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**Prot. MG 246/20**

**Re: Missionary month – Month of the Holy Rosary**

*“Jesus creates that enthusiasm of the noblest and holiest love. Caritas Christi urget nos! The lovers of humanity are the lovers of Christ...”*  
(Don Orione)



***Dearest Sisters!***

Today we begin a very special month: the Missionary Month and also the Month of the Holy Rosary.

A month that is full of important events for the Church and for the Congregation, especially for the publication of the Encyclical *"Fratelli tutti"* (All Brothers) that Pope Francis will offer us next October 4. We are also excited for our young sisters who, in different parts of the world, are about to begin a new stage in their formation among the LMSC.

At the same time, we know well that this is a month traditionally dedicated to the Holy Rosary. Mary will be our companion and will lead us by Her hand to live and be ever more faithful to our consecration and mission in the Church, particularly in this difficult and painful time of the Covid-19 pandemic, which is affecting the whole world.

With this letter I would like to reach each Community, but also each one personally. I would like to give you a wave of fresh air, in the particular moment that each one is experiencing: both the air of hope, and that of comfort and consolation. At the same time, may it be a wave of air of renewed enthusiasm, and the air that gives new oxygen to personal and fraternal life, to apostolic and missionary life, and may it help us to get back on the road and on our feet so to be able to repeat with Don Orione: *"and now I begin, in the name of the Lord! "*

I know that for many of us the time of the pandemic is becoming hard and painful. On one side, for those who lived it in the first months of this year 2020, experiencing the disease in their own body. On the other side, also for those who are currently living the uncertainty of the future, the fear of contagion, the desolation of isolation and lockdown, which in some nations has been so long...

A few days ago, the Bishop of Tortona, Mons. Vittorio Viola launched the Pastoral Plan in his Diocese, and among the expressions that struck me most, I would like to share the following: *"What we are living is a difficult but precious time of change and we must not feel 'despair', which is not a Christian sentiment. We are men and women of hope"*.

We are all in the same boat and are called to live as people of faith and hope, in the midst of the sea of discouragement and fear in which so many people are immersed.

As true Orionines, in this missionary month we can offer a *"different"* witness: that of being, in this time of emergency, even more missionaries of charity, being those who know how to *"go out"* like Mary and approach loneliness, fear, suffering of the other... to the maximum extent possible and in the prudence of the moment we are living.

Dear Sisters, in this month of October I invite you to revive in us the missionary spirit and our love for Mary, the first missionary, who, carrying Jesus in her womb, left "without delay" to be "close" to her cousin who was in need, without fear, without waiting for the "best time" or the "quietest time"... We have said many times in recent months that "our charity does not go into quarantine"!

Therefore, let us try in this month to create a "**Marian missionary**" atmosphere in our hearts and in the Community. Let us offer each other words, thoughts and "missionary" gestures of charity and closeness, while having to observe the "Covid distancing": a simple smile or a look of mercy, understanding and reconciliation. Though having to wear the "mask", the eyes always "speak" and are a powerful tool to convey the feelings of the heart.

In praying the Rosary, we want to place our Sisters of the different Communities, the Sisters in the missions in Africa, Asia and in other places in the hands and heart of Mary. There we also want to place the projects of the Congregation, the new missionary openings, the service that is being realized in our Works in the various Provinces... Let us remember our sisters with their name, with their faces, with the service they are carrying out... Let us listen to the voice of Jesus in our hearts who -who knows- is calling us today to an "additional" response in order to leave on a mission "ad gentes"...



Let us place our life in Mary's heart, let us transform our limits of age or health in a "mission", let us also make fruitful the time of "apparent passivity" that health conditions or quarantine impose on us, and let us transform them into a "land of mission". "I am mission", the Pope said, regardless of age, possibilities, place, responsibilities: I, you ... "we are mission"...!! Let us look at Saint Therese of the Child Jesus, patroness of the missions without ever having "left" physically from the cloister!

In this way we will be a strength in the Church and in the world, the strength that comes from being all united in the one purpose for which the Lord has called us in the footsteps of our Founder St. Luigi Orione: **fraternity and mission!!**

In the Apostolic Exhortation "*Evangelii gaudium*" Pope Francis gave us some concrete points in order to live the missionary spirit in this historical moment. I am sure he will certainly offer us some very valid ideas in the Encyclical "*Fratelli tutti*", which we will soon have in our hands, to live and embody "*universal fraternity*" according to the Gospel (I also invite you, as soon as it is published, to read, reflect and spread it, personally and as a community).

I entrust each one to Mary, our Mother and Mother of Divine Providence, so that She may encourage us and lead us on the path of holiness, mercy and solidarity.

I pray every day for each one of you and I embrace you with fraternal affection in the Lord. Pray also for me and for the General Councillors.

***Ave Maria always!!***

*Sr. Mabel Spagnolo*  
Sr M. Mabel Spagnolo  
Superior general



Rome, Generalate House, October 1<sup>st</sup> 2020.