

TIMES OF SILENCE AND REFLECTION DURING THE PANDEMIC



I began to write this reflection in the monastery of St. Honorato on the island of Lerins, in the south of France. It is a place of extraordinary beauty. The boats and sailboats that surround the island make it even more picturesque.

Although the environment is beautiful, the purpose of our stay was to find ourselves and strengthen ourselves internally. I followed the regulated schedule proposed by the monks, starting at 4.30 am and ending at 8.00 pm. The motto is "ora et labora" (pray and work). There are spaces to reflect throughout the day in the middle of the other activities.

I realize that our mind is like the waves, agitated by the external noise that occurs in the daily hustle and bustle and calms down with silence. The monks in this congregation treasure silence and ask us to practice it. I took advantage of these five days to reflect on various aspects, especially in light of the experiences of the last 18 months marked by the pandemic.

We have been in prolonged confinement. Our lifestyle changed radically with minimum social contact and lots of precautions. We had to resort to videoconferences and get used to virtuality as the social space. For those of us who enjoy being in contact with others, this time has been like a desert.



It seems that we are already in the last stage of the pandemic. However, new variants create new spikes of contagion. The world is not the same. Some people lost loved ones and accentuated their loneliness. Millions of people lost their jobs and fell into poverty, especially in regions like Latin America and the Caribbean.

And the forced question comes, what world are we inheriting to future generations? Inequality, climate change, population growth, aging population, accelerated urbanization and, scarce resources. These challenges motivate us to find sustainable, inclusive, equitable, and inclusive development models.

Before and after my trip to the island of Lerins, I had family experiences that have enriched me a lot. I am excited to see the passion of my grandchildren for living.

As a result of my reflection, I find that I enjoy my activities. Above all, I am passionate about talking to people and connecting them with others. I aim to create synergies that contribute to the common good. To the best of my ability, I will continue working to do my bit and make this world a better place to live.