



The Night, time of Salvation

*“At night we will go,
at night, for to find the fountain, only
thirst lights our way.”
(Saint John of the Cross)*

Dear Sisters,

‘The night, a time of salvation.’ This phrase, which we often say during Advent, is the title of this month's INFO. The motto of the Extended Council meeting held at the end of September was ‘They will not steal my hope... Come and sing it with me’¹. So we invited the Provincial Superiors to reflect together on the life of the Congregation. Afterwards, we thought it would be interesting to consider hope in dark times and salvation in the night, so we asked everyone to write a reflection on the subject.

These are difficult times. Although there have always been challenging situations, people who have faced severe trials, and much suffering in the world, there are some differences in the present day: the statistics and our knowledge of what is happening. Today, surveys, studies, reports and information are disseminated throughout the world. We cannot turn a blind eye to the scandalous realities that cry out to heaven when the development of humanity could allow for a more equitable distribution of well-being.

There is no need to report data. We are all well aware of the painful situation faced by entire villages, including children, women and the elderly, who live in permanent darkness.

During the meeting, we shared a great deal. We shared about ourselves, our provinces, our dreams, our problems and our doubts. We covered all the topics of the General Chapter, listening to one

¹ Letter Fr. Esteban Gumucio Vives, ss.cc.

another. What did we understand? What do we want to do? What can we do? How can we best support a diverse, dispersed and fragile Congregation?

We know that our missionary forces are few. But what is more important is that the Lord knows it, too — and yet he keeps us going. He encourages us every day to go out, to look to and seek. He nourishes our desires and renews our enthusiasm, never allowing us to lose hope.

We experienced the meeting as in a spirit of deep fraternal friendship. We shared our difficulties and fears, our joys and desires, and our prayerful silences. We all left convinced that our greatest strength lies in communion, and that it is within our power to achieve it.

We went to the Basilica of Saint Mary Major to pass through the Holy Door of the Jubilee and to pray at the tomb of Pope Francis. It was a welcome opportunity to spend an afternoon in prayer and rest in the middle of the week. We ended the gathering with a visit to the beach, where we swam in the sea at Ostia Antica. From the next day onwards, each of us returned to our own lives. Today, we present these pages, which reflect some of what we experienced.

In a few days we will celebrate the Easter of the Good Mother, and I would not want to end these lines without remembering her.

Every year, we celebrate this feast with joy in honour of the great woman who was our founder. She who also lived through the night. Prison, fear, illness...

She whose mystical experiences and greatest intimacy with the Lord took place at night during her times of adoration. " I saw again our feast; it is always at night, but I do not know the time²," she tells the Good Father in one of her messages. He (our Lord) told me tonight that we would be persecuted, even by saints,³ she confides at another moment. She also writes, Last evening, I asked the good God if I was not deceiving you. In short, I told Him of my pain and my trouble. Right then He showed me a number of white mantles arranged in two lines with you in the middle... He showed me several establishments⁴ she wrote in February 1802. That night, Henriette witnessed the birth of a religious family dedicated to serving the Church, just as Joseph Mary, the founder, had envisioned years earlier in the barn at La Motte d'Usseau.

Embrace you with affection.

² MOTHER HENRIETTE AYMER DE LA CHEVALERIE CORRESPONDENCE 1789-1829, VOLUME 1, p. 53

³ *Ibid.* p. 70

⁴ *Ibid.* p. 147