

Rome, 22 January 2009

*Information n. 2*

Dearest Sisters,

Once again we are writing to share with you the reflections and searches we are carrying out during this enlarged council meeting aimed at redesigning our FSP presences throughout the world.

The Word of God, on which we meditate each day in the Eucharistic Celebration, continues to cast light on our work. We find it very meaningful to be holding this meeting during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, a spiritual context that underscores the broad and universal vision that is an integral element of the Pauline charism. We begin each day with a prayer drawn from the writings of St. Paul that helps us focus on the subject under consideration so as to cast light on our itinerary and give it thrust.

On 17-18 January we sought to grasp the views and feelings of our sisters throughout the world on the subject of redesigning our presences. The superiors from our European, African-Malagasy, Asian, Oceanian and American circumscriptions took turns sharing with us the thoughts, worries and hopes of our sisters concerning the redesigning process and the need to make a careful discernment so as to carry it out wisely. The picture that emerged was positive: it revealed that our Congregation possesses a wealth of experience in the various cultures in which our members live and work, that our sisters yearn to live the Pauline charism to the full, and that they are willing to implement the changes necessary to do this. Our starting point is the Apostle Paul, who said: I do everything for the sake of the Gospel!

To create an integral project for redesigning our presences; to find new ways of working with the laity and of providing them with formation; to strengthen unity and a family spirit among ourselves; not to mention the need for universality, interculturality, the broader involvement of all our members in the life of the Institute...all these issues echoed through the assembly room, reinforcing the synergy that flowed among us. In such moments, the positive aspects of our international community struck us even more keenly and joyfully, in spite of the effort it sometimes takes to live this dimension of our life.

On 19-20 January, under the guidance of Fr. Mario Aldegani, Superior General of the Fathers of St. Joseph of Murialdo, we reflected on the role of authority in the redesigning process in the context of the consecrated life today. In our post-modern era, the service of authority requires that superiors possess the ability to involve all the members of the Congregation in its life so that the potentials of each person can be fully realized. In fact, the revitalization of an Institute's life and mission lies in the hands of each of its members.

We found it very helpful to hear about how a number of religious Institutes have implemented the redesigning process: the problems they encountered, the results they achieved, etc. We then listened to Fr. Aldegani's concrete advice concerning how to approach the process ourselves, so as to avoid making "emergency choices" and also avoid falling into the trap of viewing the redesigning process as solely a matter of organization.

Afterward, with the help of Sr. Battistina Capalbo, who is guiding our meeting according to an intensive and effective methodology, we sought to pinpoint the criteria, objectives

and strategies that are fundamental to redesigning our presences. We realize that the “innovations” that will emerge are not meant to nullify what we already possess. Instead they should help us face the future without fear by focusing on the elements that can provide us with new vitality so as to enable us to take concrete steps forward. In this way our redesigning project will not be something restricted to paper.

Thank you, sisters, for your letters, best wishes and prayers—all of which are very precious to us!

We will write again soon to let you know what is happening in the last stage of our work.

Warmest regards from all the sisters here!

Sr. Iris Pontin and Sr. M. Letizia Panzetti