

Letter of the Superior Generals

“Both were keen to discern God’s action in their own lives”

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

On the 11th of February, we will celebrate the 100th anniversary of the beginning of the canonization process of our founders. The opening of the process already indicated a recognition by the Church that in them one can contemplate the action of God and their response in the holiness of their lives.



If the cause has lasted so long, it has been above all because we have had to overcome a certain scepticism regarding the cost-benefit analysis of carrying out the demands of a canonisation process. Today, if we are nearing the final phase of the ‘positios’ it is thanks to the tenacious and discreet work of many brothers and sisters and to the conviction that our founders and their work are a gift for the whole Church.

"The words that live in our memory mature with us... And we with them" (Josep Maria Esquirol).

To get closer to the spiritual experience of our Founders, it is very good to read and meditate on their correspondence. Here we find an exchange rich in respect; attentive to the spiritual growth of each person; and of the community; and to the challenges of a nascent community. In a brief note to the Founder, the Good Mother shares her reflections on simplicity as a virtue that must characterize a religious family. This is because, she says, God reveals himself in Jesus, becoming one of us. Then, in a “composition on place,” the Good Mother enters the scene of the announcement of Jesus’ birth to the shepherds and the impact of their visit on the child. “The shepherds were the first to be called and this in consideration of their great simplicity. And the Heart of the Child-Jesus rejoiced when they came to adore him” (*Billet of the Good Mother to the Good Father*, towards the end of 1801; LEBM 41).

These words remained in the memory of the Good Father and of the founding group and supported them in their difficulties. Sixteen years later, when the Good Father announced the news of the approval of the Congregation by the Holy See, he took up these words of the Good Mother and deepened them in terms of the love of Jesus and the relationships that must exist between the members of the Congregation. "It was out of love for us and also to make us feel that we could and should imitate him in everything that he wanted to preserve the appearance of the weakness of childhood. Jesus had his simplicity. To this he added a sweet joy, a tender ingenuity and a permanent tendency to good that made him the most beautiful and the most lovable of the sons of men" (Circular Letter of approval of the Congregation and its Rules; April 14, 1817 - in *Annals of the Congregation* 1960, 177).

Both were attentive to discerning the action of God in their own lives, "two sad, poorly polished boards" and in their own time remade the social fabric discerning how to be useful to their Church and generated simple and cordial relationships among the members of the Congregation.

"Good Father and Good Mother, pray for us"

Just as the 'words of the beginnings' matured in the founders, we also want their words to resonate with renewed freshness among us. To this end, we recommend that everyone draw from that source by reading the first volume of the *Correspondence of the Good Mother* and the first volume of the *Correspondence of the Good Father*.



We ask that each local community regularly integrate the prayer for the canonization of our founders. In that same prayer, let us entrust to their intercession, praying that God will do his work in our world, in each person, and that we may live our "most essential vow," no longer living for ourselves, but collaborating in the salvation of our brothers and sisters.

Best wishes,

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