

**Little Missionary Sisters of Charity - Generalate House, Rome**  
**May 31, 2020**  
**Celebration of Blessing and enthronement of the icon of the Visitation**

**(Texts of the Video message)**

**Introduction**

We are now preparing ourselves to live a very special moment as the conclusion of the Month of Mary, on the feast of the Visitation of Mary: the enthronement of the Icon of the Visitation. During the special Audience with the participants in the XII G.C. in 2017, Pope Francis told us: *“As an example for your mission and for your service to the poor, I suggest you the icon of the Visitation. Like the Virgin Mary, go on your way, in a hurry - not the hurry of the world, but that of God – and, full of the joy that lives in your hearts, sing your Magnificat. Sing the love of God for every creature. Announce to men and women today that God is love and can fill the heart of those who seek Him and let themselves be met by Him”*.

Just on the day of the Visitation of the year 1935, Don Orione encouraged the Sisters with these words: *"Today is the feast of the Visitation. This is the day that reminds us of the charity of the heart of the Most Holy Virgin towards Elizabeth... so today, I want to start the Little Argentine Cottolengo. Go to Avellaneda; there our Work will begin..."*

We too, today, like Mary, who went in a hurry to her cousin Elizabeth, want to renew this burst of charity, in the context of the realities of the world affected by the pandemic. To Her we entrust the world, the Church and the whole Congregation, feeling the words of our Founder resound strongly in our hearts: *"Let us therefore turn to Mary: the Lord has given us this divine Mother.*

*Let's put ourselves under her mantle, she will save us... Mary is a powerful Mother, Mary is a merciful Mother, Mary is a Mother who wishes to save everyone!"*

Now Don Tarcisio will preside over the procession with which this icon of the Visitation, created especially for us, by the Carmelite Sisters of Korotycz in Ukraine, will be enthroned.

We will all go out behind Don Tarcisio, then will follow the Sisters with the candles representing the 5 Provinces of Latin America and Europe, the Delegation of Madagascar and the 3 Missionary Vice-Delegations of Africa and Asia.

The Mother General will bring the icon of the Visitation and the flag of the Little Missionary Sisters of Charity.

Let us sing: Ave Maria (litanies)

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**Words of the Superior general, Mother M. Mabel Spagnuolo, during the Celebration**

We have brought and put these little candles here, which symbolically present here today, all our sisters scattered in the 19 countries where the LMSC are present, at this moment.

This event of the enthronement of the icon of the Visitation was scheduled for the month of October during our General Assembly; this inter-capitular Assembly has as its theme: *"Blessed are you who has believed"*, the words that Saint Elizabeth addressed to Mary in the Visitation.

Today I am addressing these words not only to those who are present here in our Chapel, but to all the sisters who are not here. We will make the video circulate among all the sisters of all the Provinces and Delegations, in all the Communities. It is to them, therefore, that I extend my very special greeting. We are experiencing a very beautiful moment of communion, a very beautiful family moment, also thanks to the providential presence of our confrere Father Tarcisio, Director General of the SDP, whom we all know. This, too, is a very meaningful sign of the communion of our whole Orionine charismatic Family.

The icon of the Visitation, as was said in the introduction, was offered by Pope Francis, exactly 3 years ago, these days, in that beautiful meeting we had at the end of our XII General Chapter. This image, this evangelical icon, has come to give a final input to the decisions of our Chapter, in the sense of missionarity, in the sense of the experience of our vocation and mission, all in the light of the Coat of Arms and the motto of the LMSC, approved in this same Chapter: "*Caritas Christi urget nos*".

We feel that Mary, in her "*going out in a hurry*" symbolizes and represents this "*urget nos!*", our going out and running "*in a hurry*" towards the needs, in this historical moment that we are all living with the pandemic: in Italy where it is apparently improving, but in the other countries of the world, where we still don't know how it will go. It is an historical moment of great uncertainties, a moment to be lived with an Easter spirit because the solemnity of Pentecost also comes to give a light and a very strong push to this "*going out*".

Mary lived her Pentecost at the moment of the Annunciation, that was a Pentecost that made her fruitful and missionary. So today, the feast of Pentecost wants to make us, once again, **fruitful and missionary**, and wants to make us **fruitful and missionary in this historical moment**: a hard, difficult moment, a moment in which we have been (as Father also reminded us) all closed in our houses, but not closed in our heart. Not closed in our heart.

It is the moment to conclude the Easter season and open a new "*Easter season*".

Jesus is not in the sepulchre of our fears, he is not in the sepulchre of the pandemic, he is not in the sepulchre of the anxieties that the pandemic has aroused in the communities that have suffered more, as well as in the others that have suffered a little less. Jesus is not closed in the sepulchre: **Jesus is risen**. He awaits us outside the sepulchre, and right there, outside the sepulchre, with Mary that we want to run, we want to go out, with our heart, but also with our hands and with our feet towards the new poverties that we will surely find in this new stage of humanity that we are experiencing.

I would like that this moment lived by us, who are present here, and also by all the LMSC who will see us through the video message, may unite us in this climate of hope, of missionary spirit, of courage, as the Pope wrote me recently in his e-mail: "*courage in prayer and courage in action*": the courage of Mary who left, without delay. She, too, was in a moment of difficulty.

May Don Orione accompany us from heaven, may he inspire us more and more with his spirit, so that we too can be fruitful and missionary and also be faithful to this mission that he wanted for the Little Missionary Sisters of Charity.

I greet all of you and I thank the presence of the Oblate Sisters who are always present with us, and also the virtual presence of all our sisters whom we really greet with much, much love. We embrace you, we can embrace this "virtual" way. Thanks.

Now I invite everyone to pray the prayer of Pope Francis that I have included in the presentation of the Acts of the XII General Chapter. (Prayer to Mary: Acts XII CG pages 16-17).