

Witnessing to Catholic Students

A testimony of Régis MARION



Régis with his twin brother Georges

It's been one year since I decided to go every Wednesday evening to a Catholic chaplaincy with a Catholic friend in Roubaix (France). Ever since then, those moments of sharing and discussion with other students and priests were experiences that helped me understand more where I, as a Second Generation, come from. Thanks to those priceless occasions, I finally felt and still feel closer to Jesus Christ and to my Catholic brothers and sisters toward whom I had so many prejudices in the past.

One day, we were discussing about what subject we will discuss in the future chaplaincies and one man asked if we could talk about cults. I was glad! I strongly felt that it was an opportunity to share my faith to them, even though they knew that I was part of the Unification Movement, I would have the chance to explain to them who we truly are. Because they had never heard of us, they were not influenced by what the media said about us in the past and were not suspicious at all. So I asked if I could give a presentation about the Unification Movement and they were ok with it.

I waited at least one month and finally had a date for my presentation: Wednesday, January 21st. The priest explained to me that it would be during the "Christian Unity Week". I thought to myself that it was the perfect date for me to give this presentation. I

prepared myself, asked more experienced people in witnessing to help me prepare my text, especially my Dad, who gave me a lot of advice and all the tools to explain the different chapters of the Divine Principle quickly but clearly. I sincerely feel that God helped me through him. Many brothers and sisters prayed for this lecture to be successful and I'm so grateful for their support. Thanks to them I knew that I didn't have to be afraid because our Heavenly Parent was behind me.

Every chaplaincy starts with a Mass, and then we share a good meal and finally have a discussion together. I was really moved by the priest's sermon, he constantly talked about the importance of being open-minded and having a heart that can overcome barriers and cultural or religious differences. He talked about how the Pharisees could never unite with Jesus because of their narrow-mindedness. I was so happy to hear that from him because I knew that it would set a good atmosphere for my lecture.

When I heard that Reiner Vincenz passed away last Sunday and that we commemorated the 8th anniversary of Henri Blanchard's departure to the spirit world (the first French member to ever join the movement in 1967), I really prayed that they could attend this chaplaincy. How surprised I was when I heard that we were about to have a French/German meal in order to celebrate the French/German friendship! I was so moved because I knew that God had answered my prayers and, even though I never had the chance to personally meet Henri Blanchard or Reiner Vincenz, I felt very close to them that evening. It reminded me that our movement in France would have never seen the day without the love between two ex-enemy countries.

I decided to start my lecture with a Holy Song, I sang "Urie So Wonum Tongil" simply because it was the perfect song in accordance with what this evening was all about: unity. Then I presented quickly who we are, our works in inter-religious dialogue and action, I talked about Father's experience with Jesus when he was 15 and his will to create a world of peace ever since that day. I had the opportunity to explain briefly the Principle of Creation and the Three Blessings. I explained to them God's overwhelming excitement when he created the cosmos and all the things of creation and how the fall of mankind, an illicit sexual relationship, broke His Heart. I shared how high His

hopes were when Jesus came to fulfil what Adam failed to succeed and how sad He was when He saw His son being crucified. I talked about the importance of creating a God-centred couple, that salvation cannot be entirely completed without a husband and a wife. I clearly said that True Father and True Mother came as the True Parents to accomplish Jesus' mission.

I'm grateful that my twin brother and another Second Generation sister could come and attend my lecture. Their presence gave me strength and helped me to relax a bit, (although I can't say I was not nervous at all).

When my presentation was finished I was expecting a strong, negative reaction from the audience but I was completely wrong! They thanked me for my presentation. One young lady said that she respected me for sharing my faith because she knew how difficult it can be to do so. There was one married couple and the wife said how she could strongly relate to our vision of marriage and sexual life as a Catholic (I think the priest was a bit embarrassed when I explained the importance of being married though...)

Everyone was so respectful and listened to me very closely. I even felt a bit bad about myself for thinking that they could react negatively because deep inside I knew who they were, good people who want to have a God-centred life. It made me think of how we, members of the Unification Church, must not have prejudices against any other religions or communities even though they persecuted us in the past. I think that we are somehow traumatized by the persecution and slowly became afraid to talk to anybody. It's understandable for first generations but it must not be an excuse and especially for second generations. After 40 years, the majority of my friends or people of my generation have never heard of Sun Myung Moon

and don't have any prejudices against us. We have to take advantage of this situation and give those young people a true, good image of ourselves before their minds get corrupted by the media or what they can find on the Internet.

I don't know what all those young Catholic students will do with the message I gave them, but these words from Jesus can help them to go forward no matter what:

Mark 4:26-29

And he said, So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground;

And should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how.

For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear.

But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come.

I am so grateful to have had such an experience, I feel that forcing myself to witness has strengthened my relationship with our Heavenly Parent. I can't say that it was always easy and it's still difficult for me to overcome my fears but I know deep inside that it is the right thing to do. How wonderful it is not to hide who you truly are when you are with your friends, with your relatives! I don't want to live a schizophrenic life anymore, a life that doesn't allow me to become entirely happy. Witnessing has changed my life; it gives me the feeling of being an actor in God's Providence. I sincerely pray that this testimony will inspire every brother and sisters who takes the time to read it.

God bless you,

Régis MARION