

UNCERTAINTY

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Spirituality of uncertainty



In a few days we will celebrate the great feast of the Church, **the Lord's Resurrection**. To celebrate this triumph of life over death, each and every one of us has experienced this Lent as a time of grace that the Lord has given to us to allow ourselves to be re-formed by Him and by His Word, drawing closer to the Lord and to our brothers and sisters; some together with the people or in pastoral ministry and others with the apostolate of prayerful intercession.

The celebration of this feast invites us to go deeper into this beautiful Easter season, during which we are called to discover and experience the presence of the resurrected Jesus who walks with us; echoing our doubts, tensions, worries and uncertainties. *“What have you been talking about on the way?”* (Lk 24,17) and he enlightens them with his risen presence, *“He took bread, said the blessing, broke it and gave it to them”* (Lk 24,30).

Like the disciples of Emmaus, we too can experience in our lives, moments of doubt, confusion, uncertainty, fear ... how good it is to be able to recognize them, talk about them and above all, to be able to talk and share with Jesus and be accompanied by Him and by his Word. We know from experience that life taken from any angle is a constant challenge; every day and every moment we live is different, new and requires us to be open and available to face life with hope.

We have Just made an important decision in the light of what was experienced at the Council of Congregation, Hawaii 2016, on how to organize ourselves to respond to the decisions of the 35th General Chapter. This *“new configuration”* asks us to take a new path, which is not

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free of worries, doubts, concerns, fears, uncertainties and questions that remain unanswered: How does this process take place? How will it affect our daily lives?

On this occasion, I invite you to reflect on **“uncertainty”**, one of the feelings that we can experience with strength during this new stage of Congregation. Uncertainty is a human experience and nowadays it is not uncommon to talk about it. The global economic crisis; the spiral of violence; the social context; the uncertain and full of corruption political reality; countries at war; the world of migrants and refugees; the joblessness; epidemics, etc., which lead to living in a situation of uncertainty that can lead to scepticism, fear, distrust, hopelessness, helplessness and, to a certain degree of selfish individualism where everyone seeks his or her own interest and tends to ignore others.

Any kind of uncertainty, whether economic, political, social, religious ... is associated with the unknown and causes insecurity, anxiety and even fear. Faced with these situations, we very often do not have answers; it disturbs us that we cannot predict the results, we have no control over what is happening or what will happen. In these circumstances, what we have to do is to watch our attitude and way of thinking and feeling about the situation. Cardinal Newman, tells us: *“In a higher world it can be otherwise, but here below to live is to change and to be perfect is to have changed often”*.

Abraham's experience can give us great lights, *“The Lord said to Abram: Leave your country and your kindred and your father's house and go to the land that I will show you”* Genesis 12: 1 Abraham is surprised at Yahweh. His God, whom he honoured faithfully, asked him to leave his

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land, destabilizes him, asks to leave his people and his family, that is, he is asked to leave the equilibrium of his ordered life and all he had and possessed. Abraham, without hesitation went forward on a path that he himself was opening up, he leapt into the void, running all the risks that the new path offered him: What pushed this old man

Abraham to take such a step? Only unshakable faith in the One who called him and sent him. Faith is to be surprised by God: *“We believe that...”* (Luke 24:21), *“I thought ...”* (2 Kgs 5:11); be surprised and stay grounded and calm despite the darkness, silence or confusion, and keep saying, *“Here I am, here we are”*.

It is in times of uncertainty and insecurity that our faith comes into play. It is easy to profess faith when everything is going well, but when the clarity of the way goes, when the day becomes dark, when the mission loses flavour and fecundity: what do we do? Do we let the Lord lead confidently? Do we seek the light of the Spirit? Do we use the resources we have? Do we seek a way out and open up the road that leads to life? Or do we prefer to stay where we are for fear of the new, the unknown? These are situations where we need to be enlightened and led by the Spirit. *“But there is no greater freedom than allowing yourself to be carried away by the Spirit, renounce calculating and controlling everything, and allowing Him to enlighten us, guide us, direct us, move us to where He wants us to go. He knows what it takes in every age and every moment”* (EG. 280).

May we make our own the experience of Abraham, to walk in uncertainty. On this path we have taken, we are invited to *“embrace uncertainty”*. Although it sounds paradoxical, uncertainty can only be embraced from what is certain, because to embrace her, is not to have doubts, it is not embarking on the adventure of the unknown full of fear, anxiety, sadness or the pretence of wanting to control everything; nor is it to stay adrift forgetting the hand of God.

Therefore, the first thing we have to do is find our certainties. And the only certainty we have is that God needs us, calls us out of ourselves to go beyond, to risk... with the confidence that He walks with us. God puts certainty into our hearts, into our minds; embrace uncertainty, it is an attitude based on trust and abandonment to God's plan and His providence.

The greatest certainty for us is knowing that we are in God's hands: *"My grace is sufficient"* (2 Cor 12:9). We have many examples in the Word of God that invites us to total trust in the Master: Jesus in the passage of the calming of the storm says to his disciples: *Why are you afraid, you of little faith?* (Mt 8:26); To Thomas he says, *"Because you have seen me you have believed, blessed are those who believe without seeing"* (Jn 20, 29). In another passage he says to his disciples: *"Fear not, little flock, for your Father has chosen to give you the kingdom"* (Luke 12:32), and in another he says: *"And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. So do not be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows"*. (Mt 10, 30).

In a reflection like this: we would do very well to look back at our Founders, to the historical moment they experienced, a moment full of doubts, fear, insecurity and uncertainty; but none of this stopped them on the way that the Lord invited them to discover and explore. They walked this path accompanied and enlightened by the deep trust in the good God, abandoned to Divine Providence and to the infinite mercy of God: *"We are sustained by a thread, but the thread is supported by a cable"* (GM).

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Savour our spirituality, let us reach for the love and mercy of Jesus in our comings and goings in our fears and insecurities. Let us embrace the uncertainty that this process of the Congregation supposes, let us learn from the creativity and the freedom that she holds, let us take on the changes with confidence; let us go into this new adventure, like Abraham, like the prophets and like the apostles after the Resurrection.

Let us be open up to the newness of the Spirit as Mary was. She also experienced uncertainty and doubt, *"How will this ..."* (1, 34). The angel said, *"Nothing is impossible for God"* (Lk 1: 37). Mary believed the Word, abandoned herself into the hands of God, trusted in God's promises. She is the mistress of risk when facing the surprise of God. Let us live like her: from God and not only from ourselves, this will lead us to live in freedom and will open up a wider horizons. It might lead us down paths that we do not know, through shortcuts that we are unaware of, but let us walk with the certainty that we will not be alone, we are all in the same boat and the Lord assures us of his faithful and close presence.

"Happy Easter"