



NEL SEGNO DELL' *Amore*

Rome, 29 October 2017
Feast of the Divine Master

To All the Sisters

Dearest Sisters

The Gospel for the Feast of Jesus Master, Year A, invites us to reflect on the last evening of Christ's earthly life. In the so-called "Cenacle" or Upper Room of a house in Jerusalem, he performs the surprising gesture of *washing the feet* of his disciples—an act that even Jewish servants were not obliged to perform toward their masters because it was considered extremely humiliating and was thus a service rendered by non-Jewish slaves. Jesus lives his role as Master under the sign of supreme love—the gift of his life. He removes his outer garments, kneels before his disciples and offers himself to them as their servant and model: "I have set you an example, that you also should do *as I have done* to you" (Jn. 13:12-15).

Contemplation of the Master in his "hour" becomes for us an experience of intimacy—an opportunity to make our own his way of living and acting and do as he did (cf. Jn. 13:34). It is a plea to enter into the logic of "self-consignment" and allow ourselves to be immersed in the love that flows among the members of the Trinity so that our whole life, in a progressive journey of conformity to Christ, becomes an epiphany of this love. Our Founder urged us: "*Live the whole Christ...reach not only union of life with him, but action of life with him, that is, the apostolate*" (FSP55, p. 270).

Mission springs from love. Sr. Assunta Bassi affirmed with deep conviction: "The apostolate is life, not something to be done.... Do we understand this?" And the Founder insisted that to carry out our mission "it is necessary to have an ardent heart...that can no longer be contained" (FSP47, p.417).

In the light of the Feast of Jesus Master, it is wonderful to rediscover the apostolate as a revelation of the life of Jesus that throbs within us. Fr. Alberione urged: "*Go to church, make the Visit, ask the Lord what he wants you to say and then write it down. Draw from the Mass, from communion, from the tabernacle...then write it down.... Draw above all from God. Feel the Lord! May each one of you be like a flame...*" (FSP54, p. 182ff.).

The 2nd International Seminar for SSP Publishers, which took place last week at Ariccia, just ended (cf. the website *paulus.net* for the talks). The meeting was an invitation to us to rediscover the teaching nature of our Institute and listen once again to the moving call to be "the pen and voice of God" (cf. FSP54, p. 255). It was also a favorable moment for us to look ahead to the encounter that we too will be holding next autumn for our sisters involved in the publishing apostolate.

The world questions us insistently with its thousands of faces marked by suffering, marginalization, violence and the abuse of power. Let us renew our faith in the grace of our vocation so as to "discern the new paths the Spirit is opening for the Word" (Const. 8). Pope Francis says: "At our door people are starving and Jesus does not tire of saying to us: 'Give them something to eat'" (EG 49).

Let us welcome the invitation of the Pope to live the First World Day of the Poor (19 November) by creating times of solidarity with the most disadvantaged people around us and by reacting to our throw-away and wasteful culture by making our own the *simple, poor, joyous and faith-filled style of life* that Fr. Alberione, Maestra Thecla and countless sisters who preceded us witnessed to while dedicating their lives to the proclamation of the Gospel.

May you all have a beautiful Feast of the Divine Master!

With deep affection,


Sr. Anna Maria Parenzan
Superior General