



## SISTERS OF JESUS GOOD SHEPHERD PASTORELLE

### 8° GENERAL CHAPTER INFORMATION SHEET N.1

Dear sisters,

To each and all our warm greetings entrusted to the symphony of the Spirit who prays in us and unites us.

You have already seen on the congregational website, day by day, the steps we have been taking. Now with the first information sheet we want to share with you in more detail the life of the chapter and so help you feel involved and part of it, since here, you really are all with us!

The opening the *Eucharistic celebration* on the 29<sup>th</sup> of June, presided by Fr Silvio Sassi, superior general of the Society of St. Paul, gathered together with the neighboring communities of sisters, members of other Pauline institutions, represented by their superiors: sr. Antonietta Bruscato fsp, sr. M. Regina Cesarato pddm, sr. Franca Laratore ap.

Supported by this fraternity, the chapter sisters began in procession to the table of the Word and the Bread of life, asking the company of saints: a litany of names that made us think of one's name, a holy way which begs for the reason of our undertakings.

In fact, when later we found ourselves in the chapter hall, the name of each one was echoed in sr Marta's voice and as a response signed the attendance list: a sign of dialogue in communion and of a presence that seeks to 'keep alive the bond of Charity'. At 19.15 sr Marta declared opened the 8th General Chapter of our Congregation.

As we write, the 'working site' of the Chapter, is up and running, animated by faith, hope and responsibility. The days of spiritual exercises (June 29 evening to July 3 evening) prepared and well equipped us, for this we are grateful to sr. Bernarda Cadavid, Colombian, Daughter of St. Paul. The pause placed in us the desire for personal conversion; the savoring of Trinitarian love bowing on our frailties; the acceptance of God's compassion as the foundation and model of the ecclesial and pastoral compassion.

The availability of being a space 'empty of self' is the condition for discovering ourselves as 'indwelt by the Trinity', partakers of the divine life itself. It is our true identity, where there is the imprint of the Son, there the decision is renewed of loving obedience to the Father, in docility to the Spirit. This is the secret of apostolic fruitfulness.

At the conclusion of the spiritual exercises, our gathering space is soon filled with colorful pictures, photos, costumes, symbols ... Every circumscription prepared a *stand*: one looks, admires, queries, recognizes knows and appreciates. There always rises within the heart wonder at the richness of so much diversity! Yet what unity from the same Spirit!

It was from this very lively multicultural setting, we moved (July 4 pm), to the chapter hall where there were five tables for as many groups of discernment with different names: the door, the light, the vine, the bread, the resurrection. We recognize by the gospel word, the identity of Christ, his: *I am* ... It's in the mystery of Christ that we are invited to remain: this is the condition for communion, wisdom and prophecy.

Father Germano Marani, the Jesuit, facilitator of the Chapter, told us frankly: 'You're not here because of special skills, but as persons consecrated to God, who love religious life, to listen to God, listen to each other, seek what God wants from you in the mission entrusted to you'. The Chapter is not a secondary event, but an extraordinary one: it is worthwhile to go deeper, (and it is a grace to ask and live together) because the privileged road of the Holy Spirit passes through a purified heart that accepts the gaze of God, makes it her own, for the world.

We then continued with the legal formalities required for setting up the Chapter: the approval of the

calendar and the Regulations of the Chapter, which outlines what is already contained in the Rule of Life, the voting for the election of scrutinizers (sr. Albina Bosio and sr. Adriana Galay), the secretary (sr. Purisima Tanedo), the representatives of the Assembly (sr. Angiolina Rossini and sr. Soeli Branco) who together with the facilitator, and secretary to the superior general form the Central Coordination Committee (CCC), the information secretary (sr. Annarita Cipollone).

The translation into various languages be carried out by sr. Rita Ruzzene for English, sr. Clara Ariza for Spanish, sr. Suzimara Barbosa for Portuguese, and sr. Teresa An for Korean. Moreover, for the liturgical animation the Assembly indicated: sr. Cesarina Pisanelli, sr. Lina Santantonio, sr. Mirina Ibarra. The organization of recreational activities was entrusted to sr. Lucia Piai, sr. Ana Acero and sr. Maria Rosa Barison who is also the photographer of the Chapter. Sr Angela Napoli and sr. Teresa An as assistants to the secretarial service.

Here we are, Tuesday, July 5: the Illumination phase begins, which involves the knowledge of the congregation in the six-year period 2005-2011, the order of the Sisters who make up the congregation, the spiritual and apostolic life, the formation and the economy of our entire family.

In the Christian tradition there are two original references to the phase of illumination: Baptism and the formation of the people that enter the mystery of God and His activity in history. It is this spirit of faith that guides the experience and the reading of history as an event of grace and salvation.

In fact in the morning, sr. Marta presented, the Report of the six years as a fruit of prayer, reflection and the sharing with the sisters of the Council. There are three basic sections: **Looking together at the reality** of the human family, ecclesial, and Congregational in the light of our objective, our lines of actions, the mandates of the previous chapter; **the journey that has been accomplished** in the four areas; and the **proposals to be discern**.

The whole report was a deep and heartfelt prayer of thanksgiving and blessing, asking for forgiveness and intercession. Sr Marta spoke to us of a congregation that is beautiful, and at the same time, needing to grow, challenged today by some questions: how can we participate in the new evangelization ... how can we shine forth the Christian life ... how can our religious life become a 'surprise' for 'today's humanity' ?

In the afternoon sr. Aminta Sarmiento, Treasurer General, presented the economic-administrative Report. Introducing it with the reference of being 'united as one body the Church' (cf. 1 Cor 12.12 ff), she continued by the following three steps: the mandate of the previous chapter in regards to the new mother house, the economic situation of each constituency, the global vision of the Congregation.

A 'journey' between the numbers? No, much more: it was both a recognition of the 'providential action of God and its intermediaries, and the commitment of so many sisters living in the spirit of poverty. Precisely in this trust is contained also the complexity of our times, with its difficulties and its concerns.

At this stage of illumination, of personal and group reflection, the fundamental question which we are asked to listen to is: *what is the Lord telling us through these reports?*

The spirit of faith and service, the peaceful and welcoming atmosphere, the Eucharistic adoration and the journey of prayer that we share with you all through the resources, are essential conditions in helping us to truly seek in freedom of self, God's will.

Dear sisters and all of you whom, in different ways, are accompanying this event, we thank you while continue to count on your prayers and closeness which we already feel alive and effective. May Mary, the humble servant of the Lord, the mother who safeguards the sources of the new story of Grace, intercede for us.

From the Sisters of the Chapter  
*Sr. Annarita Cipollone*, secretary of information

Rome, July 6, 2011