

TOGETHER on the JOURNEY



October 2020 / INFO n.5

Knowing how to enter, knowing how to remain

Dear Sister,

During the lockdown period imposed on us by the COVID 19 pandemic, I read various testimonies from doctors and nurses who were able to bring light into the darkness of an illness and an existential malaise that have mercilessly affected many people ... a malaise that still seems endless. Many health workers, listening to the words of the Pope, or invited by their own Bishops, have made themselves available to stop, even for a short moment, next to the various patients, hospitalized in intensive care, to pray together or to put them in contact with family members. I particularly remember the words of Sr Maria Chiara, a volunteer doctor during the most tragic period of COVID-19 in Italy. She wrote in an article: *"This experience puts in front of me the need for the resurrection. Faced with the absurd, the lack of answers, we have all experienced that the most authentic meaning of life remains that of the gift of oneself, letting ourselves be awakened by the need of the other ... In those dense times of darkness only love remains. The lockdown has taken everything away, but it has left what matters most: The Word of God for our life and the treasure of relationships"*.

The prohibition of access to hospitals, even to patients' own families, did not prevent them from entering in the light of faith and love. That light and that faith have changed the course of many lives from within.

Need for resurrection

In every era of history there have been situations of malaise. Even today, in every geographical space of the earth, realities continue to exist in which the goods necessary to promote human life in all its dimensions are lacking: lack of faith, lack of food, lack of education, lack of health and appropriate health care, lack of stable emotional ties, lack of a land in which to settle and live in peace ... lack of respect for the fundamental rights of people and creation ... In the hearts of many people there is a strong need to rise again, the need for a new life that heals wounds and marks a new beginning.

During our General Chapter last year, we chose, as Sisters of the Holy Cross, to *"seek to bring new life in the face of death; fullness of life to ourselves, to others, and to our common home"* (GC2019). This means that we are called to

enter into the need for "resurrection" emerging from this time to bring a concrete evangelical response into the cultural and social contexts in which we operate, in the light of our Spirituality and our Charism. *Living the **Paschal Mystery** transforms us to become His presence in our changing and challenging world.* (GC 2019). In the precious inheritance, which we have received from our Founders, there is all the potential to offer experiences and ways of "new life".
Do we really believe it?

Only Jesus, the Risen One, who still bears the signs of the Passion upon himself, can give ourselves and the world the strength to rise from the tombs of fear, of nonsense, of the "lock-downs" that we have been carrying inside for some time. With him we can promote the beginning of a full life within the wounds of the world, a life that knows how to fulfil itself because it has discovered its own meaning.

Do not lose the flavour of the Gospel

What does sharing this mission of the Risen Jesus entail? John Paul II in his encyclical letter on the theme of mission argues that: *"The missionary must be a "contemplative in action." He finds answers to problems in the light of God's word and in personal and community prayer....He is a witness to the experience of God, and must be able to say with the apostles: "that which we have looked upon...concerning the word of life,...we proclaim also to you" (1 Jn 1:1-3).* (Redemptoris Missio n.91) These words bring us to the heart of everything we are doing. Each of our activities, our very life, up to our last day, has value to the extent that it does not lose the flavour of the Word of God that we are called to meditate upon and to share with those around us every day.

Knowing how to read our history and the complexity of our time, in the light of Sacred Scripture, transforms our mentality, making us enter ever more into the thoughts and feelings of Christ. How special when a person tells us that he has been deeply touched by our words because they are full of a deep meaning, very different from what he usually heard! What a grace when through our activities children, young people and adults manage to experience the encounter with God despite the limitations we have! What a gift when, during the sharing of the Word of God in the community, resentments, prejudices, subtle rivalries are dissolved, and one begins to look at the other sister in a different way!

Transformed by the Word we can be that *"salt that gives flavour"* (cf. Mt 5:13; Mk 9:50) to life, relationships, work, community ... to the ministries we carry out, to living sickness and decline. We are always on a mission!

The true beauty. To give our life

The true beauty of every consecrated person derives from the fact that being on a mission does not mean limiting oneself to carrying out a profession in a certain context, but rather learning day after day, despite our frailties and

failures, to give our own life. , through what we do. Mother Bernarda invited the first sisters to always remember that they were not only teachers but first of all they were "spouses of Jesus". By devoting time to teaching with faith, competence, sacrifice, passion, they were giving their very lives to the people of their time. When it becomes a gift, life always receives and gives something beautiful: mission becomes fruitful, bears fruit, because it knows that without Jesus, we can do nothing (cf. Jn 15: 5).

The historical period we are experiencing, with its complexities and dramas, is helping us to go into the depths of our being and our doing. We are willing to give everything of ourselves, in the little things of every day, to testify to the world that there is a meaning to life ... that we are never alone in our journey ... that every person has the right to grow in a world and in a healthier, truer creation?

Pope Francis' Message for this year's **World Mission Day**, which will be celebrated on **October 18**, can offer us some inspiration in this direction: *"Understanding what God is saying to us at this time of pandemic also represents a challenge for the Church's mission... In all of this, God's question: "Whom shall I send?" is addressed once more to us and awaits a generous and convincing response: "Here am I, send me!" (Is 6:8). God continues to look for those whom he can send forth into the world and to the nations to bear witness to his love, his deliverance from sin and death, his liberation from evil (cf. Mt 9:35-38; Lk 10:1-12).*

"Here am I, send me", "Here are We, send us" ... Let us help each other to respond to God in this way, where we live and try to give our lives.



A special thought for ...

A special thought, full of gratitude, is for you, **Congregational Leaders and Councilors** who preceded us and who are now living in your respective Provinces. I am also thinking only of the CLTs (Congregational Leaderships), which I have known *in* recent decades: Sr Adrian's CLT, who has recently entered the full joy of eternal life; the CLT of Sr Miguela, Sr Finbarr, Sr Anne, Sr Alma, Sr Telma. We carry so much gratitude in our hearts... The so much good sown in the times before us comes to light and we are walking our path, also drawing on this good.

A special thought and prayer are for the **Formators** who accompany the young people to discern and live the vocation to consecrated life in our Congregation. May they feel supported by the prayer, collaboration and testimony of each of us.

A special thought for **all the sisters and families**, present in our respective contexts, who in the period of this pandemic had to face moments of mourning,

