opposite things at the same time. **To be contemplative and evangelizing does not require a special ability**, an uncommon talent, or lots of practice.

Nor is it finding balance between two competing realities, like combining serious professional dedication with the decision to spend quality time with family, which is a challenge. Being contemplative and evangelizing does not require us to draw up a demanding schedule to find the right amount of time for each dimension that demands space for itself in our schedule.

In fact, contemplating and evangelizing are not two competing activities that divide up the day, with time for one and then for the other. The apostle of the Kingdom is contemplative and evangelizing throughout every act of their life, because both aspects come together in a single way of being, an existential attitude, a way of life.

The two traits are not only inseparable, in fact, one is always contained in the other. **The apostle of the Kingdom cannot be evangelizing without being contemplative, nor be contemplative without being evangelizing.**

As an apostle of the Kingdom, one cannot be contemplative without being evangelizing

Seeing Jesus Christ in the Gospel, in the Eucharist, in one's neighbor, and in the depth of one's heart, we experience gratuitous love, and this experience cannot be ignored. Like St. Paul, the need to exclaim "the love of Christ impels us" (2 Cor 5:14) and "Woe to me if I do not preach the Gospel" (see 1 Cor 9:16) springs from the depths of the soul.

The theological virtues make us aware of his hidden presence that comes out to meet us, reveals the love of his heart, sends, and accompanies us. They show us the thirst of our brothers and sisters for true Life. They make us see the Church as that vine that he has come to plant and cultivate. They make us aware of the light of grace, the source of life and hope, and they show us the reason for living.

Therefore, the one who does not evangelize stops being contemplative, because that life present in the soul becomes stunted and suffers when it cannot express itself by self-giving to others.

As an apostle of the Kingdom, one cannot be evangelizing without being contemplative

The apostle of the Kingdom speaks of what they have "seen, heard, and touched" (see 1 John 1:1). They are a witness for whom "it is impossible not to speak about what he has seen and heard" (see Acts 4:20). The one who does not know him whom they are communicating only announces themselves.

Only by learning to be with him and in him will we be able to go out and speak in his name.

We need to contemplate the people that surround us with the gaze of Christ—the people on the bus, family members at home, colleagues at work, friends at parties—and the circumstances of our world, in order to see all of it as He does, and in that way discover what he is doing and what he wants to do through us.

Contemplation is not only the condition or prerequisite for evangelizing. **Every truly evangelizing action is done with a contemplative spirit**; otherwise, it is merely human activity and not a spiritual reality (the Kingdom of God). Contemplating the presence and action of God through our poor actions and words is an indescribable blessing when we lend ourselves to his message.

**Why is it so difficult for us?
The fragmentation that divides and separates us**

If all this is true, why is it so difficult for us to be contemplative and evangelizing at the same time? We can safely identify the main cause of our fragmentation: we have pulled apart what is really one thing in the mind and heart of God.



In today's world, how do I evangelize by being a witness of what I have seen and heard in contemplation?





Do I compartmentalize the different aspects of my life, not allowing them to intertwine or influence each other? What strikes me about this and what do I feel called to do



The divisions in our own lives

A first fracture occurs when **the different facets of life are compartmentalized**: study, work, family, friendships, exercise and physical health, social commitments, and relationships... so many necessities fill the day before we can even plan it. We experience time as a torrent that drags us along in a frenetic succession of activities that doesn't allow us to stop and think.

Our society values a person for what they do and have, because we live in a world of productivity and consumerism, ruled by utility and efficiency, success, and pleasure. It is also an individualistic culture in which freedom is exalted as an absolute value and truth is thrown out as fundamentalism and substituted by opinions. It is a dizzying world, marked by speed and instant gratification, in which everything seems within reach, and demands that we know, experience, and control it all.

The division between God and the world

According to the dominant mentality, the world and God are separate. It seems that the world, whether the work of God or not, functions on its own and we must face our problems with our own strength and reason, supported by science, technology, politics, and personal dedication. Many people live under the implicit presupposition that God doesn't care about the world, and much less their small life. On the other hand, there are religious mindsets

that look negatively upon the world, which is seen fundamentally as the enemy of God and the source of danger and sin.

But beyond philosophies and ideologies, the division between the things of God and those of the world is an ever-present existential temptation – going to mass on Sunday, but then ignoring your neighbor during the week; taking some time for prayer, but then not knowing how to see God in your coworker or the client that you have to meet with; believing in the existence of God, but not allowing him to enter your decisions and problems.

The division between the Church and Christ

Many non-believers consider the Catholic Church to be an institution of the past that clings to outdated beliefs, with a message that is no longer understandable, believable, or much less acceptable.

Christians themselves sometimes separate the **Church and Christ** when they reduce the former to its human structures or to one aspect of the faith or Christian practice. In this way commitment to the Church easily becomes a fight to impose one's own ideas or to be clever in "gaining territory" from the "enemies of the Church." On the other hand, a person might abandon all participation in the Church, tired and disillusioned by the spectacle of a community in continual conflict.



What role does the Church play in my life: in my prayer, in my apostolate?





How is a friend or an acquaintance—or any person—a place where I can contemplate Christ who dwells in them? How does knowing that Christ is in the person I reach out to evangelize influence me as an evangelizer?



The division between Christ and one's brother

There is an even deeper and more harmful division at the foundation of the prior one. It consists in separating Christ from the brother and sister he identifies himself with. **We cannot encounter Christ if we are far from our neighbor.** In Christ we are all brothers and sisters, members of his body. But when we lose Christ as our center, it wounds the communion among us, so that others become strangers, objects, or rivals.

A desire that can be satisfied

The fruit of fragmentation is seen in the frustration of feeling confused, disintegrated, and inauthentic, with a growing distance between the desires and ideals of our heart and the reality of our daily life, between how we would like to live and how we actually live, between who we would like to be and who we actually are.

But although we sometimes think that we don't know how to find God or witness to Christ, the desire to be contemplative and evangelizing remains alive in us. It could not be otherwise: **this desire is the echo of the Lord's call to us.** Since he is the one who calls us, our longing will not remain unfulfilled.

The one who has called us is alive in us through our baptism and "is able to accomplish far more than all we ask or imagine, by the power at work

within us” (Eph 3: 20). Furthermore, we rely on another certainty of faith, that we are surrounded by a “cloud of witnesses” (Heb 12: 1) who show us that the Lord **can** transform our lives and those of others through us.

Let us think of the first Christians. They lived, as we also often do, in a world that did not know Christ at all. Against all odds they attracted many people to the Gospel, and not because they were learned or had power or had a perfect plan to convert the world. They lived in the same cities as everyone else, they dressed the same way as those around them did, they worked the same jobs as everyone else, they followed the local laws... but they were different. The mystery of the Risen Christ, alive and glorious, he whom they had personally encountered, was manifest in them.

The saints have continued on this path, and similar examples of people in all ages are not lacking, even in our own times, because the transformative and unifying encounter that converted the first Christians into contemplative evangelizers is not something of the past.

II. Ways to allow Christ the Apostle to encounter us and send us out

The gaze of Christ unites and connects us

If it is difficult for us to begin a contemplative and evangelizing life because we have separated what God has joined, **let us start by renewing in Christ our way of seeing and interacting with ourselves, with the world, and with others.**

Looking at and living in the world with the heart of Christ

Christians look at the world with the eyes of God and discover God in the midst of the world before all else, in the cosmos, nature, and humanity, since it is all God's Creation. With the psalmist we can say, "O LORD, our Lord, how awesome is your name through all the earth! (...) When I see your heavens, the work of your hands, the moon, and stars that

you set in place..." (Ps 8: 2, 4).

God not only "saw that [his creation] was good" (Gen 1: 10), but also made this world the place where he brings about redemption. God sent his Son to this world to save it. This world matters to God, and these are the eyes with which we should look upon the small cosmos to which we've been sent: our family, relationships, work, city, country, and other social and historical circumstances of our life's journey. This is the world Jesus speaks of when he says, "My Father is at work until now, so I am at work" (Jn 5: 17). One thing is knowing the cold facts of reality (a pandemic, a war, a family crisis...) and another is bringing those facts to prayer: "Lord, where are you in this situation? What do you want to do with and through me?"



In the light of the gospel, truth becomes clear. How do I see my life in this light? How have principles that are not based in the Gospel influenced my life?



The Light of the Gospel and the principles of the Kingdom don't allow us to become enchanted and deceived by lies. Behind the apparent attraction of individualism, we find solitude as its fruit; behind the ideal of productivity and efficiency is the culture that throws things and people away; behind the promises of consumerism and pleasure is the experience of emptiness and senselessness. Jesus opens our eyes, our ears, our intelligence, and our hearts with the light of truth.

That same gaze allows us to see the hunger for God that afflicts the world. The cry of this suffering world calls out to us for a response as the Lord's apostles, despite our smallness. We want to be witnesses and reflections of Heaven and bring the supernatural dimension of reality that we know is

true to daily life. That is why we speak fearlessly of God in season and out of season, since we are convinced that God is present everywhere and fills everything.

If temporal realities are ordered according to God's plan, the world can become more and more "a home worthy of the children of God" (RL 4). Therefore, we need to know the questions and challenges of people of today and commit ourselves to the construction of the civilization of justice and love in our family, work, and social life. We must ask ourselves if we are being the presence of the Kingdom in our way of treating our neighbor, exercising our profession, and fulfilling our social responsibilities (see RL 9). Nothing evangelizes like treating people, and all of creation, with the Heart of God. In this way, our way of being and acting makes the Kingdom present.

Accepting ourselves with the heart of Christ

We have said that an apostle's life is deeply marked by their encounter with the Lord. They know that they are loved, called, and sent. This awareness gives their life the dimension of living in Christ like branches united to the vine (see John 15: 5).

The Gospel speaks directly to our daily life and has something concrete to say to it. The living Christ, who has conquered every situation of death and accompanies us in different trials, becomes present in our lives. This brings us to live in a continual "liberating dependence" on the Lord. The consciousness of our need for his grace moves

us to seek to encounter him in the Gospel, in the Eucharist, and in the sacrament of Reconciliation.

We are not perfect, nor should we be surprised by that. The Lord, who looks on us with unending mercy, teaches us to live our smallness and weakness. We trust in the grace that enables us to know, accept, and overcome ourselves.

We rest in the Lord, fleeing from all self-sufficiency. He is the one who makes action fruitful. It is grace that is efficacious, not our personal successes. It is not us who should demand that he support our ideas and projects, but rather we should collaborate with his.

Always being with the Lord also means allowing him to send us where he wills, as we are in constant dialogue with his Spirit. That is how we exercise our freedom, by discerning and making decisions with sensitivity and responsibility.

Loving others with the heart of Christ

As apostles our life begins with an encounter with Christ and that encounter continues when we give ourselves so that Christ, through us, can go out to meet people and reveal the love of his Heart to them. We do it with a generous and simple heart, full of respect, affection, trust, and understanding (see SRCF 23). We can understand the weakness of others because we ourselves are “subject to weakness” (see Heb 5: 2).



*Where, to whom, and to what situations does the Spirit send me today?
How can I maintain a dialogue with the Holy Spirit so he can help me to live as Christ wants to live in me and through me?*



As apostles we are friends of Jesus Christ, like Peter, John, James, and the other disciples were. Through our common Friend we form bonds of friendship among our fellow apostles. We also build welcoming relationships of self-giving, being sincere and generous toward the people that we encounter (see SRCF 29, 2° and 3°).

We should say that loving someone does not only mean doing them good but supposes getting to know them better and better. Jesus spoke of his loving relationship with us, his sheep, saying: “I know mine and mine know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father” (John 10: 14-15). St. Paul also describes the experience of the love of God as being known by him (see 1 Cor 8:3; 13:12). **Therefore, loving one’s neighbor and looking on them with the eyes of God are one and the same.** Precisely because the other person matters to us, we try to intuit and understand how they think and feel, what they long for and fear, and we let ourselves be known by them.

Jesus treats the centurion with same goodness as he does the woman caught in sin, and Zacchaeus the same as Mary. This example of gratuitous love is the Good News of Christ. This love is characterized by not labeling one’s neighbor, which allows us to embrace them as a unique person and disposes us to “universal and thoughtful self-giving to one’s neighbor” (SRCF 23).

Two more characteristics of love are availability and concreteness. They imply giving time, effort,

and creativity to find the ways and words that best meet the real needs and interests of others.

Each of us is accompanied by a community, with whom we share the path to heaven, and for which we are also responsible. In a creative and transformative community, times of encounter among the members and occasions to heal wounds cannot be lacking. It is necessary to know that we need each other, since walking together allows us to accompany and be accompanied.

When all of us, as a community of apostles, seek the light of the Holy Spirit and open ourselves to what God can teach us through others, we create an environment of communal discernment in life and mission. An activity that fosters this dynamic is the “Encounter with Christ” (RL 15), where we learn to contemplate together, allow ourselves to be evangelized by others, and look for concrete ways to make the Kingdom present.

Living in the church with the heart of Christ

Another consequence of looking with the eyes of Christ is **recognizing the Church as the sign and instrument of God for the unification of all people in communion with him and one another**, thereby overcoming the different forms of fragmentation which we mentioned above.

The sacraments of the Church are in themselves the opposite of a fragmented culture, since they unite in themselves the visible and the invisible.

What is material is brought to life by the Spirit and the false division between God and the world is overcome. The sacraments are also the way to our interior unification. In the offertory of the Eucharistic celebration, we can place all we are on the altar, all the broken and unfinished pieces that make up our existence. When we receive communion, we are not only united to the Lord, but also to others, made children of the Father by grace, members of the body of Christ, and temples of his Spirit. In the sacrament of penance, we allow the Lord to heal the divisions and wounds opened by sin.

The very hierarchical structure of the Church is a gift of Christ to his people for the edification of the community (see 1 Cor 14:5). In its triple function of sanctifying, governing, and teaching it helps us to leave behind our partial vision of things, unhealthy radicalism, and the individualism which robs us of the certainty of following Christ and not just our own ideas.

If we are contemplative and evangelizing, the scandals caused by the members of the Church, rather than driving us away from the Lord and his family, draw us closer to his Heart, to suffering with him and his children.

When we look closely at the internal difficulties and conflicts of the Church, present since the times of the apostles, we always seek the truth in love. We find the authentic elements of each position and create paths of understanding towards the good that each one seeks instead of barriers for the ones

we don't agree with.

We, the baptized, the children of God and the Church, citizens of the world, are responsible for translating the perennial message of the Faith to the people of today. Each one of us forms part of the Church in dialogue with the world, seeking the food of eternal life in her and rendering her credible by our testimony of sincere love for others.

Gratuitous love

Gratuitousness offers us another key for embracing and living the mystery of Christ the Apostle and allows us to develop a contemplative and evangelizing attitude more easily.

Sacred Scripture presents God's invitation to us to draw near to him to receive his gifts freely: "All you who are thirsty, come to the water! You who have no money, come, buy grain and eat; come, buy grain without money, wine, and milk without cost!" (Isaiah 55: 1). "To the thirsty I will give a gift from the spring of life-giving water" (Rev 21: 6; 22: 17).

God is pure gratuitousness. From all eternity, the three Divine Persons give and receive of themselves mutually. They create and redeem us without any need to do so. In everything that the Holy Trinity does, there is no other motive than the desire to give freely, through grace, without being obliged in any way.



Do I desire the logic of gratuitous love in my life? Have I experienced it? How does it change me? Do I resist it?



We, on the other hand, struggle to live according to this logic of receiving and giving. We tend rather to grasp and take. We feel like there are things that belong to us and others that we don't deserve. That calculating and vengeful mentality keeps us on the defensive, closed in on ourselves, like the rich man (see Lk 16: 19-31), incapable of freely receiving and giving.

Nevertheless, **our heart longs for the counter-cultural logic of gratuitous love**, because only there do we genuinely encounter ourselves and others. God makes this desire possible given that, created in his image and likeness, we are children of the "heavenly Father, who makes his sun rise on the bad and the good, and causes rain to fall on the just and the unjust" (Mt 5: 45).

The first step to living gratuitous love is to be attentive to the love of God in everything that surrounds us. For that, it is enough to give ourselves – and at times impose on ourselves – moments when we don't "produce" or consume, but rather simply show ourselves to be open to what is given to us. This happens, for example, when we walk through the city or a park with our eyes open to the countless wonders that are already there, without our having done anything to deserve them, or when we take off our headphones for a few moments to listen to the birds singing. The trees, flowers, everything that lives, the heat of the sun and the freshness of the wind and rain are gifts that we have not produced or bought, nor did we have to click to enjoy them.

Paying true attention to the mystery of the person in front of us is another great help: the bus driver who greets us, the teacher who teaches our class, or the doctor who cares for us... how many gestures of goodness there are, how much dignity and pain in mankind, in our brothers and sisters. And what should we say of our families and friends? It's worth it to lift our eyes from our screens to receive the presence of those who love us and await our love.

It is good to oblige ourselves sometimes to turn off the music or disconnect from social media to be aware of "God, who richly provides us with all things for our enjoyment" (1 Tim 6: 17). We don't enter a vacuum or a dead silence, but rather we sense how much light surrounds us, how much harmony echoes in what is given to us. These moment of receptive contact with reality, lived in faith, can awaken us from the dream of a universe that we imagine to be under our control, and open our heart to the presence of our Creator and Redeemer who is always working and giving himself gratuitously. Reverence is born in the attentive heart, the intuition of how worthy and beautiful the works of the Lord are and, much more, the very Creator who manifests himself in them.

God also asks us to be attentive to the mystery within us. If we persevere in fostering this attitude of contemplative listening, we discover and come to understand, little by little, the strength and love in that have always been there our own hearts, and



What specific things do I thank God for today?



how they have guided us without our even realizing it. We see ourselves God as sees us, and we see his action in our souls. By living attentively, we are capable of spiritual discernment.

The natural fruit of being attentive to the signs of God's love around us and in us is gratitude, which in turn engenders generosity toward God, one's neighbor, and oneself. Sincere, heartfelt gratitude is not only a question of good manners, but above all a wondrous recognition of the goodness of the other. One who knows how to recognize and receive gifts will be generous because he wants to be, not because he is obliged to be. The grateful person goes out to meet others' needs without being asked and serves with genuine goodness that doesn't make the receiver feel imposed upon.

These three attitudes or virtues – attentiveness, gratitude, and generosity – are the human way of living gratuitousness. We begin by receiving and accepting the free gifts of God and this teaches us to live that same attitude of loving without asking for anything in return.

We can therefore define contemplation as receiving the love that God freely offers us, and evangelization as freely giving this same priceless gift to others. "Without cost you have received; without cost you are to give" (Mt 10: 8).

After Jesus, the most beautiful image of gratitude is the Blessed Virgin, the contemplative evangelizer *par excellence*. She receives the message of love,

finds herself graced in the eyes of the Most High, and lets herself be overshadowed by him. With her absolutely free Fiat she lends her whole being to him to dwell in. She lets herself be showered by the gifts of God and responds by giving herself completely.

Living silence to contemplate and evangelize

Silence is a great help in learning to receive and give freely, that is, to be contemplative and evangelizing. Attentiveness, which we spoke of in the previous number, presupposes silence.

We know that we live immersed in a multitude of external noises, that we are bombarded daily by things that grab our attention, and that it is not easy to be silent even in our times of intimacy with God, with others, or alone. But how deeply we long for and need those times.

Interior silence makes us enter the depth of our being and allows us to look at others from that place. It means journeying to the heart, as opposed to the dissipation that activism leads us to. Journeying to the heart doesn't mean losing oneself in a tangle of emotions, but rather reaching our living center, the interior source of our being, to find the meaning of what we do. **Silence opens up the possibility of living the interior life, and the interior life in turn favors the discovery of the meaning of all aspects of our life.**



When was the last time I had a moment of silence? What did I discover? What did I hear?



The one who practices interior silence feels as if he is opening a “physical” space within himself, a space that God can fill, touch, and transform. In deep silence we become aware of our true identity, we decipher our needs and those of others, we find with amazement the action of God in us that sometimes we don’t see at first glance. When it seems that God does not act, does not transform us, is not with us... we find that the contrary is true! But we need to go deep and open this space of interior silence to realize that God is present transfiguring us.

Living silence is also a free decision to listen, to want to listen. It is not merely being silent, but standing by, ready to receive the gift of the other, of reality, of God. Listening is attentiveness, awareness of how things are here and now, to discover what we should do. Attentiveness presupposes being aware of one’s abilities, constraints, possibilities, needs, limitations, inclinations, ideals, of what is happening to us, of what is important and what is secondary and of the presence of others. It therefore implies an open mind and heart.

There is a healing element in silence: it leads us to realize – to discover! – that we are not the protagonists in accompaniment, evangelization, or contemplation. It allows us to be truly open and ready for the unforeseen. Silence frees us from all self-sufficiency or desire to impress others. It doesn’t allow us to forget that we are limited, but it reminds us that the One who blesses and multiplies our five loaves and two fishes is with us.

God has given us the example of St. Joseph to help us better understand what this contemplative silence means. St. Joseph says nothing throughout the Gospels. Nevertheless, from his place as father and head of the Holy Family, St. Joseph looks on the baby Jesus in the manger and finds in him the divine tenderness revealed in fragile humanity. Later, he witnesses the adoration of the shepherds and the Magi and listens with wonder and pain to the prophecy of Simeon. Years later, after three days of anguished searching, St. Joseph finds himself before the doctors of the Law who wonder at the intelligence and answers of Jesus. Finally, from the house and workshop of Nazareth, St. Joseph contemplates Jesus as he grows “in wisdom and age and favor before God and man” (Luke 2:52). St. Joseph’s humble daily contemplation of his son Jesus allowed him to know both Jesus and himself at the same time, and so discover and courageously fulfill the mission that Providence had entrusted to him.

Burning with the Heart of Christ

The evangelizing character of Regnum Christi has a passionate and urgent tone. Number 10 of the Statutes of the Regnum Christi Federation describe this charismatic experience when it presents the manner of self-giving to which we feel called. We want to be men and women who take on spiritual combat as part of following Christ, fighting with perseverance and confidence in the Lord against evil and sin in our lives and in society. **We want to undertake that which will make the Kingdom**



How does today's world move me? How can I respond and help the Kingdom be more present in my country, my family, and my surroundings?



present with greater depth and breadth, with magnanimous hearts, enthusiasm, and creativity. We feel called to go out to meet the most urgent needs of the world and the Church with strength and courage. We desire to face the challenges of our personal lives and apostolate. We aim to take advantage of the opportunities that present themselves in our daily lives with Christian audacity, to announce the love of Christ and fulfill the responsibilities we have assumed, seeking always to give the best of ourselves.

After having reflected on our call to be contemplative and evangelizing, we understand this ideal to be a fruit of the love of Christ. We cannot jump right away to the characteristics of this manner of self-giving and aim to live them without stopping to consider their source and to drink from it. Such a manner of self-giving can only spring from the experience of having been encountered and loved gratuitously by him who says, “As the Father has sent me, so I send you” (Jn 20:21).

What we cannot do by our own strength, Christ can do in us. Supported by our talents we would easily fall into voluntarism or an obsession for greatness. But when we let ourselves be encountered by Christ in our weakness, it becomes a deep need for him, the work of grace in our soul.

It is the paradox of our Christian vocation. It is the paradox of being just another brother or sister, wounded by sin, fragile, constantly searching... and at the same time being full of life and hope, a bearer of Christ who has conquered death and counts on

us to experience and announce the Good News to the world.

When we are alive, when we live conscious of the fact that “hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out into our hearts through the holy Spirit that has been given to us” (Rom 5: 5), we feel urged to take up the passionate self-giving that is characteristic of a Regnum Christi member. It is an aspiration for which our hearts constantly long, even though every day we experience our own weakness. It is a call that doesn’t let us grow weary of starting again.

The apparent contradiction between our weakness and the desire to live our faith with passion initiates us in the wisdom of the Gospel that reveals the beauty of love, not in personal achievements or in an unblemished life, but in humility and sincerity of heart; not in human appearances, but in what God sees; not in the logic of the world, but in that of Christ who did not come to be served but to serve.

The experience of being weak, but alive in love, transforms us gradually in the Paschal wisdom of dying in order to have and give life. Then we know that we are called to live with a heart in love, not in a sentimental and unstable way, but as the mature fruit of discovering that God “makes all things new” (see Rev 21: 5). We believe in Love, and although we fall a thousand and one times, although failures are our constant companions, although we walk “through the dark valley” (see Ps 23: 4) and the meaning of many events escapes us,

we always live the miracle of his loving gaze that brings our heart back to life.

This is the spiritual combat that we take on to collaborate with grace so that Christ may be known and loved. This is the motivation that keeps us from living comfortably in a posture of indifference and moves us to undertake with a magnanimous, enthusiastic, and creative heart the actions that make the Kingdom present in greater depth and extent. This is the Love that does not grow tired of making us into good Samaritans who go out to meet the pressing needs of our neighbor. The fidelity of Christ and his constant forgiveness is what keeps the certainty alive in us of knowing “in whom we have hoped” (see 2 Tim 1: 12). It leads us to face the challenges that life presents us with strength and courage, with our whole self, and to offer our poverty and fragility because we do not trust in ourselves but in him. This relationship with him allows us to find opportunities for experiencing and proclaiming the love of God in the situations of our life. It is what leads us to be faithful to our commitments and to our own formation; because the love of God makes us more and more realistic, that is, more committed to reality.

This life of self-giving springs from a contemplative and evangelizing heart. At the same time, we can consider it as a path to forming that heart. The one who already lives with generosity, creativity, strength, and courage by temperament can enter again and again into themselves to root their activity in the mystery of Christ. The one who feels

that the way of apostolate described in Number 10 of the Statutes is overwhelming can stop to gaze with Christ at the pressing needs, the challenges, and the opportunities that are all around them, and throw themselves into those actions that spring from love with clarity and realism.

Contemplating life in the Gospel and the Gospel in life

The most obvious way to learn to be contemplative is through the life of prayer. It is true that it would be an error to reduce the contemplative dimension to moments of prayer, but it is also true that “we cannot pray ‘at all times’ if we do not pray at specific times, consciously willing it” (CCC 2697). The life of prayer, according to the Catechism, is nothing other than “a vital and personal relationship with the living and true God” (CCC 2558), which is precisely what makes us contemplative and evangelizing.

Reading through the pages of the Gospel we find the true face of Jesus of Nazareth, whose friends and apostles we want to be. Contemplating Christ in the Gospel is much more than reflecting on his words and remembering his deeds two thousand years ago. Nothing that he lived simply belongs to the past. “All that Christ is – all that he did and suffered for all men – participates in the divine eternity, and so transcends all times while being made present in them all” (CCC 1085). So, when we pray with the Gospel we become truly present to him and he to us. We accompany him in his journeys through Galilee and Judea up to the point

of being present with him on the cross and in the Resurrection. When we contemplate the mysteries of his life, we learn the “interior knowledge of our Lord” (CCC 2715). Only if we gaze on him can we truly know him. Only if we know him will we believe in his love. Only if we believe in his love can we evangelize.

Another moment and way of prayer is the examen. The daily examen of conscience is not a preemptive preparation for confession. It is rather an opportunity to contemplate our lives to find signs of the presence and action of the one who wants to evangelize us and send us out to others.

If we accompany Jesus Christ in his own life by contemplating the Gospel, we will let ourselves be accompanied by him in our life. Everything that he lived he wants to live in us (see CCC 521).

Conclusion: Christ is alive

Christ is alive, loving and acting in us now, through his Spirit, to bring us to the Father. He is alive, acting, and loving others and the entire world. We want to be contemplative and evangelizing to become more and more united with him, receiving his love, perceiving his action, finding the rays of his light in us and around us, finding the darkness where he wants to shine more and giving him our whole selves so that he can love and act through us.

Workshops

Workshop 1

Workshops

Workshop 1: The encounter that shapes my story as an apostle

Every apostle has a story of their encounter and relationship with the Lord. Peter left his nets to become a fisher of men. John could not forget that he first encountered the Lord at three in the afternoon. Their stories and encounters shape their way of being apostles, the way they communicate, and how they allow themselves to be transformed by Christ in every aspect of their lives.

A. Questions to answer personally

1. Do you remember the moment of encounter that was the start or foundation of your being an apostle? Can you briefly describe how it has shaped your way of being an apostle?
2. Have you discovered the personal gifts, style, and qualities of being an apostle that are linked with your relationship with the Lord?

If you had to choose some characteristics of your manner of being an apostle, of your

way of evangelizing in light of your story, what would they be?

B. In groups

1. Everyone responds personally to questions 1 and 2 of Part A.
2. Based on those questions, everyone puts their name on a blank page and writes 3 adjectives that they feel describe their way of evangelizing, that is, their particular way of living their condition as apostles.
3. Passing the papers around, each member of the group in turn writes an adjective that, according to them, corresponds to that person's way of evangelizing.
4. When each person has written on everyone else's pages, the group can have a conversation based on the following questions:

Have we found any similarities in our experiences? What are they? How are they related to the charism of Regnum Christi? Where are there differences? How can these differences foster creativity in evangelization? How do we complement one another? How are we necessary for one another?

What is our group's way of evangelizing? To what degree do we live our mission in communion?

What do we feel called to do? To what degree are our encounters, conversations, apostolates—our team life—contemplative and evangelizing?

Workshop 2

Workshop 2: Contemplative and evangelizing in the world

We believe that from the moment when God became man in the Incarnation there has been nothing that could not be permeated by the reality of the Kingdom, by God himself. For an apostle, every reality is a possibility of the Kingdom. The most mundane situations can be profoundly contemplative, which when shared with others, become opportunities of evangelization.

A Questions to answer personally

1. Think of a situation or a current event and how it could be illuminated by the values of the Kingdom.
2. What are the signs of the Kingdom, either hidden or obvious, that you find present in this story?
3. How can we be apostles amid this situation? What does this situation call us to as apostles of Christ?

B In groups

Choose a situation or a current event amongst everyone. Discuss how we think that this reality could be illuminated by Christ and the Gospel. Are there situations that reflect Christ even amid difficulties? Can we find signs of the Kingdom in these difficult situations?

Look with the eyes of an apostle. What are the possibilities of the Kingdom that we find in this story or situation? How could they be occasions for contemplation and evangelization?

Workshop 3

Workshop 3: The Gospel in my own life: contemplation and action

Christ is eternally present. He is really with us, in us, today. He makes himself present through our manner of seeing, listening, receiving, understanding, awakening... we can, if we take a moment, find him in the places we would least think to find him.

A. Questions to answer personally

1. Have you ever felt the Gospel become real in your own life? Is there a specific moment of daily life or apostolate in which you could relate to a passage of the Gospel?
2. What things, attitudes, or moments help you to live reality as a time of contemplation? What helps you to encounter God amid daily life?

B. In groups

As a group, recall and share apostolic experiences where we lived a situation in which we could say that the Gospel came alive, where the people and circumstances made it obvious that a passage, or several,

were being lived out in front of us.

How can we help ourselves as a group to create moments of prayer amid our activity? How can we live our moments of action together in such a way that they become profound encounters with the Lord? Do we have any ideas?

Can we also transform our moments of prayer into moments of apostolate? What could help us achieve this?

Workshop 4: Learning from Christ

The tension between being contemplative and evangelizing is resolved when we live in the Mystery of Christ the Apostle. It is in him that we find the one way of living these two dimensions.

1. Fold a page in half. Write on one side “contemplative” and on the other “evangelizing”. Beneath each word make a list of the actions and situations in your life that you think correspond to each one.
2. Reflect on what would happen if you only had one side’s actions – contemplative or evangelizing – what would happen in your life?
3. Now look for possible conflicts between both “lists.” For example, I need time to pray before the tabernacle, but I have a work schedule that doesn’t allow me to visit a church. Or I would like to be able to go and serve in apostolate, but my family needs me to be around on weekends.
4. Bring this list to prayer. Ask Christ how these conflicts could be resolved. How can I go

Workshop 5

from “either work or prayer” to the resolution of “work and prayer,” for example? How would he do it? How does he invite you to do it?

Workshop 5: A contemplative and evangelizing day

Christ, like any human being, “filled” his day with activities. He slept, he ate, he went to parties, he worked, he helped around the house... Christ was contemplative and evangelizing. In the mystery of Christ the Apostle we find the way to integrate these two dimensions in our own life.

1. How do you spend your day? Write the type of activities that you normally do in a day. (Study, family time, sports, work, prayer...)
2. Try to find a Gospel passage where Christ did the same activity that you are doing. If you can't find a passage, imagine Jesus doing it.
3. Ask yourself, “How would Christ do this activity? What characteristics would he have? What would he be thinking while he did it? How would others see him while he did it?”

Workshop 6: Sent by the Spirit

We want to help make the Kingdom present in our world. When we understand that it is the Holy Spirit who shows us the way, we want to put our actions in his hands, so that he himself guides us and shows us where to go.

1. Begin with a time of community prayer.
Gathered together by the Lord, ask the Holy Spirit to send you where He thinks you can do the most good.
2. When you finish this time of prayer, each of you can comment if you have any needs or situations on your heart which you can respond to as an apostolate.
3. Together, discern the way and the time to carry it out.

Workshop 7

Workshop 7: Contemplative apostolate

We carry out many evangelizing activities and actions. They all require work, organization, resources, and an investment of time. How do we see these activities in light of the contemplative and evangelizing dimension which we spoke about in this essay?

1. Choose an already existing apostolate.
2. Is there a Gospel passage where Christ does something similar, or some passage of Sacred Scripture that you find relates to this apostolate?
3. From the perspective of the Word of God, how would this apostolate appear? How would Jesus do it?
4. How do we want to live it? Is there something that we would like to change in the way we live this activity? Is there something that brings us joy because it has been done in the light of the Word?
5. What does the contemplative dimension have to do with the carrying out of this

apostolate? Is there some point that directly involves prayer?

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