



INFO SSCC

Hermanas – Sisters – Sœurs

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Congregazione dei Sacri Cuori di Gesù e Maria
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“THE SERVICE OF AUTHORITY IN THE BIBLE”



FROM THE GENERAL SUPERIOR

I would like to begin this letter with a heartfelt desire for you all, “Happy Easter” may deep joy and the certainty that light has conquered darkness, and that life has overcome death, renew our lives filling them with joy and hope. The Risen Christ is with us on the way and continues to tell us: *“I am with you always, even to the end of the world”* (Mt 28:20).

Continuing our reflection on leadership, I invite you to be with the “Word of God”, it leaves a great legacy as to how to exercise authority. God at all times has searched for and elected leaders, he has entrusted the accompaniment, the leadership of his people to those willing to seek and to do His will, men and women who are able to watch with care and love over those who have been entrusted to them.

Leaders who live the service authority as a call from God, as a mission entrusted by Him, *“there is no authority that does not come from Him”* (Rom. 13:1) assume the service of authority with awareness and belief, they become servants of God and of their brothers and sisters. Their spirit of service, proximity, welcome is what invites and leads in the ways of God. Biblical leaders are first and foremost listening servants of the Word who know how to listen to God, *“Your ears shall listen to his words: this is the way, walk in it, whether to go to the right or to the left”* (Isa. 30.21).

*authority... servants
of God and of their
brothers*

At the meeting of the Congregation for Bishops, held in February this year, Pope Francis said:
“In every age and in every place the holy people of God continue exclaiming: give us a Bishop! We need one who will watch over us from above; we need one who will look at us with the fullness of God’s heart; we do not need a manager, a chief executive officer of a company, nor one who is at our level of pettiness and small pretensions. We need someone who knows how to raise himself to the heights of God’s gaze over us in order to lead us to him. Our future lies in God’s gaze. We need someone who, because of his greater familiarity with the wide expanses of God’s field rather than with the confines of his own narrow garden, is able to assure us that what our hearts aspire to is not a vain promise”.

In the followers of Jesus there is no place for power, but an exercise of authority as service, humble sowers of the truth, bearers of the gaze of God, generous and faithful witnesses of the Risen One, capable of offering his/her life for his / her brothers and sisters, if necessary.

The Bible offers many examples of authority. I invite you to focus your attention and reflection on two people who can enlighten us in the service of authority that God has entrusted to us. The text I propose below is taken from “Authority in the Bible”, Prof. Dr. Bruna Costacurta. UISG Conference Assembly in May 2013.

Authority in the Bible

“It shall not be so among you”: These are the words uttered by Jesus after the request by the mother of Zebedee's children that they sit on his right and on his left. Turning to the other apostles, who were outraged by that request, Jesus says:

“You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. It shall not be so among you; but whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave; even as the Son of man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many”. (Mt 20:25-28).

In the communities that walk in the footsteps of Jesus there is no place for power, but rather for the exercise of the authority as a loving service, fully available, even to giving their lives for those to whom God has entrusted.

*Authority as a loving
service*

1. The ideal king : an authority without power

In Dt 17:14-20 the Law outlines the figure of the ideal king desired by Israel and given by the Lord, a king who should not, with his power, rival the kingship of God, but rather serve to mediate the presence of the divine in the midst of his people.

Chosen by God, and standing in a special relationship of dependence on Him, the king must live by faith according to the criteria of the Lord, in the awareness of being the object of a special preference, of a choice that does not flow from his abilities and personal initiative but only as a consequence of the free gift of God's mercy.

His heart then, as the text says, must not exalt itself (cf. v. 20) and his exercise of authority should not be marked by power as is the case with the kings of the “nations that are round about” (v. 14): a brother, part of the people and standing in solidarity with them, he must

exercise his function as a service to those who are his brothers, giving up the use and display of the usual forms of power.

***Reading and
conforming to the
“Word of God”***

The typical traits of power are thus subjected to challenge, so as to indicate instead the true way which one must pursue in seeking to exercise authority properly: reading the Word of God every day, and conforming to it, in an attitude of dependence and obedience which makes of the king a servant of the Lord. In this way he will be able to serve the people entrusted to his care. Authority can demand obedience only if it is lived in obedience.

The typical figure of the king “*after the heart of God*” (1 Samuel 13:14) is David, the youngest son of Jesse, chosen by the Lord out of all his brothers, taken from his task as shepherd of his father’s flock, to become the “*Shepherd of Israel*” (cf. 2 Sam 5:1 - 2, Ps 78:70 - 72).

Saul’s strong kingship, marked by abuse, must give way to that of the shepherd-king who is ready to sacrifice his life for his people, not relying on the force of arms but in the saving presence of God. This constitutes true kingship, and so a true exercise of authority that becomes service and gift, bringing life to the brethren.

All this opens us to our second point, the person of Esther, the weak and helpless queen who shows herself in all her royal might when she decides to risk her life for the salvation of her people.

2. Queen Esther and the strength of weakness

The book of Esther, focused on the experience of liberation that God works for his people by freeing them from mortal danger, has as a protagonist a young Jewish woman, Esther, who has some characteristics in common with the great person of Moses, who was also a means of salvation for Israel. It is a story that teaches how authority must be lived, by showing, negatively, the wrong use of power as bringer of death, and, positively, the “right” use that promotes and aids life.

Esther, who never displays a spirit of self-assertion, is guided instead by a sense of responsibility towards her people; it is this that will be cause for salvation. Esther seems to allow herself to be swallowed up by the system, but in reality she will cause it to burst. This is because real subversion consists in obedience to God’s plan and in being willing to pursue love even to its extreme consequences. It is in this obedience that Esther was “prepared” for her role as queen, holding this honour in silence.

The news of the misfortune that has befallen Israel comes to reach Esther’s ears, to whom Mordecai sends a desperate plea for help, asking her to go to the king to intercede for her people: “*Think not that in the king’s palace you will escape any more than all the other Jews. For if you keep silence at such a time as this, relief and deliverance will rise for the Jews from another quarter, but you and your father’s house will perish. And who knows whether you have not come become queen for such a time as this?*” (4:13-14). These are words of suffering, seemingly harsh, but in reality an expression of love. Because love does not manifest itself in a desire for protection which encourages a selfish or cowardly and defeatist attitude; love, even for those who have leadership responsibilities towards others, should be a

help to love, even at the risk of life, if needs be.

The way of salvation passes through solidarity, and Esther accepts the words of Mordecai and agrees to perish. She no longer thinks of danger, she no longer seeks to save herself, the salvation of her people is now a priority.

What is happening in the life of Esther is a conscious acceptance of her history and her identity as the way to discovering her vocation. The fact that Esther belongs to the Jewish people marks out her destiny: Esther becomes an adult, and expresses her maturity in becoming responsible for the others. She reaches her full personal dimension in this assumption of responsibility, which is both out of obedience to, and in reconciliation with, her own truth. That she is a Jew and is queen of Persia – the two come together to bring about fulfilment in the gift of life, in an authority which is both service and mediation of salvation.

Facing death, they turn to the God of life imploring that they be saved. This is not to say that he abdicates his own initiative and declines to make use of the available resources, but always with the certainty that only God can effect liberation, even if it is through mediation. It is the difficult balance between personal efforts and abandonment to the Lord, a continuous test for every believer. And prayer is the synthesis: man is in play and motivates himself, but asking God to carry through his plan of salvation.

In Esther who, though beset by fear, is ready to lay down her life for her people, there is manifested the meaning of true kingship: intercession and a taking upon oneself of the pain of others show the essential components of real authority. Esther risked her life because she had taken upon herself the suffering of the people to whom she belonged and for whom she felt responsible. The exercise of power is a service brought “to the extreme” (cf. Jn 13:1).

So Esther, a queen marked by a radical weakness which was nonetheless turned into an overwhelming force in her decision to lay down her life for her people, comes to serve as an exemplary figure of authority that is exercised in full service. An authority that is not the power of the leaders of the nations that dominate and oppress, according to the Gospel words quoted at the beginning of this text. True authority is service exercised in meekness, humility, love that leads to self-giving. True authority is that of the Lord and Master who became a servant, washing the disciples' feet and so signifying the gift of his life (cf. Jn 13:1-17); true power is that of the “Good Shepherd” who offers the life for the flock that was entrusted to him (cf. Jn 10:11-18).

*“service exercised in
meekness, humility,
love that leads to self-
giving”*

For reflection:

How does this text throw light on your service authority?

What values and attitudes go with you in the exercise of this service?

Is it in God and His Word that you find the light and the way to live out your mission?

*Emperatriz Arrobo ss.cc.
General Superior*

SHARING THE LIFE OF THE CONGREGATION

ACTIVITIES OF THE GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Visit to Ecuador

Continuing the itinerary planned by the General Government the aim of which was to visit all the sisters of the Congregation, the moment arrived to go to the country of our dear Emperatriz. With the visit to Ecuador, from 11th to 24th March, the first contact with the whole Congregation came to an end. As in all the places we have been, the welcome was extraordinary. It was an opportunity to visit the four areas in which the Province of Ecuador is divided: Cuenca, Guayaquil, Santo Domingo and Quito.



It was an amazing encounter because of the remarkable creativity of the sisters as they shared on both a personal and community level. There were cherished moments in which the strength of the God who lives in each one of the sisters and the joyful and deep service for the Kingdom was witnessed.

Meeting with the Steering Committee

On the 31st of March and 1st of April, the General Government met once again with the Steering Committee. In this meeting they began to draw up the roadmap and the documents to be worked on at the next Council of the Congregation. These were intense days of joint searching in which the importance of the documents that were being drawn up predominated.

As a result, it was deemed necessary to have another meeting on the 14th and 15th of May to finalize the work documents.

Meeting of General Government with Financial solidarity Team

On Thursday 3rd April, the General Government met with Sisters Pilar Ruiz de la Prada, the General bursar, Evelyne Royer, ss.cc. member of the Financial Solidarity team and Mr Alessandro Lombardi the financial consultant from CBIS Global, who is helping the Congregation to move towards a new model of financial Solidarity. The initial analysis of the results of the information gathered from the Congregation at large was presented. It was an opportunity to get to know the reality of the financial situation of the Congregation. This first presentation highlighted areas that needed attention as we seek to move forward.



Study of languages

To better serve the Congregation, the General Government has taken three weeks to reinforce language skills. Emperatriz and Goyi are in Ireland and Alicia and Aurora in France. Since time is too short and the Easter holidays fall within this period, on this occasion the classes are in the community, with the experience of the “teachers” Angela O’Toole in Ireland,

Thérèse Denoual in Dreux and Hortense Marie Bouquet in Poitiers. It is being a very rich and interesting experience as well as an opportunity to share time with different communities and live Holy Week in different environments. We appreciate the openness and availability of the sisters of the communities of Ireland, Dreux and Poitiers for their love, welcome, and above all, their support in enabling the practice of the language in informal conversation.

OTHER NEWS

CONFERENCE OF LATIN AMERICA

Permanent Committee of L.A.

From March 30th to April 4th, we met as the permanent committee of Latin America, in the provincial house of our sisters in Santiago de Chile. We started our meeting with a visit to the community of sisters in Viña del Mar, where we enjoyed their warm welcome and the magnificent landscape with a beautiful ocean view. The main objective of this meeting was the preparation of the XI Assembly of the Conference of Latin America, to be held in Rio de Janeiro from July 21st to 30th, this year.



Our meeting took place in an atmosphere of sisterhood and joint search wanting to respond in faithfulness to what God calls us today as Congregation on this continent.

The XI Assembly will be motivated by the motto: *“Listen to God's voice today, to generate life”* and inspired by the text of Isaiah 43, 19: *“See, I am doing something new; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?”* and use the methodology of See-Judge-Act.

22 sisters of the various countries where the Congregation is in Latin America will participate in this Assembly. We will have Sister Maria Cristina Robaina, of the Society of St. Teresa, Uruguayan, and member of the Uruguayan theological team of CLAR (Conference of Religious (women and men) of Latin America). The Assembly will be held simultaneously with that of our brothers.

At this time that we were together in Chile, the north of the country was affected by two strong earthquakes and the threat of another greatest intensity was expected. This commits us to pray and to be in solidarity with our Chilean brothers and sisters.

We ended our Permanent Committee meeting deeply grateful to our sisters in Chile for their hospitality and affection.

Beginning of the Interprovincial Novitiate of Latin America – 2014

On March 27, the day of the Good Father, a very special day for our religious family, the Novitiate of Latin America received two new novices: Genoyé Lipa and Dulce María Mera, in a fraternal atmosphere of ss.cc. Sisters and Brothers. The Eucharist was presided by Raul Pariamachi, ss.cc. (Provincial of Peru). In the celebration, Valeria Gomes dos Santos, ss.cc.



(Provincial of Peru - Brazil - Mexico) gave the insignia (cross without SS.CC.) to the new novices and invited Maria Gracia Moreno, ss.cc. and Marcelo Tregouet, ss.cc. as the oldest Sister and Brother present, to handing them our constitutions, signs of this new walk in the Congregation. After the Eucharist we shared some delicious snacks.

To reach maturity and to live my vocation in this foundational experience of God Jesus (*Dulce María Mera*

Melquiadez, ss.cc. novice)

When undertaking a new process into the unknown – known, I feel invited to live with much responsibility, availability, openness, transparency, sincerity and freedom of heart; this implies abandoning myself into God's hands, so He may instruct me in this time of novitiate, that, through the *Ruah*, He may orient me to reach maturity in my religious vocation, building elements through a good human personal formation, capable of embracing my own personal history as presence of the history of salvation, to build my identity as a woman, to host commitment to humanity, from the choice for life.



Enlightened by the Word of God, connecting me with the source, Jesus, from which I started drinking, I want Jesus to be the center of my life, and set me thence through the spirituality of the Congregation, identifying myself with the style of the Sacred Hearts, rooting in me the charism and mission of our Founders.

I wish to welcome the richness of difference and multiculturalism in my community, to be able to live together this foundational experience of the God of Jesus, and to respond to God's call from the Sacred Hearts style.



Thanks for the presence of brothers and sisters on March 27. It was a happy moment where we officially began this experience, thanks for that afternoon so full of surprises and the human and

spiritual support in this beginning of the journey.

“If you listen quietly, his love is singing” (*Genoye Lipa Ramos, ss.cc. novice*)

I begin sharing with you my experience through a simple reflection that emerged in our community prayer, where I felt clearly that God invited me to live love. “In the midst of his people Jesus is walking; in all his brethren there are signs of his passage, if you listen quietly,

his love is singing”. I feel that in this new time I am invited to tune in my life, to grasp, to hear and to see Jesus, the signs of his passage and hear how his love is constantly singing in the midst of his people, in the noise of the cars, the market, to be silent at all times, in every situation, from day to day.

The Eucharistic celebration of the beginning of the novitiate on March 27 was a significant event that marked me. I was surprised and very gratified with the presence of so many sisters and brothers, even those I had not imagined, that were accompanying us on this day. I recognized each presence with gratitude. Of course, it was my big family, people who love me and whom I too appreciate. It was a clear sign of God, to give my YES with joy. I want to keep saying: “Here I am Lord” with the desire to hear your voice in the people, among the people. I thank my sisters in community for all. THANKS to each sister and brother who were not present, for joining me in prayer.

PROVINCE OF ECUADOR

Visit of the General Government to Ecuador

With great joy the SS.CC. Sisters, Communities and Zones of the Province of Ecuador, were expecting the visit from our Superior General and her Council.

They arrived on Tuesday March 11. Representatives of communities of Quito welcomed them at the airport; after a tasty lunch, we invited them to rest in the afternoon, so that the height of Quito, would not affect their health.



Each of the meetings was motivated by our Sister Emperatriz Arrobo, Superior General, who explained the purpose of this fraternal visit and at the same time took the opportunity to introduce to us each of the Councilors Sisters.

Each zone displayed affection, love and trust where we all could share, simply, who we are, how we feel and how we are living our following Jesus. With creativity, we presented several signs that showed the concerns, difficulties, strengths, challenges, hopes and dreams, in a way that was outstanding and entertaining.

The second part of the meeting, was motivated by a symbol, to show how we would like the New Face of the Congregation and the process to follow, were we feel involved in the calls made by the 35th General Chapter, the attitude represented availability to newness, even if painful.

The Eucharistic Celebrations were peaceful moments of great intimacy with the Lord, where the reality of the Province was lived: the work on the mission, a challenge to our daily lives; the songs, dance and homily helped us to synthesize the experience.

There was no lack of recreation spaces where the sisters showed their skills in: dance, comedy, songs; we laughed a lot, and we applauded graciously, we all felt we were truly living our family spirit.



After each one of the meetings, the General Government encouraged us to further strengthen the quality of community life, combining the strengths and supporting the process of the Congregation as a Province, and encouraged us to work with young people, to invite them to share our life.

The province offered them some quick tours, but no less pleasing: the “half of the world” site, the

historic center of Quito, Cuenca, Guayaquil; a brief encounter with our ss.cc. Brothers, the Secular Branch, parents, teachers and students of our Educational Works. They also showed them their love and gratitude.

PROVINCE OF FRANCE-QUEBEC

The Association “Together with Congo” visits Picpus

When our sisters Thérèse Denoual (1989) and Hélène-Marie Duchemin (1991) left Laval, in the 90s, when the community, founded by the Good Mother in 1804 was closed, they left the students and teachers of the technical school, well aware of our mission in Kinshasa, Congo. Since 25 years ago there are no more ss.cc. religious in Laval, but directors and facilitators-educators have been concerned to keep alive the Sacred Hearts spirit and the missionary interest of the Congregation remaining very closely linked with the French sisters in mission in Congo, in particular with Sr Therese Denoual and the community in Picpus .

These young people have founded an association “**Together with Congo**”, and in 2008 and 2010 they went to Kinshasa to animate a summer camp for the children of “Father Damien” Center. They returned raved and transformed, and as witnesses, they transmitted sensitivity for Africa to others.

Each year a renewed group comes to Picpus to share with the sisters. This year Aurora Laguarda and Alicia Mamani were present at Picpus when they came and they were able to meet with these young people motivated by the mission. They were excited to talk with sisters who lived the mission elsewhere that in France.



A group of young people was able to go to Burkina Faso in 2013 to renovate a school and in the summer of 2014, another group will go for three weeks to Rwanda with the Lasallian Brothers. Their desire was to work in our mission in Congo, but as there are no more SSC Sisters available to accompany and supervise them in Kinshasa for three weeks, the association has opened itself to other African countries.

This meeting leads us to give thanks for what our sisters sowed in Laval so well, that continues to bear fruit 25 years after their departure.

PROVINCE OF PACIFIC-U.S.A.

Pacific Province welcomes a novice



At our April Provincial Assembly, the Sisters of the Pacific Province were overjoyed to welcome our new novice, Alice Liu. After six months of pre-novitiate training, accompanying by Sr. Irene Barboza, ss.cc. where Alice received lessons in Spanish by Sr. Dolores Marie Pavao, ss.cc. learned the history of our Congregation in the Islands by Sr. Mary Dolorine Pires, ss.cc. was coached on writing her autobiography by Sr. Damien Therese Dang, ss.cc. given music lessons by Sr. Angela Gregorio, ss.cc.

Alice was ready to make her discernment. After her discernment retreat given by Sr. Helene Wood, ss.cc. Alice was ready to write her letter to Provincial Sr. Regina Mary Jenkins asking for permission to enter the novitiate of the Sisters of the Sacred Hearts.

At our Provincial Assembly on Saturday, April 5, 2014 while we were able to skype with our Sisters in Fairhaven, we had a prayer service in which Alice was accepted as a novice and welcomed to the novitiate program which she will begin in the Philippines on April 14, 2014 just in time to follow the Holy Week there.

In the spirit of St. Damien

The year 2014 is a momentous time in Hawaii since it is the 150 anniversary of St. Damien's arrival in Hawaii and 150 anniversary of St. Damien's Ordination, 125th anniversary of Damien's death on Kaluapapa, Molokai.



The Hui O Kamiano Team at work. Soane, Fr. Jonathan and Margaret Uiagulele

The Brothers' US Province along with the Sisters' Pacific Province have organized a committee to orchestrate celebrations of the Servant of God, Servant of Humanity. The Hui O Kamiano (Damien Committee) under the leadership of Margaret Uiagulele is comprised of Brothers and Sisters of the Sacred Hearts as well as laity who work in our SS.CC. schools and parishes. Together we are working to highlight again the dedication and love of St. Damien for his Congregation and for the people he served

especially on the settlement of Kalaupapa.

On Friday, May 9, 2014 we will celebrate the Mass at the Neal S. Blaisdell Arena with all the SS.CC. schools, St. Ann, St. Patrick, St. Michael, Sacred Hearts Academy and also participants from Damien High School and representatives from our SS.CC. schools and parishes in Texas, Fairhaven and India. We are estimating a crowd of 3,000 young people. Tom Booth, composer/musician who has adopted our SS.CC. spirit will provide the music and also an original composition in honour of St. Damien.



On the Evening of May 9, we will again have a Mass for the young adults and parishioners of the Diocese at the Neal Blaisdell Arena and the Mass will be followed by a Concert by Tom Booth and his Band.

On Saturday, May 10, 2014 our Bishop Larry Silva will celebrate the Feast of St. Damien with a Mass at the Cathedral of Our Lady of Peace to which the people of the Diocese are invited to attend. That Mass will be followed by a tribute to St. Damien at his statue which is in front of our State Capitol. There we will have more songs, a tribute with a historical note, a liturgical hula and finally the decoration of the statue with floral lei.

On May 12, Monday, there will be an appreciation dinner for all the Brothers, Sisters Staff and Faculty of our SS.CC. schools followed by a concert again by Tom Booth and his band. Rounding out our celebration in the Spirit of Damien will be the Ordination of our Deacon Ajit of India by our Bishop Larry Silva on May 21, 2014 in commemoration of St. Damien's ordination in the same Cathedral of Our Lady of Peace 150 years ago.

We pray that these celebrations will be a tribute to St. Damien to whom we ask that through his intercession many young men and women will choose to follow in his footsteps in serving God through the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary.

AGENDA OF THE GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Date	Activity and Responsible	Place
May 5 th – 9 th	Commission of Constitutions General Government	Rome
May 12 th – 16 th	General Government Sessions	Rome
May 14 th – 15 th	Meeting with the Steering Committee	Rome
May 20 th – 24 th	Workshop of SEDOS Alicia, Gregoria, Mary and Aurora	Rome
May 26 th – 30 th	General Government Sessions	Rome

CHRONICA CONGREGATIONIS

PROFESSIONS

TEMPORARY PROFESSIONS

MONTERO María Teresa	26/04/2014	La Paz	Bolivia
LOPEZ Carmina Raquel	10/05/2014	Presidente Franco	Paraguay

JUBILEES

MAY 2014

LAGUARDA María Aurora	13/05/1989	Silver	Italy
ESPINOSA DE LOS M. M. Antonia	13/05/1989	Silver	Spain
SAA María Mercedes	21/05/1939	Ruby	Chile

IN MEMORIAM

CORDEIRO Jeanne	20/03/2014	Honolulu, Hawaii
REYNAERTS Yvonne	21/03/2014	Heverlee, Belgium

HAPPY EASTER!

*For more information please go to our Web page, blog and Facebook.
www.sscpcipus.com*