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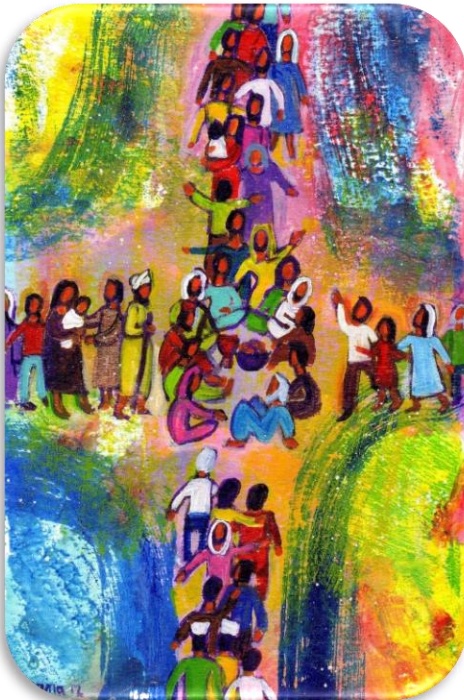
For the Feast of the Sacred Heart

"Learn from me for I am gentle and humble of heart" (Mt 11:29)

Dear Sisters,

Dear friends and partners in mission,

Once again, we are sometimes struck by the state of the world. Not only by the succession of events, but by their intensity, their simultaneity, their unpredictability. Conflicts that are multiplying, wounded peoples, children deprived of a future, forced migration, the growing divide between people and between nations... To this must be added the fragility of our institutions, the difficulty of politics in serving the common good, and the silent cry of the blessed and broken earth.



"We should not accustom ourselves to war"¹: it is always a defeat for humanity. And yet, today it seems to be spreading and taking root in many places.

Our world appears fragile, anxious, often incomprehensible. And we too can experience fatigue, fear, sometimes a form of helplessness or discouragement. We may be tempted to look the other way, or to take refuge in agitation or withdrawal.

And yet, at the very heart of this world, a simple and demanding word is given to us today:

"Learn from me for I am gentle and humble of heart".

We learn from Jesus himself that he is gentle and humble of heart. This passage of the Gospel gives us a glimpse of his intimacy: he prays to his Father as a son full of trust and in a way, he talks to us as a friend, who supports his friends and advises them.

¹ Pope Francis- Angelus 27-03-2022

Picture from Bernadette López "Following Jesus" (or "*Suivre Jésus*" in original)

God alone is His concern. And Jesus himself is pure praise for the work of God, Lord of heaven and earth, who rules over all, watches over all and embraces all in his kindness.

God alone is His concern. And here we are, witnesses of this secret heart-to-heart between Jesus and his Father.

A constant invitation to learn “from His Heart,” to be concerned only with God alone, the Source of all Love.

From his overflowing praise springs a call:

"Come to me, all of you..."

“Come”—it’s time to set out!

The movement of love, fruit of the listening of the heart, just as Jesus himself learning to “set out,” to journey from the heart of the world to the heart of the Father, and from the heart of the Father to the heart of the world.

Jesus wants us to share in that praise that makes burdens light, in that intimate knowledge of God that sets us on the way, that makes us walk in his footsteps, no matter how hard the path may be.

Loving praise does not remove difficulties and sorrows. It lightens them, it situates them in an intimate knowledge of a plan of God's love for all of us. The praise, springing from the heart of Jesus, "opens our being to the depths of God and to the anguish of humankind."²

In this way, Jesus reveals a way of being that overturns the dominant logic. In a harsh world, He teaches us gentleness. In a world of domination, He teaches us humility.

And this is not a weakness. It is a radical force. God's style is "closeness, compassion and tenderness".³ And this style is not incidental: it is revolutionary. It disarms violence at its root.

To learn from Him is to accept that our way of being is transformed. It is to enter, according to our Constitutions, into "the feelings and the preferences of his Heart",⁴ and to let this Heart shape in us another way of looking, judging, acting.

To let his way of loving transform ours.

Then something is transformed

Where we see fractures, He sees calls for forgiveness and reconciliation.

Where we perceive fear, He opens a path of trust.

² Constitutions §8

³ Pope Francis' Homily, 25-04-2021

⁴ Constitutions §18



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Where we see violence, He reveals another way of living the relationship.

Because "time is greater than space"⁵ and we are called to open processes of life, even fragile ones, even invisible ones, to sow seeds that will grow without us knowing how, rather than trying to control everything.

Our Constitutions invite us to "discern in events and situations, the call of God".⁶ Today more than ever, this discernment is essential. Not to protect us from the world, but to recognize the places where God is already working.

This is the heart of our vocation: to discover and manifest the love of the Heart of Jesus.

And in this context, our vocation takes on a particular meaning.

Abide in the interior life

Taking the time to pray, to be silent, to listen to the Word becomes an act of resistance. In a world dominated by turmoil and dispersion, returning to Source. Listening attentively and deeply, discerning God's presence in our own lives and in the world around us, living with an awareness of what lies beyond appearances, and living in truth and sincerity of heart—this is a profoundly prophetic act. Without an interior life, we risk losing the fire.

Growing in discernment rather than reaction

Faced with the complexity of the world, we cannot be satisfied with quick or simplistic answers. We are called to a personal and community discernment, demanding, patient and trusting in the service of the common good.

Living the community as a prophecy

In a world marked by polarization, our communities, our groups, our families, and our relationships are called to become spaces of encounter and reconciliation, places where it is possible to live differences and tensions without destroying each other. This requires an intention and a humble courage: that of the true word, of listening, of forgiveness. This requires, very concretely, to seek to live, with God's grace, this gentleness and humility in our daily relationships. "Our common life then becomes a testimony" ⁷ not ideal, but real, fragile, worked at...

⁵ Evangelii Gaudium §222

⁶ Constitutions §11

⁷ Constitutions §30

Inhabiting the mission as a disturbing presence

In our "Church going forth", we are called to make us closer to each other, to be attentive, capable of reaching out to the peripheries. This is deeply in line with our call to be "for others"⁸ through a simple, faithful presence, where life is threatened.

But this presence is not neutral: it questions, it displaces, it reveals another way of living. It is, in this sense, profoundly prophetic.

Serving education as a path of transformation

In a fragmented world, education is an act of Hope. It is a question of forming people capable of interiority, relationship, discernment and responsibility. Women and men "for others," who, through love in action in their lives, work, relationships, and daily commitments, are capable of repairing and transforming the world. It means doing our "small part" to contribute to the birth of a reconciled humanity, as our tradition commits us to do, helping everyone discover their dignity and vocation.

We are living through a moment in our history that is both full of hope and fraught with challenges, as the Society reorganizes into eight provinces. We have committed ourselves to this together because "our Mission is our *raison d'être*. Our Mission is the horizon that keeps us moving forward."⁹ This transition may give rise to questions, uncertainties, resistance, and insecurities within us. But it can also be welcomed as a call from the Spirit and an opportunity, an invitation to "enlarge the space of our tent," to renew our way of being and acting as an apostolic body in service to the Mission for the world of today and tomorrow.

It is precisely on this open path that Jesus' invitations also resonate today in a concrete way: "Come to me, learn from me..." The gentleness and humility of the Heart of Christ can guide us and teach us to listen, to welcome, and to move forward together with courage and confidence.

"Take my yoke upon you... »

After the donkey, the ox!¹⁰

The yoke can sometimes appear as a heavy hindrance, but it is also a protection adapted to the animal's body, a lightening that allows a greater pulling force to make a deeper furrow and produce a more abundant harvest.

To bear the yoke is to go at the same pace to give the best together. Jesus is our unfailing ally. His yoke is not a weight that imprisons. It is a link that liberates. He teaches us to walk with Him, to the rhythm of his Heart.

⁸ Constitutions §30

⁹ General Chapter 2024 p. 50

¹⁰ General Chapter 2024 p. 46



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Today, the question is being asked of us forcefully:

How much tenderness are we willing to risk in a violent world?

What degree of humility are we willing to embrace in a world driven by power?

What kind of conversion are we ready to embrace so that life can flow more freely for everyone?

In the heart of the night of the world, Hope remains. It is bold, it dares to look further, it dares to believe that God is at work, even where all seems lost.

Yes, gentleness can disarm violence.

Yes, humility can open up new paths.

Yes, the love of the Heart of Christ continues to transform the world, often in silence, always in truth.

May this Feast of the Sacred Heart give us the courage to live in this Hope and make us ever more willing to learn from Him, to share his feelings and his life with the joy of having “found a treasure.”

With my prayer and affection,



Claire Castaing RSCJ
Superior General