

In the communion of the Church

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The Church is a **mystery of communion**. The community of believers is an expression of the way God exists. With Jesus' resurrection, the Spirit is given and we receive as gift the very life of the Trinity. Communion, love, is exactly what God's being is. "The love of God has been poured out into our hearts through the holy Spirit that has been given to us." (Rom. 5:5) Beginning with Baptism we no longer see ourselves as isolated individuals, but as people called to exist not only "next to" others but united from our inner self, "in" the other, as God makes himself one with humanity in Jesus Christ.

Our community sees itself within the mystery of communion that is the Church. The Constitutions remind us of this in the first article ("**In the communion of the Church**, people of God... Const. 1) and in the last ("We see ourselves likewise as pilgrims, together with the whole People of God." Const. 153.2)

The whole third chapter of the Constitutions (Our communion in mission), describes our community as apostolic, fraternal, praying and international. A superficial reading of that chapter could lead us to think that community is something we build, as if our communion depended on our ability to overcome psychological obstacles that we might experience and find the balance that makes living together bearable.

However, **communion is not our accomplishment**, the result of our effort, but rather a gift of God who, in his mercy, allows us to live his very life, the very mystery of the Trinity. Communion is why we have been created. With good reason, we are the

image and likeness of God. Because of that, love -the way of communion- is the only thing that satisfies the heart of every human being.

The General Chapter of 2012 recognized, once more, how easily we forget the mystery on which our common life is based, and reminds us that "Only in Jesus Christ do we recognize ourselves as brothers and live as such in a concrete community." (Mission 9) Actually, that statement gives an answer to the questions that, sort of like a weary sigh, the same document asks in article 7, "Where do we find the motivation to engage in the self-denial that living together demands? How can we move from putting up with community life to actually *desiring* it?"

What unites us in community is the same thing that sustains the Church, the mystery of communion that is **God himself**. Without that essential truth, both the Church and the religious community become either an instrument for my own self-affirmation as an individual, or -the opposite- an obstacle that impedes my reaching my goals.

The communion of God goes before us and enwraps us, it penetrates within us and springs forth from our inner being. It is the mystery of God in the deepest part of each human being. Jesus tells the Samaritan woman, "the water I shall give will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life." (Jn. 4:14)

The brothers in my community are not instruments to achieve who knows what projects or goals. Nor can I expect that they be fantastic guys who make me feel good, not alone and valued. The brothers of my community are companions that God has placed on my path and, thanks to them, I enter into the life of communion that the Lord so desires to immerse us in.

We are not people united by common ideas or by emotional affinity or by some kind of religious superiority. What unites us is the life we share whose origin is in God. **This is the truth of Christianity**, its beauty and its joy. That is what allows forgiveness, celebration, reparation and hope. That is the foundation of the Church. That is what sustains our Congregation.

