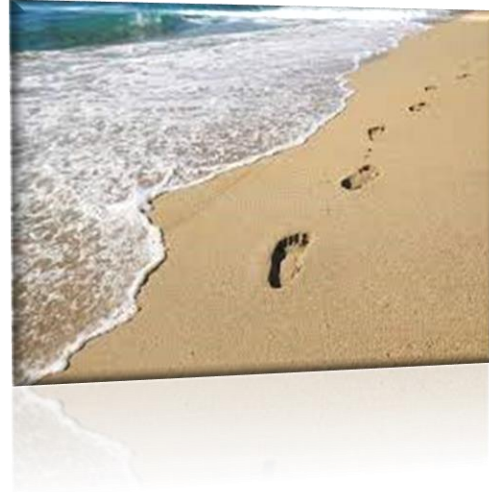


## The Customs of the Master



"First and foremost must the Apostolic Missionary conform **his** life, person and **customs** with his divine Master Jesus Christ " (Apostolic Missionary I, 1).

"The main concern of the missionary **is to conform his life with that of** Christ, as we have said at the first point of these notes; and in his most holy life he will find hidden mana, which he will find good at all times. Therefore, **do not lose sight of your** divine Model if you want to finish **the** mission that God has entrusted to you" (M.A. II, 30).

Let us reflect on this day on three aspects that these points of the Apostolic Missionary suggest to us.

**1. Conform:** Common word in the language of the founders, not very attractive to our modern and postmodern culture that puts so much emphasis on rescuing individuality, the originality of each one, which is very good. Except, when it leads to the loss of the sense of belonging, of body, of common identity. The secret is to find the fine balance between our individualistic and collectivist cultures in order to live a healthy interculturality.

The word conform *in* the thinking of the founders is synonymous with configuring, taking or having the form or figure of Christ Jesus. This Pauline-style identification reaches its fullness when we can say, "I no longer live, it is Christ who lives in me" (Gal 2:20).

The configuration is done slowly as we internalize the values, criteria, attitudes of Christ "have the same feelings of Christ Jesus..." (Flp. 2,5). It is not an intellectual meditation on the life of Jesus, we have to discover that "hidden mana" in the life of Christ and savor it, for as she says, "it will taste good." Mother Antonia speaks to us about a way of praying contemplatively tasting the Gospel so that it may be imprinted in our hearts and conform us with Christ.

**2. Customs:** Configuration with Christ encompasses "your life, your person and your *customs*." What does she mean by the term *customs*? Possibly the ordinary practices of life, how to behave with respect to people and things. The Antonia Paris had a strong orientation to the practical dimension of life. From the initial vision the Lord reveals to her that the novelty of the order he asks of her must be "in practice." According to Jesus, hearing the word and not putting it into practice is like building on sand (Mt. 7:24-27). For Antonia, "works give spirit to the voice" (PR 41). Does our way of behaving with people and things speak of Jesus? Does our way of looking, listening, respecting, welcoming, valuing, speak of Jesus? In the previous point it was said that we are forming our life with Christ from the inside and this manifests itself in life. Here the proposal is the other way around: by acting like him, behaving like him, adopting his practices, we transform our interior and allow ourselves to be configured with Christ.

**3. Keep your eyes on Him:** Finally, the way to make this possible is to keep your eyes fixed on Him, "who never moves" otherwise we easily sink like Peter into the storm (Mt.14,22-34).