



INTRODUCTION

Sr. Anna Caiazza, Superior General

Dearest Sisters, it is with great emotion that I open the work of this Intercapitular Assembly, which is situated at an important moment in our government's mandate and at the heart of so many projects underway.

Grace and peace to you, sisters, beloved of God, called to be holy together... This very "pauline" greeting is meant to express the gratitude and joy of the sisters of the government and mine to have you here to share realities and dreams, labors and hopes, to grow *in knowledge and in discernment of every kind, to distinguish always what is best...* (cf. 1 Cor. 1:1-4; Phil. 1:9).

We are welcomed in this beautiful hall by our "icon", by Prima Maestra Thecla, with her smile and open arms: she embraces us, to guard us, to inspire us and to urge us not to be afraid, to look forward *moved by the Spirit*, to become companions of a people on the way.

I am certain that we will live the coming days in an atmosphere of communion and mutual trust, in an attitude of humble listening and freedom, ready to verify but also ready to welcome the question of the future that emerges from our contexts of life. And we will work together without ever forgetting the humanity to which we are sent, remaining "on our way through the streets of the world, with a contemplative gaze, full of empathy for the men and women of our time, hungry for the Good News of the Gospel"¹, as Pope Francis urged us.

We will be helped in this by the presentations we will hear, the conversations among ourselves, the presence of the guests that we will have, in person and online, and by what will take place around us and outside this "oasis" in which we find ourselves.

We feel the prayer and closeness of all the sisters of the congregation, especially the sick and the elderly, who offer and intercede for us, so that the Interchapter meeting will be an event of grace, of far extending blessings, of hope. And we know that the entire Pauline Family is united in prayer for us.

I would like to express, also on behalf of all of you, our thanks to the sisters of the Commission to whom was entrusted the preparation of the Interchapter meeting: Sr. Gabriella Collesei, Sr. Anuarite Muadi Kanda, Sr. Rosa Ramalho, and the general councilors Sr. Micaela Pae and Sr. Shalimar Rubia. A warm thank you also to Sr. Marta Finotelli sjbp, who accompanied the Preparatory Commission in its initial phase.

Thank you to Sr. Marlene and sisters of Cidade Regina and Centrale Paulinas for their warm welcome, for their care, for their many services rendered. Thank you to those of us who have welcomed small/large commitments in order to animate our days.

¹ Francis to the fsp Capitulars.

The Interchapter meeting is, after the General Chapter, the most important meeting of the six-year mandate. In the letter of convocation dated January 6, 2023, I recalled that the purpose of the Interchapter Assembly– which usually takes place halfway between one General Chapter and the next – is convened with the purposes indicated in Article 176 of the Constitutions:

- to evaluate the plans programmed by the last General Chapter;
- to discuss important and urgent topics;
- to focus on planning, pinpointing any priorities for our journey.

Those who are members of the Interchapter Assembly *by right* are the sisters of the general government and the superiors of the different circumscriptions.

The superior of the generalate community is participating *by invitation*. The superiors of the other houses dependent on the general government will connect via zoom at those times when their presence is important. The participation – in the same modality and for particular themes – of the young sisters of the international Consult or *Commission of Hope* has also been scheduled. We have the joy of having with us a member of the Consult, Sr Emily Beata Marsh, as translator for the English language.

As we well know, the intercapitular assembly has no power to enact new laws, but certainly what comes out of such a qualified assembly, such as ours, will direct the path of the whole congregation.

In the coming days we will be called to do a “sapiential” reading of our reality, present and future, listening to what the Spirit says. The Holy Spirit does not impose himself: he urges, invites, convinces and comforts. The Holy Spirit enables us to sense “the sound of God's footsteps” in the events of daily life and to recognize the questions that God and humanity pose in the furrows of history. It makes one dream of what seems impossible, generate the “new”, taste its fruits in communion.

The theme of the Interchapter, ***“Transformed by the Spirit, we journey together to generate life,”*** in continuity with that of the 11th General Chapter, urges us precisely in this direction.

The Spirit is the source of authentic transformation; he is the real protagonist of change and acts with wise creativity. His action begins, however, always from within, from deep within us: *“You know him, for he abides with you and will be in you”* (Jn. 14:17). He is a living presence within us and gradually involves us in a process of “new life”. If we let him act, he creates deep harmony: *“It is He who brings order to the frenzy. He is peace in restlessness, confidence in discouragement, joy in sadness, youthfulness in old age, courage in trial [...]. He is the Comforter who conveys God's tenderness to us.”*²

In these days of our Interchapter meeting, let us confidently abandon ourselves to his action, remembering that we are called – today more than ever – to be *women of the Spirit*, women who are deeply spiritual and therefore, women who are deeply human. In this way we can be *“womb”* that generates life.

Generativity is not an individual fact, but a *synodal* one. The Spirit impels us *as community* to live the challenging journey to become consecrated women who generate life.

We all feel the need for a profound renewal that restores authenticity to our lives and fruitfulness to our mission. Strategies, programs, projects... are important, but what is asked of us today is to listen with docility to the Spirit of God so as to be available and open to his transforming action in our life and in that of the congregation.

² Francis, *Homily on the Solemnity of Pentecost*, 9 June 2019.

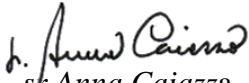
I like to associate the theme of “generativity” to that of witnessing to “beauty”, the beauty of being consecrated to Him. If God is beautiful – and the Lord Jesus “is the most beautiful among the sons of man” – then being consecrated to Him *is beautiful*. There is no vocational crisis where there are consecrated men and women capable of transmitting, with their witness, the beauty of consecration.

When the Pope speaks about consecrated life, he emphasizes another aspect of fruitfulness and of beauty: “*joy, joy... .*”³ And one who has met the Lord and follows him faithfully – he says – is a messenger of the joy of the Spirit. Joy is therefore linked to fruitfulness: it is a great vocational promotion!

Dearest, borrowing from the words spoken by Pope Francis at the beginning of the synodal process, may these Interchapter days be “a time inhabited by the Spirit! Because we need the Spirit, we need the ever-new breath of God that gives freedom from all closure, revives what is dead, loosens chains, spreads joy.”

May this be obtained for us through the powerful intercession of Primo Maestro and Maestra Thecla, whose existence was “inhabited” by the Spirit, and because of this they became prophets of life and of hope, always pointed in the direction of the coming of God.

Wishing you all a good Interchapter meeting.


Sr. Anna Caiazza
Superior General

Ciudade Regina, 5 September 2023

³ Francis, *Authentic and consistent, Pope Francis speaks about the beauty of consecration*, [Encounter with the Seminarians and Novices, Rome, 6 July 2013], in: *L'Osservatore Romano*, Monday-Tuesday 8-9 July 2013, CLIII (155), 6.