



SUPERIOR GENERAL
CONGREGATION OF THE
PRIESTS OF THE SACRED HEART
Dehonians

Prot. N. 0164/2021

Roma, June 2, 2021

Show us, O Lord, the way to follow

*Letter for the solemnity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus,
June 11, 2021*

*To the members of the Congregation
To all the members of the Dehonian Family*

Among the opportunities offered by communication technology, one is the ability to quite precisely know the location of people and places, routes, times, and means available to reach any place or destination in the fastest and most convenient way. These advantages, however, are not yet available to everyone. There are many places where people lack access to these basic means and structures. But regardless of the means and technology, what matters is to be aware of where we are and where we are going.

The celebration of the solemnity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus is an opportunity to review where we are on the journey, the way we are walking and how we are sharing it. It is up to us to situate ourselves in this global context that has brought so much upheaval. Some, more than others, are recovering a certain regularity in life and activities. But the suffering continues, and difficulties are not lacking. In the midst of all this, while we act, it is necessary to continue, both personally and communally, to reflect and answer the essential questions: where does all this leave us? What are we learning? How did we react? Among these and many other possible questions, one must not be missed: how do we go forward? As believers it is more than legitimate, indeed even necessary, that the question becomes a humble plea, as so many persons and peoples have continued to do in circumstances where everything is not clear:

*“In the morning let me hear of your mercy,
for in you I trust.
Show me the path I should walk,
for I entrust my life to you” (Ps 143,8).*

Looking at our Founder in his search for answers to his vocational and existential questions, he privileged the deep and persistent encounter with Sacred Scripture. In decisive situations his

walk was guided by the hand of Saint John the evangelist, whom he found to be a particular inspiration for his path and his work. We find certain traces of this in our Constitutions:

*“With Saint John
we see in the open side of the Crucified
the sign of a love, which,
in the total gift of self,
re-creates humanity in the image of God.*

*We are strengthened in our vocation
by contemplating the Heart of Christ,
the privileged symbol of this love.
Indeed, we are called to enter
into this movement of redemptive love,
by giving ourselves, with and as Christ,
for our brothers and sisters.” (Cst. 21)*

Let us take advantage of the occasion of this solemnity and once again draw near the foot of the cross, where Saint John the evangelist places us together with the mother of Jesus and the other women. But the Son's gaze embraces even more. With his eyes, Jesus himself shows us that the disciple he loves is also close to Mary. From above, his gaze lingers on them. Others are not there because they were afraid, or because they were disappointed. Some have distanced themselves and become isolated; others were lost in the night. Not everyone knew how to draw close. But for Jesus the important thing now is to show the closeness that is revealed through his Mother and in that disciple. He looks at them (Jn 19:26).

It is a moment of darkness (Mt 27:45), yes, but only until Jesus speaks. In fact, just as the Father did at the beginning (Gen 1:3), the word of the Son illuminates the scene and allows us to understand that what takes place there is not a tragedy inevitably subjected to the chaos of hatred, of lies, and violence. Quite the contrary, it is the configuration of a path that is born in the fragility of those who have no other form of power than a love for Life and knowing how to be neighbors. When the Son contemplates the closeness between his Mother and his disciple, it seems that he is recognizing the very closeness of the Father to Him and to all of humanity, a closeness that extends beyond the affliction without measure.

Perhaps this is why Jesus, with his word, invites both of them to consider a greater horizon, shows them a path that begins precisely by assuming the validity of what they themselves are and must not cease to be: woman and child, mother and disciple. It is up to both, as a gift entrusted to them, to lovingly care for each other as mother and disciple, and not in any other way, so that they can be recognized as an authentic family: one that arises from doing the will of the Father (Mk 3,34s.). For Mary and the disciple, what they saw and heard at the foot of the cross became a mission. They understood that Jesus was calling them to walk together, to share life. They were docile and daring in offering themselves to what we can surely call *the synodality that is born from the Heart of the Son*.

Before the side was opened, the availability of Mary and the disciple preceded the blood and water that flowed from his wounded side. It is they, the Mother and the disciple, who are the first to flow from the gaze, from the Word and from the bowels of the mercy of Jesus. Insofar as they adhere to Christ, they are the figure and model of the Church, disciple and mother who, united with the Redeemer, water, repair and regenerate humanity and the earth. This is where our Congregation and the entire Dehonian Family must always meet, be inspired and renew themselves. This is where we must learn to keep walking.

May the contemplation of the Heart of Christ, together with Mary and the beloved disciple, continue to move our lives, and our communities and families, so that in the midst of this history we share, intimately united to Him, and with particular attention to the most defenseless, let us not stop contributing to the establishment of his Reign in souls and in society.

In Him, fraternally,

Fr. Carlos Luis Suárez Codorniú, scj
Superior General
and Council