

PROFILE/QUESTIONNAIRE ON SOCIAL LOCATION AND SPIRITUALITY

1. SOCIAL LOCATION

Microcosm refers to the “inner” world: the physical body or the “nest” we identify as home. *Macrocosm* is the “outer” world: our city, country or the universe. Microcosms are +/- “open” (“weak”) or “closed” (“strong”) relative to a surrounding macrocosm. People (by ethnicity or culture) vary widely, and variations mark their way of being in the world: their ‘spirituality.’

- Where were you born? What were the geographical features?
- In what circumstances were you raised: economic, religious, political?
- How big was your world? How far could you see: ocean, mountains, forest, horizon, stars?
- What kind of climate: temperate, tropical, extreme? Sun? Snow? Seasons?
- How much did you travel? How far? How often? What means of travel?
- What kinds of boundaries constrained you: territorial, national, linguistic?

2. EMBODIMENT/BODY-TOLERANCE

“Body tolerance”: people’s ease or comfort in and with their own and other’s bodies. “High” (“Dionysian”) body tolerance is expressed in relaxed, exuberant, demonstrative, spontaneous ways; “low” (“Apollonian”) body tolerance, in more predictable, controlled, dignified, uniform ways. The Roman Rite is highly Apollonian; many people are rather more Dionysian.

- Did you dress “up” or “down”? Was your dress tight or loose?
- Did you wear many or few clothes? A uniform (formal or informal)?
- Did you display or conceal your body? What was your attitude to nakedness?
- How would you define or describe personal modesty?
- Did you encounter other people’s attitudes very different from your own?

3. HEALTH, WELL-BEING, SICKNESS

Across cultures, people have widely different attitudes towards sickness and death, ranging from an irritant or something to be fixed, postponed or even denied, to a natural, unavoidable part of life. Life expectancy ranges from over 80 years in some countries, to under 40 in others. This social fact has a profound effect on individual and social life.

- Have you been seriously ill or hospitalized?
- What was the customary response to sickness (isolation/ integration, separation/inclusion)?
- Are you familiar with death? Are you at ease with death? Do you fear death?
- How many funerals have you attended?
- Do you think of your own death? Are you preparing for death?

4. TIME AND SPACE

Time and space are culturally coded. For some, time is simply the passage of life and space is the social reality that surrounds them. For others, time and space are precious and scarce commodities. Because of different evaluations, people’s attitudes to daily living varies widely.

- Do you commoditize (“save,” “waste,” “keep,” “lose,” “steal” or “kill”) time?
- Are you conscious of trying to “turn the clock back”?
- Do you often wish you were somewhere else? Doing something else?
- Is your ministry as effective as it used to be?
- Would you rather be younger?
- How highly do you value “privacy”? Can you live alone?
- Are you claustrophobic/agoraphobic?
- Do you favor prayer/liturgy that is interiorized/private, or social/public?