



They signalled their partners

“The most precious gift we can give to others is our presence. When our full attention embraces those we love, they blossom like flowers.” (T. Nhat Hanh)

To continue welcoming the fruits of the XVIII General Chapter is to meet again as Claretian Family with the Risen Lord on the shores of life, it is to allow ourselves to restart. It is to allow Him to reset the counter to zero and that, once again, His memory and His gestures may inspire our ways of walking the path.

✓ **I place myself:** opening my hands and breathing in that greater Breath that sustains life.

✓ **I ask** the grace to welcome the "fish" of my sisters, and my mission partners, in their differences and to be able to put my own without shrinking and with gratitude. To be able to concretise the way he dreams of us as a Claretian Family at this moment in history.

Luke 5, 1-7

Jesus is the one who approaches us, he takes the initiative, he stands beside us, he sees us where we are; he gets into our boat... he asks us... he sits beside us, he teaches us... Where we cannot, in his word and in his name we try again. He alone is the one who can.



After having rowed out to sea during this time, it is now time to "signal to the partners in the other boat to help each other". ..." (cf. Lk 5, 7).

Through the word and action of Jesus, there is overabundance in the heart, there is an invitation to more love, there is a fishing that we need others to carry out... When we bring our needs together we do not become more fragile, but more "accomplices". We are invited to walk together and to collaborate with others, so that each one can offer the best.

We recognise ourselves as part of a world of difficult and fractured relationships and the weak model of our shared lives would be able to say that other relationships are possible, that there is a way of living and working together that humanises, that helps, that facilitates life...

Harmonising the differences

Recognise the diversity of registers we share in our life together, from the food we eat, to the way we pray, to the way we react. Other people's responses, their ways of functioning, are not in the registers I would expect. We are, on many occasions, in different vibrations and it is good for us to recognise this and to learn to discover and assume this polarity of registers. A nun commented about a sister in her community: "She wanted to help me, but her way did not help me". We do not express life in the same way, I cannot expect others to discover what I need, and often without realising it, because of what we project, we almost provoke what we want to avoid. We get the Martha syndrome when, before Jesus says anything, she assumes, interprets, reacts, and complains ... and brings reality to a point of self-centredness. (cf. Lk 10, 40).

We have to learn to deal with the frictions caused by daily coexistence and deal with them for what they are: small frictions, without overestimating them or giving them the power to close off new opportunities for encounter. An anecdote told to me by an elderly Argentinian sister who has spent her whole life working with children with different abilities was an eye-opener. She told me that she had learned among them an essential lesson, that the one who can help you the most is the one who is most different from you: two children in wheelchairs cannot push each other. The one who is different increases what I lack, takes me further, gives me other perspectives. For these children, being different is not a threat; on the contrary, the diversity of the other becomes a blessing when they meet. This is so evident in the physical dimension and how difficult it is for us to accept it internally.

If we live this *first circle* as "companions", our communities, our shared spaces with the laity, can become good news for the poor and the little ones.

Not to feel threatened by the expression of the other, where my gift does not reach, the gift of my companion reaches, together we do more..

To internalise:

-How do others feel about me? Do they feel good in my presence, without the fear that I want them to be different than they are? Do they feel encouraged to bring out the best?

- What are my signals like in my relationships? To what extent do I let the virus of the 3 C's (compete, compare, criticize) into my everyday thoughts, conversations, and attitudes? What would help us neutralize this virus??

- On the journey we can become hardened or tender (lean towards complaining or grow in gratitude) What can help us to grow in a healthy way of interdependence, of appreciative affirmation of others? How can I be more grateful to my sisters, to my companions on the path, for what they are, and what they contribute to their differences?

Starting over once again

 **Jn 21, 1-15:** *“At daybreak Jesus appeared on the shore”.*

Visualize yourself with those with whom you travel the journey of life, this time and this specific place where you are. Welcome each one, with its own name, with its own reality different from yours; receive them as companions with whom the Risen One invites you to follow him and to cast your nets again; Not to let them steal your joy... nor the ability to say thank you.



-With what people, in what ways am I invited to cast my nets again, to try again, to practice with others the care of love?

-What is that "fish" that the Lord asks of me at this moment and that no one can put for me?

-How do I already invite others to be able to offer their fish? I ask Jesus to pass on to me his ways of asking in order to validate.

 **Jn 21, 15-18:** In Jesus' encounter with Peter, I relive my own story:

- - The first time he cast his nets for him and felt the call: "Depart from me, O Lord, for I am a sinful man..." (Lk 5, 1-11).
- The Strong Times: *"You are Peter..."* (Mt 16, 18).
- The Most Difficult Moments: *"Get away from me, Satan..."* (Mt 16, 23)
- The Trust Betrayed: *"Even if everyone forsakes you, I won't forsake you"* (Mt 26,35). *"I don't know that man"* (Mt 26,72).
- Friendship Recreated: *"Simon, son of John, Do you love me more than these?"...*
- and the invitation to start over: *"Follow me"*, tells him for the second time in his experience of greatest fragility. It is in our poverty, and not in our achievements, that the Lord renews his love for us and entrusts us with what he loves most: take care of my sheep...

It is in our fragility that we can care with the ways of Jesus

When we are called to collaborate with other people, we are invited to consider each of them as if they had been entrusted to us personally (cf. Jn 21:15), as if each of the members of my community, of my group, has to do expressly with my following of Jesus in this concrete space and time, they are my first link in the Kingdom, what happens to them has to do with me, their joys and their pains need to find resonances in me.

This sense of interdependence, when healthy, generates in itself humanizing contacts, inside and outside the home. Contacts that require daily gestures where bonds are generated and strengthened: mutual interest, a word of encouragement and complicity, silent closeness in the face of unconfessed pain and loss, getting ahead in making things easier... and so many minimal gestures that maximize the value of living together.

When the *ammās* of the desert were asked how to know if the disciple was very close to God, they came to say something like this: if she covers her sister's frailty with tenderness and if she lightens her burden. Compassion led these desert mothers to a keen understanding of each other's inner battles. They cultivated a tender, vulnerable, and expansive heart, and vigorously rejected any critical or censorious attitude; They taught that self-knowledge is essential for a life in common, since awareness of one's own weaknesses is the opportunity to deepen our compassion for the weaknesses of others.

We are *therapists* of each other in our daily lives. We truly encounter others when we are able to love them in their frailty, in their humanity (as Jesus does with Peter).

And it is only when we dare to show our own vulnerability, when we let go of our defenses, that paradoxically we also become capable of healing. We need to generate ample spaces of trust and believe that reality gives more of itself, than the other, that the other, gives more of itself and that we have no idea of the fears that cross their hearts. Recognize the need for appreciation and recognition that each one has and the awkwardness to express affection. We are more needy than we show, but we are also much more loving than we show. Letting Jesus release that source of love in us.

«You'll stretch out your hands and someone else will lead you».

Open and extend your hands to welcome others and allow them to enter your heart with their different ideas, with a different culture, with their gifts and their weaknesses, their worries, their suffering, their wisdom, their joy... There is Someone we can trust and to whom we can give your hands together. It is He Himself who has led us so far, who leads us, and who will lead us.

«...You have been carried by me from the womb, held from the womb. Until your old age, I will be the same, I will sustain you until your old age. I've made it this far, I've taken you And I'll sustain you, I'll save you» (Is 46, 4)

“For all that has been, thank you, for all that is to be, yes”. (D. Hammarskjöld)