

Ref.: 06/97

Rome, 23 June 2006  
Feast of the Sacred Heart

Dear Sisters,

Our feast unites us in a special way and we love to celebrate it, feeling the “heartbeat” of God in the heart of the world, in the Society, in each one of us, called today to continue to walk in the footsteps of Jesus, to walk with him, discovering and manifesting his love.

We live in many different places in the world. Present among us is practically every color of skin, eyes, and hair that in their variety make the human race so beautiful. Our cultures are numerous and we have the good fortune of being able to share them with the whole world. We are women who live with the consciousness of being part of creation: nature is our home and the tremendous variety that surrounds us is gift. We complement one another in all our differences. We feel that the creativity of God needs all of us to manifest God’s love in this unique history that we share with all the men and women of the earth.

Our service as Council is constantly gifting us with the possibility of “touching” this miracle that is the Society! So inculturated and so deeply united by the “sap” of the love of the heart of God! During the month of May, we have had a significant time of reflection: first, pulling together the valuable insights from the regional meetings of provincials and the new generation and later, as a group of eleven from ten countries, searching together how to concretize in a new way the vision and the hope that we have had since the Sophia Commission was conceived. In another letter to the provincials we will tell you what happened. Here we simply want to share with you how we experienced the vitality and relevance of our charism. For this reason, we have decided that the letter this year would be from all of us and not only from Clare.

We began the meeting on the future of “Sophia” praying with a text of Dolores Aleixandre which captures Madeleine Sophie’s original vision of the Society in the form of a letter from her to us:

Today I want to speak to you about my first idea about what would be the Society of the Sacred Heart: I always had a great attraction to remain before Jesus in the Eucharist, with my inner gaze directed only at Him, simply in his presence, knowing that He was gazing at me and enveloping me in his love. I felt called to be simply in his presence, united to Him, allowing his life and the feelings of his heart to enter within me, as a canal that collects the water from a spring, like a piece of wood that allows itself to catch on fire.

But just as a fire spreads or a stone thrown into the water creates concentric circles that keep widening, I felt that the

presence of Jesus, the “weight” of his love in the Eucharist, was going forth and reaching each person to the ends of the earth. And because of this it was possible to recognize him and adore him even far away.

I was enthusiastic therefore with the possibility of coming together with a group of women who would share these same desires, in order to be day and night in adoration. And thus, though we would be few, He could make use of us to set fire to the world, to bring the life of God to all. Because what I call “adoration” has nothing to do with passivity. On the contrary, it calls us out of ourselves to make us enter into communion with Jesus and the things he cares about; it gives us a capacity to love and converts us into people who are warm and understanding, full of tenderness and compassion towards others.

I was imagining this group of 24 companions but, to tell the truth, I thought it was very few... and it was in one of those times of prayer in which I was carrying the entire world with me, especially young people, when I heard within “And if we had young people with us and managed to inspire them with this “spirit of adoration”, this desire to give the world the good news of the love of God? If we were to undertake, together with them, the task of repairing the fabric of relationships that is so torn, heal so many wounded lives, help so many broken people to their feet...! What a difference it would make!

And I began to dream of something that seemed impossible: hundreds, thousands of “adorers” of all nations and cultures, to the ends of the earth, eager to live for a world in solidarity, attentive to the heartbeat of God in the heart of the world...

For this reason I have never been satisfied with educating women to be “complete”, very competent, “well brought up”... because what I really desire is to “educate adorers”. Would you like to be one of them?<sup>1</sup>

This text framed the whole of our search and was woven through all our reflection. We spent time recognizing and articulating our differences of context and culture, the variety of ways in which we can express our spirituality, the distinct nuances that our different situations require of us. But, at the same time, we celebrated the realization that *one blood flows through our veins*, the veins of this body called the Society. Blessed multiculturalism that allows us to relish this common treasure! And because of it to feel ourselves more deeply united.

Throughout our days together we sensed more and more how justice and peace are at the *center* of our spirituality, are intimately bound up with love, and the call to incarnate them flows from the open Heart of Jesus. We can say the same thing of education. We do not think of education only as something to do; **we are educators**. From the moment that we identify with our charism, the

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<sup>1</sup> El Árbol peregrino, Dolores Aleixandre, p. 132

whole of our being is transformed into an “educational being”. And it isn’t just a question of being educators **for** peace and justice, but also of having the certainty that **to educate is in itself an act of justice**.

**Jesus is the Educator beyond compare**, the Man of Peace, Source of Living Water, who placed the poor at the center of the Kingdom. The integration we seek is *already in Him* and it is from our union and conformity with his feelings and attitudes, his preferences and priorities, that our action flows.

The gospel for the Feast of the Sacred Heart this year, the passage from the 19<sup>th</sup> chapter of John, can help us reflect on this:

It was Preparation Day, and to prevent the bodies remaining on the cross during the Sabbath – since that Sabbath was a day of special solemnity – the Jews asked Pilate to have the legs broken and the bodies taken away. Consequently the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first man who had been crucified with him and then of the other. When they came to Jesus, they found he was already dead, and so instead of breaking his legs one of the soldiers pierced his side with a lance; and immediately there came out blood and water. This is the evidence of one who saw it – trustworthy evidence, and he knows he speaks the truth – and he gives it so that you may believe as well. Because all this happened to fulfill the word of scripture: *Not one bone of his will be broken*; and again, in another place scripture says: *They will look on the one whom they have pierced.*” (Jn. 19: 31-37)

From an act of violence – the thrust of a lance by a soldier whom Jesus had already forgiven – the Church and the Society were born. It is a clear symbol of the conflict between good and evil: the thrust of the lance symbolizes division, injustice, perpetrated against an innocent one “who went about doing good”. The pierced Heart holds all the pain of humanity. And the good prevails because the blood and water never stop flowing, a Love poured out on all of creation: healing it, repairing it, making it whole... bringing peace. “That all may be one...”

When we contemplate His pierced Heart in all the wounds that surround us:  
wounds of individuals or those of groups or of peoples or even of the earth;  
when we recognize our own wounds and hardness of heart,  
when we allow ourselves to be touched by this violent lance  
that pierces life in so many ways,  
our desire to pour out our life in love,  
our educative action, our work for justice, peace and the care of the earth  
spring forth.


This spirituality educates us and shapes us, impels us and makes us “educators” out of our fragility: open to His compassion, loving with tenderness, awakening consciousness, healing wounds, nurturing growth, whatever our age and wherever we are.

In these days we have felt a special call to contemplation, to deepen our spirituality, to recognize ourselves in it with all our cultural and contextual differences, and with all the richness of its multiple expressions. Let us give thanks that in many corners of the world we are trying to live like Jesus, with his feelings, with his attitudes, with a heart that allows itself to be affected by the suffering and joys of this world. And the desire to continue inspiring thousands of adorers is very much alive in all of us!

With much love to each one and closely united on our feast,



Clare Pratt, rscj



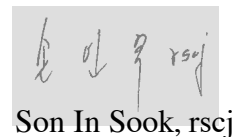
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