

# THANK YOU

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Emperatriz Arrobo ss.cc  
General Superior

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## SS.CC. WOMEN GIVING THANKS FOR LIFE

We have just celebrated the great feast of Pentecost, the coming of the Holy Spirit which is the wind that moves, the water that washes, the fire that burns, the force that renews and unites. In this liturgical environment I am writing this letter to you. The INFO edition of this month will be the last of our mandate, therefore, we have dedicated it to “giving thanks”. As Lao Tse says: *“gratitude is the memory of the heart”*. We want to have a grateful memory of what we experienced during these six years of service to the Congregation.

We are looking towards a not too distant horizon, to the 36<sup>th</sup> General Chapter that marks the end of our service as a general team, and the beginning of another congregational journey. It is a very opportune moment to remember with joy and gratitude the experience of these years of service to our beloved Congregation, and to take advantage of the occasion to express our gratitude to God and to all of you “our companions of grace” on this journey, where God's Providence has led us.

During all this time we feel that God has taken us by the hand and his Spirit has directed and guided us. In the process, the Lord has asked us to open our house, extend the spaces of our tent, lengthen the spaces for reflection to allow new experiences, perceptions, people, places, events... God the builder of his “work” has continued with his work, weaving the congregational history, using our availability, gifts, strengths and even our weaknesses to continue his project. At various moments along the way we experienced fatigue, fears, doubts, insecurity ... but also the certainty that we were not alone, that the Lord and his Spirit walked with us.

It has been a story of life received and given, a story that we have built together, a story bathed in “grace” felt and perceived through all that the Lord has placed in our hands. To this Triune God

present in our journey we say: “*infinite thanks*” for having accompanied us in our searches, questions, doubts ... but, above all, because he has always been there among us, as a faithful companion on the way.

On this occasion, I want to remember the words of Pope Francis when he says: “*Joy springs from a grateful heart. Truly, we have received much, so many graces, so many blessings, and we rejoice in this. It will do us good to think back on our lives with the grace of remembrance. Remembrance of when we were first called, remembrance of the road travelled, remembrance of graces received... and, above all, remembrance of our encounter with Jesus Christ so often along the way... Brothers and Sisters... Ask for the grace of remembrance so as to grow in the spirit of gratitude. Perhaps we need to ask ourselves: are we good at counting our blessings or have we forgotten them?*” (Homily in St. Patrick’s Cathedral, New York, September 2015).

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We are invited to recall with grateful memory and with joy: the path travelled, the experience of God on this journey, the graces received, the communion, support and affection experienced. The reflection and the work was intense at times but it brought life and can become a source of life, hope and strength for years to come.

The words of St. Paul come to my mind: “*Whatever you do in word or deed, do it in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him*” (Col 3:17), and I feel that this has been the attitude of everyone throughout the process over these six years. As a congregational body, we have tried to do things in the name of the Lord. As human beings that we are, some have gone well and others not so well, but everything is a cause for thanksgiving, because we can learn, because from faith, “*we know that in everything God works for the good of those who love him*” (Rom 8: 28).

A grateful heart does not measure time, quantity, or size to show its gratitude. When we are grateful we have more joy and peace in our hearts. It is difficult to cultivate a spirit of gratitude if our gratitude is only proportional to the number of blessings we can count. It is easy to be grateful when life seems to go smoothly; But what happens when it is not easy to see the way and doubts, fears, uncertainty ... arise? Gratitude is a disposition, a way of life that is independent of our circumstantial situation, but sometimes we forget this great truth.

*Gratitude is a disposition, a way of life...*

At the moment of giving thanks, it is impossible to name in detail everything we have experienced, everything that has marked our journey. I will limit myself to expressing something of everything that remains engraved and stored in my heart.

Thank you for the participation and availability of all the sisters, for your positive attitude and your responsible and co-responsible involvement in the whole process we have experienced as a Congregation. Thank you for the collaboration and support of the sisters who have exercised leadership services, for their animation and accompaniment to each sister and their community; for your generous and responsible work throughout these years. As also to the sisters who have generously given their time and their gifts, in the service of the general commissions of the Congregation.

Thank you for the life of each one of the sisters of the Congregation, for the prayers, the affection, the closeness, the words of encouragement that always came to us from many places; as well as the fraternal and constructive questions that we received. For your welcome and openness during the canonical visits, where we were able to witness the faith of each one, of your love for the Congregation, your commitment, zeal and generous dedication in the mission. This gift of very tangible faith, fills us with strength and makes us free and capable of overcoming obstacles and difficulties, encourages us to walk as one congregational body.

*Thank you for the life of each one of the sisters of the Congregation*

Thanks to the General Government of the brothers, fellow travellers, with whom we have shared our common vocation. Thank you for the hours of collaboration, fraternity and sincere reflection, in which together we have sought the best way to live, care for and promote the unity of the Congregation.

May the power of the Spirit of Jesus continue to guide our journey because, only from Him can we open ourselves to the future with hope and let Him continue to guide us, so that the next General Chapter is open to the will of God for our Congregation, and takes us through paths of communion and commitment for the mission.

***Infinite thanks to everyone and for everything!***