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PERCEPTION OF FUTURE APOSTOLATE AND LIFE STYLE FOR
THE DAUGHTERS OF CHARITY, SERVANTS OF THE POOR
IN THE PHILIPPINES, C. 2025

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AKLATANG EMILIO AGUINALDO



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DEDICATION

To our Masters, the Poor
and their Servants, the Daughters of Charity

Philippine Province

this simple work is humbly dedicated.



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CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

SUMMARY

This research was undertaken to envision the future apostolate and life-style of the Daughters of Charity, Servants of the Poor in the Philippines. Specifically, the researcher tried to answer the following questions :

1. What types of services and programs will still be relevant in the year 2025 for the Daughters of Charity, Servants of the Poor?
2. What life style should the Daughters of Charity adopt for effectivity and efficiency in their apostolate in the year 2025?
3. What significant relationships exist between the respondents' perceptions of future apostolate/life style and their chronological age, vocation age, and educational attainment.
4. What significant differences exist between the respondents' perceptions of future apostolate/life style and those grouped by present apostolate they are engaged in; namely schools, hospitals, institutions, parishes, formation house, others (Special community for elderly Sister, Retreat Centers), and curia.

The researcher came up with the following findings:

- I. Specific findings regarding future apostolate and life style
 - A. Apostolate



1. Schools

The overall perceptions of this section show that the youngest group has the highest mean average of 4.14 followed by the oldest group, 3.81 while the middle age group shows only 3.42 mean average. This could indicate that the youngest group favors more school apostolates than the other two groups.

Between the youngest and the middle age groups there is a difference, from 3 to 4 on the 5 point scale or from quite relevant to greatly relevant. The oldest group is very close to the middle and to the youngest groups. The total mean average of the three groups is 3.79. Their highest and lowest mean averages are not the same, except the middle and the oldest age groups whose lowest mean averages fall on item no. 1 - urban tertiary level education (Please refer to Table 3). All items in the schools' section will still be from quite to greatly relevant in the year 2025.

2. Social Services

The overall mean averages of this section show that the youngest group has the highest mean average of 4.28 followed by the middle age, 3.99, then the oldest age group, 3.78. The differences are not significant. The total mean average of the three groups is 4.02. This indicates that the respondents' perceptions on the social services' items were very similar to one another because "they have been called to keep alive the charism of Vincent" (Mahoney 1972).



Their highest and lowest mean averages are not the same, except the youngest and the oldest whose lowest mean averages fall on item no. 1 -residences for poor young girls (Please refer to Table 4). From the data presented, all items in the social services' sections will still be greatly relevant in the year 2025.

3. Pastoral Ministry

The three groups appear to have the same mean averages of more than 4 on the 5 point scale. This is the only section that shows that the respondents are virtually having higher mean average than the other sections. The youngest and the oldest groups have the same highest and lowest mean average on the same item which is no. 6- BEC (Basic Ecclesial Community).

The apostolate though is not traditional in the Philippine Province (it started in the late 70's and intensified in the 90's). But, it must be close to the heart of the respondents because most of the programs and services are rendered directly to the poor. This may indicate that its future is bright (Please refer to Table 5).

Based on the findings, there will be a tremendous impact on the service of the poor in the year 2025 when advanced technology may further separate the marginalized from the more powerful and the rich.

Based on the respondents' preferences, all items in the pastoral ministry section will still be greatly relevant in the year 2025.



B. Life-style

1. External Affairs

The three groups appear to have low mean average on all items. In every group there are several numbers indicating "barely relevant." The only item that has the highest mean average for the three groups is no. 2 which refers to accountability of personal and community goods. This item shows a 4 mean average on the 5 point scale. The lowest mean average is on item no. 3 -using community transportation.

However, the oldest group had a slightly higher mean average compared with the other two groups. The mean average of the three groups was 3.23.

The responses show that all items in the external affairs' section will be from barely to quite relevant in the year 2025.

2. Fraternal Community, Vowed life

Again the three groups seem to have the same overall averages. However, the youngest group leads the other two with a slightly higher mean average. But this difference is not significant. This could merely indicate that they have received the same formation and that the youngest respondents are better permeated with the spirit of the founders.

In fact, the three groups display the same lowest mean average on the same item which is item no. 4 "private physician, private room



when being hospitalized." The middle age and the oldest groups seem to have the same highest mean average on item no. 13 "group dialogue with superiors on certain community issues." Overall, the mean average of the three groups is 3.80.

The responses on all items on fraternal community, vowed life show that they will still be quite relevant in the year 2025.

3. Horarium /Spiritual Life

The three groups have similar overall mean averages. However, the youngest group has a slightly higher mean average than the other two. The three groups' highest mean average of 4.84 (for the oldest), and 4.72 (for the two remaining groups) fall on the same item which is no. 6 - yearly renewal of vows. They also show the same lowest mean average of 3.28, 2.92, 2.76 from youngest to oldest respectively on the same item which is no. 1 - horarium : structured schedule of community acts.

The overall mean average of the three groups is 3.87; that is very close to the overall mean average of the entire life style section - 3.70. These findings confirm that the respondents do have similar perceptions on the horarium/spiritual life style.

To the respondents all items on horarium/spiritual life section will still be from quite to greatly relevant by the year 2025.



ii. General findings

That there exists no relationship between the respondents' perceptions on the future apostolate/life style and their demographic variables is accepted.

Very few items show slight relationships which are not significant at .05 level of confidence. Their perceptions are not related to the number of years of vocation, nor to their chronological age, nor to different educational degrees they hold. This is a very unique finding for the three groups.

That there exists no difference between the perceptions of future apostolate/life style and the nature of their present apostolate namely schools, hospitals, institutions, parishes, formation house, others (retreat center, special community for Senior Sister), and curia is also accepted ($p > .05$).

Usually people somehow are influenced by their environment and work. According to the statistical finding, it is not so with the Daughters of Charity, Servants of the Poor. Everywhere they are the same, consistent in many ways...in their apostolate and life style.



Table 17

Summary of overall mean averages of future apostolate/life style

Factors	Age 25-34 n=25	35-44 n=25	45-54 n=25	n=75
Schools	4.14	3.42	3.81	3.79
Social Services	4.28	3.99	3.78	4.02
Pastoral Ministry	4.36	4.37	4.29	4.34
Life Style A	3.18	3.16	3.35	3.23
Life Style B	3.91	3.72	3.79	3.80
Life Style C	4.06	3.85	3.71	3.87
Life Style -overall	3.80	3.64	3.67	3.70

Table 17 shows the trend of:

A. Future apostolate (n=75)

1. Pastoral ministry with highest mean average of 4.34.
2. Social services with 4.02
3. Schools with 3.79.

B. Future life style (n=75)

1. Horarium / spiritual life with a mean average of 3.87.
2. Fraternal community / vowed life with 3.80 as mean average.
3. External affairs with a mean average of 3.23.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions are drawn:



I. Future apostolate

Based on the summary in Table 17, the youngest group leads the other two groups on schools and social services as it has been shown repeatedly in the previous Tables. Their mean averages show more than 4 on the 5 point scale while the other two groups display more than 3 on the scale. However, their differences are negligible.

This could mean that the youngest respondents are probably still physically and spiritually energized from their recent formation experiences, and from their youthful zeal. It is very obvious that they are eager to serve in any apostolate.

By the year 2025, the youngest group will probably be taking full responsibility for the apostolate of the Province. Will they be able to maintain some traditional works that the DC's have until now? Will there be enough qualified members for the positions of directress, dean of colleges, school principals and coordinators? There are presently gradual efforts to empower lay partners to take over the first and second levels of management.

The Province has also sent some young and middle age Sisters to school for graduate studies. These young Sisters seem to be well equipped to gradually shoulder heavier responsibilities.

The middle age and the oldest groups seem to show the same mean averages on these two factors: schools, and social services. This could



be interpreted to mean that these respondents have thought about the future when they will possibly be fewer, they are cautious about their preferences.

The three groups have the same mean averages in the pastoral ministry section. This can mean that the pastoral ministry is the core of the DC's current and future apostolate. The trend of the Province is toward pastoral ministry which seems to be the uppermost concern of the present Visitatrix.

All in all, the respondents' preferences for the future apostolate are not different from the ones they have now. However, the difference is shown in the degree of the 5 point scale. According to their perceptions they are between 3 and 4, from quite to greatly relevant. In 30 more years, the "quite relevant" may become "barely relevant," and there will be changes that would come along with the needs of the time.

So, the trend as far as future apostolate is concerned, appear to be the following in the descending order of preference: pastoral, social services and school.

Hopefully the DC's will be able to respond to the needs of the poor as they have always done. The significant suggestions brought up by the respondents regarding future apostolates need to be seriously looked into by the authorities of the Province.



II. Life Style

The youngest group leads the other two groups with a slightly higher mean average in two sections of life style, namely, fraternal community, vowed life, horarium, and spiritual life, but has a lower mean average in the first section-external affairs, if compared with the oldest group. According to their mean averages the young respondents seem to indicate that what they learned during their initial formation is still strongly motivating them.

Apparently, they seem to adjust themselves well to the DC life style a little bit better than their elder counterparts. This could possibly explain their vigor and desire to live a meaningful, consecrated life. They are young, idealistic and only with few painful experiences in life. The middle and the oldest age groups appear to have the same perceptions in almost all sections. Although overall, the youngest is still the leading group. However, their differences are not significant.

It appears that the three groups seem to have the same thinking. The differences in chronological age, vocation age, and educational attainment do not separate them from one another, as it is shown in this study.

What makes them appear identical? The young respondents show that after some years in their religious life as DC's they already "fit" into the "style" of the middle age and oldest groups. This may prove



that their formation is traditional. In fact, some of their formators have been in the position for a decade or longer.

Those who took over the formation for young Sisters and postulants (candidates for novices) 15, 20 years ago, are now the provincial major superior and are still their formators in a sense.

The concepts of tradition and authority in Filipino culture can be another factor as Andres mentioned in his book Understanding The Filipino (1987). Filipinos hold strongly to their tradition and obey blindly their elders and parents. The intense and continuous formation received by all respondents in these few years such as seminars, annual retreats, dialogue with the provincial superiors by groups or by houses, renewals, inputs on horizon shifts since 1991 have made a tremendous impact on all members.

The youngest group leads the other two groups in nearly all sections which indicates that they probably are willing to lead this life style with little modification.

With the trend shown in their preferences, there will not be any major change in the DC's life style from now until the year 2025.

In short:

1. Of the present/existing apostolates it appears that the most relevant for the year 2025 is that of the pastoral ministry, followed by social services and the schools in descending order of choices (Table 17). It will be recalled that the health services are included in the social services.



2. As to the life style, respondents' perceptions of relevance for the year 2025 are as follows (according to the highest to lowest mean averages). It seems that horarium and spiritual life (particularly the yearly renewal of vows) will remain quite relevant in the year 2025 followed by fraternal community/vowed life (particularly group dialogue with superiors on certain community issues and ongoing formation), and external affairs -specially with high mean average in accountability of personal and community goods.

This conclusion points to a more spiritual/vowed life kind of life style emerging for the year 2025.

3. There exists no difference in relationship between the future apostolate/life style and their demographic variables. Chronological, vocation age, and educational attainment have little influence on the perceptions of the respondents.

4. There exists no difference between the respondents' perceptions and the nature of their current apostolates; namely, schools, hospitals, institutions, formation house, etc. Their present works have not altered their perceptions.

Implications

Based on the results of the data, one can surmise that the Daughters of Charity have received theologically the same formation which, in a way, is very good. All groups regardless of their chronological age, vocation age, educational attainment, and their present assignment have little effect on their perception for the future



of their apostolate and life style. It can imply that only those who can adjust themselves with this formation can remain with the Company, others will be eliminated. Through the findings it may be very difficult for them to adapt to the signs of time due to their conservative thinking. In another words, it is not easy for them to change.

This can also suggest that the Daughters of Charity want to hold on to their traditional works (schools) in the Philippine Province although their preferences were not the highest among the apostolates they are carrying on. To hasten the adaptation of important changes gradual preparation of individuals and of the community will be necessary. This needs to start now by making moderate modifications in their ongoing formation if the Province really wants to meet the challenges of the year 2025.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The researcher, on the bases of the findings and conclusions of the study, wishes to offer the following recommendations:

I. Apostolate

1. That in addition to existing forms of pastoral ministry, there be additional emphasis on new forms of ministry such as non-formal education Center for tribal Filipinos; Basic Ecclesial Communities for the common workers (farmers, fishermen, miners, etc.); and mobile clinics for rural communities.



2. That because the existing schools outnumber all other ministries some of them may need to be re-evaluated in the light of their founders'charism giving priority to witnessing and justice to the poor.

3. That more attention be given to the Marillac Grantees facilities, privileges including proportionate duties/responsibilities.

4. That closer attention be given to develop the rural elementary and secondary schools where the truly poor students are found.

5. That in all the apostolates of the DC's the formation of lay partners be continued in depth and intensified as has already been started.

II. Life Style

Since the items with the highest mean averages cover aspects already found in the D.C Constitutions and Statutes, and amendments are approved by the General Assembly, there is no need to recommend them.

However, there are some dimensions in life style that can be taken up in future General Assemblies. It could happen that in the near future the International Provinces/Regions may consider them.

With that in mind, the following perceptions of respondents should be given attention (from the highest to lowest mean averages)



1. That when planning for the horarium, its traditional and structural aspects should be less emphasized, and more attention be given directly to the needs of the poor in the apostolate, and indirectly to the personal needs of the Sisters.
2. That more private spiritual reading, liturgical worship and community exercises be allowed to enhance the Sisters' creativity and responsibility in their spiritual life.
3. That group dialogue with superiors on certain community issues be given priority in their ongoing formation.
4. That the DC's should be in the wards when hospitalized, like the poor.
5. That the DC's be allowed to wear lay clothes on special occasions like camping with youth, or working in remote areas where poor people wear simple clothing, without having to ask permission from the superiors.
6. That all Daughters of Charity, Servants of the Poor, Philippine Province, keep alive with zeal and fervor the apostolate for which they are called to serve in the year 2025.

