

INFO SS.CC. SISTERS N°61 – MAY 21TH 2019



THE CONDITION OF WOMEN (1)

Dear Sisters,

This issue of INFO offers community testimonies on the second of our pastoral priorities: THE CONDITION OF WOMEN. The last general chapter did not want to close its eyes to the problem of discrimination suffered by many women in our societies - from which we, consecrated women, have not always been exempt - and it wanted to place it at the centre of our mission, so that we continue to intensify our commitment to the most vulnerable women of our environment, joining in the fight against this problem.

We cannot ignore the discrimination, explicit and implicit, that exists against women. There are discriminatory laws and customs that discard people according to their gender; and traditions according to which men predominate over women, diminishing the dignity of the majority of people in the world. We do not speak only of gender-based violence, physical or verbal, against women, which we know about, in many cases, and at least by the press and television, among others. We think of rights that are not respected, of practices that exclude, of discrimination that is institutionalised, in many cases.

Many of our pastoral tasks and apostolic commitments are directed to vulnerable women, to their advancement, accompaniment and formation. We will read about this in the following pages.

Sister Teresa Maya CCVI invited us at the UISG Assembly, a few days ago, to remember the women of our ecclesial history, to "learn about ourselves by dialoguing with their stories". She named Juana Inés de la Cruz and Catherine of Siena who were at the beginning of a litany of women, convinced that "the sacrament of memory will make them a real presence in our world today. She exhorted us to contemplate them at this time, and said: "Who are these women that you remember in every continent, whose names should be mentioned and invoked at this time?"

We can also think of those more anonymous ones whom we find on the path of life, and who helped us to make sense of suffering and effort, and to share the example of those mothers, grandmothers, teachers, neighbours, who taught us to fight for what makes us freer and to discard what oppresses us. In the family, in the Church and in the congregation, in the neighbourhoods where we have lived, in the midst of the simple people, we have seen so many women pass by who with their lives spoke to us of their struggle and their efforts not to let it get them down, but to help others to rise above it. "We need to remember them, call them to mind in the present situation of the Church, Sister Teresa told us, not because we want a place at the table of clericalism, but because we are called to seek the holistic integration of the Church"....

Our mission at this time impels us to participate in the struggle for the dignity of women, because we want a more humane life. We demand an equality of dignity and rights that will give the world, the Church, families and human groups, the harmony necessary for peace, justice, good treatment, compassion, tenderness and love in the world. We have the great testimony of Jesus, who, in defiance of the customs of his time had beautiful encounters with women who were shaped for posterity and who encourage us to spend our lives so that the dignity of all people in the world may be recognized, respected, assured?