



SISTERS OF JESUS GOOD SHEPHERD PASTORELLE

8° GENERAL CHAPTER INFORMATION SHEET N.2

Dear sisters,

Here we are with the second information sheet of the Chapter assembly. The brief daily news and a wide gallery of photos on our site, we hope are keeping alert your attention. But above all it is the daily moment of prayer, along with the Eucharistic celebration, that makes your presence felt to us. In fact, every hour of the day, from one part of the world, to another, prayers are being offered by the Pastorelle and all our friends.

Picking up from where we had left in the previous communication: the illumination phase. *The working document*, which collected what came to the Preparatory Commission and the General Government, completed the knowledge of the congregation. It was presented (**July 6 pm**) by Fr Marani, the facilitator of the Chapter, who said, 'This document is a witness to the great work done to enhance and organize the material sent by each sister and communities'.

The working document expresses the *faith* of the Pastorelle, as a personal and shared experience of the love of God, as a desire for *pastoral conversion*. Some brush strokes bring out the socio-ecclesial reality of the different continents and seeks to highlight the 'cultural issue' with the profound changes that are taking place. In addition there are some considerations for people outside the congregation, they acknowledge our sincere search for authenticity and depth, as we seek to place ourselves in the footsteps of the Shepherd in order to offer a witness to our contemporaries. Finally in the last part of *the working document* there are *ten issues* of general interest offered by the sisters' feedback. (Pastoral cooperation, the new generations, solidarity)

What you're saying to me, Lord? What do you want to say to the Congregation? It is not easy to answer these questions. You need to 'step aside', remove yourself from the centre: only this way can you perceive how the Lord is leading us and towards where He is orienting us.. For an initial response we worked (**July 6 pm**) personally at first then in groups and finally in assembly. The facilitator then moved us forward by asking: what is the next step? Yes, because we proceed in steps: that they be the right ones, timely and above all, where we can all find ourselves, with serenity coming to an agreement.

Thursday, July 7 was the last day of the Illumination phase. Dr Fabrizio Mastrofini, a journalist from the Vatican Radio, presented 'THE SOCIAL-ECCLESIAL REALITY OF THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD: what are the challenging scenarios that face the Church, religious life and the Pastorelle' His input consisted of the following points: (1) *The global context and its problems* (the supremacy of the financial *economy*, the weight of the *public debt*, a crisis seen as inability to for see the future ..). (2) The ecclesial context and its scenarios (which are different according to the continents, while, globally, the attention goes to the defence of human rights, peace, the safeguarding of creation, and the ecology of humanity). According to Dr. Mastrofini, there would be an element that links the civilized world to the ecclesial one: the difficulty of *true leadership*, able to create consensus around objectives for the common good.

After several interventions from the participants, the facilitator presented the following point: (3) *Community life: a challenge and a proposal*. In regards to the indifference and the conflicts that can be experienced, how relationships can be characterized by a sense of being welcomed, as a balanced knowledge of self and others, for the service. This is the face of a community where people choose Christ. Thus what challenges religious life is the quality, rather than the decline in quantity.

On the same day, in the afternoon, we heard Fr Sabino Chiala, a monk of the Bose Community, an expert

in Hebrew and Syriac, with the input: "LEARN FROM CHRIST: MISERY AND MERCY". How to think of today's man/ woman? How does Christ see him/ her and how are we called to see him/ her? This fundamental question is situated within a globalized and fragmented world at the same time. Today, men and women, on the one hand, share in a common state and on the other are divided by nationalism. Let us not look at them from the outside. We too are there with them.

According to Fr. Sabino there are four elements that provide the context to our time of *crisis*: the *subjectivity* that affects the sense of the person and life, the *affective relationships* that lack perseverance, the *social ties* with the fear of what is difference, the *life of faith* with the loss of orientation to the Transcendent. Fr. Sabino is convinced that these critical points, are chances, opportunities. At the base they have positive elements that need to be regained and through which we can reach our contemporaries, especially the young, who are asking for motivation and valid reasons in order to be involve. The consecrated life has the responsibility in this process, a deeper awareness of self and of its prophetic task.

Learning from our Scriptures we make our own the sentiments of Christ and participate in the events of our contemporaries. There are two texts indicated by Fr. Sabino: "Do not be anxious, but worship Christ the Lord in your hearts, always ready to answer whoever asks for the reason of the hope that is in you. Yet do it with gentleness and respect ". It is the eloquent life of a Christian, marginal and capable of companionship in the here and now.

Jesus and the adulteress (John 8:1-11): an icon of the 'ministry of compassion'. Jesus, welcoming and demanding, looks at the woman and with her, humanity, placing himself at her feet. By writing on the ground, he is renewing the gesture of God at Sinai, that with his finger wrote on the stone his Word of salvation. Likewise today humanity needs to be addressed, loved, healed by the Word of God

Here we are at the heart of the Chapter: **Friday 8 and Saturday, July 9**, the phase of the confrontation between reality and what we have heard begins: *It is the personal and communal discernment*. Where will this phase take us? Gradually step by step, a new 'spiritual horizon' ought to take form that the Pastorelle will share in the next six years, all over the world and the 'prophetic response' that they would want to be and to offer their contemporaries. From this will emerge the overall objective and general guidelines for the general programming which will be entrusted to the new group of government so that they may accompany its realization in the entire Congregation.

, Every time we resumed the process of discernment, Fr Germano, gave us the necessary information: there is no newness of the Spirit if we are full of ourselves. Discernment is carried out by the 'new' that inhabits the heart, the gift of the Spirit. The *communicative 'asceticism* calls forth an' empathetic' attention " to the other sister. It is a creative and ecclesial asceticism. To be able to be *detached* from one's own concern and entrust it to the Lord, is not passivity, but it is surrendering oneself totally to the will of God. You see then that the chapter is like a long spiritual exercise: the Spirit need tools that seek to belong, to him with an inner freedom. It is a great responsibility to carry with humility and trust, on behalf of all of you.

In groups we listened carefully. In the Assembly, insights, clarifications, the search for convergence all took place in a serene and welcoming atmosphere. On Friday evening we formulated the first synthesis, then resumed Saturday morning. Another *new step* for reflection and, in the afternoon, a small group of sisters, chosen from each table (sr Maria Rosa Barison, sr. Suzimara Barbosa, sr Lina Santantonio, sr Cesarina Pisanelli, sr. Arsenia Estrada) produced a *basic text* which would be taken up by the assembly on Sunday 10.

Do not think there has been no moments of relaxation? The Italian sisters animated our first recreation evening, on the theme *The 150th anniversary of the Unification of Italy and the Gathering of the Great Religions* that will be held in October at Assisi, again making Italy the land of universality. The 'representatives' of the religions came all the way to our gathering to give a message of pastoral care to

the Chapter's participants! In short, it was truly fun!

We now wish to greet you from this comfortable and homely house, which offers us the thoughtful and attentive service of the Daughters of St. Paul and their lay personnel. With the sisters' Generalate House just a few metres from where we are staying, we feel cared and guarded by them.

To all a word of thanks for accompanying us and we are certain that you will continue being united in prayer and fellowship.

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

Rome, July 10, 2011