



INFO N.1/JANUARY 2021

TOGETHER on the JOURNEY

THE LORD BLESS YOU

and keep you!

The LORD let his face shine upon you,
and be gracious to you!

The LORD looks upon you kindly
and gives you peace!

(NM 6:22-27)

he accompanies our history with love and cares for us. He is always with us even when we cross "darkest valleys" (Psalm 23). For him you are precious and honoured in His sight, because He loves you, (Is 43:4). He so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son (cf. Jn 3:16). He has made us His dwelling place (cf. 1 Jn 3:9). Within God's blessing there is all His Love, His Faithfulness, His Promise: **"Do not fear... I will be with you"** (cf. Is 43:1-2).

God's blessing has been present since the beginning of creation. After creating man and woman, God blessed them and invited them to be fruitful (Gen 1:28). In Sacred Scripture, blessing is always closely connected with fruitfulness and life. Every life is blessed by God from the moment of its birth and being fruitful is the fruit of His blessing. God's blessing remains forever, it is indelible, even when we are fragile and inconsistent.

In Jesus this blessing reaches its fullness. In Jesus we have life in abundance, we receive every spiritual blessing (Eph. 1:3) and we become fruitful, bearing fruit in all that we are and do (cf. Jn 15:1...), even when we grow old, as the psalm tells us: *"They will still bear fruit in old age, they will stay fresh and green, proclaiming, "The Lord is upright"* (Psalm 92:15-16a).

Remembering God's blessings. Mother Bernarda

In the tiring times of history one can run the risk of doubting God's presence and no longer recognise His blessings. Even in the past year, as Pope Francis said in his prayer on 28 March 2020 in front of the completely empty St Peter's Square: *"Like the disciples in the Gospel we were caught off guard by an unexpected, turbulent storm"* and perhaps like them we asked *"Master, do you not care that we perish?"*. And Pope Francis highlighted how the storm of this Pandemic

exposed our vulnerability and uncovered those false and superfluous certainties around which we have constructed our daily schedules, our projects, our habits and priorities. It showed us how we have allowed to become dull and feeble the very things that nourish, sustain and strengthen our lives and our communities.

This complex and difficult time strongly challenges us Sisters of the Holy Cross to return to the roots of our faith and spirituality. Indeed, Mother Bernarda is our teacher of life and faith in facing the different challenges of all that we are living. If we reread her writings and allow ourselves to be enlightened by her words, we can see that in her trust in God's blessings, the certainty of His help, never failed. In the face of the various trials she had to face, she strongly believed in God's promises: *"God will ensure that the Work begun in His honour, to His glory and for the Salvation of the human persons will continue and be preserved"* (Chronicle 69).

Weakness was for her a precious space to deepen her trust in God, as she wrote in a letter to Sr Agnes: *"Never lose courage, indeed our weakness and helplessness make us humble, teach us to set great trust in His Love, in His Kindness and in His Goodness"*. She knew how to recognise, in the midst of the "storms" she encountered, God's faithful blessing: *"This Institute is indebted to Heaven for His continual protection and blessings, which are visible and even today it is in the throes of growth, despite many storms and trials of the time. And still now the all-bountiful hand of the Father blesses and gives happiness, help and grace"*.

Knowing how to read history with an authentic faith has helped Mother Bernarda to know how to enter the challenges of the time with creativity and passion. No adversity obscured or extinguished her ability to see the blessings of a loving God, always present and at work in situations.

The blessing of a brother...of a sister

By virtue of our Baptism each of us receives not only God's blessing but also the ability to bless. In this regard, Pope Francis, in his catechesis of 2 December 2020, tells us that *"the blessing possesses a special power that accompanies those who receive it throughout their entire life, and disposes man's heart to allow God to change it"*.

St Francis understood the value and potential of blessing and, at a time of spiritual support for Brother Leo, who was going through a difficult situation, he wrote his personal blessing for him on a parchment using the words of the book of Numbers: "The LORD bless you..." (Nm 6, 22-27). That blessing of St Francis remained impressed not only on paper but also in the life of Brother Leo. Knowing how to bless with words, with gestures, with one's life, is a great work of love. When one blesses, one helps relationships to become more fruitful because they are nourished and safeguarded by the grace of God. In the fraternal life of our communities, daring to write or say words of blessing to those who live next to us is born of a great transformation of heart and mind.

Pope Francis' latest encyclical, "FRATELLI TUTTI", leads us to reflect on the value of fraternity, which is not mere philanthropy, but a life that has the flavour of the Gospel. The Gospel is the source of authentic fraternity because from it *arises "the primacy to relationship, to the encounter with the sacred mystery of the other, to universal communion with the whole of humanity"* (n. 277). *"Life exists where there is bonding....and life is stronger than death when it is built on true relationships and bonds of fidelity"* (cf. n.87). It is a true blessing!

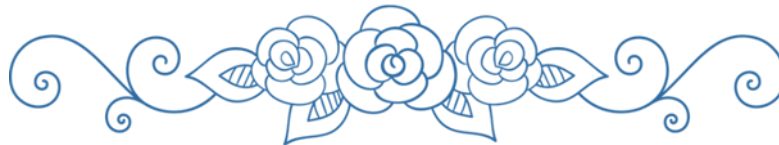
TRANSFORMATION AND BLESSING

RECOGNIZE WITH GRATITUDE

What experiences, what words from Holy Scripture, what people have been "a blessing" in your life?

A GIFT TO ASK FOR. A COMMITMENT TO MAKE

What personal or community attitude do you feel is important to change in order for your community and mission to be a blessing for the Church and society?



Dearest Sister, when God called Abraham, he told him: "You will be a blessing" (Gen 12: 2b) It is the most beautiful promise that can be made to a person: to be a blessing for others, to become a source of blessing for others. (cf. A. Grun) I ask the good Lord for this grace for you, for each one of us, at the beginning of this new year:



*BE A BLESSING
in this world that needs Light
It needs God!*

Sr Dorina

EVENTS & APPOINTMENTS

26 November 2020

On the Anniversary of Mother Bernarda's birth, we had a 5-hour ZOOM meeting with the 75 juniors of our Congregation and their formators. The theme of the meeting was: "WITH CHRIST IN JOY WE RELISH OUR CONSECRATED LIFE". After the prayer made and animated by the Formators, each young sister presented a symbol to express what it meant for her to taste the gift of her consecrated life in Christ. It was a strong moment of celebration and communion.

9-11 December 2020

As had been planned at the beginning of 2020, we held the first European continental meeting with the Leaders and Formators (initial and ongoing formation) of the European Continent. The theme of the meeting was: "*THINK ABOUT AND GENERATE AN OPEN WORLD*". We considered the dream of Pope Francis for Europe (Letter of 22 October 2020), deepening it with the inputs of from the Message of the General Chapter 2019 and the Encyclical "Fratelli Tutti". From all of them emerged the desire to deepen more and more our common roots and our spirituality. Together we also asked ourselves whether it is possible to create some steps

of "belonging together in our diversity" (GC 2019) at the level of Europe. We are on the way...

The Province of England

The New Year will be a special year for the Province of England. With the help of resources people and the involvement of all the sisters, the Province is preparing to change its structure of Leadership. Simplifying our structures and making them fit for the needs of the times are important processes to keep our charism alive, despite age and declining strength. It is a great challenge but also a great opportunity!

New location of the Generalate



On 20 November we visited the new location of the Generalate in Menzingen, close to the Motherhouse. The renovation of the building is still in progress and should be finished early this year. According to the forecasts made, we will celebrate the Easter Feast in our new house. We are very grateful to the Swiss Province which has managed all the material and financial aspects of the work. We also thank the Sisters of the House Bernarda here in Lucerne, who continues to support us with their presence full of affection and dedication.

Year of preparation for the 200th anniversary of Mother Bernarda's birth

We wish as CLT to dedicate this year 2021 to deepening the spirituality and charism of our foundress. The Life magazine will be dedicated entirely to her. We are also planning some events for the Congregation, which will be made possible through the use of ZOOM. It is a very useful digital platform, which also allows for simultaneous translation. You will be informed about the various details of these initiatives in the coming month.

Provincial Elective Chapter in Zambia

The Provincial Elective Chapter was held in the Province of Zambia from 2 to 6 January. They received the mandate for the next 6 years:

Sr IMMACULATA SILILO	Provincial Leader
Sr BETTY MUKONKELA	Provincial Councillor
Sr PRUDENCE CHISHIMBA	Provincial Councillor
Sr REGINA SINJWALA	Provincial Councillor



We assure them of our support in affection and prayer. Our deepest thanks to Sr. Hilda and her councillors for the great work done with passion and care during the last 9 years.

Thank you for your closeness and your precious collaboration!

The CLT community

Sr Dorina, Sr Bernadette, Sr Fatima, Sr Matilde e Sr Rose Paul