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Spirituality and Higher Education: Perspectives from Service-Learning

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Charismas and solidarity learning: a symphony of
four University testimonials

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

4. Charismas and solidarity learning: a symphony of four University testimonials.....68

Andrzej S. Wodka, C.Ss.R.

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4. CHARISMAS AND SOLIDARITY LEARNING: A SYMPHONY OF FOUR UNIVERSITY TESTIMONIALS

Andrzej S. Wodka, C.Ss.R.

Holy See's Agency for the Evaluation and Promotion of Quality in Ecclesiastical Universities and Faculties (AVEPRO), Rome..

Introduction

Service-learning has developed a central dimension for education: solidarity. This has to do with passing from “simply” *teaching to learning*. This passage places the student in the centre of the educational spotlight and entails different dynamics.

The art of teaching is fruitful when it awakens the students' subjectivity, infusing them with the capacity for personal and personalized learning. The potentialities generated by the reflection on one's learning in the existential and community space confirm the conviction about “learning to serve, serving to learn”.

The art of teaching is fruitful when it awakens the students' subjectivity, infusing them with the capacity for personal and personalized learning. The potentialities generated by the reflection on one's learning in the *existential and community space* confirm the conviction about “learning to serve, serving to

learn”. Thus the various initiatives that intend to “*accompany and serve students, educators and community-based organizations that develop or wish to implement solidarity or service-learning (SL) projects*” (Del Campo et al., 2017) find full justification.

Charismas and education: a natural relationship?

Quite a few institutions in the Catholic educational world were born out of a charisma, emerging in a specific historical context, with an educational requirement “of their own”, sustained over time.

In theology, charismas are gifts of the Spirit, given to support the journey of the believing community towards the final Parousia. In his “farewell” speeches (John, 13-17), Jesus announced five promises regarding the coming of “Another Paraclete” and his role in the

post-Easter life of the Church. Before John, with the decisive contribution of Paul, it was better understood how the Spirit continues to give his gifts to sustain the Church on its journey, often battered by headwinds and dramatic historical turbulence, as testified in the correspondence with the Corinthian community.

Such gifts, both personal and communal, are given to the community for the good and for building up the whole Body of Christ, where He is the head and the believers are the members (cf. Romans, 12:4-5; Ephesians, 4:11-13). Reciprocal edification and Christian solidarity, in one Body, express the true “law of Christ” that is realized in “bear one another’s burdens” (Galatians, 6:2). As spiritual gifts that depend on the Spirit, these energies and the consequent works are distinguished by the freedom of the Paraclete and are not subject, in history, to a presumed total human “control.”

In history, charismas have often expressed themselves as particular responses of God given to the specific needs of the time. They give rise to new movements, often varied and multi secular, bringing new operational sensitivities to unprecedented social and religious wounds with which humanity must confront itself. Charismas suggest that purely “institutional” human resources and, in any case, only human resources are not enough to face the new, often dramatic, emergencies. History teaches that it is only by resorting to the trans-historical springs of gratuitousness that it is possible to reorient oneself and be reborn.

This is how the religious families were born, precisely defined as “charismas”, which in time also had to be organized and institutionalized as “works”. Outpourings of these manifestations continue as Providence responds to the cry of humanity at every juncture in its history. The historical set of such manifestations was defined as “Christ unfolding through the centuries” (Lubich, 1994), embracing forms of life that are ever more communitarian and ever more explicitly at the service of the human being, with whom the Redeemer of man has always identified himself, taking on as his own the wounds of each of his brothers and sisters. The “charismas”, as openings from Heaven to Earth, are surprisingly abundant today, even coming out of the consecrated life and taking on more secular tones, always originating in the Gospel.

A particular dimension of the historical irradiation of charismas is love for the Truth of the Gospel, which is both a *splendour of God’s plan* for man and the *joy of a redeemed existence*, shared in the face of what is true, beautiful, good and fair. Simplifying, this is how numerous universities were born, created as a response to the incarnational impulses typical of a charisma, needed to translate (as an explicit face of Truth) the potentialities of the grace itself that heals humanity. The charismas manifested in the founding saints such

It is to unite all elements of nature and grace in a way accessible to shared cultural language so that they converge; indeed, to “uni-direct” towards a new epiphany of the Truth that loves; therefore, it saves, heals, and makes the human family grow in history.

as Benedict, Francis, Dominic, Ignatius, Alfonso, John Bosco and many others, responded, each in their way, to this intimate invitation of the “gift of grace” itself to integrate as “universitas”. It is to unite all elements of nature and grace in a way accessible to shared

cultural language so that they converge; indeed, to “uni-direct” towards a new epiphany of the Truth that loves; therefore, it saves, heals and makes the human family grow in history.

The next four contributions express this specific potentiality that each charisma carries with it and that sooner or later is dressed up in a formal, expository, argumentative and communicative language, accessible to every mind and heart that sincerely seeks and studies the Truth. If the Gospel of grace is a common denominator for all the charismas that are only understood together in the body of the Church, the specificity of the “charismatic face” of salvific truth is different for each one of them and this is also seen in the academic field. This special charismatic “colouring” will be linked here to service-learning which, with its initiatives and dynamics, is a fixed point for the four university institutions taken into consideration at the global level and inspired respectively by the Ignatian charisma (Company of Jesus), and charismas of Saint Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer (Opus Dei), John Baptist de La Salle and Saint Francis of Assisi.

This rose of charismas will be further enriched by Patrick M. Green’s reflection that focuses on the North American context, taking into account the impact of service-learning in four universities inspired by the Jesuit, Marianist, Vincentian and Catholic charismas respectively.¹⁵

The maius of Saint Ignatius: training and service to justice

With the first contribution of Claudia Mora Motta, service-learning promoter at the Xaverian University of Cali, we get straight to the point: “The Ignatian charisma, the university and service-learning.” The charisma here is that of Saint Ignatius of Loyola (1491-1556), founder of the Society of Jesus (1540). It is universally known how active the Jesuits are in the field of education in the world, in the 112 nations of their evangelising mission.

¹⁵ We will consider the latter through the case study of the University of San Diego, born out of an agreement between the Diocese of San Diego and the Society of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

Prompted by the inspirations of Pope Francis, contained in his book *Let Us Dream: The Path to a Better Future* (2020), Mora stresses that the starting point is always the concrete human need to which God responds with the resources of a charisma. In this case, the Ignatian charisma. The invitation of Francis, a Jesuit pontiff, to “decentralise” and “transcend” is better understood, also valid for the university: it is about broadening the perspective to make contact with reality, assuming the risk of changing ways of thinking and acting in each crisis that hits society.

Here universities are called to find and implement experiential methodologies suitable for developing attitudes of stewardship and service, in an authentic education that engages the heart, the mind and the hands.

The current pandemic crisis has also exposed multiple wounds in the society in which we live: extreme poverty, inequity in the health and education systems, unlimited desire to accumulate and “voracious” ill-treatment of

Mother Earth. Here universities are called to find and implement experiential methodologies suitable for developing attitudes of stewardship and service, in an authentic education that engages the heart, the mind and the hands.

The reflections of this contribution focus on *justice* and the role of service-learning in the way it was assumed by the University of the Society of Jesus, called—by charisma—to form men and women into a life lived “for the others, for the greater glory of God.” The Ignatian *magis*, the horizon of the “something else”, pushes us to search for the “greater”, more universal good, marked by excellence. In the university context, the *magis* also implies a *social and intellectual apostolate* to put knowledge and science at the service of others.

Therefore, the university is called to be “inserted” in the local social dynamics, and this leads to the definition of political and cultural projects in favour of the poorest. This is evidenced by the experience reported by Mora on a group of Jesuit martyrs from the José Simeón Cañas University in El Salvador (late 1980s). The Ignatian inspiration stimulated a courageous analysis of the social, economic and political reality, aimed at universal respect for human dignity. Thus, the university was able to carry out a “social projection” towards a movement of liberation, greater awareness and transformation.

The relevant presence of the Ignatian university in society was masterfully illustrated by some interventions by Peter H. Kolvenbach (1928-2016), Superior General of the Society of Jesus. Education is pertinent or relevant when it develops critical thinking capable of transforming the structures of injustice. The cultivation of this type of knowledge must

always ask “for whose benefit and for what purpose”. A decisive criterion for the evaluation of Jesuit universities is that students are transformed in the face of the sufferings of the world, learning to “perceive, think, judge, choose and act for the rights of others.”

It is a pedagogical approach that leads to the formation of the “whole person” in his or her “being in solidarity”. The injustice suffered with others touches the heart and, therefore, manages to change the mind, catalysing solidarity, essential in all relevant intellectual research and moral reflection. This is where the “social responsibility of the university” “finds its roots, through which it can contribute to the transformation of reality intelligently and effectively. People are “whole” when they are carriers of “well-informed solidarity.”

This implies an active and experiential pedagogy. Professors and students are invited to “come out of themselves” to “meet the other” in the exchange of knowledge, experiences and opportunities. This pedagogy carries out such formative process in five typically Ignatian moments: context, experience, reflective participation, action and evaluation. The service-learning methodology is also based on experiential education, where the objectives of curricular learning are confronted with the challenges of the context, to “resignifying” them through systematic and intentional reflection.

The different coincidences between the purpose of the *educational project* of the Xaverian University and the modalities of service-learning allow students to be effectively trained to be future political subjects, defenders of justice and agents for the improvement of the quality of life for all.

The charisma of Opus Dei and training for work that serves and bonds

The second contribution is from Isabel Egaña, a professor in pedagogy oriented towards social solidarity at Universidad Austral in Argentina. In her text, the author explores the topic that bonds “the mission of the university and the charisma of Opus Dei”. Egaña bases her reflection on the legacy of the holy founder of the Opus Dei, Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer (1902-1975), canonized in 2002. From the very first words, theologically loaded terms emerge in the stream of thought, such as “divine initiative”, “sanctification of human reality”, “love God” and “love the world”. Just as in the case of Saint Ignatius, also in the much more recent thought of Saint Josemaría, these terms-values are presented in close relation to the concrete human world. The immediate specificity of this charisma associates them with a dimension that is at the centre of the reflection: it is “a job well done,” with an explicit attitude of service towards others.

At the centre of the reflection is precisely the “professional work”. This is the aim of the educational activity, oriented towards the “materialisation” of the Gospel message for the common good of the whole of humanity. A job well done has a soul of its own. Its supernatural transcendence makes it a means of union with God and transformation of society, through charity.

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of society, through charity. This vision is related to the Eucharistic experience of St. Josemaría (1931), in which Christ “draws everyone to [him]self” (cf. John, 12:32), particularly humans in their activities and the whole humanity in all social relations. Christians, as “other Christs”, become —precisely through work— light and leaven in their living environments and transform them. And they do this with the same energy of Christ: He is the “pinnacle of all human activity”, therefore, we find Him amid the things of the world.

In this sense, an embodiment of Opus Dei’s charisma is Universidad Austral, a corporate initiative at the service of society. The inspirational force of the charisma, since the birth of the “first-born” University of Navarra (1952), makes it possible to articulate the university service by uniting the search for truth, the development and transmission of knowledge, with the formation of people in the wake of their “transcendent destiny” and with the complement of the corresponding virtues. This leads to intellectual, professional, social and public *leadership*, unthinkable without the help of education measured on the Gospel and “warmed” with the same love of Christ.

We are at the heart of the matter: service to society through the professional preparation and comprehensive training of the members of the academic community. They must be able to guide social, scientific and technological changes, with ever more up-to-date instruments, but always in tune with the “Christian worldview” and synergistic collaboration with other paralleled service institutions.

Finally, the contribution shows the two sides of the same coin: university education must aim at excellence in *professional preparation*, but this objective cannot be achieved without considering *service* as a true and proper *mission*. The measure of this necessary and not always easy synthesis is identified with the capacity to give real impulses towards a “University Social Responsibility”, present in each unit and potentially well defined. This

can be expressed in initiatives such as “Acción Universitaria”, or in programs such as “Puna Solidaria Austral”, where professors, students and volunteers can carry out several service-learning projects, coordinated and articulated in an interdisciplinary way, with didactic, pedagogical, health, administrative and even recreational relevance, according to local needs. In this sense, service-learning, with its approaches and programmes, has also become a must in the curricula of the different university proposals and the specific training of teaching staff.

Also in the case of the founding charisma of Opus Dei, because it flows from a single trans-historical source, this is extremely in line with service-learning. This educational modality is recognized as an opportunity to “materialise the love of God and humanity” through the transformation of the world using “a job well done”, addressing the real human needs of today, manifested in the communities. A conclusive strong point: students take the lead in bringing about change *in primis*.

The charisma of de La Salle: collaborating with God in education

The third contribution, written by Br. Michael Valenzuela, FSC, from De La Salle-College of St. Benilde (Benildus Romançon) is intended to bring together “Lasallian spirituality and service-learning”, as is common practice in this institution of the Brothers of the Christian schools in the Philippines. As in the preceding cases, the university activity of these Lasallians is connected with their charismatic source: Saint John Baptist de La Salle (1651-1719). The saintly French educator formed an association of lay teachers dedicated to the Christian education of poor and abandoned children and youth. In the years that followed, De La Salle and the Brothers of the Christian Schools gave the poor access to quality education and Christian formation, with educational innovations basic to modern education. Teaching became a true and proper Christian vocation. De La Salle, canonised in 1900, was declared the patron saint of teachers and educators in 1950. His works, known as Brothers of the Christian Schools, continues to develop the educational mission, sharing the Lasallian spirituality and charism with more than 70,000 educators in almost eighty countries.

Lasallian spirituality is born as a call to two contemplative perspectives: the inclusive love of God, who continues to redeem his children, and the hunger of young people to live life with dignity and meaning. From this double gaze present in the hearts of educators, a compassion is born that shares in the *pathos* of the Heavenly Father for his most vulnerable children. St. John de La Salle sees in the Father such *zeal* and *affection* that motivate the sending of the Son, the form and measure of all educational zeal of the Brothers. The Lasallian project starts from “feeling as God feels” to offer opportunities for full hu-

Faced with the progressive alienation of religion from concrete life, the Lasallian proposal tries to integrate, starting from faith and not outside it, professional excellence and social responsibility, but also the search for holiness which connects with the creative and redeeming work of God in the world. Here service-learning is an important strategy to achieve this “integral goal.”

manisation to those who are deprived of it, even at the cost of the cross. For educators in the Lasallian tradition, fidelity to God demands fidelity to young people whatever their situation. This vision contributes to a remarkable synthesis of faith and work, of spiritual life and professional commitment, bringing everyone into communion through fraternal solidarity. This is possible

when challenges, burdens and graces are shared, serving through education the cause of humanisation and the spiritual liberation of all.

De La Salle College of St. Benilde is a good testimony to this. Since its inception in 1980, the College has continued to offer professional, innovative and pioneering vocational courses promoting inclusion in higher education, opening up avenues into the future for the creative industries. Since the encyclical *Laborem Exercens* of St. John Paul II (1981), “the essential key to the whole social question” is work. Lasallian schools are inspired by it and try to integrate practical education with Christian formation. Faced with the progressive alienation of religion from concrete life, the Lasallian proposal tries to integrate, starting from faith and not outside it, professional excellence and social responsibility, but also the search for holiness which connects with the creative and redeeming work of God in the world. Here service-learning is an important strategy to achieve this “integral goal.”

For Pope Francis, too, work remains the key to the social question, as the exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* (2013) testifies. Faced with a human family that inhabits an “endangered planet”, harmed by exploitation that maximises profit alone, the adoption of service-learning from 2018-2019 involves all degree programmes. Students are asked to engage in at least two collaborative projects consistent with the school’s mission and aimed at sustainable development objectives.

Towards the end of this important contribution, Valenzuela lists seven specific ways in which a Lasallian-inspired spirituality sustains and deepens learning linked to service. These are elements worthy of a close study for their inspiring force. Only in the perspective of God (spiritual hunger), can the suffering wounds of the world find answers that go beyond the mere law of profit and lead to the dignity of all. The Lasallian “double contem-

plative gaze” (God is situated in the cry of human pain) helps young people to pay attention to the concrete details of life, to the rigour of the analysis of crucial problems and the search for possibilities of life in difficult situations. The innate dignity of people, discovered from the experience of relationship with God’s love, leads the students to give priority to people in every project and to treat each one with unconditional respect.

This develops social empathy, a strong point of service-learning, with which to contrast any instrumentalisation. Professional excellence of the Lasallian type is animated by a zeal for the well-being of the people it serves. In this work, thus open to transcendence, constant improvement is both a spiritual and a professional requirement. The Lasallian emphasis on fraternal collaboration and solidarity in the common mission favours the construction of similar relationships in the same society and brings about the expected inter-human and economic transfiguration. Such integration of spiritual life, professional commitment, and social responsibility is therapeutic in a world where —by exiling moral and spiritual values— dehumanisation and serious damage to society and the environment are taking place. Finally, service-learning based on spirituality helps students to deal with the possible cynicism that can always arise from disenchantment in the face of serious and seemingly unsolvable social problems. Discovering God in these crises can offer a new synthesis of realism and hope, both in the study and professional productivity. Every charitable effort, even if imperfect, is precious for the building of the Kingdom of God and instils confidence amid difficulties.

The charisma of Saint Francis: prophets of solidarity

This last contribution is offered by Daniel P. Horan, OFM, of the Catholic Theological Union in Chicago. The author proposes to offer a Franciscan perspective on the link between prophecy and solidarity. This time, the focus is on an education imbued with the Franciscan charisma, opening it up to a pedagogy based on service-learning, integrated with typically Franciscan aims and main curricular objectives.

The academic community is such if it is engaged. It is a programmatic effort to introduce students to a new way of living the educational experience, going beyond “the classroom” into local and global communities. Classical educational content led to the “text”. In contrast, the experience of academic community engagement provides students and educators themselves with a new way of learning. The “academic community engagement” then becomes a “new text”, a new “lesson plan”. Community engagement here becomes synonymous with service-learning, where new spaces for creative teaching open up and instructional experiences become holistic.

Here, Horan offers two suggestions. The first concerns the “pedagogical grammar of the academic community engagement”, where conceptions of civic responsibility, even charity, can be reflected in favour of a more transparent solidarity. Solidarity carries in itself the possibility of defining one’s position in the world. Intentional submission, presented in the life and rules of Francis of Assisi, provides a model for an authentically Christian attitude, also understood as the *evangelical life*. Today there is no lack of proposals aimed at educating by instilling the values of civic responsibility, philanthropic interest or community building in today’s young adults. The Franciscan approach provides—for the *academic community engagement*— a non-generic ability to influence, helping to improve the ways of life of Christian discipleship, according to the example of Francis and Clare of Assisi.

The second suggestion stems from solidarity, understood as a constitutive element of the Franciscan tradition, whose assumptions allow us to present today’s Millennials with a fundamental challenge for the horizon of meaning. It is a question of recognizing that the increasingly common social norms sustain, in fact, the fragmented desire for social mobility and the accumulation of wealth. The Franciscan inspiration denounces this materialistic teleology and offers an ever more integrated sense of the prophetic call to live as Christian disciples. Thanks to this, Millennial students can be trained to discern and work under this “prophetic” inspiration. There is no lack of sources: Saint Bonaventure offers a useful theology of prophecy in his *Legenda Major*, related to the life of Francis himself.

The academic community engagement that seeks to form “prophetic graduates”, so that their modus vivendi in the world may be concretely in solidarity, shows how deeply intrinsic this is to the founding charisma of Francis and the long Franciscan tradition in the world.

Solidarity, as modelling the academic community engagement and the promotion of graduates of Franciscan higher institutions as prophets, is achievable based on a rich “latent tradition” among the members of the AFCU (Association of Franciscan Colleges and Universities).

The academic community engagement that seeks to form “prophetic graduates”, so that their *modus vivendi* in the world may be concretely in solidarity, shows how deeply intrinsic this is to the founding charisma of Francis and the long Franciscan tradition in the world.

In this way, solidarity service becomes an implicit action in any engagement rooted in faith and its values. Becoming prophetic persons, born of the Word of God, does not happen automatically; the programmes would have to provide new conditions to make

such a “prophetic conversion” possible. The Franciscan tradition took on this chance that leads to a holistic education for today’s young adults, moving from service to solidarity. “Service to the community” —a component of integrated learning— helps contrast the laws of profit and social “ascent”, to position oneself in solidarity, where the truth studied and experienced liberates people prophetically, anticipating the novelty of the Gospel incarnated in the times ahead.

The shift in discourse from service to solidarity and the challenge of being contemporary Christian prophets —Horan concludes— is a precious objective of the Franciscan institutions of higher education. This implies a continuous rediscovery of educational dynamics better suited to form the next generations of young adults as integrated members of the Christian and global community.

Four charismas in tune, to transfigure the global world

With these four contributions, it is possible to perceive how the divine interacts with the human in the history of humanity, out of love and for the redemption of the latter. People trained in integrity, commit themselves to justice (Ignatius), work with responsible professionalism in favour of others (Escrivá de Balaguer), teach by serving as collaborators of God (de La Salle) and generate “prophets” of solidarity, in gratuity and not for profit (Francis of Assisi).

Claudia Mora Motta, from the Xaverian University of Cali, shows how the charisma and mission of the Society of Jesus are transformed “charismatically” into a service to faith, fully connected to the promotion of justice. The latter is perceived by the Jesuits themselves as “an absolute requirement”, proper to the Ignatian tradition, which today includes caring for creation, standing up for the excluded and the marginalised, challenging unjust social structures.

Service-learning harmonises well with the Ignatian charisma, which “seeks God in all things”. The experience of God in the Ignatian sense leads to encountering him on the path of love, also in everyday life: at work and in the most ordinary things in life. A living God is the one who is present in all living beings, found in everyday life. People formed in integrity become “conscious, competent, compassionate and committed subjects”. The humanistic spirit that “generates people” (Nicolás, 2008)¹⁶, makes personal growth happen in the integration between a solid “reflection on transcendence” and “knowledge at the service of others, to build fair societies”.

¹⁶ To consult the bibliographical reference, see the chapter by Claudia Mora Motta in this volume.

Reading Mora's contribution shows how the various aspects of the Ignatian charisma and those of service-learning are intertwined in the university environment. It is always direct and real experience, about the formation of the whole-person, the preferential option for the poor, the critical reading of the context, "letting oneself be impacted", recognize the tensions of life, discernment and action in favour of others, to contribute to the transformation of iniquitous structures in society. The spirit of Saint Ignatius is certain in this: "Love is shown more in deeds than in words."

Isabel Egaña, from the Austral University, also unites "the mission of the university and the charisma of Opus Dei". Drawing from her charismatic source—Saint Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer—Egaña recovers the expressions full of "classical" spirituality to propose them in new clothes, in close connection with university life. Here, the horizon of life is to know how to "love the world passionately, daring to seek creative solutions to its problems, in collaboration with others". Inspired by this, the university can and must become an environment where authentic faith becomes "tangible in all its manifestations." This is vital to face—as an institution—the uncertainties and concerns of society, not with immediate solutions, but rather by awakening hearts and minds towards a more just citizenship, by studying problems with critical honesty and scientific depth, and by proposing consolidated paradigms of development.

If the reading is not mistaken, the role of professional work—done with dedication and mastery—becomes the master path for social transfiguration. However, service is its hidden "soul" (as attitude), and at the same time, its most immediate incarnation (as realisation), in the progressive manifestation of the world willed by God and dreamed of by humanity. It would be one of the cases of the circularity between the *sacrum* and the *profanum*: the sacred is the soul of the profane, and one without the other they dilute into nothingness. Similarly, work and service are in the circularity that, through service marked by gratuitousness, saves work from its purely productive and selfish materiality, while work done with love and dedication manifests a "unitive" dimension that goes beyond the visible and creates transcendent bonds.

In this sense, for work to have a soul and manage to inform the human reality with the divine, Egaña draws attention to the need for an appropriate education aimed at professional work of this kind. Labour creativity can contribute to the common good, but it must be capable of mediating the multidimensional encounter in charity with what transcends mere calculation. Only in this way can the work carried out by Christians be taken up by Christ himself and contribute effectively to transfiguring the social, economic or political reality, according to the aspirations of the generations to come.

Here the charisma contributes to the formation of a *service mentality*, combining a healthy “concern for the other”, with personal generosity towards the effective care of the other, freeing people from the limits of a “small private world” and directing them towards the joyful construction of a world of solidarity and co-responsibility.

Continuing with the contributions, the third one, proposed by Michael Valenzuela from the Lasallian College “St. Benilde” in the Philippines, is special. It highlights a charisma that places Christian education on the same level of participation in the salvific work of God. This charisma is educational at its root. To educate is its “raison d’être”: it is to collaborate in the concrete and historical manifestation of the very mystery of God, who continually “leads human beings out of spiritual alienation and into the communion of love”. In this way, the Christian educator becomes a “collaborator of God”, an “ambassador of Christ”, a “mediator” and “minister of reconciliation” between God and young people.

The educational work of charismatic origin entails the cultivation of an abiding awareness of God’s presence in people and in everyday events to respond to God’s continuous invitations to love, to serve, to grow and to make others grow. Such a spirituality will make no distinction between the search for one’s salvation and the fulfilment of professional duties, as we have already seen in St. Ignatius of Loyola and St. Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer. St. John de La Salle is convinced that “the service of guides and leaders of souls” is played out before God and at the same time carries out His project and the sanctification of educators together with the students.

Lasallian spirituality is recognised as foundational not only for the educational mission itself but also for service-learning as it has been adopted in its programmes and inserted in the mission-vision on the fundamental values that lead students to regard their future professions as means to promote human dignity and the common good, according to the “feeling of God.”

The historical response to human needs is a characteristic of every God’s charisma who becomes flesh. This responsiveness is a particular distinctive characteristic of Lasallian spirituality, which frames education as participation in God’s salvific work in the world. The service-learning programme, under such a charismatic inspiration, can help not only to bridge the gap between faith and professional life but also to react to local and global threats to *humanun* itself in a truly meaningful way.

The symphony of the four charismas reaches a final crescendo with the Franciscan voice of Daniel P. Horan of the Catholic Theological Union of Chicago. He stresses that service-learning is not specifically Franciscan, since it does not belong to religious congregations or traditions which, in any case, always stress the importance of community

service as a constitutive element of contemporary education. This does not diminish the importance of service-learning in today's integrated educational programs. On the contrary: service-learning has potentialities that can make the original expressions of a more genuine charisma, in this case making the educational trajectories inspired by the Saint of Assisi "more Franciscan."

The author is convinced that *academic community engagement*, as a face of service-learning, offers a unique opportunity for colleges and universities of Franciscan origin or inspiration. This makes it possible to better integrate the explicitly Franciscan dimensions of the founding charisma of the various institutions into the educational experience of their students. The aim is to better expose the values inherent in the Franciscan intellectual and spiritual tradition so that AFCU institutions can integrate their programmes in a truly "Franciscan" way.

Francis's conversion to a life of solidarity with the poor of all kinds represents the model of lifestyle we most desire for the next generation of college graduates. It is about service (not philanthropy or gratification) capable of identifying the injustice that demands protest and commitment.

Therefore, student-prophets through a life of solidarity. The challenge is in the semantic game between "profit" and "prophet," close in assonance and very distant in meaning. Millennials who finished their first or last year as teenagers during the 2000s (but also the "Generation Z" that follows them) are invited to transcend the restrictions imposed by the culture of profit to enter a community of a different meaning, as offered by Christianity, certifying it in particular models of life, such as that of Francis of Assisi.

Four saints who lived in different times, four charismas with different embodiments, four proposals for academic education to educate the new man, recreated in Christ, historically manifested first in Europe, to later expand to the other continents, wherever the human being raises the cry in need of concrete redemption in personal, social and structural wounds of all kinds.

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Without education, history does not evolve. Without solidary service, humanity does not learn to be loved beyond all imagination and to be able—in turn—to love in this way.

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Uniservitate is a global programme for the promotion of service-learning in Catholic Higher Education. Its objective is to generate a systemic change in Catholic Higher Education Institutions (CHEIs) through the institutionalisation of service-learning (SL) as a tool to achieve its mission of offering an integral education and training of agents of change committed to their community.

“We will not change the world, if we do not change education”

Pope Francis

3 Spirituality and Higher Education: Perspectives from Service-Learning

A research topic that is increasingly attracting the attention of the academic world is the link between teaching and spirituality, understood in its broadest sense. This will be the focus of the volume that we present to our readers today. The aim is to provide, both for Catholic Institutions of Higher Education and universities at large, a space for reflection in their itinerary of discernment about their identity and specific mission.

This book, the third of the Uniservitate collection, explores these topics, bringing together research and experiences of international scope, from the Catholic university world as well as of other creeds and non-religious convictions, which delve into service-learning from the ethics of care and fraternity.

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