

Inaugural Message of the General Chapter



Dearest Sisters,

First and foremost once again: **WELCOME! Benvenute! Bem vindas! Bienvenidas! Bienvenue!**

This time the word WELCOME (*in italian Benvenute= venute bene, happily arrived*) has a great significance, because it could not have been taken for granted and it was not at all easy that all of us could be present here and that the XXXIV General Chapter could really be celebrated.

Therefore, let us wholeheartedly thank the Most Holy Trinity for having permitted this event through His Providence, for having prepared and guided it up to this moment.

We can see behind us in the logo of the Chapter, also the picture of the altarpiece of the Mother House, where the Holy Trinity and our Saints are represented. This time we cannot go to Turin to the places of our origin. We shall remain here in the Generalate, but the Mother House, the cradle of our Congregation, is also symbolically present here. Once again, welcome here, in this our **House!**

I express my great joy and also my deep-felt emotions, to be able to see, finally, all of you gathered here and also a big thanks to you for the sacrifices and hardships that each one had to face in order to participate in this event. Nothing will be lost.

From the preparation, we move on today to the celebration of the Chapter Event. Let us live it, therefore, as a **sacred time** that is given to us. Let the Spirit be the protagonist and we, His instruments, who want to collaborate and not hinder His work.

Let us live this Chapter in **gratitude** to God who has willed it, has thought of it and who is making it happen for us.

Let us live it in the **joy** of meeting one another as members of the same family, as representatives of our entire Family. Our Constitutions affirm that *“The General Chapter is a representative assembly of the entire Institute, a sign of its unity in charity”* (C 179). So we can very well say that here, **we are the Congregation!** This is a great **joy** and also a **responsibility**.

Let us live this Chapter with **responsibility**, that is, putting all our efforts to correspond to the Grace of God and to scrutinize the ways of the Spirit for our Congregation today.

Let us live in **hope**, because we are certain that He keeps His promises and “that all things work together for good, for those who love God” (Rom 8:28). We know this

because we have experienced it. For this reason we have the certain hope that, through this Chapter, God wants to manifest His plans for our welfare, and for a future full of hope.

Let us celebrate this Chapter **as a family**, it will not be the papers that will determine the journey, but **the experience that we are going to live**; it will be **the event itself** that will mark the way. If this Chapter will be a Family event, as we hope and pray it may be, then we will be able to see and take those small steps possible in order to be a **Family for Families**, in this world and in these times.

We know that in this **great Celebration** which is the Chapter, we are not alone: we are sustained by the prayer and affection of many, as we can gather from the many good wishes received. Many Congregations, Cloistered Sisters, Priests, our Laity, friends and benefactors and our ex-sisters have assured us of their unity in prayer (in the veins of our ex-sisters too, be it much or little, the sap of our Charism is present). We are all Family!

Let us therefore begin this sacred event: with gratitude, joy, responsibility and live it as a family in the great Family that is the Church and for the good of the world.

ALL THE BEST TO ONE AND ALL!