

PROJECT “LIFE IN ABUNDANCE” – IN SERVICE OF A MULTIDIMENSIONAL VISION ON THE HUMAN PERSON

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Abstract: “*Life in Abundance*” is a mental health pilot project for catholic nuns in Romania. We believe that man is body (soma), mind (psyche) and spirit (nous) and that suffering affects the person as a whole. Healing must therefore involve the whole person, the person who is a bio-psycho-spiritual unity. Religious vocation is based on two elements: the divine call and human freedom. Precisely because of this interlacing between grace and nature it is very important that the consecrated persons be assisted in all these aspects, in order to be able to live their vocation as fully as possible. Healing involves the whole person. Therefore teamwork is needed: the psychotherapist, the spiritual director, the group therapist and the physical therapist must work together. This article aims to present, based on case studies, the importance of what Viktor E. Frankl observed: genuine religiosity can lead to the healing of the soul and the healing of the soul leads to genuine religiosity.

Keywords: existential analysis, spiritual companionship, encounter, person, dignity, authenticity, freedom, responsibility

Who takes care of those who take care of others? It is the question that arises spontaneously in us, when in our offices we encounter people devoted to serving other people – priests, religious – who are blocked in their mission by a *spiritual pain*.

In this situation I see many doctors, psychologists, lawyers, craftsmen, clerks, workers who have professional experience and knowledge, but are lacking what is necessary to life: the cultivation of their own soul. They are dull, rigid, not able to resonate emotionally. Due to their black and white perception, which lacks depth, they are blinded by stress and prone to heart attack, burnout syndrome, or middle age depression.²

In addition to the two causes of this “blockage” phenomenon identified by Längle – *lack of the cultivation of their own soul and solitude* – in the

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² A. LÄNGLE, “Cultura vieții – Viața culturii. Arta de a întâlni ceea ce te mișcă”, in *Analiza Existențială* 1, 2, 1999, 20–26 (24).

category of consecrated people, we see a third possible cause: that of *fragmentation*.

We live in a world that is specializing, or even over-specializing. What is normally a prerequisite for development also carries the risk of losing an overall vision. Holistic medicine for example was created to combat this risk. Frankl says that neither specializing nor lack of universality represent a danger, but rather the appearance of totality showed by science. Reductionist guidelines present man as “*just ...*” or “*only ...*” something.³

Frankl defines man as a unity despite diversity. Quoting Thomas Aquinas he says that man is “*unitas multiplex*”. There is an anthropological unity, despite ontological differences, contrary to the difference between the various modes of existence.⁴ To prove this thesis Frankl uses the familiar analogy of the three-dimensional cylinder projected in two plans.

Man is at the intersection of three dimensions: somatic, psychic and noetic, and according to the rules of dimensional ontology we can not totally grasp him in any of these dimensions.⁵

Above we identified *fragmentation* as a possible cause of the problems encountered in consecrated life, a fragmentation which occurs when one is seen or sees oneself “*only as ...*” or as being “*just ...*” something. Due to the lack of an integrated vision or to the missed implementation of this anthropological model presented by Frankl, one often acquires a one-dimensional vision.

5. Formative Shortcomings

In a recent study⁶ on the quality of permanent formation in religious life we found that there is a discrepancy between what consecrated life is aiming at and what it is achieving. Although many Church documents emphasize the importance of forming of the whole person in all its dimensions, the formation remains essentially an intellectual and doctrinal one. Most often, what is missing from the formation process is the bonding agent that could lead to a unified religious life – with “*one body, mind and soul*”.

Without this bonding agent consecrated persons’ lives become fragmented and we are noticing the manifestation of this division in concrete

³ V. E. FRANKL, *Orvosi lélekgondozás [The doctor and the soul]*, Budapest, 1997.

⁴ V. E. FRANKL, *Az ember az értelemre irányuló kérdéssel szemben [Man's search for meaning]*, Budapest, 1996.

⁵ FRANKL, *Az ember az értelemre irányuló kérdéssel szemben*.

⁶ I. HOMA, *Studiu asupra formării permanente inter-congregaționale și congregaționale în comunitățile de viață consacrată din România*, 2010, unpublished (www.psychologos.ro).

cases, daily. This fragmentation is observed particularly in the area of affectivity and sexuality. Participating in the psycho-educational workshops offered by our "Life in Abundance" Project (that will be presented in detail later), the religious come to discover that it is possible to live the feminine vocation with a religious heart and the religious calling with a feminine spirit, meaning that it is possible to live an integrated life. A 30 years old nun shared the following:⁷

I am enjoying a wonderful inner freedom which never abandons me. I might add that I am not at all a "piece of wood", because I feel, I feel with intensity, as every normal woman feels. I'm not surprised and I do not have regrets, because even if living religious vocation "as a woman" is so difficult, it is also beautiful.

5.1. Fragmentation of dimensions

The expression "God alone is enough" (an often used and misinterpreted principle) can not be understood as an exclusion of everything that is human. This defensive attitude towards all that is human (body, joy, love, interpersonal relationships) can lead consecrated life style towards dehumanization and towards the denial of one's self and of one's presence in society.

The words of John the Baptist: "He must increase and I must decrease" (John 3,30), if misinterpreted, can lead to the belief that human nature must be humiliated and annihilated so that the Glory of God extends. Irenaeus says: "The glory of God is the living man". God is asking us to become upright and whole human beings.

Vatican II states that "he who follows Christ, the perfect man, becomes himself more human" (*Gaudium et Spes* 41). The fragmentation which occurred between the three dimensions of the human person created a confusion between the idea of virtuous behavior and the person's concrete psychological attitude.

Hence the use of terms that can lead to misinterpretations, such as: obedience, humble life, self-abnegation, self-forgetting, self-contempt, renunciation etc. These terms, sometimes used ambiguously or reductively often led to attitudes of repression or denial of the human component in the religious formation and in consecrated life. It's good to remember that holiness consists in the deification of man and in the humanization of the divine.⁸

How deeply rooted is this thinking is confirmed by a 30 years old nun:

⁷ Case taken from B. GIORDANI, *La donna nella vita religiosa. Aspetti psicologici*, Milano, 1993. All other case examples are taken from real life, but the biographical data and context are modified so that no specific person can be identified; any resemblance to a living or deceased person is purely coincidental.

⁸ GIORDANI.

I wondered if there is any point in crying any longer in front of so much suffering that I have accumulated over the years, or in continuing to waste so much energy for nothing. Certainly it's useless; but I realized how hard it is to spent time with myself, to think more about me, about my needs, my wishes. [...] I realized that it's good for me to take care of myself, to be attentive to my needs, to abandon the standard patterns that I have built, both for myself and for others. That will require a lot of practice.

In a letter to the spiritual companion another nun expressed herself this way:

You'll probably tell me that the Lord is everything to us. Yes, it's true, but You also know that man can not live only on a spiritual level, or at least I am not capable to live only through the spirit at this precise moment of my life, I feel a strong need for someone to trust in me.

5.2. Emotion-reason-behavior (impression-attitude-expression) fragmentation:

Another fragmentation which we noticed in consecrated life, in addition to the body-mind-soul unity, is the fragmentation of the unity of feelings, of the integrated emotion. This is due also to the ignoring of the fact that feelings do not have moral value.

A 25 years old nun came to psychotherapy because of the feelings of sadness that have been upsetting her for some time. During meetings she realized that what made her sad was that she didn't allow herself to feel and express her feelings. She was afraid to feel because her feelings bothered her: jealousy, envy, anger, misunderstanding, and sadness, but also love and attachment to others. She believed she was not allowed to feel these things because it was a sin. This fear blocked her in her community life, therefore, most of the time she kept silent when she was supposed to express an opinion or take a stand.

I don't feel free when it comes to talking about myself. And I keep silent, but I do not even know why anymore, maybe out of fear, maybe out of spite, maybe out of indifference. This silence is hurting me. Sometimes, after our sessions, my hands hurt very much (when she had to speak she continuously rubbed her hands), as if I had talked with my hands. I'm sorry that I act like that and that I fail to go beyond emotions.

Silence was actually her coping reaction, or "the shell" – as she called it – under which she was hiding when she could not cope. What had blocked her was precisely her desire to be good.

I saw that I did not let the "demon" side of myself to manifest itself and I do not accept it. I would like to always be good with everyone and this costs me a lot because I give up what I feel, what I want or what I think.

Another nun, 35 years old, presented me the following problem:

It's been a while since I could master my emotions of fear. They overwhelm me when I have to sing in church or when I have to speak in public. I can not understand why these things happen and I get angry with myself when I think that for so many years I did the same things and I do not remember being blocked like this, even if I was nervous. I try not to think about what happens to me and sometimes I manage to forget, but deep in my thoughts it became like an obsession. I want to work on this balance, to integrate these emotions in me.

I was touched by this dialogue in the film: "Which is the reason you are living for? – To feel". What is important for me in all this is the unity of the three elements – thinking, acting, feeling, since, at times, these elements are separated in my life. Now I understand that it's necessary that all three are present, because whatever I do, it could not be done without my presence, which makes me unique in my way of being, thinking, acting, feeling, even if sometimes I'm more aware and sometimes less.

5.3. *Formative influences remain on the surface: understanding and knowledge without commitment, dedication – impression without expression*

The deficiencies of the process of formation in consecrated life can also be seen in the fact that most of the formative influences remain at the surface, while the part of the process where the person goes deep inside herself is delayed. In the study mentioned above I defined two categories of responses given by respondents on the effectiveness of the formation:

1. In the "*static response*" category we included responses that were referred to self-knowledge deepening. For example: "self-knowledge", "enrichment", "understanding", "knowing my self better", "recognize human features."

2. In the "*dynamic response*" category responses were included which were referred to dynamic aspects as development, growth. For example: "inner healing", "acceptance of personal limits," "a more conscious dedication", "overcoming difficulties", "questioning myself".

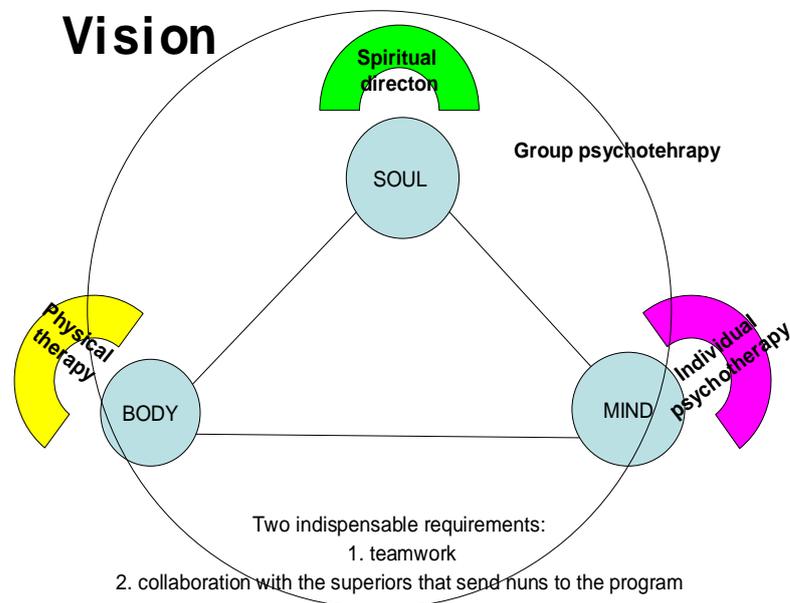
Although this classification carries the risk of being subjective and we could be accused of lack of "scientific validation", however, it shows a general trend: most answers are static, which means that the consecrated persons participating in the study referred more to knowledge than to a dynamic implementation into personal life.

6. Multiple activities

Another responsible factor for the fragmentation in consecrated life, in addition to deficiencies related to formation, is the multiplicity of the activities. In the study mentioned above we showed that most sisters perceive in today's religious life (alongside multiple pastoral and charitable activities carried out with enthusiasm and dedication) a *fatigue* due to too many responsibilities and to relationship issues with the local church. "Too much apostolate, beyond our strength." – said one of the sisters.

Being personally touched by these issues of consecrated life and seeking their solution, along with other persons we initiated within the Conference of Women Major Superiors (a kind of federation of catholic monasteries) a project addressing the issue of mental health of catholic nuns' in Romania: the "*Life in Abundance*" Project (John 10,10) – a *psycho-spiritual therapeutic residential program for religious*.

The Vision of the Project: Its basic principle is the integration of physical, psychological and spiritual aspects in the life of the consecrated person, in order that the religious could respond more deeply to the call and to the mission received from Jesus.



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Beneficiaries are of two categories: 1. religious seeking *spiritual renewal and personal development*; 2. religious who encounter *psychological difficulties* (difficulties in interpersonal relationships, emotional problems, problems in the field of sexuality, issues of addiction) or are suffering from burnout syndrome.

The constitutive elements of the program are: participation in the community prayer program of the residents, spiritual direction, participation in the spiritual sharing of the community, retreat days, individual psychotherapy, group psychotherapy, psychiatric consultation (if it the case), psycho-educational workshops, art therapy, physical therapy.

The vision of this project corresponds to the vision of the existential analyses' vision: the consecrated person is located in the world (monastery), she has certain conditions and certain gifts, she is limited and/or supported by her physical existence, by its corporality (MF1); she is moved, touched by the reality that surrounds her and the emotions that arise in her must be integrated in order to understand them (MF2); the person is not alone in the world, she lives in a community (which has its own rules), which causes her to define and delineate her own way of being (MF3); the person is oriented towards a meaning, a freely chosen life project, but sometimes she loses her orientation towards the horizon of this meaning (MF4).

For this reason the *basic elements* of the program are: spiritual direction, group psychotherapy, individual psychotherapy and physical therapy.

The multidimensional model of the person proposed by the existential analysis requires team work. To achieve this team work it was necessary to clarify from the very beginning the tasks and objectives of each field.

Physical therapy, along with all other auxiliary therapies used in the project (melotherapy, dance therapy, art therapy) aim primarily the body awareness. Physical movements and breathing exercises helped stress decrease and strengthened self-perception.

Spiritual direction is a formation and orientation process, during which Christians receive direction and encouragement in their specific vocation, in order to reach union with God through the graces of the Holy Spirit. The term of *spiritual direction* can lead to a limitation in the interpretation of the concept: spiritual direction deals with the human soul as medicine is dealing with the human body. The spiritual adviser too must consider the whole person. A spiritual man – pneumatikhos – is one that has his whole life impregnated by the action of the Holy Spirit, in all its aspects and dimensions.⁹

⁹ T. MERTON, *Lelkivezetés és elmélkedés [Spiritual Direction and Meditation]*, Budapest, 1989.

The goal of spiritual direction is to penetrate beneath the surface of one's life, to go behind the scenes of behavior and conventional gestures showed to the world and to bring to the surface its inner freedom, its most inner truth, that is what we call the resemblance to Christ in his soul.¹⁰

Every Christian needs spiritual guidance, but consecrated persons in a particular way. Lack of spiritual companionship in monastic life make the difference between mediocrity and sanctity of life.¹¹

Existential analysis aims to lead the man to say YES to his life in the reality of its existence, to say YES to the experience of living with an inner agreement – with himself and the world. Existential analysis as a method of psychotherapy aims to support and empower a person to get to experience spiritual and emotional freedom and to reach to a genuine attitude and to a responsible behavior towards oneself and towards the world.

By using *group psychotherapy* in the project we planned to offer the possibility of rebuilding life situations, especially inter-personal situations, which sisters had faced in their own convents. Coming from different communities, through group therapy and community life (it is a residential project) the sisters had the opportunity on one hand to practice on a “neutral” ground the interpersonal skills they acquired in therapy and on the other hand – the method used is psychodrama – to stage their experiences, conflicts, their traumas, which they can further deepen during the individual psychotherapy, and why not, the other way around too.

The vision of the group therapy, as the one of the individual psychotherapy and of the spiritual direction is based on a common element: RELATIONSHIP, ENCOUNTER. Quoting Moreno:

In the beginning there was existence, but without a thing or a living being there is no existence. In the beginning there was the word, the thought, but action was before. In the beginning there was action, but there is no action without an actor, without an object towards which the actor is oriented, without a “you” which the actor encounters. In the beginning there was the encounter.¹²

The *encounter* is actually essential in any therapeutic intervention; this is how we have access to the person. The person is reflected by another person, but it is ultimately intangible. After all, the person remains a mystery, we should not forget that. This intangibility is what actually constitutes *the dignity*

¹⁰ MERTON, 10.

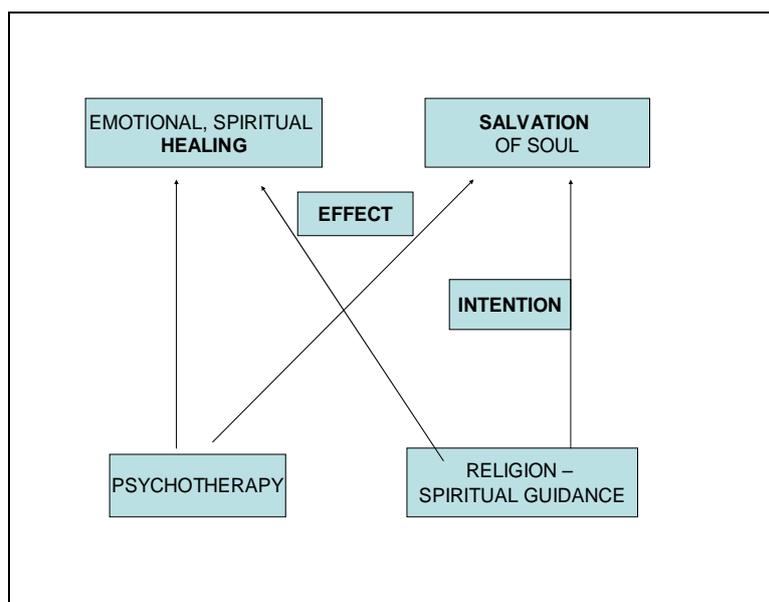
¹¹ MERTON, 17.

¹² <<http://www.pszichodrama.hu/index.php?menu=7&almenu=1>> [10.09.2011].

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of man. The person is *free*, which means it can always be otherwise. We are thrown into life and life interrogates us; we have the *responsibility* to respond, to take our lives, our vocation in our hands. In consecrated life authenticity is the basic condition. Authenticity means first of all to take ourselves seriously, to take seriously what is born in us, what belongs to our specific individual being. If there is a psychological authenticity it will certainly lead to the evangelical one.

The person can not be dissected and taken in pieces, it is the force, the energy which elevates, integrates and transcends all human dimensions. "The spiritual person creates the unity and the wholeness of the human being."¹³ Because existential analysis and spiritual direction are centered on the whole person, the psychologist and the spiritual director can easier confuse the boundaries and enter in each others professional space.



Adapted from the scheme of Frankl.¹⁴

Frankl explains the relationship between religion and psychotherapy by the side effect and by the primary purpose or intent. The purpose of psychotherapy is mental health and the purpose of religion is the salvation of the soul. As a result of practicing religiosity, mental healing can occur as a side

¹³ V. E. FRANKL, *A tudattalan Isten* [The Unconscious God], Budapest, 2002, 21.

¹⁴ FRANKL, *A tudattalan Isten*, 66.

effect, as religion has psycho-hygienic features. Similarly, during psychotherapy a person can arrive to uncover the inherent religiosity. The goal of psychotherapy and the purpose of religion are not on the same level of existence, the rank of spiritual health is different from that of psychotherapy. “The dimension in which the religious person progresses is higher and more comprehensive than that in which the psychotherapy occurs. Penetration into the higher dimensions occurs through faith, not through knowledge.”¹⁵

From the following table we can better understand the differences and similarities between spiritual direction and psychotherapy:

Spiritual direction	Counseling/ Psychotherapy
– Experiencing GOD in personal life	– Living with an INNER AGREEMENT
– TO GROW in holy of life	– TO MATURE psychologically
– Knowing one’s personal history of GRACE	– Acceptance of one’s history of LIFE
– The belief that the Holy Spirit is the ADVISER and that spiritual companionship is intended to facilitate the relationship between God and the person	– The capacity of involvement in the THERAPEUTIC RELATIONSHIP: its purpose is to learn new behaviour PATTERNS, regarding both one’s self and others
– A healthy IMAGE OF GOD	– A healthy SELF IMAGE
– Capacity to distinguish between psychological and spiritual issues in one’s personal life	– The ability to distinguish between psychological and spiritual issues in one’s life
– Capacity to deal with theological themes (sin, suffering, grace)	– The capacity to process psychological pain: anxiety, bereavement, relationship problems
– Capacity to bring daily life issues in prayer	– The ability to reflect on everyday personal life from an EMOTIONAL and BEHAVIORAL perspective
– Knowing the Scriptures	– Knowing one’s weaknesses and strengths
– Capacity for spiritual DISCERNMENT	– Capacity to DECIDE upon one’s life

Let’s see now through concrete cases how psychotherapeutic and spiritual interventions go together.

CASE 1: “To whom do I belong?” A 30 years old nun was referred for psychotherapy because she was diagnosed with depression. She

¹⁵ FRANKL, *A tudattalan Isten*, 66.

formulated her problem: "When I see only the negative sides and only what is wrong in me, I feel these negative thoughts suffocate me and do not give me the possibility to see also what is good in my life."

After several months of medication her problems were still not resolved. From the biographical data we find out that her father abandoned her. Her problems began when in the community she began to have conflicts with the authoritarian persons. She criticizes, gets angry, jealous, envious, suspicious, and has difficulty forgiving. She is continually seeking to be accepted and testing others to see whether they are worthy of her trust. She does not ask because she's afraid of rejection, because she is always expecting to be refused.

She is seeking to be seen, appreciated and when this does not happen she gets upset, starts crying. She has several somatic effects (headaches, fever, vomiting). During psychotherapy she passes from the claims directed towards others to the discovery of her own inner being.

Those around you, you can ignore, but not your own person. I have only one possibility: to accept and love it, with the negative parts and with the good ones. [...] I try to convince myself that exterior things can not affect me at all, that everything depends on me. I need to change the way I evaluate my life.

The change she wanted and she fervently prayed for, occurred when she found the answer to the question which caused all her pain: "To whom do I belong?"

I am of God, I am mine, I have to get my life in my own hands and cut my umbilical cord. [...] I understood that what I need to change is my attitude towards myself, to convince myself that with all I have lived and suffered and with all my sins, I am the same person in which God finds joy, the same person he loves.

During the spiritual direction sessions she was encouraged to pray, in her daily meditation, for her specific emotional states and to reflect upon her suffering and upon the struggle against suffering in light of the Gospel.

I thought I could not cope any longer with my depressed state. But I understood and I shall pray God to give me the ability to overcome these moments and not to let them seize me. What I feel should not crush me. I hope, I trust that He will help me.

The image of God is an important aspect that is being clarified during the spiritual direction sessions. In this case, where the client has experienced abandonment by the biological father, this process had an even greater

relevance. Systematic approach of the image of the Heavenly Father helped her build a mental relationship with her father and to accept the unacceptable.

Another aspect which was discussed during the spiritual companionship sessions was the theme of vocation to consecrated life. Because of conflicts and also because of feelings of non-acceptance from others she had doubts about her religious calling. As the psychotherapeutic process progressed the vocational certainty also improved.

In times of crisis she takes her refuge in prayer and this helps her to maintain her balance:

I have a strong desire to become strong and not to be so much concerned by what is being said on the periphery, but my sensibility remains the same. Nevertheless I am trying to recover by withdrawing in the presence of the Lord and writing in my diary ... besides the Lord and my diary I have no one to whom I can open my heart ... here I can tell you what hurts me and also my point of view.

CASE 2: “Somewhere along the way I lose myself” A 40 years old nun is sent by her superior to psychotherapy because she shows signs of burnout syndrome, a fact with which she disagrees. Nevertheless, she undertakes to attend the sessions, during which she realizes, helped also by the therapist, that in reality she has a problem with boundaries and space. She has experienced trouble with breathing for several years.

I didn't take time to enjoy a moment of silence, a walk, something good to taste. I never allowed myself to rest, to have a balanced daily program. I reached rock bottom. I do not know where, when and how to do anything. Mostly I do everything only in desperate situations, when I say I can't anymore. This way, slowly, I lost the boundaries and the natural order. Therefore God has lost his place in my life, and I'm just not myself anymore. I do not know how to make things work for me and for others.

The problem of delimitation and space is generalized in her life: she lost the boundaries in her relationship with others – she does not know how much to give and how much to receive; she lost the boundaries of her senses – “I don't know anymore what is good, beautiful, and biological and what is a sinful desire”; she does not distinguish the voice of the Lord and the one of the wicked one anymore; she feels she has no place in the community, in the church; sometimes she feels suffocated (too little space), other times she feels lost (too much space). Not having an adequate space in herself where to resonate with her own self, to be face to face with herself, she feeds from the emotions and feelings of others:

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I lost the right measure... I put my soul into everything, I find my joy both in prayer and work, in dancing and in having a conversation, but I do not know anymore how to find the joy of simply being with myself ... Somewhere along the way I lose myself. I do not turn back, instead I am desperately pulling all the resources and possibilities.

During the spiritual companionship sessions she is encouraged to structure her daily life through meditation and other regular times of prayer, contrary to her unstructured nature and to her life philosophy: "No rules that remind me of structures that I can not keep up with". During the meditations she was taught to use techniques that help her calm down and descend into her depths, so that (through calming and deepening) her capacity to withstand what is unpleasant and to cope with loneliness (being alone with God and with her *self*) might increase.

Sometimes I can calm down by talking to God and saying with simplicity: "I can not continue any longer, it only worked so far. If You want more, You must enlighten me". And it works. But if, in my anger, I stop talking to Him and I stop believing, than it is awfully hard.

Spiritual companionship encourages a contemplative reflection; it encourages to see life with the eyes of God and to not hurry up in order to be able to enter into the depths of the soul:

It helped me understand that I have no patience with myself or with others, that I want everything to be resolved quickly, immediately; but I realize how dangerous this "rushed" road is, because it is a superficial one. I must learn to make small, but secure steps, that have their source in my depths.

CASE 3: "A little girl": A 25 years old nun who lived many traumas in her childhood came to psychotherapy because of her depressive state that made her rigid and closed in the community.

I drew a 10 years little girl, skinny, tidy, in a dark room with only a small opening. This drawing expresses for me the image I have of me, a skinny girl that at that age suffered a painful experience which made me close myself inside, raising walls around me, so no one would come near me, because of my fear of getting hurt again.

In her case, the psychotherapeutic process consisted in processing the loss of childhood spontaneity and of the relationship with her mother.

A feeling of anger aroused in me when I saw that I was asked to do things which were too big for me at that age. I did not have the courage to refuse; even now, when I'm given a responsibility that goes beyond my strength, I do not have this courage, but I fail to ask someone for help. I

think I can handle things alone and often, because of that, I have experienced failure, which caused my self-confidence to lower more and more, and brought me to become physically and mentally exhausted in my attempt to rise up to the expectations of others. This made me raise my own expectations, my desire for perfection, even higher, in order not to deceive others, but I'm tired, and I can not continue like this anymore. It's about time for me to stop...

Fundamental conditions for the second basic motivation are relationships, time and proximity. Längle says that "the mother is the matrix of life" and in terms of psychological development the most important connection with life is the relationship with the mother.¹⁶ In this case, the relationship with the mother, emotionally speaking, was completely absent, even if she was physically present in the client's life. Reflecting on her relationship with her mother she says:

I felt the longing for my mother awake in me: that desire to receive the affection of a mother... there is no one who can give me a motherly hug anymore. Even if we did not have a close relationship, I remember those times when she used to wait for me at the gate, warming up me in her arms when I was returning from school.

As a child she had no time to play, for she was made accountable very early; she always tried to make herself useful, to always serve everybody, not wanting to become a burden for others. The experience of getting closer in a relationship was made impossible for her by a childhood sexual abuse. She was aware of her coping reaction:

Taking my distance and raising walls I am doing nothing else but closing myself more and more inside, losing at the same time many wonderful experiences that I could live with others.

At the end of therapy that girl she drew told her: "Accept, overcome and continue growing". She encouraged herself: "If I do not accept the past I will not be able to continue my every day human and spiritual growth".

In the spiritual direction sessions we worked on guilt and sin issues related to her sexual experiences, as well as on loving herself. She was encouraged to understand that doing something for her self was not selfish or sinful. Her experience: "When I think of myself, and I allow myself something that I like, right there I have the thought that I'm selfish." We also worked with her on forgiveness, on reconciliation with life – as is it – that she was given by

¹⁶ A. LÄNGLE, "Existenzanalyse der Depression. Entstehung, Verständnis und phänomenologische Behandlungszugänge", in *Existenzanalyse* 21, 2, 2004, 4–17.

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God, and on becoming aware of God's presence in the painful moments of her life.

Despite the fact that others have forsaken me, the Lord himself always received me, just that I could not see this. Now I'm better, I got a little courage that no matter what happens to me the Lord is always there to receive me...

In closing I would like to quote Frankl again: "The world is not healthy, but it is curable."¹⁷ But in order for this to happen it is necessary to see the human person as it is: unique, free, with dignity, responsible, authentic and to support in all its dimensions: somatic, psychological and spiritual.

¹⁷ FRANKL, *Az ember az értelemre irányuló kérdéssel szemben*, 15.