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I speak to you as someone from Northern Europe and in response to the section in the *"Working Instrument"* entitled "The Chaplaincy". I want to share with you our reflections from the University of Oxford. This is our experience, but we recognise too that there are as many permutations of chaplaincy models as there are universities. I want today to share with you five areas in which the Chaplaincy or chapel (Working Instrument) should be clearly contributing to the life of individuals, the University Institutions and European culture at large.

(1) **CHRIST LIVED**

Any Chaplaincy must have at its heart an authentic spirituality, rooted in the great traditions of the past, but also looking forward. It must be real, alive and active. This is the basis of everything. Ultimately Christ is the one at work. He is the teacher, the evangeliser, the animator. We are only his instruments. Young people today are looking for authenticity and integrity. This must be at the heart of chaplaincy. We can do as many conferences as we choose. We can dialogue as much as we like, but if Christ has not been made present, we are no better than the secular culture that we try to influence. I mention this, for it is so important. Pope John Paul II , writing in *Tertio Millenio Ineunte* in putting before us his programme for the new millennium speaks most clearly about not only 'Seeking the face of Christ', but seeing Him through holiness, prayer, Eucharist, reconciliation and in hearing the Word of God afresh. A Chaplaincy must first and foremost be a place where Christ is encountered through these channels of His presence. In my own Chaplaincy, the Eucharist, Sacraments and life of prayer are clearly at the centre.

In an age when the Church cannot any longer be assured of support within the media and community, young people need to know that the one they seek, can be found, and that those who have already done are transformed by His presence.

The first duty then of a chaplaincy is to make Christ present. It is a duty that rests not on the Chaplains but also on those whom he can encourage to work and pray with him.

(2) **CHRIST SHARED**

The Chaplaincy should ultimately be a place of community. Eucharistic life is one of being the Body of Christ beyond the liturgy, An authentic shared life is one of the greatest forms of catechesis and evangelism and should be inclusive drawing others into its midst:

"It is in building this communion of love that the church appears as 'Sacrament', and as sign and instrument of intimate union with God and of the unity of the human race" (John Paul II TMI 42).

Community life, on whatever level is where a humanism which respects the dignity of each person made in the image of God is properly expressed. It is where we learn our own dignity as well as that of others. In a post-modern society where individualism is expressed, a community life is essential if we are to realise the rights and obligations of being part of the human family. A true shared experience is one also in which we are able to live properly the moral precepts that bring us to our fullest stature as children of God. On a personal level, it is largely out of community living that we become aware not just of our universal vocation as those made in the image of God, but also the particular vocations of service and priesthood. Pastoral care for those who find themselves in difficulties is often one that is healed through encounters with others and shared experiences.

(3) **CHRIST TAUGHT**

The Chaplaincy needs to be a place where Christ can be discovered through authentic and lively Catechesis, the dwelling on the Word of God and through the development of spirituality. Christ the teacher needs always to be expressed. Those who are developing intellectually in the various academic fields need also to be challenged to develop and grow in their faith and in the rich traditions of writing, Theology and spirituality. There are many young people who simply *"Wish to see Jesus"* (John 12:21). In every pedagogical approach, there is always a need to listen to these requests and the needs of those who seek Christ or an answer to the meaning of life. The ability to share the mystery of the gospel often comes from what has been heard first.

An exposure and celebration of the rich traditions of catholic art, music, writing and approaches to science and medical research can only enrich an individual to wishes to find Christ in every aspect of their life.

So a Chaplaincy should never afraid to put before the young the great truths of our faith or to allow these to discussed in dialogue. It has to be said that true dialogue can only really be possible after faith has become a reality in those who are participating. Despite all this there is always a careful balance between the didactic and the discerned.

(4) **CHRIST DISCERNED**

The chaplaincy should always be the environment for respectful, academic and honest dialogue (the respectful and honest dialogue which John Paul II encouraged us to engage in during the Jubilee of the Universities in 2000). This can take many forms:

- **Dialogue among the different intellectual traditions** at play within the university curriculum. It is important that the Chaplaincy should be a place open to all disciplines of learning. It needs to be open to the truth of the gospel being viewed and discussed from the different perspectives given by different academic disciplines. Those who study need to be helped to understand that Christ can be found, and celebrated in all areas of learning. In my own chaplaincy we have begun a series of talks with discussions entitled "Faith & Reason" in which we have a catholic academic speaking about his or her sphere of academic life and relating that to their faith. These have been very popular and I commend this approach to you all.

In Northern Europe it is important to say that we cannot always assume that those who teach and study theology will be Catholic or support the work of the chaplaincy. I have in my own work one experience where the Theology Faculty quite clearly severed its links with the Chaplaincy, wanting to see itself as an independent and free academic discipline.

- **Dialogue with fellow Catholics**, in an honest and open forum. This is especially fruitful when Catholics from different parts of the globe meet. The internationalisation of many of the Universities has enabled the wealth of cultures and Charismas that have enriched the Church to be in close contact. Shared experiences and a common faith celebrated in dialogue help to remove what could be described as ecclesial xenophobia. I might also mention here not just students but also teachers and to say that I think it is important for the chaplaincy to provide a form for those who are sharing their academic skills to meet and discuss with one another.

- **Dialogue with contemporary culture.** Young Catholics need to be the makers of our future culture. There is always a danger that we can retreat to our own security and culture of a ghetto, with those who share our views, who give sustenance and stability. We are all affected by our culture, indeed we are all part of it and deeply influenced in our attitude, if not directly, then subtly in the various influences, intellectual and cultural that surround us. The need to understand our contemporary culture, especially in the West - Post modern individualism, Rationalism, Political ideologies, movements in ecology, latest advances in medical science, psychology, technology etc

- **Dialogue on an ecumenical sphere**. Catholics who learn to share their faith with Christians of separated churches not only develop a trust and understanding of one another other but also grow in their value of their own Church. When a chaplaincy needs to work ecumenically, this dialogue is not only beneficial but essential. Ecumenical chaplaincy need to speak clearly on matters of agreement about the values of the gospel. John Paul II warns about the imperative of such dialogue: *"The invocation "ut unum sint" is, at one and the same time, a binding imperative, the strength that sustains us, and a salutary rebuke for our slowness and closed-heartedness. It is on Jesus' prayer and not on our own strength that we base the hope that even within history we shall be able to reach full and visible communion with all Christians"* (YMI 48).

- **Dialogue with those of other faiths**. This is especially true of those Abrahamic faiths. In the contemporary climate of mistrust and misunderstandings a shared experience of God and the great spiritual traditions opens the chaplaincy to being a place of true spiritual encounter. This dialogue should always be genuine and truthful. Once again John Paul II exhorts us: *"Dialogue, however, cannot be based on religious indifferentism, and we Christians are in duty bound, while engaging in dialogue, to bear clear witness to the hope that is within us (1 Peter 3:15)"* (TMI 56). Once again in my own university the young Catholics have begun a series of fruitful evenings of dialogues between Catholics, Jews and Muslims,

- **Dialogue with the underprivileged.** The Church's Social Doctrine should be something that is clearly set before those who are studying at University. It gives a balance and a context to the microcosm of academic life: Let me illustrate this with a project from my own university.

From Oxford (and also during my time in London) we run a project in which students practice as tutors from children who have fallen well behind in their reading skills. This is usually because a child is speaking and reading English as a second or third language (in one school there are 33 languages spoken). This is especially acute in many of the children from Islamic backgrounds who also attend Mosque school, where they are taught to read the Koran, but not always with comprehension. Our projects (which are both in government funded schools – one secular, one Catholic) help the children not only to read, but also to comprehend. In addition it also exposes the children to young men and women at University, sowing seeds of their own future possibilities. For the students themselves, they are able to give something of themselves back to the community, which at the same time being exposed to young people who are socially or academically deprived.

Other students work through The Society of St Vincent de Paul, working the homeless, refugees and Asylum seekers.

(5) **CHRIST PROCLAIMED**

I've already touched on one or two aspects. Chaplaincy should always be a place that is, in a prudent and patient way, not afraid to proclaim the truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Any true new Humanism must not only be lived, but proclaimed. This is what John Paul II speaks of when he asks us to become the *"mysterium lunae"* of the face of Christ (TMI 54). Christians should have no fear of the truth of the Gospel, especially in its proclamation in the community.

Let me tell you of one project we have done at Oxford. It is in the production of two booklets: *'Christianity'* & *'Living life to the full'*. The first was a simple introduction to the Catholic faith; the second was an introduction to the moral and social teaching of the Church. The students themselves took all the initiatives commissioning, fundraising and then delivering these to every student in the university. This is direct proclamation. Above all a life lived, shared, taught discerned is clearly a major part of making the Gospel present in the world. A Chaplaincy that is clearly rooted in Christ, in its spirituality, its openness to dialogue and culture, has much to say to the academic environment and to the world at large.

THE EUROPEAN AND LOCAL CONTEXT OF CHAPLAINCY

I think that all of us would agree that in Europe we are moving increasingly into a secular culture with its diversity and multiculturalism, in which in many areas, the Church is playing less and less of a role, although she may still have, for historical reasons positions within the national and educational framework.

There are several types of secular culture within present day Europe and these affect very deeply the role of chaplaincy in the Universities. I would suggest that these fall into broadly the following three categories:

- First there is a culture which is 'Post-Catholic'. This is a culture which may have had at its heart a faith rooted in loyalty to the Catholic Church, its traditions and way of life.

- Secondly, there is a 'Post-Protestant' culture, such as my own, which is deeply formed by Puritanism, often deeply anti-catholic and mistrusting of anything that might come under the heading of 'supernatural'.

- Thirdly there is post communist – this can be combined with a Catholic culture which has suffered marginalisation for many decades, or alternatively the Church finds itself (and this is true of some parts of Eastern Europe) in a hostile Orthodox culture.

Therefore the context of being 'chaplaincy' in the university is deeply effected by the historical legacy of culture.

Let me illustrate several issues from my own country.

In the United Kingdom there are still a few universities that have no Catholic Chaplain. There are others where the 'Chaplain' is lay and subsequently it is difficult to have a real sense of the sacramental. There are part-time chaplains and chaplains who are parish priests. There are no Catholic Universities. All the official positions are almost solely held by Anglicans and Catholics usually have to work as part of Ecumenical teams. Many chaplains have no formal recognition from the Universities and few are paid by the institutions in which they work. Some even have work on an inter-faith basis and share their building with other religions. Often there are many different chapels (25 in my own University – and only one Catholic!) Christianity often has many voices from one chaplaincy, sometimes clearly in disagreement with each other.

There are also different types of Universities. There are those that streamline those of the highest intellectual calibre, there are others at the bottom, and those in between. Some attract only students from the local region, others are national, and others are international.

We cannot any longer presume that all those attending university will be young. Many now choose to make a mid life choice for academic study. These people will be already formed. Those of more mature years who make a choice for participation in Chaplaincy life can often be a positive leaven within the community.

Even in Catholic Life there are different styles and approaches to chaplaincy. Indeed, not all may recognise this "working instrument" as an approach.

In conclusion I want to finish with some words from John Paul II, which I think sums up much of what I have said:

"The Son of God, who became incarnate two thousand years ago out of love for humanity, is at work even today: we need discerning eyes to see this and, above all, a generous heart to become instruments of his work" (TMI 58)