

Lent 2024



“God has visited and redeemed His people”

(Lk 1:68)

Dear Sister,

it is a profound need of every human being to feel that someone recognizes their value and gives them the freedom to grow, live and be themselves in the best way. Not being recognized and loved, being oppressed, and not liberated, can affect and even destroy a person's life.

At the beginning of Lent and within the journeys that I am undertaking with my councillors to visit the sisters in the various continents, I am eager to contemplate with you some icons of "visitations" present in the Sacred Scripture. Lent is truly a special time to awaken our "inner senses" and be attentive to how God is visiting us and where God invites us to let ourselves be set free. *Here are three "icons" that can help us...* There are many others and it would be nice for each of us to be able to add them to these...

[The Lord's Visit to Abraham at the Quercia di Mambre](#) (Gen 18:1-15)

In the hottest hour of the day Abraham is sitting outside his tent, probably tired from the journey and challenged by the heat. This tiredness of his, however, does not make him fall back on himself; in fact he looks up and sees three people nearby. His sense of hospitality allows him to prostrate himself before them and invite them to stop and take some food. Abraham experiences the entire moment of welcome as a sacred moment and this sacredness will also envelop the Lord's



promise: Sarah will have a son, despite Abraham and Sarah being elderly. That Visit of the Lord in the hottest hour of the day and in the human frailties of Abraham and Sarah (old age, sterility, fatigue of the journey...) becomes a place of promise.

I stop to contemplate the icon of this visit and I identify with Abraham or Sarah...I am confronted with my efforts, my sterilities, "the elderly part of me" and I allow the Lord to stop, share, offer me his promise...

Jesus' visit not recognized (Lc 19,41-44)

Jesus is walking towards Jerusalem where he will experience his passion, death, and resurrection, and he stops to contemplate the holy city, the beloved city, the city symbolic of his people. In the heart of Jesus there is no joy but suffering. Jesus cries over Jerusalem not only for the fact of not having been recognized and accepted but for all the pain and destruction that Jerusalem will have to face due to its heart being hardened and not open to peace processes. When we do not welcome the presence of God in ourselves and in others everything transforms into an enemy... We lose the sense of contemplation and the sacredness of the person; the desire for domination prevails.

I stop to contemplate Jesus' tears over Jerusalem. I pray for Jerusalem and the serious wounds of this time in Israel and Palestine, the wounds of every war, of every form of violence that happens in the world and in ourselves when we do not allow God to visit our lives and free them from every form of division.

Sr Chaithanya's visit

There are icons that we do not find in Scripture and are not painted on canvas or wood. It is the life of some people who have visited us or we have visited, experiencing a profound internal experience. This is what I experienced in Kottiyam hospital in South India when with Sr Fatima and Sr Josia, Provincial Superior, we went to visit Sr Chaithanya.

She was supposed to celebrate her 25th anniversary of profession with her companions in the chapel of the Provincial Chapel but it was not possible because her health situation had worsened. She was

practically in a coma although alert at times. On the day of the Feast of Jubilees, after the celebration, we went into her room and renewed our vows with her. I do not know if she was able to understand what was happening, because she seemed unconscious. She was, however, able to hold the lit candle in her hand. At the end of the Renewal of Vows, I was taking that candle but Sr. Chaithanya held it tightly, as if in that Light there was a strength, a meaning... An intense moment!



The visit to this sister and her gesture, perhaps unconscious but clear, "stopped" me as if I were in front of a sacred land. In fact, she made me contemplate the beauty of a life that, despite the limitations and darkness of illness, knew how to cling to the light and still knew how to say "Yes" to that God who had visited, called, and loved her. That 'Yes' was completed forever on February 10th of this year.



Happy Lent dear sisters! I hope that you and I allow ourselves to be visited and freed internally by the Word of God and by every encounter that can generate in us, in our communities and in mission places the desire to live and announce the Gospel. In communion of prayer and journey

Sr. Dolina
Congregational Leader

The images of this letter were taken from some websites

Premium Photo | Help day concept: silhouette two hand (freepik.com)

004b_OspitalitaAbramoTrinita_Mosaico_XIsec_CappellaPalatina_Palermo_Particolare.jpg (640x480) (cosepiccoledilorenza.it)

weeping for jerusalem: a theological meditation* - Jerusalem Peace InstituteJerusalem Peace Institute (jerusalem-pi.org)