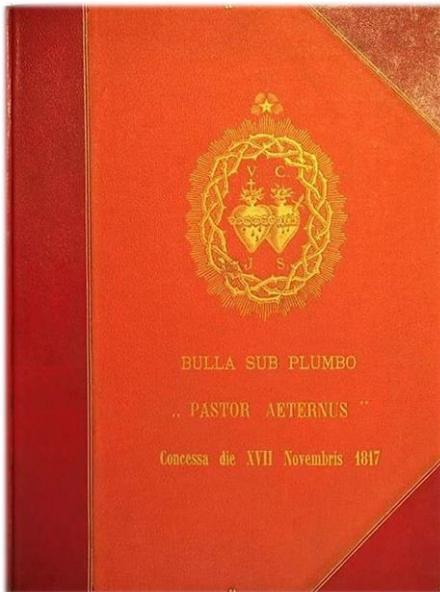


# Close of the Bicentennial

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Superior General

INFO SSCC Brothers No 118 – November 6, 2017

## November 17, 1817



Bulla Sub Plumbo  
*Pastor Aeternus*



This year celebrating the papal approval of the Congregation comes to a close. January 10, 1817 Pope Pius VII published the decree approving the Constitutions of the new Congregation. On **November 17** of the same year Pius VII, at the Good Father's request, granted the Bull "Sub Plumbo" entitled *Pastor Aeternus*, in which he confirmed the pontifical approval of our religious institute.

In commemoration of that event, this past year we have been asked to reread and meditate on our Constitutions, which are the direct descendants of the text approved by the Pope two centuries ago and which define our place in the Church today as a way of following Jesus and carrying out the mission entrusted to the Congregation.

In agreement with the General Government of the sisters, we chose **November 23, 2017**, the day on which we remember the Good Mother, as the close of the bicentennial. And so I would ask that you include this theme in all the celebrations planned, as is customary, for the day of the Good Mother.

Coinciding with that, on Sunday **November 19** this year we will celebrate for the first time throughout the Church, the **World Day of the Poor**, instituted by Pope Francis with the theme, "let us love not in word or speech but in deed and truth." (1 John 3:18). A beautiful coincidence that helps us better appreciate the celebration of our bicentennial.

In fact, our Constitutions are words. They are necessary words, words that give us direction, words that make us one with the Congregation as a whole, wise and well-chosen words. However, as with everything related to love, without deeds that flow from them, the words amount to nothing.

Pope Francis, in his message for this Word Day of the Poor (signed June 13 of this year) calls us to move beyond the contrast "between the *empty words* so frequently on our lips and the *concrete deeds* against which we are called to measure ourselves." (n. 1) Words, those too of our Constitutions, are no longer empty when they bear fruit in works of love for the poor.

Francis is convinced that "sharing with the poor enables us to understand the deepest truth of the Gospel" (n. 9) "If we truly wish to encounter Christ, we have to touch his body in the suffering bodies of the poor, as a response to the sacramental communion bestowed in the Eucharist." (n. 3) He would suggest that on this World Day of the Poor that we seek out the poor near us and invite them to share our meal as guests of honor (n. 7) I can think of no better way of celebrating our bicentenary as a Congregation approved by the universal Church. Happy feast.

