

**BY THIS EVERYONE WILL KNOW THAT YOU ARE MY DISCIPLES,  
IF YOU HAVE LOVE FOR ONE ANOTHER (JOHN 13:35):  
AN INVITATION TO PRIESTLY FRATERNITY  
A.B.C. Chiegboka  
&  
Kanayo L. Nwadiolor**

**Introduction**

As part of his farewell speeches, Jesus enjoined on his immediate collaborators the new commandment of love in these words: “My children, I am with you for a little while; you will look for me. . . . Now I give you a new commandment: Love one another just as I have loved you, you also must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.

There are occasions of failed fraternities among the clergy that scandalizes the people of God who look on priests as models for healthy interpersonal relationship. There are evident dichotomy between the nice homilies on the love of neighbor which some of preach and the lives that they live. An adage holds that action speaks louder than words” and “I cannot hear you because what you are speaks louder. Okeke (2006) calls the attention of the priests to reflect on challenges to personal integration and openness to the demands of their call since modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if he listens to teachers, it is because they are witnesses and the faithful draw great encouragement from the example and witness of the priest. Similarly CBCN (2001) advises that priests should strive earnestly to always match their words with their actions. Their lives should be gospels that people can read. An individual priest's life may well turn out to be the first gospel that some people will read or may be even the only gospel that they will ever read.

-Invitation to self examination was paramount in the sustained and outstanding renewal programmes of the Pope Benedict XVI all through his time as the Universal Pastor and Head of the Catholic Church. For instance, from the Extraordinary Synod of Bishops on the Word of God in the life of the Church in 2008, the Special Assembly of Synod of Bishops on Africa in 2009 and also the Jubilee Year of St Paul from 2008 to 2009, to Year for the Priests from 2009 to 2010. In his letter of June 16, 2009 in which he proclaimed the Year for Priests (June 2009-2010), the Holy Father said among other things:

On the forthcoming Solemnity of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, Friday 19 June 2009- a day traditionally devoted to prayer, for the sanctification of the clergy- I have decided to inaugurate a “Year for Priests” in celebration of the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the “*dies natalis*” of John Mary Vianney, the patron Saint of parish priests worldwide. This Year, meant to deepen the commitment of all priests to

interior renewal for the sake of a stronger and more incisive witness to the Gospel in today's world, will conclude on the same solemnity in 2010. (Benedict, 2010: 1).

The challenge placed before the priests from the bishops and Holy Father is urgent and clear: a call for an interior renewal for incisive witness to the Gospel. Thus, it is through healthy interpersonal relationships manifested in their love for one another. For convenience, this paper shall expose the experiences of failed fraternity among priests, the foundation for priestly fraternity and finally the invitation or rather the challenges to priests to sustain priestly fraternity for the growth of the faith community placed in their hands.

## **The Foundations of Priestly Fraternity**

### **Priestly Consecration**

The priest by virtue of his baptismal rebirth is incorporated into Christ and constituted a member of the people of God and a person in the Church. With the reception of the sacraments of baptism, confirmation and Eucharist, the clergy is a fully initiated Christian. As a Priest, he enjoys the clerical state and is designated as a sacred minister or belongs to the ministerial priesthood, or minister of apostolic mission. This status is effected by sacred ordination to the order of priesthood through the imposition of hands and prayers of consecration which transforms the individual with the imprint of unrepeatable and indelible characters.

On the other hand, the juridic effect of ordination apart from the jurisdiction of teaching, sanctifying and ruling in the name and person of Christ, places one also in hierarchical communion. As such one so designated and chosen from among the People of God becomes a priest, consecrated and set apart to mediate between the people and God, and to represent them before God. By this act he is also the ambassador of the divine redeemer and consecrated to the universal mission of the Church (Ngwoke, 1998). Furthermore, it configures him to trinity and makes him represent Christ sacramentally as *alter Christus*. He acts “in persona Christi” and “in persona ecclesia”. This reflects the two dimensions of priesthood which is identification with Christ and services to the Church. Thus, the priests derive their identity ultimately from the love of the Father; they turn their gaze to the Son, sent by the Father as High Priest and Good Shepherd. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, they are united sacramentally to him in the ministerial priesthood. Their priestly life and activity continue the life and activity of Christ himself. Here lies their identity, their true dignity, the source of their joy, the very basis of their life (Okafor, 1994). The Fathers of the Council added:

Let priests remember that in carrying out their task they are never alone but are

supported by the almighty power of God. Believing in Christ who has called them to share in his priesthood, let them devote themselves to their office with all trust, knowing that God is powerful to increase charity in them. Let them remember too that they have their brothers in the priesthood and indeed the faithful of the entire world, as allies. (CBCN, 2004:20).

Priestly election and consecration is a vocation to be identified with Christ and to accomplish a mission to serve the Church which is ministry of love and pastoral charity. For John Paul (1989).

The essential content of this pastoral charity is the gift of self, total gift of self to the Church, following the example of Christ. Pastoral Charity is the virtue by which they imitate Christ in his self-giving and service. It is not just what they do, but their gift of self, which manifests Christ's love for His flock. Pastoral Charity determines their way of thinking and acting, their way of relating to people. It makes special demands on them. Priestly consecration is other regarding and an office in relation to others since one is involved in service based on love and sharing.

### **The Incardination and Presbyterium**

The Church's legal tradition disposes that every cleric must be inscribed in that community or diocesan Church for whose services he was ordained. This is called incardination which comes with diaconate ordination for diocesan priests. Incardination is a juridical institution which gives the cleric a juridic title of rights and obligations in the local Church apart from that secured with baptism. It is also a means by which a concrete pastoral relationship of service and discipline is established between the cleric and the Church. Therefore unattached or transient clerics are not admitted. Hence, priests' incardinated in particular Church or diocese maintains ecclesial communion and canonical relationship with the diocese and to the personnel structure of authority of the Church, i.e. the diocesan bishop under whose authority he exercises his ministry and enjoys the right of maintenance and other priests.

An adage holds that no one is an island. Together with the bishop and other priests they form the Presbyterium. The priest is not alone but part of a structure and together with other priests they are committed to the same mission of the Church which is to evangelize. Thus: Priests, united around their bishop, should live their brotherhood, in the knowledge that it is a true “sacramental fraternity”, which is a necessary foundation for mutual spiritual animation and for the accomplishment of their ministry in unity of purpose. They should keep in mind the value of their priestly fraternity for purposes of evangelization, forming a dynamic and credible body, in conformity with the prayer of Jesus to his Father at the Last Supper. Evangelization is never an isolated individual act, but is always deeply ecclesial, to be undertaken in the spirit of communion.

The Presbyterium is a group with set objectives and primary tasks. It is within this

framework of primary task that interactions are made, initiatives discerned, actions accomplished and evaluated. However, the healthy functioning of any group like a Presbyterium depends on good leadership that ensures a balance between task-oriented and relationship-oriented parts of leadership process. In effect, the Presbyterium is a bond that holds all priest together and through it and in fruitful solidarity they all realize the mission of Christ the redeemer which is salvation of souls.

### **The Commandment of Love**

Jesus' new commandment is love of God and Love of neighbor. He reiterated clearly in the Gospels that it is the virtue for the identity of true disciples and followers. The Psalmist complemented this when he says: “How good and pleasant it is, when brothers live in unity” (Ps. 132). Paul exhorted the Christians in Rome on obligation to love and live in peace with all (Rom 12: 16ff) and to the Corinthians he proposed the theological virtues of faith, hope and love and highlighted love as the highest and unifying virtue. For him:

Love is patient, kind, without envy. It is not boastful or arrogant. It is not ill-mannered nor does it seek its own interest. Love overcomes anger and forgets offenses. It does not take delight in wrong, but rejoices in truth. Love excuses everything, believes all things, hopes all things, and endures all things. Love will never end....Now we have faith, hope and love, these three, but the greatest of these is love. (1Cor. 13: 4-8).

For the priests, they are called to be another Christ in his radiant virtue of love to all. This is the bases of their fraternity and friendship.

### **The Imperative of Joint Pastoral Actions**

God willed to establish the members of the Church as a people in communion and a family with common lineage and responsibility to care for others, solidarity, warmth in human relationship, acceptance, dialogue and trust (John Paul, 1995).

Man is not alone and an island but a being in society, in relationship and in solidarity. Jesus maintained emphatically, “cut off from me you can do nothing” (John 15, 5) and no one has the plenitude of knowledge and charism. Aristotle has observed that the individual, when isolated, is not self-sufficing and therefore he is like a part in relation to the whole. But he who is unable to live in society or who has no need because he is sufficient for himself must be either a beast or a god (Jowett, 1952).

The Fathers of the Second Vatican Council decreed that no priest is sufficiently equipped to carry out his own mission alone and as it were single-handed. He can do so only by joining forces with other priests under the leadership of those who are rulers on the Church. And continuing in a more emphatic voice said that, all priests, who are constituted in the order of priesthood by the sacrament of Order, are bound together by

an intimate sacramental brotherhood; but in a special way they form one priestly body in the diocese to which they are attached under their own bishop. For even though they may be assigned different duties, yet they fulfil the one priestly service for people. Indeed all priests are sent to cooperate in the same work. This is true whether the ministry they exercise be parochial or supra-parochial. They all contribute to the same purpose, namely the building of the body of Christ.

It is in expectation of this highly desired bond in love and communion that is supposed to exist among these ministers involved in parish pastoral ministry, the researchers believe that since all clerics are working for the same purpose, namely the building up of the body of Christ, they are to be united with one another in the bond of brotherhood and prayer. They are to seek to cooperate with one another, in accordance with the provisions of particular law. This is an invitation to responsible consultation and collective solidarity in shouldering burdens of pastoral ministry between bishops and priests, among priests living in the parish and by extension between the parish priests and the lay faithful.

#### **The Reasons for Failed Priestly Fraternity**

The issue of failed fraternities found its vivid expressions in the scriptures. In the Old Testament, we read about the case of Cain and Abel where the former because his sacrifice was rejected killed his brother who found favour in the sight of the Lord; also the usurpation of the birthright of Esau by Jacob through the intrigue of the mother; or the hatred to Joseph by his brothers because he was the beloved of the father and dreamer. In the New Testament, we are aware of the search for places in the kingdom by the sons of Zebedee, James and John against the rest of the twelve, and so on. However, the obligation to love of neighbour Jesus injunction to his followers and especially the priests who remain his anointed representatives. It was in this line that the Congregation for the Clergy (1994) urges the priests to see the Presbyterium as, a privileged place in which the priest should be able to find means of sanctification and evangelization and of being helped to overcome the limits and the weaknesses which are proper to human nature and which are particularly felt today. He will therefore make every effort to avoid living his own priesthood in an isolated and subjectivistic way, and must try to enhance fraternal communion in the giving and receiving –from priest to priest- of the warmth of friendship, of affectionate help, of acceptance, of fraternal correction, well aware that the grace of Orders assumes and elevates human relations, psychologically, affectionately, cordially and spiritually. The capacity to develop and profoundly live priestly friendship is a source of serenity and joy in the exercise of the ministry, a decisive support in difficulties and a valuable help in the growth of pastoral charity. Priests must exercise this friendship in a particular way precisely towards those brothers most in need of understanding, help and support.

It is often observed within the diocesan Church different levels of strained relationships

or failed fraternities among clergy. These include: Bishops and the Priests; Priests and Priests (i.e. curial officials and priests; parish Priests and Parish Vicars; Parish Priests and Priests in Residence); Priests and Religious; Priests and Laity or Parish Publics/communities, and so on. This phenomenon among priests shows the presence of conflicts that exists among the clergy. The word conflict comes from Latin word *confligo, confligere, conflexi conflectum*- to strike, to throw together, and to collide, to clash. Conflict, therefore, is always a struggle between two opposing principles, aims, feelings, interests or perceptions. It is a social condition where often people pursue mutually exclusive or incompatible goals. Okere (2002), commenting on the nature and levels of conflicts, holds that:

*Conflict describes and characterizes situations marked by the absence of peace.... Conflict can exist at any number of levels, personal, inter-personal, communal and inter-communal. It can take any number of forms: political, religious, economic. It can be rooted in race, class or gender. Whatever its form, the underlying issue in conflict is a lack of justice ... justice which is "truth in relationships", the truth about self, about self in relation to others, to nature and to God. (p. 2).*

St James placed the origin of conflict inside the human person in these words:

*Those conflicts and disputes among you, where do they come from? Do they not come from your cravings that are at war within you? You want something and do not have it; so you commit murder. And you covet something and cannot obtain it; so you engage in disputes and conflicts.... You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, in order to spend what you got on your pleasures. (James 4:13).*

For the ministers of Christ, certain trends, awful in itself are observed. For example, in relation to Bishops and their priests since strained relationships are always observed in placements, transfers and deprivation of offices; in further studies and recalls; in exhortations and reprimands and in maintenance/social security. For instance, the issue of further studies or education for the diocesan priests show unhealthy experiences from both the side of the priests and their respective bishops as relationships and communion have been strained with problems that revolve around such issues as: lack of pragmatic personnel administrative policies in the local Churches lack of enabling and receptive environment both at home and overseas; overwhelming experience of prolonged stay, presence of unproductive and under-utilized academic degrees and distracted concentration on wealth by some priests (Chiegboka, 2006).

And on the other hand and in a more significant form between Priests and Priests, where we have had the evidence of extreme selfishness and misplaced individualism, conflicts between parish priests and the vicars and priests-in-residence, questionable attachment to the affluent members of the community and the immediate

relatives/family and the utter neglect of the expected fraternal solidarity among priests. Okafor (1998) observes thus:

In the recent past it used to be a luxury for two priests to live together in a presbytery. It was a privilege reserved to elderly priests and priests with multiple assignments. Nowadays, it is common to have two or more priests living in many parishes. What can cause the breach of peace among priests living together? The encapsulated answer is: Selfishness. It could be selfishness on the part of one, or both or all of them. The atmosphere created by selfishness makes it possible for them to catalogue the offences of one against the other. This is because it is impossible for a selfish man to forgive and not count the cost. In some instances where a priest lives alone, he still succeeds in keeping himself sad by inflicting his selfishness on the society around him. Thus he quarrels with the Seminarian, Cook, Typist, Steward, Catechist, Readers, Mass Servers, Church Wardens, and Parish Council etc. Such people must locate an escape goat for their anger all the time. Such ugly situations should no longer be found among us. Let us jettison selfishness out of the windows of our lives and breathe the fresh air of forgiveness, justice and peace. (p. 8).

Additional reasons include unhealthy image of one another i.e. unhealthy images and misconceptions that affect the identity, status, attitudes towards one another; evidences of pride, ambition, greed, envy, hatred, lack of respect; presence of emotional immaturity and complexes or exhibition of wounded self; connection with the powers that be or struggle over power; display of materialism, fame, money, cars; ministerial activities beyond one's territory i.e. intrusion without permission; observed conflicts in competences especially in demands related to rights and benefits; evidence of growing discord, conflicts and litigations among priests living together as the noble edifice of fraternity is eroded by fight of personal egos/individualism/selfishness and as some engage in intrigues and character assassination that remain a scandal to the people of God in the parish and beyond; or unhealthy and irresponsible relationship with women in the rectory or flooding of the rectory with friends and family relatives at the neglect of other priests; and generation gaps. Oguejiofor (1987) remarks that:

Where the Spirit of Christ is absent, the natural gap can lead to difficulties in relationship. Fear is arising in some older priests seeing many young and talented men sprouting in the Presbyterium. This is the fear of insecurity. Acting from this there is the tendency to hold tenaciously to what some believe they have got, resisting transfer and at the same time supervising the yearly movement of other people. Others try to derogate the younger generation 'I don't know what you people are taught in the seminary nowadays'. The younger members of the Presbyterium are not free from the problem of the gap. There is evident distrust of the elderly ones. Every act emanating from them is seen from a pejorative mirror. They are regarded as people who have outlived their

usefulness and as a consequence have become too retrogressive or reactionary. In the best minds of the younger priests and seminarians, they should all be flushed out from the helms of affairs if Christ's kingdom is to flourish.(p. 7).

Some parish priests adopt either a laissez fair or despotic/high handed style of leadership. In one of his observations, Okafor (2004) exhorts the new parish priest thus: Becoming a parish priest does not mean becoming a Lord unto oneself. Often after ordination, some people feel that they have arrived; they have added the 'one yard'. They see themselves as eternal high priests who can never be expelled anymore. Some turn into '*eze onye agwana m,*' for such people the learning process has ended. But no view is as mistaken as this. According to Aristotle, human beings by nature desire to know. In other words, when you think that you have no need for new knowledge, fresh insights, or that you have nothing to learn from others, then you are, according to Aristotle, denying your human nature. At the root of such attitude is an arrogance which is a sign of emptiness. (pp. 2-3).

In addition, we have observed that the forum for communication, pastoral planning/programming/schedules and dialogue for fraternity/common life are lacking in some rectories. There is thus need for division of labour and trust among priests living together. The Parish Vicars are not glorified houseboys at the hands of the parish priests. They are priests in their own standing and part and parcel of the mission and ministry of the Church. We also observed that some parish priests when they have cause to go on leave or stay outside the parish for a while normally hand over the parish administration to a visiting priest other than the other priests with him. In some cases such visiting priests are highly remunerated and attended to more than those directly involved in parish ministry or residing in the rectory.

What do we say of those who are unconcerned with the welfare of his brother priests, i.e. his feeding, Medicare, car maintenance, house equipments, gifts etc?; or one that feel threatened because his colleagues preaches better homilies or appreciated by the community; or one that exhibits intimidating character that does not accommodate or tolerate the other?; or one soaked with jealousies against the achievements and progress of the other?; or exhibits insincerity in making monetary demands etc? In effect how do the priests manage the differences in their personality and character? How do they accommodate one another in the spirit of the gospel and as a reflection of their true identity as servants of the gospel? This will lead to x-tray the foundations of priestly fraternity and the challenges before the priests.

### **Invitation to Priestly Fraternity**

As priests consecrated for the Lord and the Church, they should readjust themselves and comportment so that it will correspond to their identity and their invitation to fraternity. It is on this note that the researchers present these challenges necessary for the achievement of priestly integrity before the people of God.

### **The Challenge of Internalized/Personalized Priestly Identity**

In our desire to accomplish the challenges of priestly fraternity, the researchers believe that priests should make a journey through themselves by appreciating their identity and personalizing their vocation. According to Okeke (2001):

To be responsible for one's vocation entails personalizing one's vocation. Personalization is a continuous process and entails having a clearer vision of the vocation itself, the dismantling of false expectations associated with it, and the overcoming of illusions about oneself. But the ground of that personalization remains the rediscovery and acceptance of God's unconditional love for us as individuals and as a Church. (p. 21).

We believe that a mature personality will definitely enhance mature interpersonal relationship which the priests are called to exhibit among themselves. But to accomplish this, the Church calls on clerics to ongoing formation which continues throughout one's life time.

Francis Bacon in his nobly acknowledged philosophical dictum declared that, "Knowledge is Power". The Church found the value of education from the early pages of the book of Genesis, where the divine Master mandated and injected in every human person the inherent power and creative disposition to "fill the earth and conquer it" (Gen 1, 28). This need is unique for the priests as Prophet Malachi proclaimed: "The lips of a priest shall guard knowledge, and men shall seek instruction from his mouth, for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts". The same was the position of prophet Hosea:

Hear the word of Yahweh Israel! For Yahweh has an accusation to bring against the inhabitants of this land. There is neither truth nor goodness nor knowledge of God in the country only perjury, lies, murder, theft and adultery, with continual bloodshed. That is why the country is in mourning with all who live there wasting away; the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, even the fish are dying. But let no one apologize or accuse another, for it is you, priest, whom I single out! You stumble day and night and the prophets stumble with you, and you make your people fall. My people perish for want of knowledge, and because you have rejected knowledge, I also reject you as priests, and since you ignore the law of your God, I, too, will ignore your children. (Hosea 4: 1-6).

This position of the Scriptures found its basic expression also in the voice of the

Magisterium of the Catholic Church in the decree *Presbyterorum ordinis*. Secular culture and even sacred science are advancing at an unprecedented rate in our time. Priests are therefore urged to adequate and continuous perfection of their knowledge of things divine and human. In this way, they will prepare themselves to enter with greater advantage into dialogue with their contemporaries.

Furthermore, in the context of the individual development, the Congregation for the Clergy (1994) directs that such (ongoing) formation must cover and harmonize all the dimensions of the formation of priests. Thus, it must tend to help each priest achieve the development of a full human personality nurtured in the spirit of service to others, in whatever task he may receive; it will permit him to be intellectually prepared in the theological sciences as well as in the human sciences in so far as they are linked with his ministry in order to pursue his function as witness to the faith and with a greater effectiveness.

### **The Challenge of Healthy Interpersonal Relationship**

The priests should reach out in healthy interpersonal relationships with both his bishops and other priests. Reminding the priests of the need for a sense of the Presbyterium and friendship the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria (2004) instructs:

The priest maintains and fosters a spirit of fraternity, solidarity, friendship, and special hospitality to his brother priests who are often alone, tired and exhausted. He spends time and recreation with his fellow priests. If possible, there is a guest room in the priest's house, ready to warmly receive visiting priests. If he is aware of a priest in difficulty or temptation, a priest that is too much and too often on his own, he reaches out to support, assist and possibly challenge that priest. If need be, he elicits the support and help of the Bishop in assisting that priest. (p. 20).

Complimenting, the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples added that priests should try to have relations of real friendship with their fellow priests, being able in this way to help each other more easily to develop their spiritual and intellectual life, to give assistance in material needs, and to live more fully and more serenely. This type of friendship between priests, developed in Christ as a consequence of each one's personal communion with Him, is of great help in overcoming the difficulties of loneliness.

The diocesan bishop is bound to create the enabling environment that will foster this relationship among priests in his leadership styles especially in personnel placement, further studies, maintenance etc. On this note he should exercise his authority, and show charisms of discernment, discretion and prudence in his dealings and especially in his personal knowledge of his priests, that is, their character, their aptitudes, their aspirations, the depth of their spiritual life, their zeal, their ideals, their state of health,

their financial situation, their families and everything which concerns them. And he should know them not just in groups or through pastoral bodies, but also individually and, as far as possible, in their place of ministry. This is the purpose of his pastoral visits, when as much time as possible should be given to personal matters.

The legislator called the bishops to show solicitude for the welfare and predicaments of his priests. He is to have a special concern for the priests, to whom he is to listen as his helpers and counselors. He is to defend their rights and ensure that they fulfill the obligations proper to their state. He is to see that they have the means and the institutions needed for the development of their spiritual and intellectual life. He is to ensure that they are provided with adequate means of livelihood and social welfare, in accordance with the law.

As the number of priests in each diocesan presbyterium increases, the Bishop is also challenged to see that their talents which are gifts from God should be identified, appreciated, willingly acknowledged (not grudgingly tolerated) and given every opportunity for constructive uses for the glory of God and the salvation of souls. Thus in exercising his ministry, the bishop should try to relate with his priests, *not merely as a ruler towards his subjects, but rather as a father and a friend. He should devote himself wholeheartedly to creating a climate of affection and trust such that his priests may respond with a convinced, pleasing and firm obedience. The practice of obedience is strengthened rather than weakened if the Bishop, as far as possible and without prejudice to justice and charity, explains to the interested parties the reasons for his decisions. He should show equal care and attention to every priest, because all of them, while their gifts will be many and varied, are engaged in the service of the Lord as members of a single presbyterate.*

For the diocesan priests, they are called in obedience to collaborate with the bishops in a spirit of loyal and sincere communion, being ready always to accept transfers, and the invitation to return to take up assignments at home. The local Church has concern for them, and she waits for their prompt return to continue the mission of Christ the redeemer, which is far from being completed. Their contribution is required in the area of both the society and the Church, in the seminaries, diocesan curia and parishes.

### **The Challenge of Community life**

Community life should show itself as the next challenge for priestly fraternity especially for priests living in the same rectory, within the same town with multi-parishes, in the same vicinity (that is in deaneries and regions). Committed participation in associations of priests, seminars, retreats, workshops, conferences, organs of administration, committees, recreational activities and celebrations at the

diocesan, regional, deanery and parish levels are sine qua non to enhancing and fostering priestly fraternity, fraternal solidarity and collaboration as the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples rightly opines that community life, based on the one priesthood and as an expression of fraternity, is strongly recommended by the Church for diocesan priests. It favors joint apostolic work and especially first evangelization, which experience has shown to be difficult if undertaken by individuals. Bishops should study, therefore, how to promote community life, according to the possibilities available and the models offered by local culture, trying to overcome understandable organizational difficulties and possibly some psychological reticence. It should be remembered that community life cannot be improvised but requires sensitization and preparation already in the seminary.

There should be time for dialogue and review of pastoral programmes; time for common prayers/con-celebrations at Masses; at least one common meal; effective communications of feelings and sentiments and so on. In essence, there is obligatory need to have regular and formal business meetings (discussions during meals or during recreations are inadequate).

Community life means not merely living physically together but sharing on the spiritual, pastoral and human levels. Thus, priests who form a community should pray together; they should exchange useful information and plan and evaluate together their apostolic activities; they should help each other in cultural updating; they should help each other financially, even having to some extent their goods in common, according to the bishop's guidelines; they should willingly take recreation together; they should help and encourage each other in difficult situations, in times of weariness or illness, and especially when problems with one's vocation arise; when necessary, they should not be afraid to give fraternal advice.

### **Conclusion**

The paper have tried to present instances of failed relationship among the clergy, the foundations for the existence of priestly fraternity and the challenges open to the priests to accomplish the highly needed interpersonal relationship marked with genuine Christian love and understanding which remain the hallmarks of the revered Christian identity and status. For the realization of this highly desired interpersonal relationship, the priests need to undergo sincere conversion and appreciate their condition and by being aware that grace builds on nature. They need to cultivate the necessary virtues of selflessness or other regarding attitude and also allow reason to guide their daily action since it will engender the proper understanding, discernment and appreciation of the other. In addition to this is also the virtue of humility, that is counting the other as more

important than you and have concern for the common good. There is need to exhibit the spirit of tolerance and use adverse situations to teach rather than witness friction in their midst. In conclusion, priests, “fill your minds with whatever is truthful, holy, just, pure, lovely and noble. Be mindful of whatever deserves praise and admiration” (Phil 4, 8), and

If your life in Christ means anything to you, if love can persuade at all, or the spirit that we have in common, or any tenderness and sympathy, then be united in your conviction and united in your love, with a common purpose and a common mind. That is the one thing which would make one completely happy. There must be no competition among you, no conceit, but everybody is to be self-effacing. Always consider the other person to be better than yourself, so that nobody thinks of his own interests first but everybody thinks of other people's interests instead. In your minds, you must be the same as Christ Jesus. (Phil. 2:1-5).

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