

## OUR COMMITMENT CAN MAKE THE WORLD BETTER

### *Encourage God's necessity and the Religious tolerance (I)*



Dear Sisters,

The last General Chapter considered two themes related to religion as a priority for the Mission: unbelief, which is growing, especially in the countries of the West, and religious intolerance that challenges us especially in Asia and Africa. Without a doubt, these are two very different phenomena. Unbelief responds to the advance of secularization, and has its expression in religious indifference, a detachment from everything that appears to be transcendent, and acting as if God does not exist. In some more critical circles, it manifests itself in attempts to eliminate from social life everything that refers to what is religious, with a certain declared hostility.

Our Congregational Apostolic Plan (PAC), “calls us to zealously seek new ways of proclaiming God's love to children and young people, to families and to our associates in our Institutions and projects of evangelization”. We believe that Jesus has good news for today's world, for the men and women of this time; and that the Gospel offers a programme of full life filled with meaning for the whole human community in every age and circumstance. We are convinced that the love of God that is known and accepted creates communion, understanding and solidarity. But we recognize that today, we must renew our ways, languages, methods... and be creative in proclaiming Jesus Christ.

Religious intolerance, on the other hand, is the consequence of certain fundamentalisms or fanatical attitudes, which since very long ago have given rise to discrimination, persecution and war. We read about it in the history of humanity in its different times, places and circumstances. The

Universal Declaration of Human Rights states in article 8 “the right to religious freedom”, and the Second Vatican Council recognizes and reaffirms it (Dignitatis Humanae, N°2). Unfortunately, intolerance towards religious minorities has grown in the world, and from time to time we know that somewhere a church/temple was bombed, people were executed, or simply that those who do not profess the majority creed are discriminated...

PAC challenges us here in another way: "*it invites us to seek concrete ways to generate spaces of communion, reconciliation, reparation and dialogue*", thus formulating certain challenges of our SS.CC. spirituality that unites us to the reparative gesture of Jesus. it urges us to be agents of communion and reconciliation.

In either situation, both unbelief and religious intolerance, the key to mission is dialogue. And we cannot forget that the challenges of dialogue are enormous: Dialogue demands a respectful attitude in the face of those who think differently, a real acceptance of their ideas without arrogance or pride, and real attempts to understand others from their own beliefs and thoughts. Dialogue requires time, willingness and listening. Leave aside intransigent attitudes and feelings of superiority. All this is not easy, but it is the only tool that allows us to live harmoniously with those who think differently, and to show with our lives that we are disciples of Jesus.

In a few days we'll celebrate Christmas. We will remember that the only true God was born a child in Bethlehem. And from his cradle (a manger, says Luke), he received the poor and the kings, so that all of us, here and there, could enter into God's dialogue with humanity.

May we meet at the manger on Christmas Eve in a prayer of thanksgiving for our Congregation, our vocation and our fraternity.

**MERRY CHRISTMAS**