



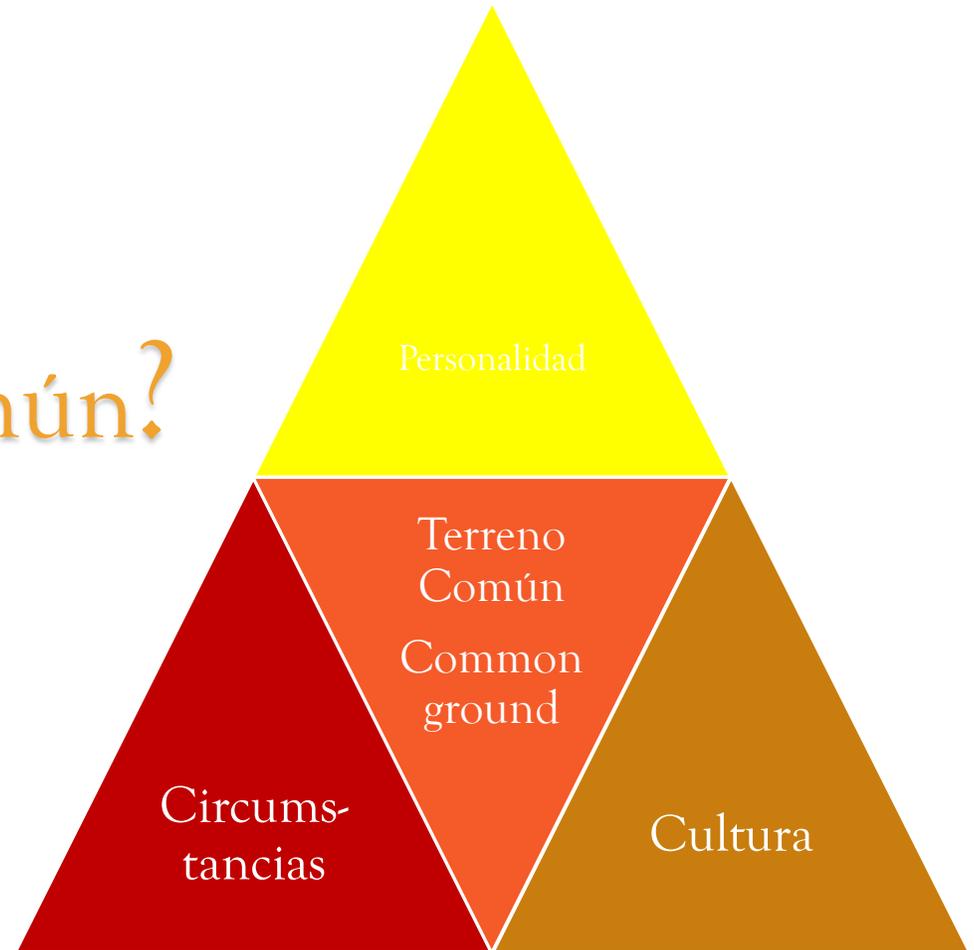
Intercultural  
Communion:  
Conflicts and  
Opportunities

# Culture & Conflicts

- ◆ Conflicts are part of the life of all groups. We can learn to manage them or allow them to destroy our communities
- ◆ Culture is only an aspect of relational conflicts. Culture gets blamed for many of the conflicts among groups, when in reality, there are other factors at play.
- ◆ The source of many conflicts lies in issues of personality or circumstances, and in the relational dynamics of a group.

Interculturalidad es el **encuentro** y **reconocimiento** de las diferencias para ir mas allá y preguntar...**¿Qué tenemos en común?**

Interculturality is the encounter and acknowledgement of the differences. We need to move beyond them and ask: **What do we have in common?**



In the last workshop we asked you to discuss in your group....**WHAT ARE THE TASKS OF THE SISTERS OF THESE COMMUNITIES ?**

Discuss and respond in group

- ◇ A sister arrives at an established community in a different country
- ◇ A group of multicultural sisters live in a country other than their own
- ◇ Sisters in community live in their own country with some sisters from another countries.



# DISCLAIMER

- ◇ We want to learn about culture to grow in communion, not to...
  - ◇ Have power, influence, dominion over others
  - ◇ Encase people in certain expectations...”This person will never be able to...because she is from...” Labeling or stereotyping.
  - ◇ Make generalizations...”They are like XXXX”
  - ◇ When we presented the approaches to culture, individualistic and collectivist, we did not exclude exceptions in many cases due to personality and other factors.

# Colectivist cultures vs. Individualistic Cultures

Culture is not the only factor, temperament and personality also play an important part in everyone's way of being. We cannot "blame" culture for everything.

## IN MY CULTURE...

1. Is the focal point for decision making the individual or the group?
2. People more often invoke their rights or their duties, responsibilities?
3. People are valued by their role or by their personal merits?
4. People tend to voice their opinions, talkative or quiet, speak when asked
5. People prize novelty or tradition
6. People tend to value individual achievement or collaboration, team-work?

1. Egocentric.....	Sociocentric
2. Rights-based.....	Duty-based
3. Personal.....	Positional
4. Elaborated communication.....	Restrictive
5. Novelty.....	Tradition
6. Competition.....	Collaboration



# Conflicts and Culture

**Relationship to authority:** Society's understanding of authority has changed. While in some places people expect equalitarian treatment, in other relationships are based on hierarchical positions. Several factors affect one's view of authority: self-esteem, relationship to parental authority, etc. The key is to look at the Gospel's understanding of authority and power, How did Jesus understand it?

**Religious Practices:** Liturgy is the public prayer of the Church and follows the norms of the local episcopal conferences. In our communities we abide by these guidelines in each place and when we go to a different country, we adapt to the practices there. We can share devotions from our places of origin, but never impose them elsewhere. Learning about the devotions to different advocations of Mary in different places is a great way to promote interculturality

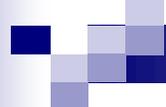
# Conflicts and Culture

- ◇ Openness to change and uncertainty: People from some cultures experience great anxiety in the face of uncertainty. They need things well planned and structured. Although some degree of organization is a universal value, some cultures feel comfortable with unstructured changing situations. They are more tolerant of change and achieve their goals in different ways. When working in teams, these two groups need to come to a fair balance of organization.
- ◇ Correction and guilt: When people from cultures with an individual oriented world-view make a mistake, they experience guilt, personal responsibility. Collective-oriented cultures experience shame, fear of losing face in the group. This is important in correcting a person from either culture, or when asking them to recognize their mistakes.

# How do we transform these conflicts?

- ◇ Watch the following video [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X\\_AfRk9F9w](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X_AfRk9F9w)
- ◇ What does it tell us about the different ways of approaching conflict?
- ◇ Culture plays an important role in conflicts, and also in the way conflicts are managed.
- ◇ Individualist cultures prefer to face conflicts, collectivist cultures avoid conflict.
- ◇ All cultures are called to find a way to transform conflict through dialogue, discernment, and collaboration.





# Five Modes of Conflict Response

(Based on the Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode instrument)

- **Compromising**
- **Collaborating**
- **Competing**
- **Avoiding**
- **Accommodating**

People in conflict can be assertive and try to get most of themselves or cooperative and concerned with how everyone fares.

All modes are useful in certain circumstances, but the goal is learning to collaborate

# COMPETING

- The **competing** conflict mode is high assertiveness and low cooperation. Times when the competing mode is appropriate are when quick action needs to be taken, when unpopular decisions need to be made, when vital issues must be handled, or when one is protecting self-interests. ***Competing Skills***

- Arguing or debating
- Using rank or influence
- Asserting your opinions and feelings
- Standing your ground
- Stating your position clearly



# ACCOMMODATING

- The **accommodating** mode is low assertiveness and high cooperation. Times when the accommodating mode is appropriate are to show reasonableness, develop performance, create good will, or keep peace. Some people use the accommodating mode when the issue or outcome is of low importance to them.
- The accommodating mode can be problematic when one uses the mode to “keep a tally” or to be a martyr. For example, if you keep a list of the number of times you have accommodated someone and then you expect that person to realize, without your communicating to the person, that she/he should now accommodate you.

## ***Accommodating Skills***

- Forgetting your desires
- Selflessness
- Ability to yield
- Obeying orders



# AVOIDING

- The **avoiding** mode is low assertiveness and low cooperation. Many times people will avoid conflicts out of fear of engaging in a conflict or because they do not have confidence in their conflict management skills. Times when the avoiding mode is appropriate are when you have issues of low importance, to reduce tensions, to buy some time, or when you are in a position of lower power. This is a way of having power, the power to withdraw.

## ***Avoiding Skills***

- Ability to withdraw
- Ability to sidestep issues
- Ability to leave things unresolved
- Sense of timing



# COMPROMISING



- The **compromising** mode is moderate assertiveness and moderate cooperation. Some people define compromise as “giving up more than you want,” while others see compromise as both parties winning.
- Times when the compromising mode is appropriate are when you are dealing with issues of moderate importance, when you have equal power status, or when you have a strong commitment for resolution. Compromising mode can also be used as a temporary solution when there are time constraints. ***Compromising Skills***
  - Negotiating
  - Finding a middle ground
  - Assessing value
  - Making concessions

# COLLABORATING

- The **collaborating** mode is high assertiveness and high cooperation.
- This mode requires more time and energy than the rest of the modes and in each situation individuals and groups need to decide whether the cause warrants this investment.
- Times when the collaborative mode is appropriate are when the conflict is important to the people who are constructing an integrative solution, when the issues are too important to compromise, when merging perspectives, when gaining commitment, when improving relationships, or when learning.

## ***Collaboration Skills***

- Active listening
  - Non-threatening confrontation
  - Identifying concerns
  - Analyzing input



# What factors can affect our conflict modes?

- **Gender:** Males are sometimes socialized to be assertive.
- **Self-concept.** How we think and feel about ourselves affect how we approach conflict.
- **Expectations** What do we expect from the other person?
- **Situation** Where is the conflict occurring and is the conflict personal or professional?
- **Position (Power)** What is our power status relationship, (that is, equal, more, or less) with the person with whom we are in conflict?
- **Culture:** Some cultures tend to avoid conflict, while others are comfortable in it and even enjoy it!
- **Practice** Practice involves being able to use all five conflict modes effectively, being able to determine what conflict mode would be most effective to resolve the conflict, and the ability to change modes as necessary while engaged in conflict.

# Unhealthy alternatives to Dialogue

- ◆ Hostility, Cold war. Unexplained silence.
  - ◆ Ignoring and excluding others.
  - ◆ Gossip, disqualifying or criticizing others
  - ◆ Individualism.
  - ◆ Sarcasm (passive-aggressive behavior)
- **Roadblocks to Communication**
  - Blaming
  - Generalization
  - Comparisons
  - Returning the ball (“You do the same”)
  - Judging intentions
  - Sarcasm (passive-aggressive behavior)

# COMMUNICATION



## Non verbal

- ◇ Eye contact...is it a sign of respect or lack of respect?
- ◇ Physical distance...what is the appropriate distance?
- ◇ Laughing or giggling...is it a sign of shame, embarrassment or arrogance?

## Verbal

- ◇ Do not take for granted that words mean the same to different cultures.
- ◇ How is information transmitted directly or with introductions. Lineal or circular approaches.
- ◇ Is saying NO clearly better than saying Yes to avoid offending and not meaning it?
- ◇ Is it better to address conflicts directly or with a mediator?
- ◇ Confrontation Model: I feel XXX, when you (say or do) because



COMUNNION:  
the Work of the  
Spirit

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