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Sunday Pedagogy: A Commitment to the Renewal of the Church

Nedeljska pedagogika: predanost prenovi Cerkve

Abstract: Year after year the Church celebrates the Day of the Lord, a celebration that has transcended the boundaries of evangelization as the most sublime thing in the Church. This is why there is a need for a dynamic, pastoral and priestly pedagogy, which will make Sunday a real place for the transformation of spiritual experiences, and which, from a hermeneutic analysis of the texts and authors that have to the survey is used as a tool for collecting information on priests to measure their pedagogical formation and the results which show the need for an articulation between the pedagogical and the pastoral, in which a contribution is made to the formation of priests through a revitalization of the liturgy, especially the celebration of the Lord's Day. This is why this research is an extremely important contribution to the ecclesial renewal in the celebration of the Lord's Day, so that the clergy, from their pastoral work, implement pedagogy as an articulating element of evangelization and the will of the Church focused on the Gospel of Christ.

Keywords: Pedagogy, pastoral, church, clergy, Sunday celebration

Povzetek: Leto za letom Cerkev obhaja Gospodov dan – gre za praznovanje, ki presega meje evangelizacije in ki je v Cerkvi nekaj najvišjega. Od tod izvira potreba po dinamični, pastoralni in duhovniški pedagogiki, ki naj nedeljo naredi za resnični kraj preobrazbe duhovnega izkustva. Hermenevitična analiza besedil in avtorjev, sodelujočih v anketi, je uporabljena kot orodje za zbiranje informacij o duhovnikih, s čimer se ugotavlja njihova pedagoška formacija in rezultati, ki kažejo na potrebo po razmejitvi med pedagoškim in pastoralnim področjem. Predlagana je tudi formacija duhovnikov s pomočjo pozitivne liturgije, zlasti obhajanja Gospodovega dne. Na tem temelju je raziskava pomemben prispevek k cerkveni prenovi pri obhajanju Gospodovega dne – da bi tako duhovniki na podlagi svojega pastoralnega dela uresničevali pedagogiko kot utemeljevalno prvo evangelizacije in kot voljo Cerkve, osredotočeno na Kristusov evangelijski.

Ključne besede: pedagogika, pastorala, Cerkev, duhovščina, nedeljsko praznovanje

1. Introduction

Pedagogy is that differentiating element that allows priests to appropriate it to energize evangelization and make Sunday a day, as John Paul II states: »The Day of the Lord -as Sunday has been called since apostolic times« (DD, 1); moreover, it is a meeting of celebration and worship, a place in which the transformation of the subject is proposed. While it is true that priests receive a strong academic formation rich in ecclesiology, biblical, sacramental, theology and pastoral care, all this formation must be accompanied by the pedagogical element that makes it possible to carry out the evangelizing work of the Church.

In this order of ideas, and bearing in mind that Sunday Day, according to the Spanish Episcopal Conference (1991, 2): »is one of the first and most original Christian institutions. His birth must be sought in the fact that the Lord rose and manifested himself to his own the first day of the week as all the Evangelists testify«, so Sunday is the time of meeting of the communities that gather around listening to the Word and the Fraction of the Bread; it suffers pedagogical and didactic elements that allow in the participation of the faithful in the meaningful celebration, which helps not only to live the faith in Christ, but also to become a transforming experience of the human and the social, since the well-explained Word and the Eucharist are very dynamic, they make the experience of the human God been felt and experienced: Jesus in the realities of the man and woman of today, in other words: »He finds that only the Church which responds to concrete problems of concrete people, especially the weakest and most vulnerable, is consistent with its mission.« (Žalec 2020, 268)

From this perspective, then, the need arises to answer the question: How to make the celebration of Sunday truly become a place of transformation of the spiritual experiences of the faithful, in such a way that it serves as the axis of the experience of faith in Christ Jesus? Answering this question implies thinking of a priestly pedagogy, which involves the formative differentiating elements for the pastoral work of the validly ordained priest and brings to an evangelizing quality in the style of Jesus the Teacher and Pedagogue par excellence.

2. Pedagogy and Pastoral Work Are the Articulating Axes That Energize the Sunday Celebration

Since the beginning of the history of knowledge, there has always been speculation about how humankind gradually developed knowledge, learning and knowing, elements so significant that have been in all cultures, people, nations, traditions, languages and idiosyncrasies from generation to generation; till reaching the knowledge developed from the disciplines and knowledge supported in didactics that enable holistic learning, that allows the development of the capacities that according to (Nussbaum 2012, 40) »It refers to the potentialities of humankind, substantive freedoms that individuals have to develop as functions that allow them

to realise themselves and achieve well-being«; however, from these substantive freedoms of individuals, pedagogy¹ plays an important role in the development of the capacities of thinking subjects, culture, society, religion and in this sense in the evangelizing pastoral of the Church, understood as it manifests: »As a renewed and vigorous organic pastoral action, so that the variety of charisms, ministries, services and organizations are oriented in the same missionary project to communicate life in their own territory.« (CELAM 2007)

However, pastoral care, understood from this ecclesial and Latin American context, is based on the very roots of the Gospel, when in Saint Mark we find the divine mandate of Jesus when he says: »Go in to all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved, but he who does not believe will be condemned.« (Mk 16:15-16)

Therefore, evangelization is then a human and divine action that makes it possible to focus its evangelizing activity on the culture, society and communities that make up not only the conglomerate of people to be evangelized but also, the community of the baptized who must be accompanied in the formation process from the faith and in the certainty of impregnating with hope in the face of the daily vicissitudes that are presented to the man and the woman of today: since »Only the Church that responds to concrete problems of concrete people, especially the weakest and most vulnerable, is consistent with its mission« (Moore 1995, 572).

3. Formation in Pastoral Pedagogy for Priests: A Commitment to Ecclesial Transformation

The pedagogical formation of the priest helps to qualify the evangelizing action of the Church, thus fostering a good community and especially formative climate, as Pope John Paul affirmed in the 1994 Encyclical „Pastores dabo vobis“: »Certainly there are also purely human reasons that must impel the priest to permanent formation. This is a requirement of progressive personal fulfilment, since every life is an unceasing journey towards maturity, a continuous formation.« (PDV 66)

Consequently, all this makes it possible to apply pedagogical formation as a new transversal trend in the field of evangelization, in such a way that it serves as an effective means for a personal experience of the Lord’s Day as a place of living encounter with the faith and in which the Second Vatican Council expressly states in the Dogmatic Constitution „Sacrosanctum Concilium“: »On the day that is rightly called ‚The Day of the Lord‘ or Sunday. On this day the faithful must gather in order to hear the word of God and participate in the Eucharist.« (SC 106)

¹ The notion of pedagogy is linked to the social, cultural and educational climate of each historical moment, as well as to contexts in which new conceptions and approaches emerge. Although it has been part of the training processes since ancient times, its major developments coincide with the emergence of modernity. Today it is associated with the apogee of the ‚postmodern‘ discourses of education and the transformation of social relations and, in this way, with the constitution of new realizations of subjectivity, identity and individual and collective social practices. (Díaz Villa 2019).

In the same way, the evangelizing, celebrational and liturgical work of the Church is seen as an imperative need for the priest's human, Christian, biblical, catechetical, liturgical and pedagogical formation, as John Paul II puts it: »In the human dimension, the priest must increase and deepen that human sensitivity which enables him to understand the needs of today and to accept the pleas, to share the hopes and expectations, the joys and the works of ordinary life« (PDV 69), which means that this firm Sunday decision must permeate all the ecclesial structures and all the pastoral plans of the dioceses, parishes, religious communities, movements and any institution of the Church.

No community should be excluded from entering decisively, with all its strength, into the constant celebratory renewal, without losing the essential: the celebration of The Lord's Day, and from abandoning the obsolete structures that no longer favour the transmission of the faith. Faith is therefore closely intertwined with trust in God, so we can conclude that faith is a source of human strength. (Žalec 2020, 272)

Thus, this formative need emerges as the fruits of testimonies through the survey and the facts observed, based on the experience of the parish communities that have deepened in pedagogical practices to evangelize, which presumes the need to implement a new comprehensive pedagogical formation that is appropriate to the continuing formation of the priest and his communities, so as not to »Lament the deficiencies in the participation of the Eucharist« (Ratzinger 2012) and with strategies to structure in the pastoral, a theoretical-practical foundation, in relation to the teaching of the faith within a dynamic and meaningful framework for the faithful and communities as proposed in the Constitution „Sacrosanctum Concilium“: »Zeal to promote and reform the sacred liturgy is rightly regarded as a sign of God's providential dispositions in our time, as the passing of the Holy Spirit through his Church.« (SC 43)

It is, therefore, a question of building and proposing participatory, creative, flexible, integrated and relevant didactics that respond to the most sensitive needs, interests and problems of the communities, which celebrate the faith on the day of the Lord as Pope Francis points out in the Encyclical „Laudato Si'“: »Sunday is the day of the Resurrection, the ›first day‹ of the new creation, whose first fruit is the risen humanity of the Lord, guarantee of the final transfiguration of all created reality.« (LS 237)

In short, it seeks to rescue the pedagogical part of the priest in the construction of his evangelizing work as well as harmonize the different aspects of pastoral care, so that it can carry out a true transformative action that has transcendence in the priestly life; as Pope John Paul II insistently invites: »Sunday, established as a support for the Christian life, naturally has a value of witness and proclamation. A day of prayer, communion and joy, which radiates energies of life and reasons for hope.« (DD 84)

Now, to renew and revitalize the Church's Sunday celebration and evangelizing, it is necessary to read the reality and apply the methods of Jesus' pedagogy in order to be more effective in the day that has been entrusted to the Church and that in the words of John Paul II is understood as »The day of rest is such first of all because it is

the day ,blessed' and ,sanctified' by God, that is, separated from the other days to be, among all, the ,day of the Lord'« (DD 14) and to proclaim the Gospel, with the witness of life and the word, in such a way that every Sunday celebration becomes a ,Delivery' (Mc 16;15, Mt 28;19) that Jesus proposed to his disciples; which involves going out, accompanying, pointing out the way, proposing and interpreting the message of salvation today and applying it to the cultural reality from the liturgical experience and from the Day of the Lord.

However, as worship is an act of Christ and the Church, the first host is God, who through the Holy Spirit makes humanity visited by God. This encounter with the One who brings salvation is the expression of God's greatest hospitality. The Church, however, must remember this hospitality of God by becoming the host of the Eternal Communion. (Krajnc 2020, 489)

In this regard, the Church is called to think about the renewal of the communities to which CELAM (2007) insists with determination: »The entire parish community is called to be the space where the Word is received, celebrated and expressed in the adoration of the Body of Christ, and thus is the dynamic source of the missionary disciple«; this interest is born from systemic reflection, traced by the Aparecida document as an integrated model of parish communities and of the priest who mediates the processes of the transformation and reconfiguration of the liturgical and pastoral celebration, who must have as their basis a properly founded epistemological knowledge and with clear methodological criteria, which allow effective processes of evangelization, supported by pedagogical knowledge and the human sciences that study the fact of learning to learn and learn to teach. »In this way, learning the art of celebrating, passing through the liturgy of each Sunday (one day of the Lord, one day for the Lord, one day to the Lord to enter into the mystery.« (Lopez-Corps 2019, 15)

4. Methodology

This research is qualitative-ethnographic, carried out in the Archdiocese of Medellín. It aims to analyse the pedagogy used by the priests of the parish communities in the celebration of Sunday and how they appropriate the concepts of pedagogy, didactic, and the pedagogical methods used in the celebration to transmit the Sunday message, in such a way as to help raise the quality of evangelization according to the will of Pope John Paul when he affirms in the encyclical *Dies Domini*: »The Lord's Day, as Sunday has been called since apostolic times, has always been given special consideration in the history of the Church because of its close relationship with the very core of the Christian mystery« (DD 1); this research then succeeds, through the survey, in establishing the importance of Sunday in parish communities and through the interpretative analysis the researcher collects.

The object of study of the research are the priests of the Archdiocese of Medellín, whose population is as follows: 722 validly ordained Catholic priests, of which 100 priests are sampled.

Analysis of Information

1. IMPORTANCE OF SUNDAY IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE		
	Percentage	Number of answers
Always	41%	41
Almost always	19%	19
Occasionally	4%	4
Never	11%	11
Don't know/No response	25%	25
Total	100%	100

Table 1: Importance of Sunday in the Christian Life. Source: Orozco (2021).

Information from question 1

41% of the sample clearly defined the importance of Sunday in their parish communities, while 19% stated the importance of transforming Sunday celebrations into Christian life; 25% of the respondents were concerned because they did not know how to answer the question asked (see Figure 1).

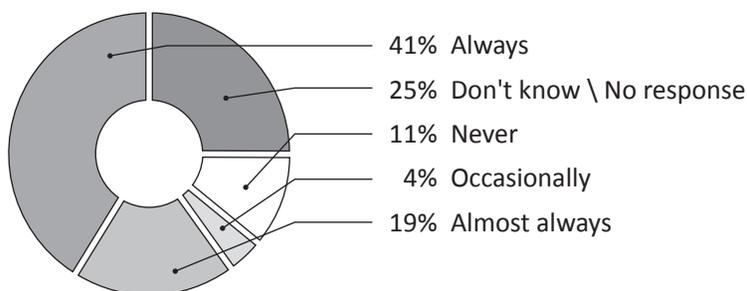


Figure 1: Importance of Sunday in Christian Life. Source: Orozco (2021).

2. PEDAGOGICAL METHODS USED IN THE SUNDAY CELEBRATION		
	Percentage	Number of answers
Exegetical method	22%	22
Catechetical method	20%	20
Discursive method	43%	43
Pedagogical method	15%	15
Total	100%	100

Table 2: Pedagogical methods used in the Sunday celebration. Source: Orozco (2021).

Information obtained from question 2

Discursive method 43% of the population surveyed are not clear about the pedagogical methods to be used during Sunday celebrations, while Exegetical method 22% of the priests surveyed answered that pedagogical methods are always used on the Lord's Day, which means that they are focused on the pedagogical methods required by today's evangelization so that the message of the Good News can be used. On the other hand, Catechetical method 20% respond that almost always,

which makes it clear that on Lord’s Day, some use these methods to make the Gospel message more explicit. All this makes it possible to analyse the urgent need to train the archdiocesan clergy in pedagogical methods so that pastoral work may be more effective and relevant in changing times. It is important to bear in mind that 15% of the interviewees have pedagogical methods, which means that pedagogical training is needed for the Sunday celebration. (See Figure 2).

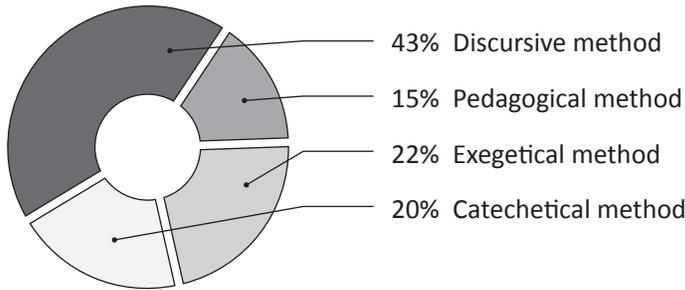


Figure 2: Pedagogical methods used on Sunday celebration Source: Orozco (2021).

3. PEDAGOGY OF THE PRIEST TO KNOW HOW TO TRANSMIT THE SUNDAY MESSAGE		
	Percentage	Number of answers
Always	11%	11
Almost always	15%	15
Occasionally	65%	65
Never	9%	9
Total	100%	100

Table 3: Pedagogy of the priest to know how to transmit the Sunday message. Source: Orozco (2021).

Information obtained from question 3

Regarding the pedagogy used by the priest to convey the Sunday message, 11% of the respondents replied that they always used it, while 15% replied that they almost always used methods to explain the Gospels. In a high percentage, 65%, that is, 65 priests occasionally use methods to celebrate on Sunday. 9% say that there is never any pedagogy by the priest (see Figure 3).

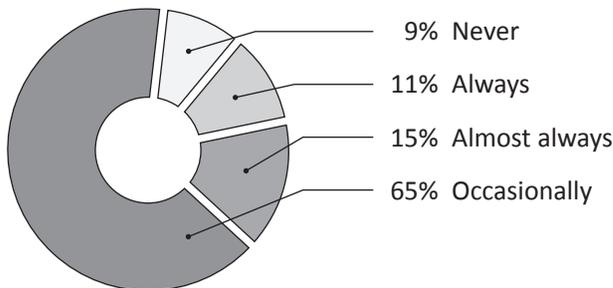


Figure 3: Pedagogy of the priest to know how to transmit the Sunday message. Source: Orozco (2021).

4. THE CELEBRATION OF SUNDAY TRANSFORMS		
CHRISTIAN LIFE		
	Percentage	Number of answers
Always	67%	67
Almost always	12%	12
Few times	16%	16
Never	5%	5
Total	100%	100

Table 4: *The celebration of Sunday transforms Christian life. Source: Orozco (2021).*

Information obtained from question 4

In question 4, which is based on the transformation of a Christian life of Sunday celebration, a high percentage of 67% responds that whenever they go to Sunday celebration, it transforms them, while 12% priests almost always, while if the percentages of few and never times are added, 21% of the faithful who take part in Sunday celebrations do not feel transformed as Christians (see Figure 4).

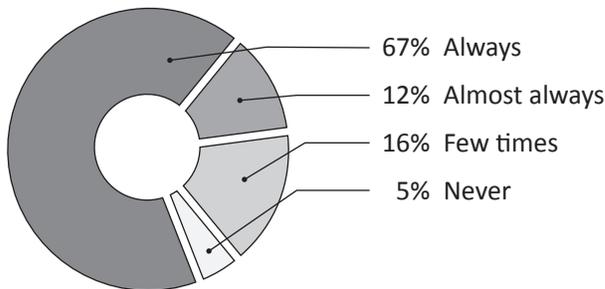


Figure 4: *Sunday celebration transforms Christian life. Source: Orozco (2021).*

5. Interpretative Analysis – Discussion

This research does not only try to reproduce reality but constitutes a development based on perception and thought. Its success is the result of interaction with the subjects under investigation, who in turn take the influence of assessment and points of view.

Once the technique has been applied, the analysis allows us to elucidate the basic categories of the importance of Sunday for the communities, from the pedagogical methods to the pedagogy of the priest to transmit the Sunday message, how Sunday the Lord's Day must transform Christian life. In this sense, John Paul II affirms: »The discovery of this day is a grace to be asked for, not only to live to the full the demands of faith but also to give a concrete answer to the deepest longings of the human being« (DD 7); according to the survey, the answers show that Sunday is truly the Day of the Lord; this is demonstrated by the answers to questions 1, 4: »Sunday is therefore a sign of the Easter event of the Lord's Day. Past and anticipation, through faith and hope, of God's rest, the perfect and endless future life.«

From the category of Pedagogical Methods used in the Sunday celebration, which is linked to the pedagogy used by the priest to transmit the Gospel message on the Lord's Day, it is relevant to note that, from the answers to questions 2 and 3, and that in words (Orozco Gómez 2015, 176) it is understood as: »procedures, forms, systems and Education laws allow teachers and intellectuals interested in the subject to acquire clear and precise concepts and then to introduce themselves to the great complexity that these subjects have acquired today.«

With regard to the category of 'Priestly Pedagogy for Knowing how to Transmit the Sunday Message in the Homily', which is linked to the way in which practical elements are used, not only for catechetical pastoral care but also for the biblical and celebratory pastoral care of the Church, it should be noted that from the survey carried out and the answers to questions 2 and 3, it can be deduced that among the priests of The dioceses of Medellín need to strengthen the use of new didactics so that the Sunday Gospel message can come to an end. In this regard, CELAM (2007): »The pastoral efforts directed towards the encounter with the living Jesus Christ have borne fruit. Among others, we highlight the following: the efforts of pastoral renewal in parishes are growing, fostering an encounter with the living Christ, through various methods of new evangelization.«

These answers suggest that priests need a pedagogical and didactic formation so that they can overcome difficulties in the transmission of the Sunday message through practical means, with the advice of the Apostolic and Roman Catholic Church, Pope Francis affirms: »The homily cannot be an entertaining spectacle, it does not respond to the logic of the media resources, but it must give fervour and meaning to the celebration. It is a peculiar genre; it is a preaching within a liturgical celebration.« (EG 138)

After highlighting the importance of the Pedagogy of the Priest to know how to transmit the Sunday message, the analysis leads to another category: The celebration of Sunday transforms Christian life. The survey and the answers to questions 1 and 4 allow us to have a clear vision of the need for a Sunday celebration that transforms the lives of believers, in which the Encyclical *Dies Domini* notes: »Man's relationship with God requires moments of explicit prayer, this relationship becomes an intense dialogue that involves all the dimensions of the person. The 'day of the Lord' is, par excellence, the day of this relationship.« (DD 16)

6. Final Considerations

The above research leads to the conclusion that pastoral pedagogy is of the utmost importance in the formation of priests, since it not only makes it possible to use didactic and pedagogical tools for evangelization and the formation of grassroots ecclesial communities and the celebration of the Lord's Day but also makes possible a commitment to today's ecclesial transformation and renewal.

The research contributes to the pedagogical formation of the priest, although it is true that his initial formation in theology, pastoral care, catechesis, ecclesiol-

ogy, biblical and exegetical formation, among others, pedagogy is an important element that serves as a basis for linking priestly activity with methodological didactics for the new evangelization. especially in the celebration of Sunday day.

The contributions that have supported the research, have served as a cross-cutting axis for the research development, it is clear that all of them allow the solidification of pastoral pedagogy, since pedagogical elements are needed that can energize evangelization and the transformation of parish communities through a pastoral pedagogy that is evident, dynamic and innovative.

Based on this research, it is possible to carry out further research on pedagogy and what to do with the priest, for the sake of the new tendencies of the modern and globalized world, in which the Church and her Pastors must strive for didactics and methodologies new in their ardour, new in their expression and new in their language, always respecting the Magisterium of the Church and its doctrine.

Abbreviations

DD – John Paul II 1998 [Dies Domini].

EG – Francis 2015 [Evangelii Gaudium].

LS – Francis 2015 [Laudato Si’].

NMI – John Paul II 1992 [Novo Millennio Ineunte].

PDV – John Paul II 1992 [Pastores Dabo Vobis].

SC – Vatican Council II. 2004 [Sacrosanctum Concilium].

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