

The Role of Women Religious in Pastoral Ministry

Sr. Kusum OSA

Introduction

This paper is an attempt to look at the role of women religious in the pastoral ministry. The paper tries to look at pastoral ministry from various angles. From the point of view of the parish and parish activities, and deals with the identity crisis that women religious face due to the generation gap and the changes taking place in the understanding of pastoral ministry in the new era of professionalism, competence and greater awareness of self worth. The paper invites us to approach pastoral ministry in a broader sense and shows the need for women religious to equip themselves to be effective in ministry. There are various roles inside and outside of parishes which women can handle with efficiency, competence and a sense of fulfilment.

1. Setting the Context

Throughout history women have played a great role in nurturing society although it had not been recognized. The world knows a few women who have exhibited extraordinary power through leadership qualities; women who have fought tirelessly against injustice done to the poor and marginalized; women who have accepted and cared for the rejected members of the society, but the vast majority of women in India are exceptions as strong and committed to family and marriage bond. They endure suffering; expose themselves to vulnerability and hard work. However, the present generation is fortunate to see the changes taking place in

Sr. Kusum, OSA, holds a Licentiate in Pastoral Theology from K. U. Leuven. Her Licentiate thesis was: *HIV/AIDS: A Contemporary Social Phenomenon in Need of a Theological Approach*.

favour of women in the society and in the Church. The indispensable role of women in the society, in the Church, decision-making and governance, etc. is a matter of crucial importance today.

It has to be remembered, that the Church is very much part of the wider society and it reflects the historical and emerging trends in the society. As a result the contradictions and inequalities prevalent in "the Church mirror those present in the wider society. So the Church alone cannot be blamed for all the biases that continue to permeate the mindsets of certain sections of its members and social structures."¹ "Women's dignity has often been unacknowledged and their prerogatives misinterpreted; they have often been relegated to the margins of society and even reduced to servitude. This has prevented women from truly being themselves and it has resulted in a spiritual impoverishment of humanity. Certainly it is easy to assign the blame to this – and if objective blame, especially in particular historical contexts, has belonged to not just a few members of the Church, for this I am truly sorry. May this regret be transformed on the part of the whole Church, into a renewed commitment of fidelity to the Gospel vision."² The changes that are taking place in the society have also awakened the Church to the presence of women in the Church and feel the need to integrate them in the life and governance of the Church.

1.1. Pastoral Theology and Pastoral Ministry

The common man understands pastoral theology and pastoral care as "caring of souls," something limited to the celebration of the Eucharist, administration of sacraments, and burying the dead. Today pastoral theology has assumed a wider spectrum which is concerned with humanitarian, social, and religious concerns which demand competent pastors who can adopt different approaches and methods with flexibility and ease. The capacity to reflect upon and articulate something of theological significance in the light of human experience is highly valued in pastoral theology, as the capacity to interpret meanings, myths, and symbols that shape people's views of themselves and their world. A pastor's ability to understand and respond to contemporary human issues from a theological perspective can influence people's attitude about themselves and the world.³

¹ Lilly Francis & Loy George, "Empowerment of Women and Church in India," in *The Empowerment of Women in the Church and Society*, ed. Commission for Women, CBCI, New Delhi: CBCI Commission for Women, 2008, 26.

² Cf. *Ecclesia in Asia*, 34.

³ S. Pattison, & J. Woodward, "An Introduction to Pastoral and Practical Theology," in *The Blackwell Reader in Pastoral and Practical Theology*, ed., J. Woodward & S. Pattison, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000, 10. (1-19)

Pastoral theology is not a discipline that stands aloof from all other disciplines, rather it stands in relation to all other theological as well as human sciences. Those participating in pastoral care have to analyse dimensions of their work in terms of social factors, for, pastoral theology has a close association with sociology in the sense that both shape and condition theory and practice.⁴ The pastoral nature of theology enables the Church “to proclaim the Gospel message through the cultural modes of their age and to direct pastoral action according to an authentic theological vision.”⁵ Pastoral theology is a theology at the service of the human person.

Pastoral theology was understood as something, which is related only to parish and parish priests. However, it is to be thought of in a broader sense as the role of laity and of religious women in the Church is broadly discussed and demanded. The topic has its relevance in this context when women think creatively about their role in the pastoral ministry.

1.2. Pastoral Ministry: The Impact and Persistence of Old Understanding

When I was doing my undergraduate studies in theology, once there was a debate on women ordination. My name was proposed to speak for women ordination. I was personally not very much pleased with the idea of women ordination in those days. As I was coming out after the debate one of the brothers who was then only a first year philosophy student, who appeared to be very much disturbed and irritated, asked me, “Why do you sisters come to study theology? Your place is in the villages. Go and do the village work. Theology is meant for priests.” Then I asked him, “Why are you so much afraid if the sisters study theology or get ordained.” Then I felt for the first time that women getting empowered seems to pose a threat to men.

A young priest was transferred to a certain parish. He sent away his cook and the sacristan and demanded the sisters to supply him four meals, clean the Church and the surroundings, etc. The sisters resisted. This priest found that the sisters were not doing anything for the people in the parish. They have no school, or dispensary or hospital. So he told people if they want anything to be done in the parish they should bring some other group of sisters to the parish. Sisters who used to be in this parish for some years,

⁴ M. M. Northcott, “Pastoral Theology and Sociology”, in *The Blackwell Reader in Pastoral and Practical Theology*, ed. J. Woodward & S. Pattison, 151. (151-163)

⁵ John Paul II, Apostolic letter, *Pastores dabo vobis*, 55 a

who were well appreciated by the people and the former Parish priest for the family apostolate and pastoral care were suddenly degraded, and the work they do, are not seen as something worthwhile. This situation has resulted in a sort of identity crisis for the religious.

2. Identity Crisis of the Religious

2.1. Society

Today the religious find themselves between two positions. There is lack of appreciation to this kind of life by the society in general. In the conclusion of the encyclical *Vita Consecrata*, Pope John Paul II, addressed the attitude of the modern society about religious life. We live in a "utilitarian and technocratic culture which is inclined to assess the importance of things and even people in relation to their immediate usefulness".⁶ Therefore, many people ask today, what is the point of consecrated life? "Is the consecrated life not a kind of "waste" of human energies which might be used more efficiently for a greater good, for the benefit of humanity and the Church?"⁷ Why embrace this kind of life? What they do today can be done by anyone without becoming a religious." Many congregations experience the result of this attitude as they face a steady decline in the number of vocations in the last few years. We find explanations to it mainly from the point of view of nuclear families. There are also greater opportunities offered to girls for higher education and employment. Partly it may be also due to the lack of credibility people find in our lives. A serious question to be asked is, are the young boys and girls of our time fascinated by our way of life and our mission?

2. 2. The Church

Besides the depreciation of religious life by the society in general, there is lack of recognition to the "religious women" by the Church in general. Sisters are doing a lot of work in the parishes. But they have been always at the periphery. A feeling which is very painful is that seldom one acknowledges them or gives them the due recognition for what they are and for the service they do in the parish. However, when it comes to what sisters do in a parish it is referred often only in relation to the parish and parish activities without acknowledging their contribution compared to other ministries sisters do in the parish like running a nursery, school, hospital, old age home, orphanage, hostel etc. These are considered

⁶ John Paul II, Encyclical letter *Vita Consecrata* 104

⁷ John Paul II, Encyclical letter *Vita Consecrata* p. 104

as sisters' business. The religious understand all their apostolate as service to humanity. Religious need to have means for their living and services from the ministry they have taken up. The idea that the religious are for the services in the parish alone should be broadly discussed with many other implications.

2. 3. Religious: Identity and place

The religious should know who they are and what their place in the Church is. The Church defines religious life and states very clearly that "it is a life deeply rooted in the example and teaching of Christ".⁸ It is a way of following Christ with an undivided heart through the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity and obedience. And "the consecrated life is at the very heart of the Church".⁹

Second Vatican Council's Instruction on the Renewal of Religious Life, speaks about the place of religious in the Church: "While it is true that the state constituted by profession of the evangelical counsels has no bearing on the hierarchical structure of the Church, it has an undeniable relevance to her life and holiness".¹⁰

2. 4. The Religious: Expectations

It is also good to know what is Church's or society's expectation from the religious, in other words, what is demanded of us?

- We have to follow Christ as it is put before us in the Gospel.¹¹
- We have a duty to show Christ to believers and unbelievers/and are called to bear witness to Christ through our own life, and through the accomplishment of our mission.¹²
- All institutes should share in the life of the Church.¹³
- Not only the Church but even the society needs people who are capable of devoting themselves totally to God and to others for the love of God.¹⁴
- We have to transform ourselves by God's grace and conform ourselves fully to the Gospel.¹⁵

⁸ John Paul II, Encyclical letter *Vita Consecrata* 1.

⁹ John Paul II, Encyclical letter *Vita Consecrata*,3.

¹⁰ Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, *Renovationis Causam*, Instruction on the renewal of religious life; Dogmatic constitution on the church *Lumen Gentium*, no. 44.

¹¹ Cf. Second Vatican Ecumenical Council , *Perfectae caritatis* 2 (a).

¹² Cf. John Paul II, Encyclical letter *Vita Consecrata*, 109.

¹³ Cf. Second Vatican Ecumenical Council , *Perfectae caritatis* 2 (c).

¹⁴ Cf. John Paul II, Encyclical letter *Vita Consecrata* 105.

¹⁵Cf. John Paul II, Encyclical letter *Vita Consecrata*, 104.

- Different congregations have different charisms. Church embraces the varieties of charism and we are invited to be faithful to the founding charism and to the spiritual heritage of each institute.¹⁶
- We are expected to be experts of communion and to practice the spirituality of communion in our community and outside.
- We have to lead a holy life.
- We are called to live a life of self-renunciation and of simplicity.¹⁷

Having explored the expectation of the Church and society from religious, it is good to analyse the actual state of religious women today in the parishes which is the central platform of their mission.

2. 5. Religious: Real Life in the Parishes

We don't need titles to practice the many things mentioned above. Mother Mary is a good model for religious to imitate in this regard. Although there are a few exceptions, generally the life of women religious is a story of subjugation, discrimination, lack of respect, violence and many other things. Women religious render to the parish a lot of their time and services. If I ask the sisters what do we usually do in the parishes, they would respond, they are called upon for decorations, to keep the Church, surroundings, and linen clean, sing during liturgy and lead the choir, teach catechism, lead all sorts of organisations in the parish and so on. They must go also for regular family visits, ward prayers, in spite of their other commitments in schools or hospitals, and other ministries the congregation has taken up related with their original charism. I must say, sisters are and have to be very much dependent or even submissive to the parish priests. Otherwise sisters will have to suffer a lot in the parishes.

The younger generations who are more educated, qualified, perhaps also empowered find it very difficult to be simply in a parish just doing the kind of works mentioned above. They want to have a proper answer when people ask them, what they do as religious. Pastoral care is of less value in our modern culture and society. Today people appreciate pastoral care in a professional way. There is a clash in the understanding of religious life and ministry between the older generation and the younger generation. The younger generation like to collaborate but not as slaves, they like to serve but wish that they are respected, they like to be treated

¹⁶Cf. John Paul II, Encyclical letter *Vita Consecrata*, 36.

¹⁷Cf. John Paul II, Encyclical letter *Vita Consecrata*, 90.

as equals as dignified beings. They demand for their rights. They enjoy certain amount of freedom, for obedience is not simply obeying what another commands, rather they choose to be respected with their potentials and capabilities. Undue interference from any authority is questioned on the basis of justice.

3. Factors that Contributed to the Marginalisation of Women

There are various factors which contributed to the plight of women. Among many factors the Church also shares her role in keeping women at the edges of the Church for centuries. The Church did not also bother to listen to them, or involve them anywhere. The Church knew her only as Martha. Let us look at those factors.

3.1. Patriarchal Culture

We have a culture of patriarchy that uphold men and downgrade women. Women are considered biologically, intellectually and spiritually inferior to men. These ideas and beliefs not only influence both men and women but also are transmitted from one generation to the next through various forms.¹⁸

3.2. Patriarchal Structures/Institutions

Social institutions or structures are made up of people, developed by people and altered by people. In a patriarchal social order all social structures or institutions are based on non-participation or peripheral participation of women in decision and governance in the family, in the Church and also the society.¹⁹

3.3. Self-internalization of Patriarchy or Gender Stereo-types

Both the dominant and the dominated are formed by these structures to preserve and protect the hierarchy and sustain it. The society has assigned to the boys and girls their roles. Both men and women are made to think, feel, and act in ways that uphold men and downgrade women, they begin to model their own thoughts, emotions, and actions to suit patriarchal traditions.²⁰ Having discussed the various factors that contributed to the fate of women, it is good also to look at the other side of the coin, namely to see far-reaching changes taking place in favour of women both in the Church and society.

¹⁸ *The Empowerment of Women in the Church and Society*, ed. Commission for Women, 18-19.

¹⁹ *The Empowerment of Women in the Church and Society*, ed. Commission for Women, 20.

²⁰ *The Empowerment of Women in the Church and Society*, ed. Commission for Women, 22-23.

4. Positive Contributions of the Church

There is also a long history to women's emancipation process both in the Church and in the society. I acknowledge all that India is trying to do for the empowerment of women: National policy on the empowerment of women, human rights commission, self help groups, reservation for women, education of girl children etc. Now, however, I focus my attention on the efforts made by the Church.

Through its social teachings highlighted in the documents such as *Pacem in Terris* (1963), *Gaudium et Spes* (1965), *Mulieris Dignitatum* (1988), and papal letters and messages to women and men of the Church, the documents of the synod of bishops, the universal Church has reiterated the need to promote dignity and equality of women in the Church and society. Woman is neither the property of man nor his extension but "another 'I' in a common humanity."²¹

Pope John Paul II affirmed the "essential equality of men and women since both of them – women as much as man – are created in the image and likeness of God."²² There is a growing concern for the past few decades among the Indian bishops about the struggles of women. In their statements they repeatedly affirm the essential dignity and equality of women and men derived from Gen 1:27. In 1974 they have recognized women's participation in the Church's mission. In 1984, the CBCI acknowledged that women are among the most affected of the poor and "experience, cumulative exploitation" in the family, employment and society.²³ To keep the focus on issues that affect women Feb 12th was declared as Women's Day.²⁴

In 1992, the concerns of women were addressed again at a Plenary assembly of the CBCI in Pune and consequently, a Women's Desk was instituted with the appointment of the first women secretary to the office of the CBCI. In their concluding statement bishops said, "discrimination against women seems to be embedded in the structure of our society.... Violence against women sometimes starts from the very moment of conception of the girl child and is experienced by them at all stages of their life. Violence that is

²¹ John Paul II, Apostolic letter *Mulieris Dignitatem*, 6

²² Fr. John Desrochers, *The Church's Social Teaching on Women*, in *The Empowerment of Women in the Church and Society*, ed. Commission for Women, 182; The Apostolic letter *Mulieris Dignitatem*, 1988, 6.

²³ Dr. Astrid Lobo Gajiwala, "Response to the Key Note Address," in *The Empowerment of Women in the Church and Society*, ed. Commission for Women, 53.

²⁴ Dr. Astrid Lobo Gajiwala, 53.

physical, sexual, and psychological against women is the result of *inhuman and unchristian attitudes*. With a sense of sorrow we must admit that *women feel discriminated even in the Church.*"²⁵

In the decision making and the consultative structures like the Parish pastoral Council, Diocesan pastoral council, Diocesan Finance committee which are canonically advocated structures in the Church, the presence of women is inadequate.²⁶ In 1996, the CBCI discussed the theme "the empowerment of women in the Church and society". In this meeting the women's Desk was upgraded to the status of a Commission.²⁷

In 1998, they declared "we should empower women in such a way that they can take up leadership roles in the Church and in the society."²⁸ The theme of the 28th General Body meeting of the CBCI held in Jamshedpur from Feb 13th -20th, 2008 was *the empowerment of women in the Church and society*. In this meeting there were 160 bishops, 40 lay and religious women and 7 lay men invited by the bishops, not just as observers but as active participants.²⁹

The Catholic Church in Kerala plans to launch a strategy for the political empowerment of women. The bishops recently released a gender policy that sets aside 33 percent of seats for women in the Church bodies. The Church has to become further involved in a self-critique, cultural critique, and structural critique to unearth the gender, caste, and class biases that persist within it and alter the same. The point is that the lot of good things decided for the empowerment of women are to be implemented down to the parish levels too.

Pope John Paul II looked at the role of women in the Church and in the world more closely than any other Pope in modern history. During his pontificate, women took over pastoral and administrative duties in parishes without priests, and they were invited as "experts" at Vatican synods and symposiums. In 2004, for the first time, the Pope appointed two women theologians to the prestigious International Theological Commission and named

²⁵ Astrid Lobo Gajiwala, 53; Sr. Inigo, "Scriptural and Theological Foundations for Women's Empowerment," in *The Empowerment of Women in the Church and Society*, ed. Commission for Women, 78; Lilly Francis SMMI & Loy George, 18.

²⁶ "Statement of 28th CBCI General Assembly," in *The Empowerment of Women in the Church and Society*, ed. Commission for Women, CBCI, 119.

²⁷ Astrid Lobo Gajiwala, 52.

²⁸ Astrid Lobo Gajiwala, 53.

²⁹ "Statement of 28th CBCI General Assembly," 118.

a Harvard University law professor, Mary Ann Glendon, to be the president of the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences.³⁰

When one examines the organisation and structures of the Church, one realizes that the Church leadership is clergy centred. The laity in general and women religious in particular still remain powerless at the bottom of the Church structure. A reason for relief is there that things are changing and moving. Lay people and women religious are encouraged to take more active roles in the Church, study theology etc. If we really analyse both men and women we realize that it is not only the men who hold these negative stereotypes of women, but also women religious themselves. This is not surprising because both have internalized patriarchy and did not have the opportunity to question their internalized prejudices. If we are followers of Jesus we need to behave like him. In the Bible we see that Jesus intervened in the lives of people especially women whenever the dignity of women was degraded or not respected.

5. The Dichotomy within the Church between the Ideal and the Actual

Although Christianity as a religion and as a social institution upholds the values of equality, justice and freedom, we are confronted with the question: how far has this ideal been actualised as far as women are concerned? There is a pseudo-glorification of "Women" and degrading teachings and practices concerning the real women. It is no exaggeration to say that the "record of Christianity with regard to the status of women is a record of contradictions."³¹ Even among priests there is a thinking and an attitude that the sisters have no rights. They are called to serve and therefore make them do the work even what the priests are expected to do.

Only a few bishops, priests and male family members acknowledge the great potential of women and stand for gender equality. Many fail to encourage the contributions of women and to work in dialogue, cooperation and partnership with them. Many are not really committed to relevant women's policies and programs.

Despite its declarations on equality and co-responsibility, for all practical purposes, the Church still remains a hierarchically structured institution, firmly established on the rock of

³⁰ Sr. Inigo, 77.

³¹ C. Arokiaswamy, "Women in Christianity" in *Quest for Gender Justice*, Sebasti L. Raj, ed., Madras: Satya Nilayam, 1991, 174.

patriarchy. It also perpetuates gender discrimination through its andro-centric theology, biblical interpretation and all male Church leadership. A lack of sensitivity to women's issues prevails. In short there is a resistance to change in the Church.³²

6. Positive Signs among the Religious

There are some positive signs which give us hope. Women religious are realizing that their empowerment is for mission. Women are now members in the parish councils. There is eagerness among religious women to study scriptures, theology and spirituality in a contextual way. Many are qualified in theology, psychology, and sociology. Some religious women are called to teach in seminaries and are involved in counselling and preaching retreats, etc.

Some dioceses invite women religious to speak to their priests during their recollection days and retreats. Some are trained in communication media, some are lawyers, journalists and social activists. Some prove themselves to be daring and empowered women. There are inter-novitiate classes of both gender arranged which would lead them to live their committed life and sexuality with confidence, conviction and appreciation. That lectures on women's rights and gender equality have been included in the curriculum of the seminaries is a good step.

6.1. Self-understanding of the Religious

I had mentioned above that there is a sort of identity crisis today among religious as a result of contemporary responses and the outlook of the secular world. One can say that the crisis is also the result of the poor self-understanding of the religious themselves.

The religious need to find their worth within themselves. There is the need to develop their identity as individuals with rights and duties. This understanding should also include understanding of the evangelical counsels. It demands joyful living of perfect chastity, as witnesses against the culture which treats sexuality as a consumer good. We should be men and women who show balance, self-mastery, and affective maturity.³³ It is a major challenge today for us women as we enter into competent fields which involve risks. Pastoral ministry is not only understood in terms of parish and parish activities but it is going out to the people whoever is in need of us.

³² E. Schussler Fiorenza, *Bread not stone: The challenge of Biblical Interpretation*, Boston: Beacon Press, 1984, 9.

³³ Cf. John Paul II, Encyclical letter *Vita Consecrata*, 88.

The poverty religious embrace promotes solidarity and charity and they challenge the world, which embraces materialism that craves for possessions. With our life of simplicity and hospitality we should set an example to those who are indifferent to the needs of their neighbours.³⁴ We need to take active roles in working against injustice done to poor people, women, fight for the rights of the poor and marginalized etc. Therefore we need to equip ourselves.

The obedience religious profess is a challenge to the notions of freedom.³⁵ The notion of freedom is a value closely connected with respect for the human person.³⁶ We don't often realise the great potentialities and possibilities of the religious and the field lies ready outside our convents, institutions and parishes demanding our care and attention.

7. St Paul's on Women's Role and Ministry

St Paul's letters are quoted to silence women. In Pauline letters we see women are pictured as having important responsibilities in the Pauline house Churches and whom the Apostle called colleagues. The women played important roles in the Church from the very beginning.

In Galatians 3:27-28, St Paul nullifies the barriers between Greek/Jew, slave/free, male/female in Christ. Paul clearly intends these three pairs to be treated in parallel. Paul's vision of collaborative ministry of men and women serving Christ and the Church in mutuality and equality could be understood properly.

In Philippians 4:2f, women are presented as fellow workers and have laboured and struggled with Paul in his work. Among the persons mentioned in Romans 16, six are women, and they are all said to have participated in the building up of the Christian communities.

The couple Prisca and Aquila in Rom 16, 3-5, played a major role in Paul's ministry. Paul names them "fellow workers." The word "co-workers" is a term of equality used by Paul of himself and Apollos in 1 Cor. 3:9. The evidence seems undeniable that women worked alongside men in the Pauline Churches.

So far Paul appears to view women as equals with men in the Church, and yet he has bequeathed references to develop a different picture of women.

³⁴ Cf. John Paul II, Encyclical letter *Vita Consecrata*, 90.

³⁵ Cf. John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Veritatis Splendor*, 31-35.

³⁶ Cf. John Paul II, Encyclical letter *Vita Consecrata*, 91.

1 Cor 11: 5: She is as free as the man to participate in the Church worship, praying or prophesying, provided she wears a head covering. Man and woman in mutual dependence stand as equals before God. The passage 1 Corinthians 14: 33b-36, presents us with an apparent contradiction of what we have just said on the basis of 1 Corinthians 11. In chapter 11 Paul says women may speak in public assembly if appropriately dressed, but in chapter 14 women are ordered to be silent—not to speak in the Church. Again, in 1 Timothy Ch. 2:8-15, the author commands women to be silent and submissive. He permits no woman to teach or to have authority over men, she is to keep silence. This certainly represents a contradiction in Paul's teaching. Which text is genuine?

Conclusion

I would propose certain pastoral possibilities for women religious:

1. Sisters need to be trained professionally and theologically that they feel comfortable among the people of our society who are educated and qualified. How much of money is spent for the formation of priests. A share can be kept apart for the formation of sisters too in order to equip them and to integrate them into the main stream of the society and the Church.
2. We must also create stages where we must also address issues like oppressions, injustice, partiality, etc. done to the sisters in the parishes, dioceses, the Church institutions and society.
3. We need to make us confident of ourselves and competent to move and work freely among the people of our time.
4. The problems our people face today are different from what people faced 5-10 years ago. We need to change the mode of family visits in our parishes. Sisters must be trained for family apostolate, youth ministry etc. so that we can be effective ministers.
5. Qualify ourselves to be professional counsellors, who can assist our people in their trouble.
6. Our prayer meetings should be occasions where we don't read prayers from books, but lead people in prayer with creativity and spontaneity, so that people love to come to our prayer meetings.
7. Train sisters to preach retreats, give recollection talks, break the word of God during prayer meetings etc.
8. We need sisters with specialization in social work to organize our people. To keep our people to our flock, make

them also the recipients of the benefits Government offers for education, health, job opportunities, etc.

9. People are looking for someone to listen to them. The sick people especially, terminally ill cancer patients, AIDS patients etc.
10. Our institutions should become also centres for professional and spiritual counselling.
11. Get involved with the Jesus youth. We can enter into fields where we otherwise cannot reach.
12. Work for women in distress.
13. Organize the women in the parishes. We can do so much for families through women.
14. There are many priests and religious whose quality of life can be improved if they are offered a little help through professional training. Many are going to lay people for guidance.
15. Sisters should keep themselves informed and develop reading habits.
16. We can also be experts in prayer and spiritual counselling.