

# Sustained by prayer

*Alberto Toutin ssc  
Superior General*

## **INFO SSCC Brothers No 169 – 2 November 2022**

As I write this, I am visiting the brothers in Fiji and Tonga.

The Congregation has been present in these South Pacific islands since 2013.

I was positively surprised by the serene observance of Sunday in Tonga: all shops are closed, there are no flights on that day and there are hardly any people on the streets. It is a day set aside for mass or worship, followed by a family lunch and rest. Even the kitchen is prepared the day before, so that the cooks can rest on that day.



Cemetery in Tonga

There is a special silence. There is no loud music in the houses. The only music that is allowed is the singing of the Sunday services. I think it would be good for us to recover Sunday rest, which is the time to cultivate our ties with God, with the family - with the living and the dead - and with mother earth. There is a wisdom that consists in knowing how to be together.

I accompanied Marisi Palepale ssc on his visit to the home of one of the young candidates who has been admitted to the pre-novitiate. We were welcomed by his family. The young man shared with us his joy of knowing that he has been admitted to the Congregation, giving thanks to God and his parents for their support. The parents, in their turn, shared their joy. It is a blessing for them that one of their sons is a man of God, on his way to becoming a religious and later a priest. In their prayers, the parents have asked the Lord for this grace, asking him to work in the heart of each of their children. And despite the sadness that their son will soon be leaving home, the parents restated their support and above all their prayers: "We have prayed for you, and we will continue to pray that the Lord will accompany you on your way". This young man's positive response to the Lord to follow him into our religious family is sustained by the affection and prayer of his parents. It is not only "his" vocation, but it is also the story of love that God has been weaving in his family through grandparents, parents, siblings. A story that God will continue to write in the new family, our family, to which this young man will soon belong.

We also visited the Carmelite convent in Fahefa, Tonga. In the community of the sisters who welcomed us, there are three young religious in their twenties. They shared with us how it was above all the life of prayer that attracted them to enter Carmel. For her part, the superior, who has been a religious for more than 59 years, says that what makes her happy in her life is the fact that she has given her life to the Lord. In reality, her words are not necessary on account of the happiness she radiates. And she recalled a time when Marisi's father came hand in hand with a little boy who was no more than 7 years old and asked the then young Carmelite to pray for his son. That child was our brother Marisi.

### **Lean on the prayers of our brothers and sisters**

We will never stop being grateful for the prayers of our grandparents, our parents and those who have promised to pray for us. Such prayer has sustained and enlightened us in the important decisions of our lives, sometimes without our knowing it. It has been there like a protective cloud. This is also the meaning behind our prayer for deceased brothers, sisters and benefactors. Certainly, we pray for them and we also count on their constant intercession. It is also the meaning of the litany of the saints prayed at the time of perpetual profession and ordination. The Church, together with all her saints, prays for us. We in turn support the people who entrust themselves to our prayer. In adoration, we present them to the Lord. Our life of faith is sustained by the faith of so many people. We often say this in our preaching. However, it seems to me that at times of vocational crisis or when we are undergoing a crisis of belonging in the Congregation or in the church, we forget this precious resource. Precisely in such moments of dryness and discouragement would it not be good for us to rely on the prayers of our brothers and sisters?

**Alberto Toutin ssc**  
*Superior General*