



+ Rome, July 16, 2010

Dear Sisters,

Today I want to refer to two of my letters: the one from April 5 about the meeting of the Provincial Superiors with the members of the Generalate, and the one from June 3 about the Plenary Assembly of the UISG in Rome. In addition I also want to give you information about the first meeting of the General Council with Sr. Rosemary Howarth, SSND, who will accompany our process of reconfiguration.

The content of the above mentioned letters demands from all of us a great openness in order to meet the challenges of consecrated life today. It is a matter of radically putting into practice all that is expressed in our Constitutions, especially in Chapters I to VI. What is essential is a “vibrant spirituality that is nurtured by the experience of the Paschal mystery in our daily life, made relevant in constant interaction with the challenges of present society and sustained by ongoing renewal in our way of life.” (Sr. Rekha Chennatti)

But what is a “vibrant spirituality”? It is more than fulfilling some pious practices. Rather it has to penetrate every moment of our daily life. To live spiritually means to become one with God’s Spirit. “When we want to live spiritually we have to learn to breathe in the Spirit of God and to breathe out the same energy and let others participate in it, wherever we are, whatever we are doing, whoever may be with us. True spiritual life demands that we trust in God’s work in us.” (Sr. Joan Chittister) This requires that we let ourselves be seized time and again by the fire of God’s love, the Holy Spirit, so that our darkness can be transformed into light and love, as the above picture from Christel Holl shows. It is a picture full of movement and vitality. The people, captured and transformed by the fire of the Holy Spirit, become bright signs of the Gospel. That did not only happen 2000 years ago, it happens also today. Pentecost is a daily event.

When we understand spirituality in this way then consequently we have “to go beyond” many things (cf. Letter from April 5). This does not mean that our life in the past had not been spiritual. The point is rather the “MORE” according to the Gospel: “Go, sell everything that you have... Then come and follow me.” We never can stay with what we think we have reached. The “inexpressible love” which should characterize our Congregation (cf. Article 7), remains a lifelong challenge, but it is also a never-ending gift. “Developing a genuine spirituality is a process, which presupposes an authentic God-experience and demands a regular and deep prayer life. One needs to spend quality time with oneself in the presence of God to hold the different aspects of consecrated life together.” (Sr. Rekha Chennattu)

During the Plenary Assembly of the UISG last May it became very evident that the present situation of many religious communities is comparable to night, and our Congregation is no exception. We see that changes are necessary, but at the same time we do not see what we should change and where God will lead us. That can cause impatience in us and can raise the feeling that we are losing time. To endure the “night” is not to be equated with passivity. We must confront the night, we cannot pretend it is not there. “It will do no good to accept it passively and go on living as though nothing has happened. There is a gold vein in the darkness that will only reveal itself to those who speak with the darkness. There is much that

has not been revealed to us. Time will give us a perspective but we are called to live our lives in the present moment.” (Sr. Camilla Burns, SNDdeN)

Dear Sisters, all that is said is fundamental for the further process of reconfiguration. We have asked Sr. Rosemary Howarth, a School Sister of Notre Dame, to assist us as our facilitator. Sister was Superior General of her Congregation for 12 years and has experience with spiritual and structural reconfiguration in her own community. The first meeting with her took place on June 26. Some weeks before I had informed her of what we had done so far in regard to our reconfiguration process. During the coming three years Sr. Rosemary will assist us in finding possible ways for reconfiguration, but which way WE have to go we must decide for ourselves. It is important that we have a contemplative attitude as we get involved in the process; that means that we have to listen to our inner self with an open spirit, open heart, open will. That requires, as I already said above, that we “spend quality time in the presence of God.” However it takes much time, much silence in order to perceive the inner voice.

Important directions from the first meeting with Sister Rosemary are:

- Fundamental for our Congregation is the continuous deepening of our eucharistic spirituality.
- Our motto “That all may be one” calls for a strengthening of the WE. The point is not only my/our Province but also WE as the Congregation of the Sisters of Christian Charity. In order to experience the WE, some concrete steps are necessary.
- Let us ask: How is the Holy Spirit alive in US? It is advisable to talk about that in our convents, to tell one another where and how we experience the vitality of the Spirit in our communities and how the prophetic-mystic call is reflected in our lifestyle as SCC’s.
- Let us ask: To what is God calling US? To what does he invite US in order to live our vocation as SCC’s today? What is God’s desire for us?

In your convents please share your thoughts about these four aspects with their corresponding questions and send a summary to your Provincial Superior so that we can talk about them next May during the Enlarged Council in which Sr. Rosemary will also participate. The aim is to include as many Sisters as possible in the process of reconfiguration, as we have already done in the past two years.

Some possible actions that may help us to experience the WE:

- Our motto “That all may be one” requires a unity in our formation program. Therefore the formators are asked to share via e-mail, Skype or personal meetings the main points to be covered for the pre-novitiate, the novitiate and the period of temporary profession. The aim of this sharing and also getting to know the formation programs is to develop a common program during the formators meeting in 2012.
- The formators of the Sisters in temporary profession are invited to develop a common project each year so that all Temporary professed Sisters do the same thing during the same period. That helps to increase the awareness that we are all one.
- Sisters from other fields of activities are invited to similar actions: the provincial treasurers, the coordinators for Justice and Peace, the group of younger Sisters, the coordinators of our Associates. The SCC Days which are held in all Provinces/ Delegation provide a good opportunity to include all Sisters. What is always most important is the strengthening of the WE. Sr. Rosemary suggested that one common theme from the Chapter Document

2007 be chosen each year. The sharing about this theme can be a part of the SCC Day. The results should then be made accessible to all Sisters throughout the Congregation.

- The Sisters who take part in the renewal courses "I am a pilgrim" are invited to reflect about the impact that "being on the way" had on their spiritual life as an SCC and to share their experiences.

The Provincial Superiors and the General Leadership will form the core coordinating group for the process of reconfiguration.

Dear Sisters, you see that the important point is to recognize God's invitation to US and to let ourselves be guided by his Spirit. Also the structural reconfiguration process is a spiritual process which had begun during the time of Mother Pauline and that we have to continue.

Information:

- From August 2 to October 29 Sr. DeSales and I will be in the USA for visitation. Therefore you will not receive a circular letter for a longer time. But I think that this letter gives enough animation to pray, reflect and share about the content. Observe especially the directions given. Your Provincial Superior will let you know when you should send the summary of your sharing to her. I know that the unity of the Congregation is close to your heart. Each one of us is like a mosaic stone and only together the beauty and expression of the mosaic can be effective.
- Please continue to pray for the three tertianship Sisters who from June 28 to July 13 had been in Paderborn and who now continue their tertianship in Rome under the direction of Sr. Joann Marie Aumand until August 5. Sr. Anna Tran will make her final profession on August 15. For Sr. Maria Teresa Nguyen and Sr. Angela Machuca final profession is planned for next year.

Let us thank the Lord for the vocations he sends us and let us take seriously the prayer for priests and religious vocations; that is what the Lord calls us to first. "Pray to the owner of the harvest that he will send out workers to gather in his harvest." Let us support the vocation ministry of the Sisters to whom this task is entrusted in a special way. We all are responsible to live radically what we vowed. Only then others can experience that it is worth while to leave everything and follow Christ.

With hearty greeting also from our Generalate Community and the Tertianship Community,

I am your grateful

Sr. Adalberto