

**'Common Heart – Common Journey'**

*“If you have faith as small  
as a mustard seed...”*

*Lc 17,6*



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### **THE GRACE OF BEGINNINGS**

On October 16 of this year - the anniversary of the birth of our Congregation - Sr. Rose Paul and I were in Altötting. We were invited by the Provincial Leadership of the Province to participate in the celebration of the 125th anniversary of the presence of the Sisters of the Holy Cross in Germany.

After the Eucharistic Celebration, the local municipal authorities greeted everyone present. There was also a teacher present, an expert in historical research who presented the history of the Holy Cross Sisters in the German Province, starting from its origins. This was a very interesting story, which began, thanks to Sister Elekta Kaltenbach, a Sister of the Holy Cross of Swiss origin, a missionary in South Africa, who came to Europe to seek the necessary funds to face the misery she encountered on the missions. During that search and at the invitation of a benefactress, she had made the choice to buy land in Altötting to start a new community of Sisters of the Holy Cross with some young women wishing to be missionaries. (You can read the story of this beginning on the website of the Province of Germany

<https://www.schwestern-hl-kreuz.de/schwestern/geschichte>)

The lay person who presented the history of the German Province was seated at the same table as myself. During the dialogue with him it came spontaneously to me to ask him, which aspect of the history of the Sisters of the Holy Cross had struck

him in a particular way. He replied that he had been struck *by how a very small group of religious with poor means had the courage to start a mission presence without knowing anything about how it would continue. Yet from that courage and faith a great work was born.* How wonderful!

Sr Elekta and the young women in formation, despite an insecure future, dared to start a new presence, with very few means available. I think that this situation occurred with each arrival of our sisters in the different continents. Without great material and economic possibilities, our pioneer sisters said their yes to God and, trusting him, they brought life to many situations in the midst of limits.

This also happened at the beginning of our Congregation, Mother Bernarda and the first sisters, having fearlessly embraced poverty and scarcity of means began to live God's call to serve the poorest of their time through education and to promote a better standard of life rooted in the Gospel. Not having everything available and not knowing how their mission would end did not dampen their enthusiasm and their gratitude for the vocation they received. They trusted the Lord with the certainty that He would support them and never abandon them.

For those who have faith, every beginning carries within itself a particular grace, because it is a beginning that does not start from a human initiative or from the desire for something new at all cost. The first step to begin arises from having accepted the call of the Lord, even when everything is not known clearly and it seems impossible that it can happen.

### **A PATH OF TRUST**

In the Letter to the Hebrews we read that "By faith Abraham, called by God, obeyed by leaving for a place that he was to receive as an inheritance, and he left without knowing where he was going". (Heb 11: 8) We all know his story, marked by enthusiasm, difficulty, discouragement, an attempt to fulfill in his own way the promise of an heir, a predilection for his son Isaac, a willingness to completely renounce this son in order to remain

faithful to God. A fully human life, a life marked also by limits but always open to the presence and paternal guidance of God.

Abraham left without knowing where he was going but he left. He knew Who was calling him. God was for him a friend, a father, a certainty. Trust in God and in his promise supported his path, made it possible. In his heart he knew that God would never disappoint him: the promise of a land and a lineage would be fulfilled. And so it happened. Abraham continued to trust God, always, even when the reality was different from what humanly would have been expected, because God was beside him and showed him every time the beauty of the Promise made.

### *THE COURAGE to START*

Every true beginning comes from within, because it is an act of trust in what is felt in oneself as good and right. Additionally, each of us, precisely because we are unique and unrepeatable, brings a new beginning into the world as Anna Arendt says in a wonderful way in her book:

*"With each new birth a new beginning enters the world,  
and a new world potentially comes to light"<sup>1</sup>*

We must not think only of the great beginnings that some people in history have been called to make. We are invited to think of all those little beginnings that make a difference in our life, in our communities, in our mission: and to start noticing how those who live closest to us are doing, to silence a word that hurts, to start smiling to generate positivity, to defend those who have no voice, to illuminate indifferences that make our hearts capable of seeing only the error and never the pain ... Initiating collaboration even when we prefer to work alone ... etc. The great changes in the history of the Church were born of people who had the courage to start living the Gospel seriously, starting from daily life. We are called to begin, first of all, with that serene trust that if God calls us to start something, it is because He will always be beside us and will complete his Work for us.

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<sup>1</sup> Arendt Archive, page 113

## THE COURAGE TO WALK TOGETHER

Abraham did not leave alone; he brought his most loved ones with him. Jesus carried out his mission by calling and involving the twelve apostles. God, who has the full power to do everything by himself, has always preferred to involve others in His plan of Love and Salvation for all humanity. The path that the Church has been making in recent years reminds us of this<sup>2</sup>. Nobody is saved alone and that is why we are called to a process of conversion from **"I"** to **"We"**, in our community living, in our Provinces and our Congregation.

WALKING TOGETHER requires courage and patience, because it touches our being, our way of seeing and often makes us vulnerable. But if it is our uniqueness that gives beauty, it is our unity that gives strength.

Allowing ourselves to be enlightened by the Word of God, meditated daily, let us ask ourselves:

*What "beginning" do I feel called to do  
to be in communion and on mission with others?*



*"The Sisters will do great things if they remain united to God and united among themselves ... if they will keep their gaze fixed on the purpose to which they have consecrated their life".*

Father Theodosius

Thank you, dear Sisters, for every beginning of "new life" that you have made and we will do together

*sr. Dorina*

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<sup>2</sup> Encyclical "Fratelli tutti" and the Synod that has just begun "For a Synodal Church: communion, participation, mission"