

**EFFICIENCY OF COMMUNICATIVE DIALOGUE
IN RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY LIFE**

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Abstract

Community life should be a life enjoyed when everyone in a given community get to understand each other and make themselves available for the development of everyone in the community. It could also become unbearable or unaccommodating, when some individuals in the community refuse to internalize the essentials of communal living especially when some persons see themselves inferior to themselves. The essence of community life promotes dialogue and fraternal understanding. Therefore, when sincere communication exist, people can live together not minding individual limitations and opinions.

Introduction

It can be argued to be indubitable that community life can be more fulfilling, when there are avenues of reciprocal dialogue. In a situation, whereby, effective communication is impeded either by tribal or racial differences, one may not be wrong to say that community life is reduced to a situation where people stay together not with same motive of building a home.

Adding to this efficiency of communicative dialogue, is the expression of true Christian love which Pope Francis suggests should always possess the quality of concreteness. For example, when Jesus speaks of love, he often used concrete things like feed the hungry, visit the sick, assist the dying, etc. Pope Francis recommends that: "When this concreteness is lacking, we end up living a Christianity of illusions, ... Love that is not concrete, he said, becomes "an illusory love".¹

Thus, this presentation shall focus on the importance of promoting true democracy so as to encourage or give room to sincere dialogue and sharing among the community members. As a consequence, we shall strive to explain how efficient communication becomes necessary in religious life today.

Efficient Communicative Dialogue

Online dictionary sees, efficient as an adjective which means performing or functioning in the best possible manner with the least waste of time and effort; having and using requisite knowledge, skill, and industry.

When there is efficient dialogue existing in the community, each member is able to relate freely and a visible growth becomes eminent.

According to Jacob Srampickal, communication can be efficient, when the proper language or expression is put to use.ⁱⁱ Those engaging in this form of communicative dialogue, should be ready and willing to use language and expression which should accommodate the parties involved. Therefore, one can say emphatically that any language that downgrades the other person as not having sufficient prowess to contribute to growth would rather create conflict and barrier amongst persons. As it is common with most humans, that no one is prepared to be seen as inferior to another.

From the foregoing, it is important to state that efficient communicative dialogue to greater extent is one of the most required element in any healthy community of persons living together as religious experiencing evangelical vows.

Democratizing Phenomenon amongst Community Members

In this, it can be said too that when everyone in the community sees each other as equal whereby no one begins to lord it on another whether because, he or she is handling a particular office. Then a true and authentic community can be established through this way.

The idea is being able to come together as we are, by bringing our own individual gifts and placing them at the service of others in the community especially in tolerating each other at those special moments of encounter.ⁱⁱⁱ

In this aspect, we can add that democratization in community life promotes a culture of encounter which specifies that everyone in the community should be ready not only to give, but also to receive in equal measure, whether it be through fraternal criticisms or compliments.

Renewed communicative dialogue

There might be situations where some religious use their own preference to judge or condition others as yardstick for every community member to embrace.

Pope Francis did not mince words when he was emphatic saying that the path of peace or development has its beginnings from dialoguing and it is through this that we build bridges of peace in relationships rather than walls that create distance among persons. Here, the most appreciated or recommended form of dialogue should be that which promotes sincerity of intentions. Pope Francis continues that what is needed in sincere dialogue is humility where those involved do not need to raise voices but to always consider that the

other person has something by exhibiting a readiness to acknowledge the potentials of the other person.^{iv}

On the other hand, Adele becomes correct to say that where a supposed companion in the same journey begins to speak judgmentally by competing about who is right or wrong destroys and endangers the transformation of communal relationship which is required in religious life.^v

Thus, this renewed communicative dialogue entails rendering of oneself to the service of all in the community. Better put, it implies a self-emptying service which should pave way for genuine collaboration amongst all in the community.

Sincere sharing preserves common good

“common good, ... today takes on an increasingly universal complexion and consequently involves rights and duties with respect to the whole human race.”^{vi}

In religious life what encourages each to promote growth is when those practicing the life are able to promote sincere dialogue by giving each the opportunity to contribute one’s idea even when it may not appeal to the hearing of the other persons living in the same community. In fact, it suffices to say that true communal living, and really give room for an avenue for sincere encounter. The words “true” and “sincere” were carefully chosen, because, there are some occasions, that some members of a particular community, especially those who are in the hems of affairs will claim to give room for democratization of ideas, even when they know that they already have made decisions on specific issues. Thus, when any of these are absent in a dialogue, then, one can say that, there was never any need for dialogue or soliciting ideas. No wonder, *Vita Consacrata* insists that community life can be better enjoyed as “a life shared in love”.^{vii}

This life of sharing in love according to *Gaudium et Spes* where everyone should always try to enlighten one another through honest discussion, which must preserve mutual charity and care for all in the community for the purpose of maintaining common good.^{viii}

On a second instance, one can add that, sincere sharing or dialogue includes moments when an individual in the community will be opportuned to admonish each other. Thereby, giving opportunity for everyone in the community to be able to tell each other the truth in love without bias or favoritism. This aspect, we must emphasis is important in communicative dialogue. Like Francis Cardinal Arinze will say in some informal gathering while defining what dialogue really means: it is when each is giving opportunity to talk, while the other party listens and then roles are reversed in the same way. Thus, as *Communio et Progressio*,

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puts it that efficient communication is seen to be more than the expression of ideas and the indication of emotion but rather it remains the giving of oneself in love.^{ix}

Jesus when choosing his apostles was able to bring people from different fields or professions. He was able to entrust a fisherman, zealot, tax collector with the special task of forming a unified community.^x

Since efficient communication refers to all forms of life communication, whereby people communicate with each other verbally and non-verbally. *Vita Consacrata* recommends that efficient communication is when dialogue is conducted in a climate of mutual trust and openness.^{xi}

Efficient communication in other words to a greater extent is when people are able to encounter one another at different instances. But in this era of people focusing on themselves alone, we have in promoting true communal living, the option of using efficient communication to achieving the required goal of encountering one another in a sincere and fraternal way.

Again, one can join George Kaitholil to state that sincere sharing in a genuine community, can be experienced when every member of the said community can be free to think and work knowing that it is through love and support for each other that selfishness and destructive competition can be eliminated.^{xii}

Conclusion

The core of this write is to emphasize that for a community life to be commendable, those in this type of life, should be able to do things that will promote or maintain the common good of all, which most times, may be hard to ascertain because, of the different personalities engaged in this way of life.

Consequently, we shall conclude with the words contained in CCC 1925 concerning the practice of common good which presents the essential elements necessary for common good as when there is the reciprocal respect for and promotion of the fundamental rights of the human person. Indeed, when this mutual respect exists and none is made to be seen as inferior or of lesser personalities, one can truly boast of the presence of an efficient communicative dialogue in the community life.

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ⁱ http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/cotidie/2014/documents/papa-francesco-cotidie_20140109_love-soap-opera.html - (POPE FRANCIS' MORNING MEDITATION "Love is not a soap opera" Thursday, 9 January 2014).

ⁱⁱ Jacob Srampickal, (2009), *Communications can Renew the Church*, Karunikan Books, Kochi. p127.

ⁱⁱⁱ Adele J Gonzalez, (2009), *The Spirituality of Community*, Pauline Publications, Mumbai. p97.

^{iv} http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/cotidie/2014/documents/papa-francesco-cotidie_20140124_create-dialogue.html - (Pope Francis' Morning Meditation on "How to create dialogue" Friday, 24 January 2014).

^v Adele J Gonzalez, (2009), *The Spirituality of Community*, Pauline Publications, Mumbai. p98-99.

^{vi} *Gaudium et Spes* 26.

^{vii} *Vita Consacrata* #42.

^{viii} *Gaudium et Spes* 43. see also CCC 1905 - 1912).

^{ix} *Communio et Progressio* #11.

^x Adele J Gonzalez, (2009), *The Spirituality of Community*, Pauline Publications, Mumbai. p97.

^{xi} *Vita Consacrata* #50.

^{xii} George Kaitholil, (2012), *Communion in Community: A Renewal Programme for Religious*, Pauline Publications, Mumbai. Pg.14-15.