**Mother’s Message**

**at the conclusion of the XXXIV General Chapter**

Rome, 25th September 2021

Dearest Sisters,

We have reached the end of the much desired and long awaited XXXIV General Chapter.

We lived intensely the time of preparation and even more intensely the time of celebration, experiencing the **strong and Provident presence of God** at various moments: while dealing with the theme, during the phase of the elections, in the discussion of the various proposals. God was present and manifested Himself in various ways, even through our weakness.

Certainly there were moments of fatigue and tiredness, but great was our joy of being together **as a family.** Unfortunately we did not have many moments of recreation, as planned, but it was a joy to see that all the moments together were well used to communicate, rejoice together, share experiences, even overcoming linguistic barriers. We worked together not only for the specific work of the Chapter (in the assembly or in the commissions) but also in all the other practical tasks. As we said, everything was important: from the preparation of the Chapter Document till the last teaspoon placed at the table... And we tried to understand each other in every way, even with gestures. Someone said to me: “If we could have stayed like this together for a couple of months, all would learn a little bit of the other’s language”. Our Chapter was, indeed, a workshop and a training in multiculturality.

Even the liturgy, well prepared, in different voices and in different languages, made us savour the many ways of praising the Lord, of praying to Him and imploring Him.

For everything and for everyone, let us thank God.

At the beginning I had said: it will not be the papers that will determine the way, but the family experience that we live, **it will be the event itself that will mark the path**.

And so it is: this event will mark the way. Let us therefore treasure this **experience of being family** so that it becomes, in little ways in our little communities, a daily experience. Let us shift from “capitular asceticism” to **daily asceticism**, to correspond to the abundance of the Grace of God that we have received and experienced here.

We also said and experienced that the General Chapter is a **celebration**. Well, (as it is for Holy Mass) the sacred time of the Celebration does not end with its closing, but continues in daily life.

In today's First Reading, God's Word tells us:

*"Rejoice, rejoice, daughter of Zion, for, behold, I am coming to dwell among you*" (Zec 2:14).

Courage, therefore, **He has come and is coming to dwell among us!**

**Let us walk in His presence, with joy, with a sense of responsibility** and **hope**. He dwells among us!

He is the Son of God, the man of the cross, who came to be handed over into human hands (as today's Gospel tells us too).

We too are now are being handed over to our concrete reality, to our small or big Communities, to our daily life (sometimes difficult and tiring),and it is **there** that **we will continue to live the Chapter**, with joy, with a sense of responsibility and hope. He will accompany us, as Crucified and Risen Lord. And by following Him, our family can be like "***Jerusalem without walls***", ***a Family for families***: **a united family, an open family, a family that welcomes and goes out to meet the poor**, the new poor, with joy and courage, because **it has the Crucified and Risen Christ at its centre**.

May this be our commitment, daily asceticism, as a response to the grace of God that has been given to us. I wish you a happy journey! The Chapter continues….