



'Common Heart – Common Journey'

INFO n 2/July 2021

Now choose Life!

Dearest Sister,

On the 2nd of June we went to Zug with some sisters from the Mother House to participate in the annual blessing of the city. It is a characteristic ceremony that takes place every year. Usually many people, citizens and tourists participate. This year, due to Covid and the rain, the number of visitors was rather low.

While I was following the ceremony, which alternated between the blessing words of the Mayor of Zug and the sound of the alpinorn, my gaze was suddenly drawn to a father who was walking arm in arm with his disabled, adult, daughter whose legs moved with difficulty and whose words were barely understood. After helping his daughter to sit on a low wall, he took his camera out of a case and smiling began to film the various moments of the blessing ceremony, showing himself very interested and eager not to lose any detail. At the end of the photos he carefully wrapped his camera in a used bag and placed it in his case as if it were a precious treasure, of incalculable value.

This scene impressed itself on my mind and heart. It helped me to reflect deeply on our life and our mission. I think that we all know the hardships, worries, daily challenges of families in which

there is a person with physical or mental difficulties at various levels. Often we can't even imagine them. We also know the love, the care, the limitless dedication with which the various members of the family, with some exceptions, take to heart the well-being of those who are weaker.

What important lesson did the father of this disabled woman teach me on that evening?

He taught me that, within the daily difficulties and challenges that he probably had to face, he still kept a space for wonder, joy, presence among the people and interest in what was happening in his city. It helped me to see that fatigue - and I think also the suffering of certain moments - had not taken away from him the joy of participating in the events of the city and the desire to treasure them with a video or a photo. That camera so carefully guarded was a biblical reminder for me: *"Now choose life"* (cf. Dt 30,19b)

In the light of the encounter with that father, whose testimony was more eloquent than a thousand words, I have kept within myself some questions that I share with you.

In the midst of the challenges of our time (and not just the pandemic!) that are affecting the lives of many people and the structures of our own communities and our mission, **ARE WE CHOOSING LIFE?**

Are we able to welcome and face with faith the internal and external difficulties of our communities?

Can we still CHOOSE to be amazed and rejoice, despite the limitations that we face every day at various levels?

Every day, when I go to pray in the chapel of Mother Bernarda, I read on her tomb the inscription: SHE HAS CHOSEN THE CROSS, HAS CARRIED THE CROSS, ON THE CROSS HAS WON.

Mother Bernarda's life and mission were by no means easy. In the few years of her young life she encountered joys, satisfactions, acknowledgments, but also difficulties, misunderstandings, divisions, illness. Yet within these limited situations Mother Bernarda **continued to CHOOSE LIFE**. She chose life as it was, enduring its challenges without thinking of herself. And this she did every day. She loved and lived her life to the full as a consecrated woman for the mission entrusted to her by God in the world, among the people.

None of us chooses difficulties spontaneously but **each of us can choose HOW TO CARRY THEM**, live them, face them with dignity, not stopping at them. Each of us can go through the difficult moments of history, not giving up on the faithful search for the presence of God and his Work. He is always present and always acts within the history of every person and of all humanity.

This is why **Mother Bernarda WON**. She overcame within herself those negative feelings that arise in the face of difficult relationships. She overcame fear and personal uncertainty in the face of the complexity of certain events, by consulting the authorities of the Church. She overcame the temptation to yield in the face of any attempt to modify the charism received as a gift from the Spirit. She overcame mediocrity and the desire to possess people by leading them to choose according to their conscience freely before God. She overcame division with love, wanting to lose herself rather than lose a sister. She won because she chose to remain among the people to live and proclaim the Gospel.

Mother Bernarda won, because as Saint John tells us: *“Everything that is born of God wins the world; and this is the victory that has defeated the world: our faith ”*. (1 Gv 5.4)

Knowing how to feed the light of faith in our personal and community life, to share it with the people we meet in our various ministries, is the greatest gift we can give to ourselves and to humanity. Apart from God there is no life: there is only darkness, discomfort, loneliness, conflict ...

Despite our limitations, we are in fact called to believe and testify in our world that there is a provident God, who loves us as we are and makes us capable of living a life worth living. Our Founders showed us the way! And now by our steps we are invited to continue their journey, within the history and challenges of today ...

Dear Sisters, let us help each other to always choose life, a life that is nourished by the Gospel and which, every day, with patience, dares to give itself, despite everything. Choosing life with faith and love can truly transform us and those close to us!

I greet each of you with these beautiful words from our Founders

*"There is a Providence that
takes care of every human creature
and embraces each of his spiritual and material needs.
God knows and can
give us what is best for us.
Trust and cooperate with his grace.
God has never let me down! "*

(Father Theodosius)

I am close to you with my love
and gratitude!

Sr. Dorina

Sr. Dorina Zanoni
Congregational Leader

