

# Speaking to the Hearts of Jesus and Mary

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**D**ear brothers,

Fraternal greetings from Chile where Fernando and I are confined awaiting our return to Rome. We have been in the Provincial house in Santiago, which has allowed us to be closer to our older and sicker brothers.

Here, as in other countries, we see all the health efforts that are being made to contain the advance of the pandemic. At the same time we are aware of the need to cope with the growing demands which are now appearing after long days of quarantine for food, for meeting up with those close to us, for money. Multiple initiatives by both the state and the public have been put in place to come to the aid of those most in need.

From the communications that I have had and that we have received during these days, I have seen with joy the many initiatives that the brothers and sisters of the Congregation have taken to accompany the most vulnerable people: from letters and telephone calls to people on their own to the opening of kitchens where food is prepared and distributed. We are moved by the suffering of so many people and this spurs us on to place our energies and resources at their service. There, in service, the closeness and active tenderness of God is manifested, as is the best of ourselves.



A brother praying in the Church of Santa Cruz de Ivry Port (France)

## The Heart of Jesus speaks to us

During this time of confinement, the reading of the Word and the celebration of the Eucharist in our communities have allowed us to savour, perhaps in a different way, what the Heart of Jesus and his Spirit are telling us.

The liturgy during this Easter season has allowed us to hear in our hearts the authoritative words of Jesus in the Gospel of John, speaking to his disciples, accompanying them in their misunderstandings and obscurities and transmitting to them the certainty of his support through his consoling Spirit. During this same liturgical period, the reading from the Acts of the Apostles has reminded us of a dynamic nascent Church that had to respond to the innumerable internal and external challenges it was faced with, assisted by the certainty of the Spirit of Jesus who precedes, sustains and brings to fruition its evangelising efforts.

It is good for us then to place ourselves as people of faith listening to the Word, letting ourselves be transformed by it. We are like the disciples in the Gospel of John who, at times, do not understand what Jesus is telling us. Sometimes, our expectations prevent us from welcoming the Lord who is speaking to us here and now, his Word echoing in each one of us, in our brothers and sisters, in world events, in nature. It is also good news to know that the assistance of the Spirit of Jesus to the Christian communities of the early Church is at work in us and beyond us. It is the Spirit that gives us light to face the inevitable tensions and conflicts that arise in a living community. It is the Spirit that gives rise to the gifts and ministries that are required for the building up of the community. We are part of that living community of the Church, which walks with so many brothers and sisters and with so many others in whom the Spirit is already at work. The best of us as people of faith, as religious and as pastors emerges when we make ourselves available to serve the Church and enter into the dynamic of the Spirit of Jesus that sustains her.

### **Let us speak to the Heart of Jesus and Mary**

In this month when we celebrate the Hearts of Jesus and Mary it is good for us to return to them to speak to them, heart to heart, presenting to them the impact that this pandemic situation is having on the people we know and also beyond, on our world and on our planet, and entrusting to the Sacred Hearts our own fears, darknesses and desire to make ourselves available to the needs of the Church and of our world.

**“I invite you to especially dedicate this month to speaking to the hearts of Jesus and Mary”**

I invite you to especially dedicate this month to speaking to the hearts of Jesus and Mary, in our prayer or adoration, in sharing the Word of God, during Mass. Let us do this with a simplicity of heart, placing before them the faces and situations of people who have been entrusted to us or who we know. Let us not forget our

brothers and sisters in community, those we love well and those who are more difficult for us to accept. Let us say to the Lord: “They are yours and you entrusted them to me and through them you wanted to accompany me and speak to me”. May our words to the Heart of Jesus and the Heart of Mary become as simple and urgent as those of the beggars who ask for alms or bread.

And may we know that when we speak to the hearts of Jesus and Mary in our chapels or in our rooms, we are never there alone. We are there in the name of the whole Congregation and of all humanity, expressed in the names and faces we present to them or even in our silences and times of inertia.

On 20 May in Tokyo, the former Superior General of the Society of Jesus, Father Adolfo Nicolás (1934-2020), died. After a time of spiritual exercises, meditating on the Gospel of John 21, he had these words for the Heart of Jesus:

“Lord Jesus, what weaknesses did you see in us that made you decide to call us, in spite of everything, to collaborate in your mission?”

Helped by these words or by others that come from your heart or from the heart of humanity in hope of health and salvation, we can enter into dialogue with the Heart of Jesus.

Let us also speak with the Heart of Mary, with that filial trust with which our Founder invited his brothers and sisters to address her:

**“Let us also speak with the Heart of Mary, with filial trust”**

“It is necessary to go to her when God withdraws, in our pains and desolations, in our infidelities. She will pray for us if we call her to the place of our desolation.” (Good Father. Circular Letter, April 14, 1817).

### **We can make our own the words of supplication to the Virgin of the Way**

“O Mother of Mercy, who lovingly placed the body of your Lord in the stable at Bethlehem so that it might become bread for humanity, and with equal tenderness placed it in the tomb so that, like the grain of wheat fallen into the earth, it might bear fruit of new life, teach us to put away the old self and its passions in order to clothe ourselves with the new self.”

May the Hearts of Jesus and Mary sustain us and make us their grateful sons and daughters.

Fraternally,

**Alberto Toutin ssc**  
*Superior General*