

Territory of Ecuador-Colombia



Dear Sisters,

In this issue of INFO we meet the Territory of Ecuador-Colombia. Two countries twinned by their common father Simón Bolívar, and related in the ss.cc., since the presence of the Congregation in Colombia was founded by the sisters of Ecuador. After years of autonomous life in different Provinces, they have come together again in the new structure of Territories that we have today, and they find themselves on paths of integration, joint research and mutual collaboration.

The Congregation, which arrived in the Latin American countries in the 19th century, was established at the request of governments who recognised that the education offered by the French Sisters was a valuable contribution to the development of society. Thus, ss.cc. schools were founded in different cities, to which thousands of families entrusted the education, especially of their daughters. And there the sisters lived in convents as was religious life at that time.

It was other needs of the Church and of the world, many years later, which opened doors to a diversity of fields of evangelisation. The new winds brought by the Second Vatican Council and its

aftermath in Latin America, especially the meetings of Medellin and Puebla, encouraged religious life in small communities, and led the sisters to consider ways of proclaiming the Gospel in the neighbourhoods and villages, in rural missions and parish work outside the old convents. This is what we find when we read about the history of the Congregation in these countries, and it is part of our history as a congregation that has been walking in step with the Church and the world. As a theme for reflection, this issue of INFO offers us a few pages on Saint Therese of Lisieux, patroness of the missions and missionaries, who has a special place in our congregation since several general superiors recognised a great harmony between essential elements of our spirituality and the saint's way of living and understanding faith, the love of God and of our brothers and sisters. Pope John Paul II, who proclaimed her a Doctor of the Universal Church in 1997, granted her the title of Doctor of Love. She can help us to deepen our inner life and to strengthen our missionary spirit.

And I cannot fail to mention here the ecclesial event that began a few days ago, when Pope Francis launched a time of reflection on synodality in the Church. We welcome this call with the certainty that this time requires significant progress in the participation of all, communion among all and a renewed mission that proclaims Jesus Christ, the Lord, to all. We were not so far from this initiative of Francis when in the last Chapter we proposed as challenges posed by PAC *“to seek with the brothers and the laity of the Secular Branch, spaces of encounter in the mission that we share, and to try out wherever possible new ways of being Church. And to promote meetings... to reflect together on the ss.cc. mission and the challenges of today”*. It will be an important part of our task during this time to participate in this synod as we have been called to do.

With kind regards.