

S.Theonestina Nambunga CIB Panel 15 Sept.

SISTERS; WHAT CAN WE DO IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE ONCE AGAIN THE VALUE OF LISTENING WITH OUR HEARTS?

ROLE PLAY

SITUATION NO. 4

The young monks then must respect their seniors and the seniors must love their juniors.

Here is a time and Situation of a Sister who is not in speaking terms with her Superior communicates through the e-mail for information permission etc. even if they live a cell apart.

The superior who abides her time to confront the Sister, likewise answers the Sister concerned through e-mail, COMMENT on how listening of the heart can be applied here.

THEME; LISTERN WITH YOUR HEART

LISTENING IN AN AFRICAN CONTEXT.

INTRODUCTION:

In our African culture when certain misunderstanding or conflict occurs, the elderly are the one who are responsible to solve the problems that occur in the family or clan. Elderly are considered to be wisdom and all members of the family or clan listen to the elder. The Family issues are discussed at night when the elderly particularly elderly of the clan gather and discuss the conflict or misunderstanding happened during the day within the family or clan. Night time allow the elders to listen carefully and whole heartedly after the activities of the day. During the process of reconciliation for example the elder Introduce the matter and the rest of the family sits quietly and listens. There is a deep sense of respect for the elder. The rest of the member keeps quiet in order to allow the elder and the persons concerned to get in touch with the tone, feelings and thus understanding of the issue correctly.

LISTEN WITH YOUR HEART IN THE RULE OF ST. BENEDICT.

All these implies that value of listening is also known, lived and treasured in our African culture. The ability of listening includes deep sense of respect for elders, readiness to accept any fraternal correction when and needed enables a peaceful way of solving the issue.

In the Rule of St. Benedict the first Word is LISTERN. As Benedictine members we are invited lovingly by our Father St. Benedict to listen to what he tells us. On our side there is a need to attentive and quiet in order to listen effectively.

This way of listening whole heartedly will enable us to be in touch with the Inner voice which speaks softly but lovingly. So that at the end of the day one becomes aware of the answer to give to that inner voice.

Listening with the inner heart gives one peace and leads slowly to conversion of life.

It also develops a habit or attitude of entering into a spirit of prayers.

SOME OF THE CHALLENGES OF LISTENING WITH YOUR HEART.

GLOBALIZATION have taken control of the whole world and almost entered into every aspect of life, religious life included.

As a result today there are people who feel uncomfortable to listen to Spiritual readings, common prayers, and common recreation. They do prefer to use their time to chat using Internet and cell phone with their friends and families.

This modern Mass media has created another problem.

The Sisters give more time listening and more attentive to their needs but not the community affairs.

Moreover the Inner voice which gentle is almost crushed and remains unattended always.

Consequently one does not find prayer life as a Priority anymore.

COMMENTS:

According to my experience as a Prioress of a community of 289 members I discovered;

1. The fact of responsibility or necessity of sincere communication and giving information to the Prioress regarding ministry and Project is most of the time weak if not missing at all.
2. This is true also to the Situation stated in situation No. four (4).
3. It is true that there are some Sisters who decide to plan and manage to live privately secretly and lonely within the Monastery.
4. Moreover, it is not surprising that if it happens that I am not in speaking terms with the Sister she plans to communicate with me through cell phone or e-mail if she has access to it.
5. This is what I feel and ask myself, when and where did I do wrong to her, that makes her avoid me and distance herself that much?

Why does she fear me? Although I understand that, there are some sisters who fear people in position, due to life experience.

6. In spite of all these listening of the heart has to be applied:-

a) As a person who lives in African culture I feel like not answering her request through cell phone or e-mail. But I fear the consequences might be more destructive if I do ask to meet personal and discuss the issue. So I also answer through e-mail although some times are not a good way for communication especially for people who live in the same community and see each other every day.

b) I need to be courageous and brave enough to go to her cell and visit with her and share with her what I felt as I got her e-mail.

- c) I need to be humble, ready to tell her prudently that both of us have to begin our way of communication differently.
- d) The Prioress has to be a person who appreciates and approves when Sisters do what is good. This will enable her to correct the stubborn Sister easily.
- e) Respect the feelings of the Sister about me, may be this way if applied carefully can be the beginning of healing of wounds we might have caused to each other as we journey together in religious life.
- f) Lastly I hope it can lead to start personal contact between the two of us and the community. In this way we can achieve once again the value of listening with our hearts?