

Chapter 3

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1. INTRODUCTION

- A. The charism is a gift that generates a mentality
- 62. The charism of the CM is a gift that shapes its own unique mentality. In fact, the whole of the CM is contained in its mentality in some way.
- B. The mentality is essential to the CM
- 63. The mentality, essential to the movement, was lived and shared by a group of people, and brought forth an ecclesial movement with a specific purpose, strategy and method.

2. CHARISM AND MENTALITY IN THE CM

- A. General definition of mentality
- 64. Mentality is a way of thinking, a perspective; a set of beliefs, ideas, attitudes and values of a person, a culture or a society.
- B. The original shaping of the mentality (historical reason)
- 65. The mentality contains the irreducible core that identifies the CM, the initial direct expression of the charism of the Movement.
- 66. The mentality arises when the charism, a gift of the Spirit, comes alive: a group of people, faced with a concrete reality, shares a new way of thinking and proceeding.

67. The starting point of the CM was a deep knowledge of the reality – a world with its back to God, Christ and his Church. As life was no longer Christian, the influence of Christianity in it was practically void.¹
68. That knowledge of reality creates a restlessness and an apostolic zeal that seeks to transform the person so that they become the leaven of the Gospel, in their own environment which will transform society, taking into account:²
- a) An evangelizing activity that awakens a hunger for God,
 - b) A preaching of conversion by means of a kerygmatic method,
 - c) A vision of the Church as universal sacrament of salvation, of the Christian as an apostle, and of the world as the place where the Gospel has to become reality.
69. In order that Christianity could influence life, it was necessary:
- a) To consider it as life, and as the key that motivates and explains life,
 - b) To live and share what is fundamental to being Christian,
 - c) To act in the world and for its service, and not only within the Church,
 - d) To adopt a new attitude, a Christian one, in carrying out regular commitments rather than taking on new ones.³

¹ THTW, p. 46

² CCICR, p. 47-53

³ THTW, p. 16-17

70. This could lead to the conclusion that, as humanity and the world had ceased to be Christian (although apparently Christian things were still “done”), the CM would not be limited to encouraging a Christian “doing,” but would emphasize a Christian “being.” Because when one “is,” he or she really “does” everything that is possible.⁴

C. The mentality of the CM today (current reasons)

71. The charism, when it is received and shared today, keeps shaping a single mentality. It is a unique way of thinking and living that, when shared, is still the core of the CM, and allows it to be what it has to be in reality of today.

72. Therefore, by keeping its essential core and maintaining its identity, the mentality is capable of adapting to life and its changing circumstances. It is the criterion that accompanies and directs the process of maturity, growth and communication of the CM.

73. The starting point of the mentality is still the knowledge of the current reality and the need to respond to it: today, as in the past, people continue to ignore that God in Christ loves them; they still need to know and experience the love of God in their daily life.

74. In the complex reality of today, the mentality of the CM still provides the same basic proposal: sharing God’s love through a kerygmatic method that enables transformed persons to transform environments.

⁴ SI, p. 186

75. With such an essential and irreducible core, the mentality of the CM is creative, dynamic and continues to offer an original and current response to the 'here and now' of history.

3. THE MENTALITY OF THE CM

A. Definition of the mentality of the CM

76. It is a vital perspective, a way of understanding reality, born of the experience of the charism, freely adopted by those who share that experience and integrate into the CM. It shapes a set of criteria, beliefs, vital attitudes and choices of faith that transform the life of the person, setting it as a joyful Christian life, witnessing and missionary, which is shared and offered to others by means of friendship.

B. Essential features of the mentality of CM

1. A new vision of reality

77. Mentality of CM provides a new vision and understanding of reality:
- a) *Of God:* A God who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit, source of life for all people. A living God who is always near, hopeful about each person, whom He always loves and whose good He always wants. In short, a loving God who, in Christ, loves each person in a unique and unrepeatable way.
 - b) *Of the person:* The person is seen as unique, unrepeatable, open to or with a capacity for God, able through God to live life fully, meaningfully and called to self-realization through their own knowledge and freedom.

- c) *Of the world:* The world is the place of salvation, the horizon of the mission, the scope of Christian life, to be transformed through the Gospel by the action of conscious Christians.
- d) *Of the Church and of the evangelization:* The Church as sacrament of salvation, ready to serve by bringing people to God and God to people.⁵ In the Church, the laity has a role and a responsibility:⁶ to leaven the world, from their own environments.⁷ The Church exists to evangelize, to enable people to experience the love of God by means of an evangelization that is based on the kerygma, the joyful announcement of the Good News of Jesus Christ made by witnesses.⁸

2. Some basic convictions

78. Mentality of CM offers some basic convictions, foundations of all activity:

- a) Christianity as an experience of God's love, Christ's friendship, and life in the Spirit is the integral solution to the reality of mankind.
- b) Every person, whatever their circumstances, is called to meet God, to transform their life and become a witness to the Gospel.
- c) The witness of one's life, friendship and prayer are key elements to enable others to encounter Christ.

⁵ LG, no. 4

⁶ ChL, no. 2

⁷ ChL, no. 17

⁸ EN, no. 2.52

3. The criteria for action

79. Mentality also implies some criteria for action. Those criteria guide all activities in CM.
- a) *Friendship*: Friendship is the deeper form of communication and interaction; it is the key to the process of being a person, and a privileged channel to share Christian life.
 - b) *Sincerity*: It is essential that there is sincerity in friendship, so that there be friendship in sincerity; sincerity with ourselves, with God and with the others.
 - c) *Normality*: The Christian life is an everyday, ordinary, normal life; therefore evangelization, conversion, transformation of the world is part of normal everyday life.
 - d) *Freedom*: As a channel for the Christian life, it supposes absolute respect for everyone's freedom.
 - e) *Joy*: Friendship, encounter with Christ, Christian life, and the proclamation of the Gospel: all this is a source of joy.

4. THE MENTALITY, ESSENTIAL TO THE CM

A. It explains everything

80. The mentality explains everything that the CM is: why we are what we are, why we do what we do and how we do what we do.

B. It is the basis for our judgements and criteria

81. The mentality forms the basis for our essential judgements and criteria. The criteria, totally adopted, become beliefs and these become vital attitudes expressed as certain options of action. Therefore, in the CM, the definite actions (method) come from the mentality.

- C. It determines purpose, strategy, method and structure
- 82. The mentality determines the purpose of the Movement, settles its method and strategy which are the means to achieve it, and signals the structures needed for this achievement.
- D. It allows development without losing its identity, to respond to the challenges of the times
- 83. The mentality plumbs the depths without losing its identity, in order to meet the challenges of the times: it enables the discovery of creative solutions to problems in current circumstances and is the reason for new achievements, because its objective is to create and promote.
- E. It creates unity in diversity
- 84. The mentality creates unity in diversity: Sharing the same mentality is the bond of union between people of very diverse nature and conditions. Keeping the same mentality is what will maintain the unity of purpose, strategy and method in the CM, while respecting the natural diversity.

5. THE MENTALITY OF THE CURSILLO LEADER

A. The mentality has to be lived

85. The CM *is* not a mentality, it *has* a mentality. The mentality only exists if people in the CM own and live that mentality.

B. The mentality has to be maintained

86. In order that the mentality be the criterion for maturity and growth in the CM, we need people and groups who share the mentality, keep a thinking attitude and live the reality as an ongoing challenge.

In this process dialogue, contrasts and sharing of concerns and experiences are necessary so the perspectives, the criteria and the essential convictions remain valid for everyone.

C. The mentality has to be transmitted

87. The mentality is transmitted basically by means of the personal contact. This requires people who not only understand the mentality and know how to explain it, but live it so deeply that it becomes an inspiring and motivating element for others.

Therefore it is transmitted when it is lived, when it is witnessed and when it is shared, when it is coherently explained in friendship, dialogue, and prayer.

6. CONCLUSION

A. Be aware of the importance

88. A clear awareness of the importance of the mentality, as the explanatory key of the whole Movement is fundamental to the life of the CM. The purpose, strategy and method of the CM can only be understood from the perspective of the mentality.

B. Understand the mentality

89. On the other hand, it is necessary to keep in mind that the mentality is an immediate consequence of the specific charism of the CM: The acceptance, commitment and experience of the charism shapes the mentality, in such a way that the charism and mentality are intimately connected realities.

C. Accept the mentality

90. Like the charism, the mentality has to be welcomed and lived by persons who unite and share this mentality and make it a reality. It is necessary therefore, to keep a permanent “thinking” attitude (at personal and community level), reflect constantly and grow in awareness of the authentic mentality of the CM.