

C: A PARTICIPATORY CHURCH

C\5

THE GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT MAKE PARTICIPATION POSSIBLE

TOPICS OF ASIPA TEXTS:

A : GOSPEL SHARING (7 steps)

B : SMALL CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES

C : A PARTICIPATORY CHURCH

D : TRAINING FOR PARISH TEAMS

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ASIPA C: A PARTICIPATORY CHURCH
Programmes for Training of the Christian Community

C\5

THE GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT MAKE PARTICIPATION POSSIBLE

Prepare beforehand:

- Practise the role play for step A

INTRODUCTION

There was great excitement and expectation in the parish of St. Michael. The new parish priest had arrived! He made it clear from the very beginning that he expected everyone to participate and take personal responsibility for the life of the parish.

The new priest was very happy to find in the parish some neighbourhood groups which came together for gospel sharing every week. Immediately, he visited one of them.

Let us come along and watch what happens.

A. THE MANY GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT IN A NEIGHBOURHOOD GROUP

1. Role play

(A group of about three men and three women sit in a semi-circle, facing the rest of the group.)

The priest enters, greets the people, sits down and says:

“May I invite your neighbourhood group to prepare the Mass liturgy for Pentecost Sunday in our parish Church?”

First person:

“How do we do this? We never have done it! Perhaps we could try?”

Second person:

“Perhaps we could start by taking the gospel of Pentecost and celebrate gospel sharing. This will bring us in touch with the Good News of Pentecost!”

Third person:

“I could practise a special song for Pentecost with my students. Some of them even play instruments.”

Fourth person:

“What about the readings? I would like to suggest Mr. and Mrs. Smith. They read well on other occasions!”

Fifth person:

“We could invite some old people and some youngsters to prepare the petitions!”

Sixth person:

“I have a good idea: What about also asking some refugees and migrant labourers to prepare some petitions? This would be very nice, like the first Pentecost when different peoples understood each other!”

2. Reflection in whole group

Questions:

- *What different “talents” or “gifts” do we find in this neighbourhood group?—*
- *What are the reasons why we can call these talents “gifts of the Holy Spirit”?—*

Supplement:

Gifts and talents found in the small community:

- In this group we find joy in taking responsibility for the Sunday liturgy. This is already an action and gift of the Holy Spirit.
- The whole group feel able to share the gospel among themselves and find out the deeper meaning of Pentecost.
- Others have the gift of singing and reading.
- There is the gift of having “good ideas”!

Why “Gifts of the Holy Spirit”?

- The members of the neighbourhood group use their gifts to make the Sunday liturgy appealing and meaningful for the whole congregation. They use their talents for others. This is a sure sign that the Spirit of God is at work.

Conclusion:

- Participation and co-responsibility in a parish are possible because the baptized and confirmed Christians have received talents and gifts of the Holy Spirit.

B. WHAT DOES THE BIBLE TELL US ABOUT THE 'GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT' ?

The Bible speaks of the “Gifts of the Spirit” or “talents” or “charisms” (the Greek word for “gift”).

1. Small groups of 4/6

- Each group reads one of the texts below.
- Discuss the questions.
- Report after 15 minutes

Questions:

- **What “abilities” and “gifts” of the faithful are mentioned in this text?—**
- **What is the difference between mere “jobs” and the tasks which are undertaken in a Christian community? —**
 - (1) Romans 12, 1-8
 - (2) 1 Corinthians 12, 1-11

Supplement:

The gifts of the Spirit:

- The gift of personal priesthood: To offer oneself to God (Rom 12,1)
- The gift of personal prophecy: To seek and to find God's will in life (Rom 12,2)
- The gift of faith: To recognize Jesus as Lord. (1 Cor 12,3)
- The gift of "being in charge". (Rom 12,8)
- The gift of love and mercy, teaching and healing. (1Cor 12,9-10)
- The gift of serving and consoling.(Rom 12,7-8)

Tasks in the Christian community are more than "jobs"

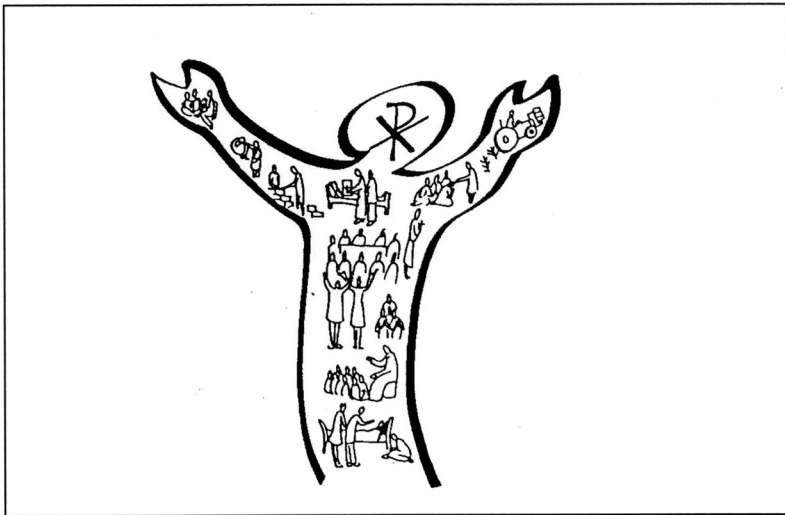
- "Jobs" can be done impersonally without inner commitment and interest.
- The gifts of the Spirit are given to continue the mission of Christ and to promote the "Kingdom Way" of living. Every gift is a calling from God.

2. Deepening

Discuss in the whole group:

Question:

- ***Compare this drawing below with our texts:
Romans 12,1-8 and 1 Corinthians 12,1-11***



C. WHAT HINDERS US FROM USING THE GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT?

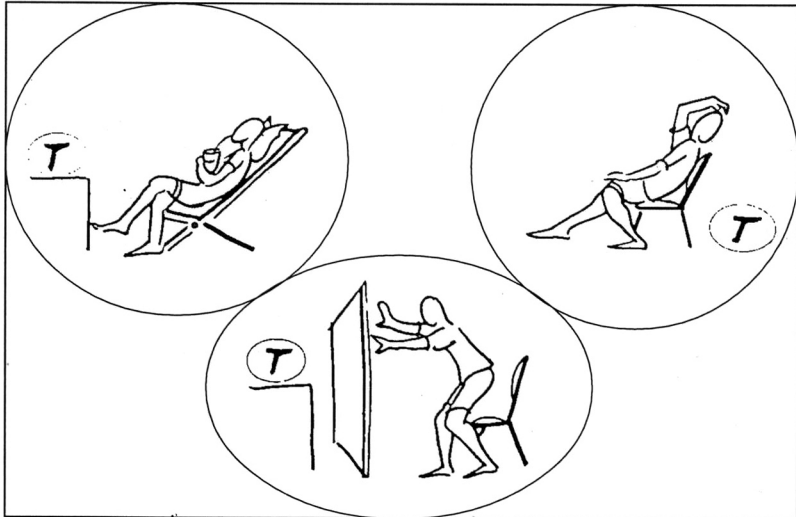
1. Small groups of 2/3

- *Discuss the questions below with the help of the different situations in the drawing below.*

Report after 10 minutes

Questions:

- *What hinders us from using the gifts of the Spirit at work, at home or in the Church?—*
- *Which situation affects you personally?—*



Supplement:

- Some use their talents for themselves only and have a good time.
- Others do not know that they have certain talents.
They may be afraid of using them!
They always wait for others to take the initiative!
- Others do want to use their talents but are hindered by officials, cultural taboos, prejudice etc.

D. SLUMBERING TALENTS SHOULD BE AWAKENED!

1. Groups of 5/6

- Discuss the questions with the help of the drawing below.
- Report after 20 minutes

Questions:

- *What gifts of the Spirit are already exercised in our parish?-*
- *What gifts of the Spirit are still “slumbering” in our parish? —*
- *Why are they not being used?—*
- *Make suggestions on how we can discover, awaken and encourage sleeping talents in our parish.—*

PRAYER:

- Name talents and gifts which you see in others.
- Thank God for these gifts.

METHOD OF ASIPA TEXTS

ASIPA TEXTS are compiled for Christian men and women at grass root level of the parish. They can be conducted most fruitfully in Small Christian Communities, Neighbourhood Communities, Parish Pastoral Councils or any other small groups in the parish.

ASIPA TEXTS can also be used with larger groups, e.g. in the parish hall - provided the “participatory method” is maintained in smaller working groups.

Features of the “ASIPA approach”

1. ASIPA TEXTS adopt a “**participatory approach**” in which all participants of a group search and discover for themselves as far as they are able to.
2. The texts are compiled in such a way that the facilitator can use them with a **minimum of preparation**.
3. The facilitator is requested to **follow the text** as closely as possible and allow the participants to contribute when indicated in the text.
4. The facilitator is not content with one answer to a question but he/she encourages as many participants as possible to search for an answer. “**Buzz groups**” of 2/3 are helpful to achieve maximum participation.
5. The **SUPPLEMENT** can help add to the findings of the participants and summarize them.
6. The **SUMMARY** is meant to be used as ‘input’.

ASIPA:

As-ian -I-ntegral -P-astoral -A-pproach

The Asian Bishops declared in the Final Statement of their Fifth Plenary Session in Bandung: The Church of 1990s has to be a "Participatory Church", a "Communion of Communities", a Church that "witnesses to the Risen Lord" (*FABC5,#8*).

The question was, how to promote this "new way of being Church". Therefore, late in 1993, jointly sponsored by the FABC Offices of Human Development and of Laity, a consultation meeting was held in Malaysia. It was during this consultation that the pastoral process for promoting a "Participatory Church" in Asia was termed ASIPA: Asian Integral Pastoral Approach.

ASIPA TEXTS (training programmes) follow this directive:

ASIAN

They want to implement the vision of the Asian Bishops and help Asian Christians face Asian life in the light of the gospel.

INTEGRAL

They aim at achieving a balance between the "spiritual" and the "social", between the individual and the community, between hierarchical leadership and the co-responsibility of the laity.

PASTORAL

They train the laity in their pastoral mission in Church and world.

APPROACH

The process of ASIPA TEXTS can be described as a pastoral approach which is "Christ- and Community centred". It involves the participants of workshops to search for themselves and allows them to experience a "New Way of Being Church."
