

INFO SS.CC. SISTERS N°21 – DICEMBER 18TH 2014

## BORN AGAIN



This year the Lord gives us the grace to celebrate his “Incarnation” with joy and renewed spirit. He comes to illuminate with his light, the darkness that often surrounds the world and our hearts, bringing hope, joy, peace, in a word LOVE. As an SS.CC. family, celebrating the birth of Jesus, connects us directly to the birth of our Congregation.

Surely each of us, both personally and as a community, have prepared ourselves in the best way to welcome the “God with us” and let him put his tent within our lives and within the lives of those to whom we proclaim the love of God Incarnate in Jesus.

May the celebration and experience of this Christmas, not be one thing more on the list of our celebrations, but a celebration that is different, unique and recreates our life and mission; a celebration that bring about feelings and attitudes that engender life in us and through us.

To celebrate Christmas is above all, to believe, to give thanks and to enjoy “a God who became flesh”. He did not want to give us explanations of who he is, but he wanted to be part of our history and to take our flesh, our human condition, our questions, suffering, helplessness... let us approach the manger and learn from his poverty, from his closeness, from his tenderness and from his humanity. With his humanity God makes us human!

**Let us approach the manger and learn from his poverty, from his tenderness and from his humanity.**

Since the “Incarnation” everything has changed, God himself has entered our world and our lives, and so it is possible to live with hope. So Christmas has to be for us a call: to be “born again” to be

born to life, love and hope, to believe that in Jesus we can be constantly renewed, to allow the Spirit to find his dwelling in us and to make us new creatures, recreated, transformed...

The decisions of the 35<sup>th</sup> General Chapter ask us be alert and to respond to new calls that God has for us today. To discover and to respond to new calls, new emergencies, new challenges, new cries; we need: to return to Bethlehem and be transformed by the life that is born there; to welcome and to develop this Life, to multiply it and to offer it to everyone *“I have come that you may have life and have it in abundance”* (Jn 10:10).

Every Christmas our Founders invite us back to where the congregation was conceived, to our Bethlehem in Poitiers. On Christmas Eve, the ss.cc family remembers gratefully its birth. Under the circumstances in which the Congregation was born we can speak of night, fear, terror; but especially of light, surrender, love, good news for the society of the time. The consecration of our Founders to the Hearts of Jesus and Mary would bear fruit soon, fruit that would bear life and hope. We are we the successors of this mission today. Today we are asked for creative fidelity to respond generously to the current challenges. This is not possible with our strength only, we need to open ourselves to the Spirit, to trust, and let God hold, enlighten and guide our life and mission.

*“In Poitiers, the Founders and their first companions were daring. They risked their lives when faced with the revolutionary threats. The Good Father developed a clandestine and itinerant ministry, doing everything possible to reach the most suffering and abandoned. It was a time when adoration began (with the tabernacle camouflaged). A time of the visions of the Good Mother and the burning zeal of the Good Father. A time when the community had no security and no clear organization, but where brothers and sisters were willing to suffer everything, even death, for the passion that the love of God stirred within them”.* (Javier Alvarez Osorio). We must ask ourselves, it is this passion for the love of God that encourages, stimulates and moves our life and mission today? Maybe we have lost it? Maybe we have to ask the Spirit to revive it within us again? Without this passion for God's love, there will be no passion for the mission, we will be like bells that make noise, and as Paul says, a noise that does not serve any purpose.

**To discover and to respond to new calls, new emergencies, new challenges, new cries, we need to return to Bethlehem**

Christmas is a privileged opportunity to recreate our passion for the love of God incarnate in Jesus. This passion will help us to recover the charismatic boldness that we all need to live our ss.cc vocation and mission with the joy of the shepherds in Bethlehem, with the fidelity of the Founders, with faith, availability and Love *“Mary knew how to transform an animal cave into a house for Jesus with a few rags and a lot of tenderness”* (Pope Francis).

**It is this passion for the love of God that encourages, stimulates and move our life and mission today?**

Let us ask the Lord to grant us the grace of being “born again”; the courage to surrender daily life with joy, availability and hope; an overflowing joy to devote ourselves to his service and to give life in the service of those to whom we bring the treasure of his love that redeems. May the Lord make us docile to his Spirit to proclaim the Good News of Life that became flesh and who wants to put his tent in the heart of every human being who would like to receive it.

In the context of Christmas we are experiencing, the “New Face” of the Congregation can be understood as a call to be “born again”. That our charism and spirituality be a new experience in each one of us through the re-creative action of the Spirit. Only if we open ourselves, like Mary, to the action of God, if we entrust our life and mission fully to the Lord and his Spirit, our whole life and mission will have a new sense, a “new face”.

The revitalizing experience that Christmas offers us, prepares us well to experience with great joy the time of grace that God gives us, with the occasion of the Year of Consecrated Life that has just begun. A time when the Church invites us to: remember gratefully the past, a memory that becomes a source of hope and of a future. Embrace the future with hope. And experience the present with passion.

**In the context of Christmas we are experiencing the “New Face” of the Congregation, which can be understood as a call to be “born again”.**

Let us draw near to Bethlehem and together with Mary and Joseph let us contemplate and discover that in that fragile Child our hope for a new and different world is founded and sustained. In Him is the presence of a God of Love and Mercy who comes to dwell among us. Let us welcome in our hearts the mystery of God, who wants to transform the human heart.

***“Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year”***