

Infant Jesus Sisters

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Pentecost 2020

Peace be with you !

This year, we are celebrating Pentecost at a very challenging time. The Pandemic continues to cause havoc, particularly among the most fragile people and the poorest populations, who are living through moments of great distress and disharmony. Our Institute has been in mourning. Our plans are on hold... Many of you have shared messages of suffering, courage, hope, and graces received during this ordeal.

How can we not think about the confinement of the apostles following the death of Jesus? They were physically confined, but were also locked inside themselves through fear, sadness, disappointment and the disruption of their plans... And it is exactly **there** that the Risen Jesus came to meet them, wishing them peace, arousing joy and doubt at the same time. And it is **there** that He promises to send His Spirit. Easter and Pentecost historically occurred during a time of unrest.

I will not comment on what this crisis is putting us through and is teaching us. We have received messages from our parishes, our dioceses, from Pope Francis, from our leaders, our friends and various organizations... We have sometimes been overwhelmed by what we read on social media. Let us treasure the messages which have touched us, challenged us or invited us to conversion and use them to enrich our lives.

This Pentecost is the first Chapter. This year, the Barré definitively met with hours before his death, he



Spirit to **inspire, teach and lead** us. I invite those of you who have the time and are interested to explore in the New Testament how these verbs (inspire, teach and lead) speak about the Holy Spirit's action in our lives. As we call on Him, let us ask Him for these graces for ourselves and our whole Institute. *"The Counsellor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you"* John 14, 25-26. (NIV) Only He can make the

we are celebrating since our General date coincides with the day Nicolas His God. What a coincidence! A few had promised to call upon the Holy

Gospel take flesh in our lives, in the way our founder wanted for us. On its journey before and during the General Chapter and our local chapters, the whole Institute opened its doors to the Holy Spirit so that we might become *more authentic witnesses of God's love for each person and for the whole of creation*. His breath has pushed us forward on a road we walk together to reinforce our links beyond our borders, to share our charism with lay people who wish to journey with us, to





take care of creation and hear the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor. The landscape of these new paths is currently, and perhaps permanently, transformed by this pandemic. Let us not lose our way!

Pentecost is not just a one-day event which only leaves a memory, albeit an energizing one. Its richness continues to unfold all through the Acts of the Apostles. At Pentecost, the Holy Spirit entered our history and, from then on, our lives were inhabited by the Risen Lord. The account in the Acts of the Apostles shows us that this history is the source of deep joy and creativity but also of tension as the emerging community developed. Let us think about the difficulty of welcoming people from elsewhere. Their religion, their culture and their traditions challenged Jesus' disciples. They had disagreements and it was only together, through prayer and dialogue, that they were able to move forward. They learned to make themselves available to the unknown and the unforeseen so that the message of Christ would be welcomed by all as good news.

What about ourselves? We are also called to walk together on the road the Holy Spirit has opened up before us. His action continues and is unpredictable: *"You can hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going."* (John 3, 8). Let us listen to his voice, let us not lock our doors in fear of what is new. Let us find our responses together, let us humbly welcome the truth of others and dare to express our own without imposing it; let us be challenged by diversity; let our decisions mature in prayer and open and selfless dialogue. Then, we can be sure that the Holy Spirit will be alongside us so that together, Sisters and lay people, we may go forward on a new path, where the mission entrusted to us from the beginning will take shape. It is also the Holy Spirit who will give us the strength and courage to accomplish it as He did for Peter after Pentecost.



May the Holy Spirit teach us, lead us and inspire us so that by going forward on the road opened up for us at our Chapter, we may together *"do good to all creation and thus cooperate in its redemption"* (Laudato Si). This is our wish from Jane, Felicia, Marina and myself, for this feast of Pentecost. It is accompanied by much affection. And may the power of the Holy Spirit who *"heals what is wounded"* reach out to our sick sisters and friends as well as throughout the whole world.

Sr Brigitte

- Our sisters of Providence invite us to enter a jubilee year with them, from 21st October 2020, to celebrate the 400th anniversary of the birth of Nicolas Barré the following year. We will look for opportunities to do this in each of our countries.
- Emilie Papaix, our young archivist, who is concerned about what we will pass on to future generations, has made the proposal to gather our testimonies and our stories of everyday life during this period of the pandemic. This initiative is one of the many forms of partnership we have with our lay collaborators.

