

### **Last but not Least: Facing the Challenges with Jesus**

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Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance (James 1: 2-3).

The current articles in the journal reflect the many facets of religious and priestly life. Logically, there is no single solution to the challenges that religious life is facing today. For a religious and a priest, the development of spiritual maturity and finally attaining contentment in one's vocation is bigger than achieving worldly materials and pleasures. The formee during the formation period needs to remember not to be deceived by the achievements of men and women of the world. Galatians 6- 4:5 talks about one's actions that should create pride in oneself, not by comparison with others, as each one of us should carry their own burden, and that "a man reaps what he sows" (Galatians 6:7).

The realities of the current world are like a storm that is beating against the Church and its foundations. We should be open to the realities that the world is ever changing and developing. As facilities increase, complexities in family life and religious setting increase. The growing need for humans to technologically advance and be like God may actually be moving them away from God. The Church has a new challenge of bringing people into the community life and showing them the basic message of Jesus teaching of service and care. The Catholic morality underneath its decision-making process appears to be more than just faith issues. Formators need to start looking at issues from different domains so as to find healthy solutions. One way to look at

this is through that lens of mercy that Jesus had. Just as time heals wounds, so does God heal wounds and good therapy heals wounds. Spiritual counseling and psychotherapy are ways in which the formee can transform their life facing the raging storm.

Leaders also need to equip themselves to face the reality. Jesus as a leader always sought the guidance of His Father and practiced daily prayers which gave Him answers to the troubles He was praying for. Jesus used to find a solitary place for morning prayers (Mark 1:35). To build competency in the field and spiritual practices and understanding, formees, as well as formators, need to be open to multi-cultural context, the political and social context around them. Having an appropriate assessment about what is happening around the Church can help them to proactively respond to the issues with a flexible mind.