

INFO SS.CC. SISTERS N°47 – JULY 20TH 2017

TRUST IN ME, DO NOT BE AFRAID



A few days ago we celebrated the feast of Our Lady of Peace, a very important feast for the whole Congregation, and one that has been with us from the beginning of our journey as a Sacred Hearts family.

To make reference to Mary as Our Lady of Peace, is to think of Mary as a simple, serene and trusting woman, who trusted totally in God, not knowing where her Yes would take her. “Behold, the handmaid of the Lord, let it be done to me according to your Word” led Mary on to new and unthinkable ways. She can teach us what it is to trust in God without any human security, sustained only by faith. This does not mean that trusting in God was easy for Mary. Throughout her journey of faith, Mary had to overcome many obstacles, and to take on, without understanding, realities and events presented to her and she humbly “kept all these things in her heart” (Lk 2:51).

*Mary as a simple,
serene who trusted
totally in God*

Mary responded faithfully to God's plan, overcoming fears, misgivings, and assuming the consequences of her “Yes”. She had a profound experience of this truth: “*Trust in me, do not be afraid*”. She is with us on the path we have taken of following Jesus in fidelity, and she helps us to experience in faith, the consequences of our YES to the Lord and to His Plan. She teaches us how to go along this path, keeping our eyes fixed on Jesus. She supports us and is with us on the new, not so clear and uncertain ways we have to travel, and she invites us to experience the risk with the certainty that we are not alone, because the one who called us: goes before us, accompanies and waits for us. What experience do we have of the faithfulness of God on this journey?

When we are more aware of how God's faithfulness has sustained and encouraged us on our journey of faith, we can hear these words in our hearts: “*Fear not, for I am with you; Do not be dismayed,*

for I am your God; I have given you strength, I have been your help, and I have supported you with my right hand” (Is 41:10). One of the fundamental experiences that mark our consecrated life is the fidelity of God in spite of our infidelities, for as St. Paul says: “If we are unfaithful, he remains faithful because he cannot deny who he is” (2 Tim. 2:13). When faced with this faithfulness of God, what is my answer? How has my fidelity to the Lord been throughout my years of consecrated life? And what is God asking of me now?

In this way of seeking and abandoning ourselves to Providence we are not alone

The words “trust in me”, “have no fear”, “I will be with you always”, reveal to us a deeply involved God, caring for and sustaining the human condition. They are the comforting words of a God who is immersed in the history of his people, who embraces and redeems all our weaknesses. We can also say: a God who is involved in, cares for and sustains our Congregation, because it is His Work, He offers us his presence and fidelity, and asks us only to trust in Him, just as our founders trusted him fully. Gabriel de la Barre said: “The mission was entrusted to two humble people who abandoned themselves to Providence, who walked steadily following a grace that led them”.

The process we are experiencing as a Congregation, brings to mind these words: “Trust in me, do not be afraid”. We began this adventure in the 35th General Chapter, when we felt the presence of the Spirit strongly among us. Enthusiastic, excited, embraced by its impetus, we continue on the road, we take the risk, we dare. We did not know fully where it would lead us, but we trusted and decided to choose life.

God's faithfulness has sustained and encouraged us on our journey of faith

It has been almost 5 years since that experience, and along the way we have had moments of euphoria, of joy, of tiredness, of doubts, of wanting to go back, of a return of excitement... I think we have been through all these moments. But what we have been able to experience is that, throughout all these years, the Lord has been with us. God always surprises us, shatters our plans, puts our projects in crisis, and says: “Trust in me, do not be afraid”.

We are walking along a path that we have not walked before, and suddenly we find ourselves with stones that we did not expect, with forests that we did not suspect, with rivers that we must cross ... faced with this the Lord tells us again and again: do not fear, I am with you, trust me, do not be discouraged, I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will support you ... If we are afraid of what God can ask of us or is asking of us, it would be good to ask: Do I let myself be surprised by Him as Mary did, or do I close myself up in my securities, in what is material, spiritual, ideological, projects...? Do I really let God into my life and give him control over everything, or do I want to retain some of that control in my hands?

To trust in God is to allow ourselves to be led by the Spirit, to believe in His promises, in His revelations, and to let ourselves be surprised by Him. To trust in the Lord is to let Him shatter our plans, to go out from ourselves and trust Him alone. “Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and not in your own understanding. Seek him in all you do, and he will show you which path to take ...” (Pro 3:5-6).

the Lord tells us again and again: do not fear, I am with you, trust me, do not be discouraged, I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will support you ...

In the process we are experiencing in the Congregation, let us trust God, let us not be afraid, let us strengthen our faith. In this way of seeking and abandoning ourselves to Providence we are not alone. Jesus and His Word are our reference on the road, and the Spirit encourages us and

pushes open doors and windows that were perhaps closed by fear. Let us make our own the words of Pope Francis: *“Faith is not a light that dispels all darkness, but a lamp that guides our steps in the night, and this is enough to be able to walk”* (Lumen Fidei n° 27).

Let us experience this adventure of the Spirit together and continue the journey to the breath of the Spirit, sustained by faith, rooted in hope and inhabited by love. Let us make our own the prayer of Thomas Merton:

Prayer of Trust

My Lord God, I have no idea where I am going.
I do not see the road ahead of me.
I cannot know for certain where it will end.
Nor do I really know myself,
and the fact that I think that I am following your will
does not mean that I am actually doing so.

But I believe that the desire to please you does in fact please you.
And I hope to have that desire in everything I do.
I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire.
And I know that if I do this, you will lead me on the right path
though I may not know it at that moment.

Therefore will I trust you always
though I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death.
I will not fear, for you are ever with me,
and you will never leave me to face my problems alone.