



I want to see the sunrise every morning

Dear Sisters,

Before coming to Lucerne, I spent 8 years in Italy in the community of S.Croce in Sondrio. It was a community made up of sisters of different ages, from the "youngest" (I and sister Giuseppina) to the eldest.

We shared many experiences together and I carry several significant testimonies within me. Today I choose to share with you one experience in particular. I speak of Sister Faustina Dell'Orto, a sister full of life and resourcefulness, until almost the last months of her earthly existence. She was a sister with a strong, enterprising character, and a certain sense of humor. The good Lord allowed her to live up to the age of 102. I remember one thing in particular that comes back to my mind for its profound meaning. In her last years Sr Faustina was no longer able to go down to the community for lunch due to some health problems. Her room had become "her kingdom". Her bed was arranged in such a way that when she entered it to rest she could look out through her bedroom window. She did not want the blinds to go down in the evening. When I asked her why she never wanted the blinds to be pulled down, she replied: *"I want to see the sunrise ... that beautiful moment when the sun rises every morning."* This response remains in me as a profound invitation to reflect. In fact, I said to myself: *"How wonderful it is to be over 100 years old and still want to see the sun rise every day!"*

All the furniture in her room was arranged so that each morning Sr Faustina would have the joy of waking up to the dawn of a new day with the joy of being awake and alive.

Stay awake and vigilant. The prophet Elijah

I shared this memory with you because I think it is fundamental in every journey undertaken, both personally and at the level of the Congregation, to make sure we stay "awake" so as not to lose the purpose of our presence in the world: to recognize with gratitude, every day, the Love that illuminates our lives and that promotes the dawn of a better society.

It is not an easy path because it is full of pitfalls and tiredness. Pope Benedict XVI in his homily to Consecrated Religious, February 2, 2013, invited all Consecrated men and women to be vigilant as he said: *"Do not join the ranks of the prophets of doom who proclaim the end or meaninglessness of the consecrated life in the Church in our day; rather, clothe yourselves in Jesus Christ and put on the armour of light – as St Paul urged (cf. Rom 13:11-14) – keeping awake and watchful."*

All the prophets, as Sacred Scripture presents to us, have undergone a process of maturation and transformation to remain "awake" and

capable of awakening in the people the need for God and for a more just life.

Their maturation took place in the concreteness of their history, in a profound - and at the same time mysterious - dialogue with God. Let's think of the biblical image of the prophet Elijah. His name means "*Jawhè is the Lord*" and the meaning of his name was also his mission: to bring the people of Israel, marked by idolatry, to the true God. If we retrace all its historical history, which we are reading in the liturgy of these days, Elijah lives his mission in complete obedience to God, enjoying all the successes but also the bewilderment, the tiredness, the desire to leave everything, because they are dangerous and not rewarding. Yet God who has always accompanied him, reaches him in his crisis and makes him live a new experience of him on Mount Oreb: "*What are you doing here Elijah? Come out and stop on the mountain in the presence of the Lord ...*" And after Elijah recognizes the presence of the Lord in the "*voice of subtle silence*", the Lord invites him to retrace his steps ..." (cf. 1Ki 19: 1ff). Transformation takes place only when we decide to remain docile to the call of the Lord and to the mission he has entrusted to us, a call of Love that never abandons us and always reaches us.

Rooted in Christ to be a transforming presence helps us to see the sunrise.

Pope Francis answering the question of what he expected from religious in the year dedicated to consecrated life said: "*I expect you "wake up the world", since the distinctive sign of consecrated life is prophecy.... A whole world awaits us: men and women who have lost all hope, families in difficulty, abandoned children, young people without a future, the elderly, sick and abandoned, those who are rich in the world's goods but impoverished within, men and women looking for a purpose in life, thirsting for the divine...*"(21 November, 2014)

Our Founders really knew how to "wake up the world" of their time by offering training capable of helping people find the true meaning of their life in Jesus, the living Water for their thirst, and balm for their wounds. By lovingly guarding God's call and the sense of their mission they made a difference in society. The real difference was to awaken in the hearts of the people the need for God, the joy of having met Him, the desire to use their gifts to see a new dawn in the working environment that they would deal with in life, the energy to fight against all forms of inhumanity. How beautiful! And, we dear sisters:

What are we awakening in our communities ...?

What do we want to awaken in the society in which we live?

Mother Bernarda accompanies us in "starting every day to love the Lord" and to sacrifice everything to continue promoting the dawn of a more humane ... more Christian society.

A special thought for ...

A special thought is for you, **dear elderly and ailing sisters**, to thank you for your transformed and transforming presence in our Congregation. Your prayer, the offering of your labors, and your testimony are precious energy for the mission of the Congregation. All of you contribute to the one mission that has been entrusted to us: we are on a mission TOGETHER!

A special thought for you, **dear Junior Sisters**. Pope John Paul II in a world meeting with young people said: *"In saying "yes" to Christ, you say "yes" to all your noblest ideals. I pray that he will reign in your hearts and in all of humanity in the new century and the new millennium. Have no fear of entrusting yourselves to him! He will guide you, he will grant you the strength to follow him every day and in every situation..... "If you are what you should be, you will set the whole world ablaze!"* (Tor Vergata Rome 19-20 August 2000). This is my wish and prayer for each of you

A special thought **for the staff of our communities and for the laity** who work with us and for us. Their presence in our homes and ministries enriches us humanly and spiritually. Every day they challenge us to live the Gospel with more credibility and passion on a personal and community level.

I keep you, all sisters, in my love and in my prayer

sr. Dolina

Appointments

Due to the Corona Virus pandemic, which has affected every part of the world, leading the various governments of nations to impose various restrictions, has meant that we have had to **postpone our travels** and scheduled appointments outside Europe.

The trip to Africa, Chile and India has therefore been postponed. However, the **European continental meeting** (Provincial Superiors and Formators) scheduled in Menzingen 9-11 December 2020 remains on the agenda

Taking advantage of the indications given by the Dicastery of Consecrated Life during this period of the Pandemic, the **Provincial Chapters**, planned in the Provinces of **Cunco and North India**, were postponed to another date yet to be confirmed, given the impossibility of preparing them adequately. The **Province of Central India** will hold and celebrate its provincial elective Chapter from 20 to 25 September of this year, currently having no major problems of meeting at the level of the preparatory Commission and of moving from one place to another.

Meetings Online

In this period, taking advantage of the preciousness of technology, we have shared life online with some of the Provinces:

- we celebrated the beginning of the new commissioning of the Provincial Leadership of Southern Africa.
- we have begun to engage with Provincial Leaderships outside Europe to deepen the knowledge of the province and share some topics deemed important for that particular context.
- we shared time dialoguing with Provincial Leaders who asked for our accompaniment on certain situations.

During this time when travel is impossible we make ourselves available to engage in dialogue with any Province who request us to meet with you.

Bicentenary of the birth of Mother Bernarda

On 26 November 2022, the ***two hundred years of the birth of Mother Bernarda*** will be celebrated. To inaugurate the preparation for this major event we invite, through their local Provincials, all our junior sisters along with their Formators for an online meeting using GOOGLE MEET. A date for this meeting will be confirmed soon. It is our hope that this encounter will become an annual event with the purpose of deepening our spirituality and our charism among the junior sisters. We will try to promote, as far as possible, mutual knowledge and a shared sense of belonging to the same Congregation.

Each anniversary is an event of grace. This is a small start. The rest will be planned later, open to what the good God will inspire us in the concreteness of history.

Thank you for your support and your precious collaboration

The Congregational Leadership Community

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