ENCOUNTER 03

Overflowing

03

The love received wants to go out

PASTORAL PRINCIPLE

Whoever has been touched by love learns to open paths to the heart before trying to fill it with words.

Starting point

True love has a strange inability to stay shut in.

When someone experiences that Christ has sought them, forgiven them, fed them or sustained them, a desire is slowly born:

that others may come to know this life too.

Mission is not first of all an obligation added on to faith.

It is the love received beginning to overflow.

The Word and the faith of the Church

> “As the Father has sent me, so I send you” (Jn 20:21).

> “Go, therefore, and make disciples” (Mt 28:19).

The whole Church shares in the apostolic mission. Every member of the faithful is called to it according to their own vocation. “The joy of the gospel fills the hearts and lives of all who encounter Jesus” (EG 1): it is that joy, not duty, that sends us out first.

IN ME · What we receive seeks a way out

Jesus formed his disciples by sending them.

Part of their formation happened while they walked.

In mission they discovered their limits, learned to trust and touched a wounded reality.

Something similar happens to us.

Whoever visits a sick person ends up praying differently.

Whoever tries to share their faith discovers questions they had never asked themselves.

Whoever draws near to a need also discovers their own poverty.

Mission develops what we have received.

Faith becomes word.

Prayer becomes closeness.

The Eucharist becomes bread shared.

MIRROR OF TEPEYAC

Before he receives any explanation or task, the account pauses on what is happening inside Juan Diego.

His heart fills with joy.

He wonders whether he deserves what he is hearing and seeing.

No one has explained anything to him yet: he has already been touched.

The mission will come afterward.

The heart awakens before the hands are sent.

WITH OTHERS · Awakening the heart

Not all evangelization has to begin by explaining.

Sometimes the first step is making wonder possible: a warm welcome, an act of charity, a kind word, a beautiful space, a celebration lived with joy, a word that speaks the other person’s language.

Beauty does not replace truth.

It can open the door to it.

And inculturation does not water down the Gospel: it looks for the door through which this particular person can receive it.

For conversation

- What love I have received from God wants to go out from me today?
- Does our pastoral work only inform, or does it also awaken?
- What usually opens the hearts of the people we serve?
- Does our language start from our world, or does it also try to enter theirs?

This Week

Inner step

Ask:

> “Lord, may the love I have received not end in me.”

Missionary step

Choose a pastoral gathering that already exists.

Do not organize anything new.

Add to it a single gesture of beauty, hospitality or care that helps open hearts: the welcome, the space, an image, some music, a few words, a small detail.

Then notice what it brought about.

Expected fruit

To discover that proclaiming the Gospel also means learning how it can enter the concrete heart of the other.