

Passionate and close

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Dear brothers, sisters and lay members:

Fraternal greetings from Rome.

At the time of receiving this INFO we are already in the novena of the feast of the Sacred Hearts and on the threshold of entering the month dedicated to them. What great trust God places in our little family, in making each one of us witnesses to the depths of his love for all humanity and for the whole of his creation, manifested in the hearts of Jesus and Mary! Who can know this abyss of light and darkness better than our own hearts? All the more so, if it is a question of coming to know God by entering into the paths that lead us to the hearts of Jesus and Mary. Moreover, we have the gestures, the words, the sensitivity and the gaze of Jesus and Mary, which come to us through the Gospels and through which we can experience what it was that moved their hearts. I emphasise their passionate love for what God entrusted to them and their closeness.



The hearts of Jesus and Mary do not love half-heartedly or at a distance. They know how to make themselves close, neighbourly, friends to those they meet. Therein lies a source of inexhaustible joy. It is to discover that God already precedes us in the heart of each person. It is in the closeness, face to face, in the faces of those we meet, that we recognise that God is there. And it is also a source of conversion from our hasty and invasive attitudes with which we often clumsily try to approach the other. To enter into the other is to enter into a sacred zone. This requires respect, time, patience, fine listening, availability. It is the other who opens the doors of his or her heart that invites me to enter. No one can force this door open.

In a visit to Mexico I was privileged to visit *El Samaritano*, in Bojay-Mexico, a house that exists in service of migrants. It is a house that has been run by our sisters since 2012. In this house they welcome migrants from various Latin American countries who are on their way to the United States. It was encouraging to listen to the sisters who are in charge there, the passion and affection with which they spoke of those who have

passed through the house. In a year the numbers passing through can be thousands upon thousands. However, each one has a name, a face, a story. The sisters have a passion and closeness that has forced them to work at serving these migrants better. They live a closeness that makes them suffer with those who listen and or who are mistreated along the way, those who have been witnesses or victims in their own flesh of violence or of human greed that reduces people to merchandise for trade of all kinds. For this reason, it is a risky closeness, because those who take the side of the poor are an obstacle for the mafias that unscrupulously prowl around migrants.

Let us ask the Sacred Hearts to teach us to be men and women who become passionately close to those who today carry heavy burdens of suffering in their lives. May we help them to bear their burdens, in the journey they allow us to make with them. May we let these men and women be the ones who evangelise us, the ones who bring out the best in us, the ones who relativise our difficulties, which can sometimes weigh us down and which are nothing compared to what so many brothers and sisters are going through. And above all, may these faces, with their stories, their silences, their resilience and their weariness, lead us to present them to the Lord in prayer: "Here they are, Lord, they are yours. Lead us to love them with passion as you did, and may you, Mary, help us to be companions on the way.

Fraternally,

Alberto Toutin ssc
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