

Information Bulletin No. 2

Rome January 23, 2010

To our dearest Sisters,

We have reached the conclusion of our Encounter. It was a journey through Europe that introduced us, through the eyes and words of each sister, to a precious piece of this old continent. It was a cultural and pastoral journey, rather than a tourist trip, one that led us to face also some grim and threatening panoramas. We sketched out with surprising ease journeys that have many things in common—elements that can serve as beacons of light to give clarity and new depth to our life. These beacons are: spiritual renewal, new ways of proclaiming the Gospel, communications, multi-culturality, study, sharing of our charism with the laity, pastoral work for vocations, more open-mindedness with regard to Europe, and synergy among the Daughters of St. Paul who live and work on this continent....

How will we proceed to design “our” unified Europe? Thinking and working together, without leaving out some *redesigning* of geographical borders, in order to work in greater communion and collaboration. We went through the various hypotheses almost on tiptoe ... speaking about common plans for formative environments, for communities, for the mission, for assistance, for a more reciprocal and stable collaboration. We also carefully considered the possibility of some changes in the boundaries of our circumscriptions. We underlined some criteria for our redesigning journey in Europe: quick decisions, a wise and gradual implementation, the involvement of all the sisters, interior freedom and the courage that comes from faith.

The European Project was born from the participation of everyone, the fruit of a research that was patient and focused. The methodology carried out by Sr. Battistina Capalbo channeled the researches and discussions forward, orienting them toward the final objective without losing any of the input of the Assembly.

We are vividly aware that we live in a special time of “historical calls” that appeal to our vocational responsibility and give us the needed impetus to help us conquer the timidity we might feel when faced with the challenge of our poverty.

In the current context of Europe/Quebec, so multi-cultural, multi-religious, and disoriented in faith and values, we feel called to give an effective witness of faith in communicating the Gospel, and to work in trust, unity, and collaboration among ourselves. The priorities of the Project are:

- **Continental collaboration:** with an organized communication; meetings to address themes (on vocational pastoral work, formation, apostolate-economy, government) or initiatives which would be verified at the Interchapter; and sharing, as “one body”, resources and talents. We will experience the strength that comes from unity, and we will thus express our witnessing, prophecy, and announcement.

- **New Geographical Boundaries:** will be studied for Central/Eastern Europe, and concrete steps will be taken together among some circumscriptions in view of an eventual new juridical configuration.
- **Study and deepening on:** new forms of apostolate, the use of digital media, economy and administration, assistance for the elder and sick sisters.

In her concluding remarks, Sr. M. Antonietta reminded us of the image of the disciples on the road to Emmaus, who, in their bewilderment after the Passion, asked Jesus to remain with them.

It is a request we also are making, and Jesus reassures us: “Do not be afraid: I am with you!” With Jesus, there is darkness, fatigue, and delusion no longer. His presence and his Word can redesign our journey. Down through history, docile and faithful listeners of the Word have become, through their witness, “living letters” of God, telling with their lives of the love of the Lord. The Word of God, read, meditated, shared, lived, put into practice, will gradually transform us, making us become women “of the prophetic voice”, as our Founder and Maestra Tecla wished us.

The Continental Encounter was like a school: now the challenge is very much our responsibility. We need to possess the patience of the “baby steps”, so that the proposals will take effect, give us the taste of daring, help us feel the journey as a positive one, and nourish our hope.

Looking to the past, we see that God has always walked at our side. So why, then, fear the future? We are all rowing in the same direction, and the wind of the Spirit fills our sails. The Institute is on the open sea...it is headed “to the other side”, attempting to go also where our feet have never yet touched the ground. Poverty is a great gift. We Daughters of St. Paul know through experience that, the poorer we are, the further the Lord carries us.

Even if the Project we have taken on is demanding, we are sure that it will give us wings and nourish the life of our communities. The fundamental strategy of our journey of redesigning will be the involvement of each sister, because **God works in the body**, in the body that is the entire Congregation.

My heartfelt gratitude goes to you all, dearest sisters, who have lived these Pauline days with us, in prayer. Thanks also to the cloistered sisters of more than 300 monasteries who have prayed for us.

Greetings to you all!

Sr. M. Letizia Panzetti - Sr. Vanda Salvador