

INFO SS.CC. SISTERS N°99 – APRIL 2024



RECALLING THE JOURNEY WE TOOK – GENERAL CHAPTERS

Dear Sisters,

When we are climbing a mountain, it is encouraging to stop for a moment and to look back. How far we have walked, how far we have climbed, the point of departure is so far away! It rekindles the desire to keep going.

In the months ahead, we invite you to do this exercise. It is one more way of preparing ourselves for the event of the Congregation that we are going to experience in September, with the 37th General Chapter. It is a way of recreating the desire to continue to climb the mountain.

In this INFO we present a summary of all the General Chapters that the Congregation has experienced since the Second Vatican Council.

We took this date because of the important milestone that this Council marked in the Church. Because it called Religious Life to take definite steps towards renewal. Because with its conciliar Encyclical *Perfectae Caritatis*, it made a strong call to renew lifestyles, to reformulate Constitutions and rules, to redefine, change, restructure, ..., and it pointed out a way of living in continual renewal, in rhythm with the socio-cultural changes in the world.

So, we go back to the year 1964. The Church was in the midst of the Council, and fresh air and new winds were blowing. Everywhere we heard slogans, comments, and new ideas. We no longer have sisters who can speak to us about that first period, but the journey we have made since then is there for all to see. And yes, there are many sisters who can remember the processes we went through. The changes, the orientations and transformations are notorious, and they testify to the assistance of the Spirit, the audacity of the sisters and, why not, the intercession of our founders and of the sisters who have already passed on. Is it not true that when a sister goes to heaven, we think of her as one more intercessor?

Our look at the past is one of gratitude. Chapter after Chapter the sisters were able to discover the appropriate changes so that the Congregation would continue to be “necessary for the heart of God”. Therefore, the words “renewal”, “fidelity”, “openness” are repeated, documents are revised, new norms, other structures and forms of government are established, often keeping ahead of the times. It

is difficult to say that some Chapters are more important than others. There are processes in which one can appreciate very well how they are linked, complement each other, and give the Congregation a clear and defined direction. Looking carefully at the photos accompanying each Chapter, we can appreciate external changes, which are typical of the times. But we must not forget that external things always have their counterpart on the inside, because we also speak with them. Let us try, then, to discover those great changes that brought about a turning point in our way of life that were gradually implemented. Decentralisation, the Apostolic Community, the opening up to new missions, the mission statement, the Congregation's option for the poor, the new face, the Apostolic Plan of the Congregation. Our thankful regard moves us forward.

At the end of each synthesis, you will find a link that allows you to easily access the corresponding document on the Congregation's website. We invite you to read and contemplate the journey that the Lord has been making with us. For the God of our faith acts in history, leads it, and takes it along the most favourable paths.

Recall the days of old, think of the years gone by. Your father will teach you about them, your elders will enlighten you... (Dt 32, 7), Moses recommended this to the Hebrew people, before he died, he knew that the past, for better or for worse, always pointed to the future.

Affectionately