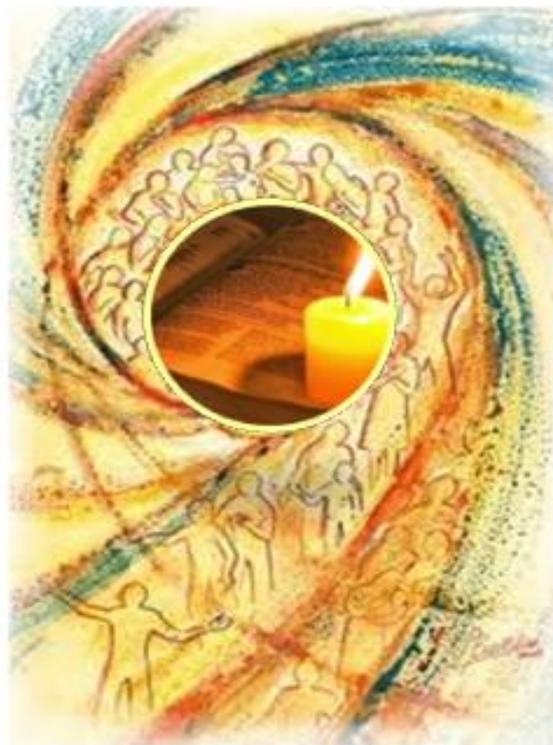


TO LIVE THE PRESENT WITH PASSION

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INFO SS.CC. SISTERS N°29 – OCTOBER 20TH 2015

To live the present with passion



Throughout this year, the Church has constantly invited us to renew and to recreate our vocation and mission as consecrated people. Pope Francis has reminded us that we are called to “*live the present with passion*” to listen carefully to what the Spirit says to us today, and to put into practice in an increasingly deeper way, the fundamental values of our consecrated life.

This call of the Church gives stimulus to the process that we are experiencing as a Congregation to respond to the calls that the Spirit asks of us today. During the long time spent on the “*revision of our works and presences*”, we have certainly had in mind these words of the Pope. “*The Year of Consecrated Life challenges us about faithfulness to the mission entrusted to us. Our ministries, our Apostolic works, our presences, do they respond to what the Spirit asked of our founders? Are they sufficient to address its purpose in society and in the Church today? Is there something we have to change? Do we have the same passion for our people? Are we close to them, sharing their joys and sorrows, and truly understanding their needs and offering our contribution to respond to them?*”

The reality of our everyday world confirms strongly that we need to restructure for the mission if we want to respond with passion to the emerging situations that are presenting themselves. In recent months there has been no lack of events or reflections that have moved our hearts and our lives. The number of refugees and immigrants who knock on the doors of our countries, the dire consequences of natural disasters, countries at war, the massacres of innocent people for

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economic and political interests, extreme poverty often experienced near us, the fragility within our communities... invite us to not to remain asleep: not to wait until Jesus tells us: *“They have mouths and do not speak, they have eyes and do not see, and they have ears and do not hear ...”* (Psalm 115: 5). These are realities that cry out and ask of us a *“great passion”* for the Lord and for his people.

At the same time we must be aware that we are restructuring to respond with more passion and boldness to the mission, it can be more or less easy on paper, but it can be much more difficult when it comes to implementing the decisions we make. Therefore to positively face the consequences of the process of the Congregation that we are experiencing, we need to be passionate for the Lord and for the Kingdom. We cannot forget that what we are, is and will be the Congregation. There is no future without us, the future is within us. We need to put passion into what we are experiencing now. Let us make our own the call that the Pope made to young people: *“Do not let them steal the dream of an authentic mission, of following Jesus that involves the total giving of yourselves”*.

Living with passion, is to struggle to make the Kingdom possible, to risk living the way Jesus did: loving life, experiencing the giving of oneself with joy and enthusiasm, suffering with those who suffer, weeping with those who weep, rejoicing with those who rejoice... It is to be convinced and enthusiastic about what we do, as if we could not imagine doing anything else. Without escaping from reality, on the contrary, embracing it and taking responsibility for it.

Rafa Nadal (the Spanish tennis player) sharing his experience says: *“before a particularly difficult game of tennis, the secret was to put in twice the passion and twice the excitement”*. The reorganization of the Congregation is not an easy task, so we need to have recourse to the same secret *“to put in twice the passion and twice the excitement”*. We need to become increasingly aware that this reorganization will involve some losses and some gains, but in the end we can say with Paul, *“I consider everything as nothing, as rubbish if instead I may gain Christ and live united to Him”* (Phil 3: 8-9).

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Fr. Rogelio Bustos (Mccj), reminds us that passion is not achieved once and for all, it is like a plant that we have to care for and to feed each day; hence the need to review how we live our commitment and what is our relationship with the Gospel, with the charism and with the mission. In the same vein the Pope invites us to ask, *“how do we allow ourselves be challenged by the Gospel; if this is truly the “Vademecum” for everyday life and for the options that we are called to make”*. In light of these calls and questions, we can ensure that only the Gospel with its dynamism and relevance can indicate the route that can direct our steps. We are invited to live in an attitude of

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DISCERNMENT so as not to deceive ourselves and in this way be the reflection and expression of the charism that our founders left to us.

Living in the present with passion is to become “experts in communion”, *“In a polarized society where different cultures experience difficulty in living alongside one another, where the powerless encounter oppression, where inequality abounds, we are called to offer a concrete model of community which, by acknowledging the dignity of each person and sharing our respective gifts makes it possible to live as brothers and sisters”*. Pope Francis (Letter to all Consecrated People in November 2014). In the light of this call it is very important to ask ourselves: How are our

relationships in community? What experience of communion are we building today? What passion do we put into what we experiencing every day?

Living the present with passion, is to look at and to recognize how our inner fire is and to ask ourselves: What lives in our hearts today: charm or disappointment? Is the first flame of love still burning? Or do only ashes remain? And if so, is it time to put in fresh air to revive the remaining embers that are still within. Living with passion, constantly requires us to immerse ourselves in the spring of prayer – adoration, to meet the Lord and to stay with him. If we want to experience passion today, we need the transforming power of the Spirit. Only the Spirit can enlighten our today, enflame our love for Jesus and his Kingdom, and recreate our life and mission.

Our passion for God and the Kingdom, leads us to serve with all our being: heart, mind and will, and at all times and to seek God's will. Passion is at the basis of the quiet and humble service of so many of our sisters, but precious in the eyes of God. The passion that comes from a heart deeply rooted in God is what gives meaning and visibility to who we are and what we do every day. Without this passion, there is no quality of life, and fatigue, sadness, resignation, routine, despair, disappointment... easily become present in our life and mission.

The Lord invites us to live “Today” in a hopeful and transformative way, writing history, our history, confident that God is doing something new with our poverty and even our losses. Fidelity to the Spirit asks us to be farsighted and imaginative, to live with hope and commitment, being creative instruments and builders of the “*new face of the Congregation*”.

May passion for the Father and for the Kingdom which Jesus experienced, and the strength that Mary had to say yes, to go in haste to visit her cousin Elizabeth and to remain standing at the foot of the Cross be the passion that leads us to hear the voice of God as did the prophet Isaiah: *Whom shall I send, and who will go for me?* And let us be able to respond like him: “*Here am I; send me*”. (Is. 6:8). May Jesus and Mary help us to be willing to give our lives with passion in the building of the Kingdom.