

INFO SS.CC. SISTERS N°30 – NOVEMBER 20TH 2015

# *Embrace the Future with Hope*



How crucial this is for us at a moment when we are experiencing, the rediscovery of the value and importance of “hope” as a Congregation! This topic has certainly been reflected and worked on both at personal and community levels throughout this year of consecrated life.

On many occasions, Pope Francisco reminds us that we are called to embrace the future with hope, and says: *“Amid all the uncertainty that we share with our contemporaries, in the midst of our doubts and fears about the future, hope springs the fruit of our faith in the Lord of history who keeps repeating: “Do not be afraid, I am with you” (Jer 1,8).*

In the last General Chapter, we looked at and recognized the global reality of the Congregation: *“Ageing and significant decrease in the number of sisters, few vocations, people leaving, a decline in the sense of communion... too many structures of animation, management, works...”*. realistically accepting this situation, we decided to *“choose life”* we embraced hope and looked to the future with faith, with hope and with confidence; We took courageous decisions together and started along the path towards a new reconfiguration of the Congregation.

The road has not come to an end, we are on it and we need to follow it if we want to reach the goal we drew up together. We are all called to build our congregational future and to embrace it with hope, we all we need a constant discernment of God's will for our Congregation. We need to discover that God is walking with us, that He never abandons us.

*“By day Yahweh went before them in a pillar of cloud to guide them along the way and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, enabling them to travel by day and night” (Ex 13: 21).* We can also say that we are on the road of the exodus, where at times can feel doubt,

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insecurity, fear, resistance, darkness... and it is precisely in those moments that the Lord reminds us that He is with us, that He is walking with us.

Hope is the fruit of faith, whoever believes does not stop along the way, but moves on with eyes on the Lord. In the Congregation there have been many times when we have looked towards the future with hope and trust. Let us remember our Founders in the early years of the Congregation; always breaking new ground, opting for life that was emerging, attentive to any growth and possibility. The times when weakness and difficulty were the greatest, were also the times when God's faithfulness was manifested most strongly. The Good Mother would say to us "*we are supported by a thread, but this thread is supported by a cable*".

At this point in our history, it is we who are called to give a "new face" to our Congregation, choosing life and choosing a future full of hope. We are called to allow ourselves to be led by Jesus and His Spirit and to venture into the "mission" more faithfully than ever. "*How I wish that the coming years be steeped in mercy to go to meet each person, bringing the goodness and tenderness of God! To everyone, believers and non-believers, so that the balm of mercy can reach them as a sign that the Kingdom of God is already present among us*" (Pope Francis).

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It is essential to recognize that we have a very large personal and community responsibility with regard to this future that we all want to build. If we still believe in God's plan, revealed in the plan of our Founders, we must continue working to make it happen today. We have a history from which we can

learn and a mission for which we must take responsibility. Do not let external difficulties and our weaknesses and internal darkness block us, impede creativity and erode our hope. Only hope understood as a deep trust in the Lord will help us to make important decisions to invest and trust in the future, our SS.CC. future.

We are called to remember the faithful and merciful presence of God, making our own the words of St. Paul: "*I am firmly convinced that He who began his work in you will bring it to fruition*" (Phil 1,6). To embrace our future as a Congregation with hope, we need like Paul, to be convinced that he who has begun his work in us, will bring it a happy conclusion. Therefore our searches, insights and decisions "*will choose life*" if they are based on the faithfulness of God, which we must constantly remember.

Designing the future of the Congregation with hope will require a constant "pruning" on the way, wiping away all that detracts from it, that prevents looking beyond: discouragement in the search, indifference and neglect of the commitments taken clinging to old structures that do not respond to current needs, the lack of faith that prevents us from seeing God walking with us. The time is opportune: to embrace with love what we have undertaken together, to fill ourselves with enthusiasm, to return to Jesus, our only source of life and hope. It is time to scrutinize the signs of

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light for our beloved Congregation, allow the Spirit who makes all things new to work. It is time to remain in prayerful vigil so as not to fall into temptation.

Let us embrace the future with hope, it is not a passive waiting for the future, not a conformist resignation, nor a naive optimism; it is a hope that springs from the trust we place in God. This is "*the hope that never disappoints*" as

St. Paul says and that helps us face reality calmly, without letting difficulties crush us and prevent us from going forward. Hope is the virtue of the Pilgrim of the one who walks. "*Though I walk in*

*the dark valley, I fear no ill, for you are with me”* (Ps 22:4). The Lord is the true Shepherd who knows the way, our way as Congregation, and goes with us to guide us and to accompany us. To recognize this Presence, is what sustains our hope.

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May the Spirit who inspired us to undertake this process as a Congregation fill us with the strength to continue the journey with courage, recreating in each one of us a spirit of trust and courage, peace and communion, joy and confidence.

Mary Mother of hope, be with us and guide us on our way, teach us to believe, to hope and to love with you, show us the way that the Lord wants us to take, and though we often fail to glimpse it; teach us to trust in God and in his plans of love.

***“Happy feast day of our Good Mother”***