



## *Our melody*

Dear Sisters,

“Music can change the world because it can change people.” These words were spoken by Bono (Paul David Hewson), the lead singer of the Irish band U2. He is a man known for his commitment to social and educational causes, and has twice been nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize. The phrase encapsulates a profound human truth: that all genuine transformation occurs within individuals, in their hearts, and that these transformed individuals then go on to change their environment.

In this INFO, we discuss Ongoing Formation. This is something we are all familiar with as a continuation of initial formation once we have made our perpetual vows. It encourages our integral growth throughout our lives. We have titled this INFO 'MELODY' because of the effect that music has on us. It simply reaches our ears, touches us, awakens us and moves us. It touches our hearts because it speaks to us of emotions and feelings and makes us tune in to them. When this happens, music accompanies us in our nostalgia, comforts us, encourages us and transforms us. A melody or song can evoke memories, rekindle hope, give us strength and effect change in our lives.

We believe that certain experiences that help us grow have a similar effect on us. They touch our hearts and encourage us to take a step forward. Retreats, courses, good books, conferences and certain moments in life itself touch us so deeply that they renew our outlook. It is as if they are tuning our vocation, just as musical instruments are tuned when starting a new piece. Then we feel freer, happier, more open and better able to create a positive environment around us.

Throughout our journey, we experience moments of new conversion, when we rediscover our 'first love' armed with the wisdom and maturity gained over the years. We have accepted that we sometimes have to unlearn in order to relearn; it is like an endless spiral that takes us further without our knowing where. We have learned that reality is always new and different and that we cannot *look back while ploughing, lest we be distracted from the affairs of the Kingdom* (cf. Lk 9:62). Life has taught us to recognise our limits and accept our mistakes, to listen more attentively, to give others space, to defend routines that bring us harmony and to embrace silence and solitude in our daily lives. Each new conversion propels us forward, because after one comes another, and then another, and then another. We are called to live in continuous conversion, embarking on a long journey of change and inner renewal. We are called to holiness.

To emphasise this point, Pope Francis wrote an Apostolic Exhortation. He quoted the Second Vatican Council, which emphasised that 'all the faithful, Christians of every condition and state, strengthened by so many and such powerful means of salvation, are called by the Lord, each in their own way, to the perfection of that holiness with which the Father himself is perfect'<sup>1</sup>.

Ongoing formation provides us with the tools to discover our own path to holiness. This enables us to live more fully and responsibly while listening to the whisper of the Spirit: 'I have guided you along the path of wisdom, and I have led you along straight paths' (Proverbs 4:11).

Affectionately.

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<sup>1</sup> Papa Francisco, *Gaudete et Exsultate*, n° 10