

## **AN OPEN LETTER FROM MARÍA ANTONIA PARÍS**

### **TO HER DAUGHTERS AND SONS IN THE WORLD**

Dear all,

"very soon While celebrating, a new anniversary of my birth, a desire has arisen to share with you some thoughts and feelings that are in my heart.

It happens to us that when we approach the days of important memories, the memories of God's blessings, the life that he gifted us, the people and experiences lived, a lot to be thankful for! How much to value and re-imply! And always, how much to celebrate with appreciation and gratitude for so much kindness!

Another one joins to this reason, a deep sense of solidarity, and I am well aware that in "your" places many of you are living days of trial and affliction; others, gradually overcoming the difficulty and, undoubtedly all, facing the consequences of these traces of God, as I like to call them, which are not easy to understand or assume. If you knew how much I understand you and carry in my heart! This is how, little by little, you will experience that the ways of God are immeasurable, but also that nothing can escapes from his providence.

Well, it is at this moment that I wish to accompany you, make myself present with a word of consolation, of encouragement, encouraging you to hope against all hope, it is only enough that it be part of your intention, desire, concrete expression. I am always attentive to the prayers that you send to God through the intercession of this your servant.

I know you are living a tough time. But at the same time, it is a time of the Spirit promising renewal. Do not miss the opportunity to consolidate this experience with your eyes and heart fixed on Jesus, who has shown us the way, doing it first: "*knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit which has been given to us.*"(Rom 5: 3-5).

Sometimes I hear or see in your networks phrases like "everything will be alright", or that "the world yearns to return to normality". Although these are expressions of noble desires, a healthy realism makes us understand that in them there may be a bit of illusion, or be carriers of a certain distraction. Oh! My beloved daughters and sons, do not allow little depth or superficiality to entertain you with little credible or empty words, but rather may you perceive the timely, effective and hopeful message in the silence of prayer, in the seriousness of reflection, in the humble and attentive waiting for the passage of the Spirit. So that this your time may pass from the cross to the light of the resurrection with a deep Christian sense. You are responsible not only to care your faith but of many men and women who walk with you the path of salvation. How important is the power of a word that reaches and touches a fired heart by suffering and to help him find a liberating meaning, but full of evangelical essence. I entrust you very much this mission!

You would have noticed that I write to you with words and wide gaze. I would not like to miss this moment of "encounter" and share what we have discussed with Antonio María (Claret) several times in your recent times. You know that we are united not only by a common project, the founding of the New Order, but also by a deep spiritual friendship, which began precariously in Tarragona, took hold in Santiago de Cuba and reaches its fullness, here, together with God and his saints. How we are pleased to see you grow as a Family united around the Charism! How happy we are with the fine attention to the Spirit who directs you to new steps of openness and vocational and charismatic fruitfulness! What a hope gives us the path of

communion you take as consecrated by the baptism as religious and laity, cordially united by the same charism! Follow those paths, because the Gospel is one and it is for all, and because it is necessary for every creature to know and love the Holy Law, and because where one does not go, the other can.

I don't want to go on any longer, but I would like, finally, to recommend you to walk in good company. You know that the road becomes easier when you travel in pairs or more. As I said before in these tough times accompany each other; be mutual light and guidance in the darkness. Talk about what happens inside your heart with sincerity and respect. Spiritual conversation, where each one strips of oneself, puts an attentive ear, an open mind, an active listening and a compassionate heart. It is an oasis that helps sustain the questions and to wait with perseverance for the new times of answers. And know that this can only be done by someone who knows himself and is a brother.

And now yes, I leave you, I say goodbye with a see you soon till every moment! I await your prayers, requests to present them to the God of Mercy.

An affectionate hug,

Your mother, friend and companion, ***Maria Antonia París de San Pedro.***

On the 208th anniversary of the birth of Maria Antonia París,

foundress with Saint Anthony Mary Claret,

of Religious of Mary Immaculate Claretian Missionary Sisters

What feelings does the letter from María Antonia París arouse in you?

What are the aspects that generate delusion, hope ... or hopelessness, concern ...?

What would you ask God today through the intercession of Maria Antonia París?

Rome, June 27, 2021.

***Ana María Mandrile***

Internal Responsible for the Causes of the Congregation

