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General Superior*

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*Unity
Brothers –
Sisters*

*A gift
received from
the Spirit*

Dear Sisters,

“Since its foundation, our religious family has had one charism, one mission, one spirituality. Brothers and sisters assume together the responsibility of maintaining and strengthening unity, aware that it is a significant value”. (Const. 8).

The unity of sisters and brothers is the theme of this INFO in which we will read several testimonies of the relationship between the two branches of our Congregation of men and women, original and perhaps unusual at the time, and relevant and perhaps necessary for today.

In the history of religious life, there are multiple calls (for example, the 7 founders of the Servants of Mary). But this call of a man and a woman, of a priest and a laywoman, who together found a mixed religious family, is a peculiarity that even today, at least within the Church, may surprise us a little. That it was a prophetic gesture, they do not mention that, because it is current language. However, clearly, nowadays, we can classify it as such.

Although the history of the Congregation has had better or more difficult times in what we call the unity of sisters and brothers, there is no possibility of getting confused about what was the intention of its founders. It is a fact all too evident that they bequeathed to us a Religious Congregation of sisters and brothers, to respond together and in collaboration to the requirements of reality. The relationship of the Good Father to the Good Mother, and the founding acts left this as an unmistakable task. We share, sisters and brothers, much more than spirituality. We share the founding history: the facts, the texts, the official documents and the traditions that make up family life.

Issues related to the relationship between men and women were not a concern at the time of the founders. There were other urgencies and previous steps that society had to take to advance in its development. Today, however, we have to look very seriously at these issues which touch directly on the charism we have inherited, and which today's reality has among its most important requirements. The unity of sisters and brothers is part of our identity as religious men and women of the Sacred Hearts, and this requires us to have clear positions on these issues. Our charism demands of us concrete gestures of closeness, respect, appreciation, collaboration and joint work, as a sign and witness of our common vocation.

Let us remember that the last General Chapter asked us to seek opportunities for encounter, to intensify communion in formation and apostolic work, and to allow ourselves to be enlightened by the example of the Good Father and the Good Mother, who, living together their charismatic experience, bore fruit for the benefit of the whole Church.

Affectionately,