

INFO SS.CC. SISTERS N°51 – JANUARY 20TH 2018

WOMEN SS.CC. LISTENING TO THE SPIRIT



We have just begun a New Year and with it, our hearts have been filled with good desires: desires of peace, love, justice... for ourselves and for all humankind. It is often said: “new year, new life”, and this is surely what God hopes of us; He hopes that we would live a new, renewed, joyful and revitalized life as consecrated women, making our own the sentiments and attitudes of Jesus and Mary, inspired and led by the Spirit.

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To speak of ss.cc women is to speak of our identity and belonging. Here it is worthwhile remembering what the 32nd General Chapter said to us, when speaking of the profile of the ss.cc. woman. “*A religious woman who looks at reality and faces it, who works actively in building the community which lives for the mission, a woman of prayer and discernment who, listening to the Spirit, discerns the will of God...*” It is profile which has not lost its relevance and is very much in harmony with what we are living at this time as we draw up the Pastoral Plan of the Congregation.

Our ss.cc spirituality is very rich and our desire to live it is also authentic; but it is not always easy to do so in our daily lives. Because of this, one of the strong calls with which we are faced, is to be women open to the Spirit. Our founders were people of the Spirit, docile to His creative action. They knew how to listen to His voice in the midst of many other voices, and to discern well what God was asking of them. This same Spirit continues to speak to us today through the events of each day. It is not easy to listen to it in the midst

Be women open to the Spirit... in an attitude of listening and discernment

of so many “other voices”, and demands that we remain always in an attitude of listening and discernment.

It is very simple to say that one is open to listen to the Spirit, but it is not so easy to live. To harmonize our hearts with the voice of the Spirit and believe that He lives in us and wants to speak and act in us and through us, is to allow oneself to be challenged and disturbed by the Spirit who inspires us and invites us to discern. In addition, in this discernment we do not begin from zero, since the charism that we have inherited from our Founders precedes us as the “living word” pronounced by the Spirit.

*To harmonize our hearts
with the voice of the Spirit*

The apostle John, in Revelations, begins by inviting the “seven Churches” to listen to what the Holy Spirit is saying to them. “*Let he who has ears, listen to what the Spirit is saying to the Churches...*” (Rev 3, 6). He describes their reality, presents them with a call, an invitation, a challenge, and at the end, a promise.

The Spirit is also speaking to our Congregation today. He is making us become aware of our reality and from that is calling us to give a generous, available and trusting response. We need to listen to the calls that the Spirit is addressing to us; the challenges that he is placing before us. However, it is not a question of a simple superficial hearing, but of an attentive and ready listening. The Lord is inviting us to be attentive; to His voice, to our reality, to the calls of the Spirit, to the challenges that we have to face and also to the promise that He has reserved for us.

*To give a generous,
available and trusting
response*

Awareness of our congregational reality, the distance between our dreams and our reality, the real cries of today’s world and the situations of suffering that knock at our hearts, may in some moments make us feel bewildered and hopeless. There is the danger of allowing ourselves to be overtaken by fear, which according to Hafiz “*is the cheapest room in the house...the simplest place to occupy*”, and which could block the new thing that the Spirit wants to do in us, in our communities and in the Congregation. Let us not forget that one of our greatest strengths is the great spiritual treasure that have within us as ss.cc women, that is, the charism which our Founders bequeathed to us.

Pope Francis continually reminds us that the same Spirit which from the beginning strengthened the apostles to proclaim the Gospel, is the very same one who gives us the strength to continue journeying, even in the moments of darkness and resistance.

Without the strength of the Spirit, we would not be able to do anything which is not truly rooted in God and in his Word, “*When He, the Spirit of Truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come*” (Jn 16,13). We have the clear example in the very life of Jesus. He “with the Spirit” went into the desert; with the “strength of the Spirit” he returned and began to preach; “guided by the Holy spirit” he chose his apostles...

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Let us learn from Mary to listen to the Spirit with an attitude of: openness, receptivity and availability. Let us ask the Spirit to guide our mind and our whole lives so that we can live as new, wise, women born again of water and the Spirit.

I will end by inviting you, to make your own, this prayer based on a prayer written by (*Jan Richardson*), and to let it resound with the hearts of each one of you and each community.

WISE WOMEN

Wise women also came.
the fire burned in their wombs
they walked in shadows,
trusting the path would open
under the light of the moon.

Wise women also came,
they came by their own authority,
their own desire, their own longing.
they came in quiet, spreading no rumors
bringing their gifts, the fruit of their labor
as wise women always do

Wise women also came...

In all the important moments of our lives,
may we be these wise women
who go carrying and sharing their gifts.
ready to help their companions on the journey,
And whisper blessings, new and ancient in their ears.

Emperatriz Arrobo, ss.cc.
Superior General