

DEEP WATER

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PUT OUT
INTO DEEP WATER



The same words that Jesus spoke to Simon Peter, “*Put out into deep water and lower your nets for a catch ...*” (Lk 5: 4-5) he speaks to us today. This Gospel text can throw great light on the journey we are making as a Congregation.

The Lord also asks us to leave the shore, to row offshore; far away from our habitual and familiar ground, away from our moorings and everything that prevents us from finding and discovering what God wants. Jesus asks us to go into the deep waters, where newness and the best fishing is to be found.

Push into the deep supposes that we take a risk in going beyond our securities, fixing our eyes on the horizon, with hope and trust in the Lord who always invites us to go further. Peter and his companions trusted the words of Jesus, and cast their nets. What prevents us from doing the same?

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The process of the Congregation that we are experiencing, needs us to be available: to allow ourselves to be led by the Spirit into the deep, to enter the depths of our being and to discover what is most authentic within us. But going deeper, is not as easy as it might seem, leaving what is known and safe costs much. Teilhard de Chardin said, “*going down into the depths of my being, there came a time when I stopped touching the bottom and I seemed to slip into the void*”. Not to control situations as we are accustomed to and to launch into a future without seeing everything clearly, requires us to renounce what is safest for us and to allow ourselves to be carried away by Jesus and his Word.

Our Founders received and experienced a vocation and a mission embodied in the reality of the specific time in which they lived; they understood the scope and the primacy of God's love. This Love was the compass that encouraged, strengthened and sent them to “*put out into, deep water*”,

and to receive the impulse to announce the merciful love of God, in those specific realities where the human heart needed love and reparation.

At this point in our congregational life, the Lord asks us, like our Founders, to build our life and SS.CC. mission on the primacy of the love of God, and clinging to the rock that is Jesus *“to put out into the deep water”*, to go to the depth of our consecration and to the depth of our mission. We are called to allow Jesus and his Word to guide us *“throw the net to the right side”* (Jn 21:6), and let the abundant life that Jesus offers us fill our lives, our communities and our apostolate.

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As our last Chapter Decisions said, *“we exist to welcome the life that comes from Him, to increase it and offer it to everyone”*. Only then can we *“be custodians of a charism that has much to offer today to a world with situations of division and brokenness, in need of the image of a God who reminds them of mercy and communion; a world with places of poverty and suffering that are in need of reparation and compassion; a world often separated from Christ that needs the witness of the closeness and love of our Good God.”* (35 Gen. Cap.) Only then can we be bold and daring women who hurry to *“put out into deep water and let down the nets”* that despite the fatigue of a fruitless night, listening to and trusting in the words of Jesus, once again cast their nets over and over again.

We know that in the depths of the sea the risks are greater, it is there where Peter's faith faltered. And possibly we are not stronger or more solid in our faith than the disciples of Jesus. In our process as a Congregation we will probably face moments of dissatisfaction, insecurity, fear, when we feel that our faith is weakened, but also where we turn our eyes back to Jesus and cry out like Peter *“Jesus save me, Jesus save us”*.

At the scene of the *“miraculous catch of fish”* the disciples are together, *“we have worked all night...”*. In the same way the Lord calls us to *“put out into the deep water”*, but together as a body, and thus united and in communion, we can face the uncertainties and desolation of the night, and rejoice with the abundant life that arises when morning comes.

Once again we are called to put God at the center of our life and mission with an attitude of unconditional trust and as the letter to the Hebrews says *“to run with perseverance towards the goal ahead, focusing our eyes on Jesus the author and initiator of our faith”* (Heb 12:2). He is the starting point and goal of our faith. Only when we accept Jesus with our heart and when we say like Mary *“YES”*, the Lord works wonders in us, then we can say like Mary and with Mary: *“My soul magnifies the Lord ...”* (Lk 1: 46- 48). It is not easy, we need great faith. And faith is a gift from God. Let us humbly ask for this great gift! Let us say to the Lord that hopefully, we, like Peter, also believe in Him and obey His word: *“Put out into the deep and throw out the nets ...”*.

Is the Word that helps us to discover the presence of the Lord

To experience this dynamic is possible only if we cultivate a deep spirit of prayer that leads us to an encounter with the Lord and to be really centered in his

Word. It is the Word that helps us to discover the presence of the Lord, even in moments of apparent failure, when fatigue seems useless, as happened to the Apostles themselves, who after working all night, exclaimed: *“master we caught nothing”* (Lk 5:5) it is in these moments that we need to open our hearts and let the Word act with full force.

After experiencing a time of “*revitalization*” both personally and as a community, we have initiated a second phase in our “*Road Map*”, “*reviewing Apostolic works and presences*”. A phase that cannot be unconnected from the above, on the contrary, there must be constant reference to it. A phase where we have a wonderful opportunity to give thanks and to strengthen life, enhancing our apostolic works and presences, as well as the privileged opportunity to listen to the Lord who says to us: “*put out into deep water and throw out the nets*”. An invitation and a call to look beyond, to look at areas other than those we are used to, with the awareness that our place is not on the shore; the Lord wants us to put out into deep water, where we can makes God’s merciful love more visible.

To speak of the merciful love of God at this moment connects us directly to the Easter experience to which the Lord invites us in the coming days and for which we have prepared during the Lenten Season that is coming to an end. An experience marked by the Father's love for humanity, an experience marked by the triumph of life, the triumph of love. On this journey of the Congregation towards a “new face”, we are called to “choose life, to choose the love”, welcoming the Risen Lord into the heart of each one of us and into the heart of our communities.

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Let us live this Easter time as a time of newness and grace in our every day journey and our Congregational search. As a time in which the power of the Spirit urges us to “*put out into the deep water*” and go deep into the source of the compassion and mercy of the Pierced Heart of Jesus.

May the Risen Christ be our strength for the journey.

“Happy Easter”