

DIALOGUE: Pedro Poveda (P) and Victoria Díez (V)

[Quotations from P.Poveda "Pensamientos para unas Jornadas de Profesoras de Escuelas y Centros Públicos de Enseñanza" (Notes for a seminar for public-school teachers) scheduled to take place on 17 July 1936. Part of it is published in "Amigos fuertes de Dios" (God's staunch friends) p. --- ss. Quotations from Victoria: "Una vida en misión" (A life in mission); "Santas del siglo XX" (Twentieth century women saints) and "Veo el cielo abierto" (I see the heavens wide open)]

There are 3 basic themes:

A - Vocation to the apostolate, to the Teresian Association. Love and self-giving in the Association, activities with young people.

B - The strength of prayer. Self-giving and union with Christ. Spiritual life.

C - Profession of faith and a life consistent with faith. Being in the world. Witness of life: to what extent?

Parts of the dialogue can be selected according to needs.

[Words in parenthesis act as bridges or complete the sense of a phrase]

DIALOGUE

**A - 1**

P - This Association began with young people - young people whom you admire and love. They were God's young people who understood the mission right from the beginning and put all their effort and enthusiasm into seeing it grow.

**A - 1**

V- I, for my part, can declare that I have found all the happiness attainable on this earth, and I have found it because I belong to an Association that clearly works for people's salvation.

- Until now I was unable to fulfil the longing within me because I had not found an Association that corresponded to my vocation. But now, Divine Providence has led me to this house in Seville.

- We need to love. We have to love with energy and courage because it is not an easy mission. In fact, it is really very challenging.

**A - 2**

P - Members of the Association should never forget their identity as such, nor the aims of the Association, its spirit, its organisation, its destiny. This awareness will always help them in their undertakings.

**A - 2**

V - I am thinking of my school. Finally, my school was officially opened! But until that moment arrived, there was so much to do and so many obstacles! All of that effort was quite exhausting... However, the inspector was very lavish with his praise and I was pleased, especially for the Association.

- I have just had a visit from all the members of the town council and a group of workers who came to see the school exhibition. I am satisfied because they went away very happy and they congratulated me very many times.

**A - 2'**

P - The love a Teresian member professes for the Association should be equalled by her prudence in speaking about it.

**A - 2'**

V - Now that they know me and see that the children are making progress and that I take care of the school, it does not matter if my ideas are known. I always stay at school longer than officially required so that, in this way, there will be no complaints.

- I need prudence and strength for the battle that I shall inevitably have to face.

**A - 3**

P - You are the hope of the Association, and that obliges you to be equal to such an exalted mission. You must put real effort into preparing yourselves because you should be God's instruments. Think of how much effort in their education is taken by those aspiring for high office in the world! Tell me, is there anything higher than being an apostle?

**A - 3**

V - When I think that these people are well-disposed to accept God, and that maybe they can do so through me - an unworthy person who wishes to save them -, I feel imbued with strength that can only come through grace.

- [This is why I say to Carmen]

- Don't give up studying. Apply yourself to it, not just to avoid a reprimand, but because you are convinced that this is what God is asking of you, and not for any other reason.

**B - 1**

P - If we really knew the strength of prayer we would consider ourselves fortunate, because we would be absolutely certain that we could achieve all the good we desire and seek, for ourselves and for everyone else.

**B - 1**

V - They say that the love of God is like a flame of fire that cannot remain hidden. So then, a soul aflame with this celestial love will find it hard to conceal it. How wonderful it would be if we could say the same about ourselves! Why not let's try?

- What can I advise you? Just one thing: all that matters is that you love Jesus, not with words, but with deeds.

**B - 2**

P - It is amazing how much good you can do if you are filled with God, if you live close to God, and if your work and all the good derived from it are related to God.

**B - 2**

V - Lord, communicate your divine fire to me so that I may be embraced in burning charity and work unceasingly to become more holy and to help those entrusted to me to do the same... Take me, O my God, take me before I offend you and become separated from you. I long to be yours till death.

**B - 2'**

P - Those who forget themselves in order to think of others acquire the right for God to care for them, guide them, defend them and grant them success in their work of apostolate.

**B - 2'**

V - If it should be necessary to give my life in order to identify with Christ, from today I would cease to exist for the world as I would live solely for Christ and my death would be my gain.

- Lord, instil in me a spirit of truth and simplicity in order that people may be attracted to it. Invest me with strength and courage for the battle that awaits me in the world.

**B - 3**

P - All the strength of your apostolate rests on your union with God. In order to convey it to people we need to be filled with God's spirit, and this is achieved by asking for it with faith and trust.

- May no sacrifice hurt when it is for spiritual good and the salvation of others.

**B - 3**

V - I accept the will of God and I would not mind going to the ends of the earth if I could give glory to God there and evangelise for Him. However, there's no way I can go. ... I suffer so much when I see my parents. I always try to seem calm and strong although I do not feel that way at all.

**B - 3'**

P - Do we place our trust in God or in our activities? in our strength? in anything human? The peace we feel in our souls and our calmness of spirit will give us our answer.

**B - 3'**

V - What can I do, Lord, to please you more? I give myself totally to your adorable will. Do what you will with me because I belong to you completely.

**B - 4**

P - How have you fulfilled your professional duties? Could your shortcomings have been of disservice to the children, their families, the town?..

**B - 4**

V - Finally in my town ... According to the news I heard today ... there are no means of communication. The journey is complicated: from Seville to Merida and from Merida to Badajoz by train; from Badajoz to Olivencia you have to take a bus, and after that, nobody knows...

- My parents are disgusted at the condition of this town ... I suffer terribly when I see them, but I always try to look calm and in control even though I am not.

**B - 5**

P - If people observe your conduct in order to judge the faith you profess, the morals you practise and the Church that teaches both, what will the enemies think? Will you have confused them? Will you have edified them or scandalised them?

**B - 5**

[My methods?]:

V - An active school is one where the children develop their perspectives with the help of a reasonably disciplined environment. They are being prepared for their future occupation or profession through exposure to the approach adopted at school. We go on excursions to picturesque and historic places... We have classes in the open air, we alternate singing and rhythmic exercises... Thanks to the good environment and sensible freedom, the children feel at home and care for their school...

- The children love me to talk to them because the poor little things are not used to being spoken to with love... They are aware that I don't punish them or hit them, but that I correct them and love them, and so they are delighted to be with me.

**C - 1**

P - Now more than ever you need to learn from the Early Christians how to live under various forms of harassment. See how faithful they were to the Church, how they witnessed to Christ, how they prepared for martyrdom and prayed for their enemies. Learn from them how to forgive, to love, to bless the Lord, to encourage all around you.

**C - 1**

V - Now is the time to be generous, to stride ahead without looking back. Is this road sown with thorns? Do not be afraid. The prize awaits you at the finish.

**C - 2**

P - Do we judge current events with human criteria or divine criteria?

- Our utterances, judgements and attitudes will make this known.

**C - 2**

V - ... I am very worried about what is going on at the present time because things are getting worse ... Here you have to remain deaf and blind and have your arms outstretched like Moses.

- I don't know what the Lord has prepared for us. Pray to Our Blessed Lady about this, and ask that I may have the strength and all that is needed for this. I put all my trust in God.

**C - 3**

P - It is with prayer, love and work - and not with complaints, remarks and moaning -, that you will help to save Spain.

**C - 3**

V - We have to live reality, and if this reality is hard and bitter, we need to perfume it with sacrifice because that is more useful than dreaming. And if we sometimes dream of something that is eternal and capable of filling our hearts, it is because some day - perhaps not so far away - we are certain of achieving this ideal.

**C - 4**

P - Now more than ever you will need celestial lights in order to know your great mission, and supernatural strength in order to accomplish it.

**C - 4**

V - We were reading on the veranda overlooking the field ... we had never spoken so intimately before. [we said]: "we must prepare ourselves for whatever God sends our way. If anything happens, we are certain that neither you nor I will live to tell the story".

...The two of us prayed to the Holy Spirit and Our Lady to give us strength ... We had a foreboding the storm was coming ... we spent hours reading Association materials.

**C - 4'**

P - They are talking so much these days about persecution. How much they comment, how superficially they judge, how eager they are for news, such uncontrolled curiosity, such un-Christian vehemence, such carelessness in allowing themselves to be influenced, how many mistakes are being made! Let us examine ourselves and make reparation.

**C - 4'**

V - Afraid?

- Do not worry. The Lord does not ask us for more than we are capable of resisting. If we are asked for martyrdom, God will give us the strength to endure it.

(On commenting with ----- about the outcome for Inés in Fabiola's book, which Victoria had given her to read)

**C - 5**

P - Now is the time to double our prayer, to do more penance, to suffer better, to be lavish with charity, to speak less, to live very united to Our Lord, to be very prudent, to console those near us, to encourage the fainthearted, to be generous in mercy, to live with Providence, to have and give peace, to be good examples for others at all times.

**C - 5**

V - Most Holy Mother: I consecrate to you all of these children you have entrusted to me. Be their true Mother and Teacher. Now that you have closed my lips in this sacred place and I cannot show your love, grant that they may perceive it and be good, and that at the end of my days I may not come alone to fall at your feet, but that I may be surrounded by them.

**C - 5'**

P - It is now that the disposition of our souls is known, when our spirit of faith is evident, when our trust in Providence is seen, when the true virtues are distinguished from the false, when the firmness of doctrine is revealed and steadfast holiness is esteemed.

**C - 5'**

V - This town that You have given me, which is yours and mine, belongs to us both. What will You do with it? Ask me a price!

**C - 6**

P - ...We have this depressing situation where people chosen and selected and who claim to be pious, do not think like the Early Christians when there is persecution, nor do they express themselves in the same way. They do not pray or do penance, they are not humble and do not work, they do not put God's will nor the teachings of the Church into practice. They just wail dejectedly, withdraw defeated or hide away intimidated.

**C - 6**

V - [During this Holy Week], ... unfortunately, the women came out in smaller numbers than in previous years, some because of apathy, others through fear ... we shall see if they will take a stand.

**C - 7**

P - ... Tabernacles are desecrated, pictures are destroyed, churches are burnt, and crucifixes are removed from schools, homes and society. Relations between people are poisoned and young people are corrupted. They blaspheme against the name of God, they incite hatred for Jesus Christ, they endorse evil, they justify crimes, they encourage acts of hatred between people. What are we doing? If we were not crazy, if our Christianity is not as false as that of others, if our consciences are not hardened, what explanation can be given for our lives so full of misery, our activities that are so listless and our responsiveness so lethargic?

**C - 7**

V - [The day they set fire to the church]  
- It was the most awful day I had ever spent in this town.

- I am afraid of this place, but if I have to, I'll get through... at the feet of my Tabernacle I find strength, courage, inspiration and love, all enough to guide the people who have been entrusted to me.
- You can imagine how much I need Our Lord's help. I am very alone - so alone that I have no one to confide in, and my soul often feels overwhelmed.

**C - 8**

P - How courageous were we in confessing Jesus Christ, defending Him and sacrificing ourselves for Him?

**C - 8**

V - [Dear Carmen] Are you feeling afraid there? We are very afraid here because they said they were going to eat us alive... The only consolation I had was that there's nothing much to pick from my bones, so they would leave me in peace... Seriously though, we have had three days of dreadful panic, but thank God we are safe and sound, although we are always ready for .... whatever they decide. You can imagine your family, the three of them looking worse than in the photo you saw. As for me... you would think they had "licked" me I'm so gaunt ... in spite of the fact that I am accepting God's will and am prepared for anything.

**C - 8'**

P - Our deeds must show that we are disciples of Jesus. We should pray for the enemies and do the best we can for them, and that is to pray for their conversion.

**C - 8'**

V - I have this premonition that they will kill me in Hornochuelos.

- Take heart, my friends! There is life beyond!