 **PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS**

 **28th August 2015**

**ENTER INTO THE PRAYER!**

1. **Create the atmosphere of contemplation¡**

**Reading and meditation of n°7:**

*Comfort, comfort my people,
says your God.
Speak tenderly to Jerusalem.* Isaiah *40:1-2*

**Listening**

**7.**Using a stylistic peculiarity, also seen later in the text (cf. *Is*51:17; 52:1: *Awake, awake*!), the oracles of the second part of Isaiah (*Is*40-55) make a plea to come to the help of Israel in exile, shut up inside an empty memory of failure. The historical context clearly belongs to the prolonged exile of the people in Babylon (587-538 BC), with all the consequent humiliation and the sense of powerlessness to escape. However, the disintegration of the Assyrian empire under the pressure of the new emerging power of the Persians, guided by the rising star of Cyrus, enabled the prophet to foresee that an unexpected liberation might come about. And so it did. The prophet, inspired by God, voiced this possibility publicly, interpreting the political and military developments as actions guided mysteriously by God through Cyrus. He proclaimed that liberation was at hand and that the return to the land of their fathers was about to take place.

The words that Isaiah uses: *Comfort... speak tenderly*, are found regularly in the Old Testament. These recurrences are of particular value in dialogues of tenderness and affection. Thus Ruth recognises that Boaz has “*comforted me and spoken kindly*” (cf. *Ruth*2:13), or in the famous page of Hosea who announces to the woman, Gomer, that he will “allure her and bring her into the wilderness and speak tenderly to her” (cf. *Hos*2:16) for a new period of fidelity. There are other similar parallel passages: the dialogue of Shechem, son of Hamor, who was in love with Dinah (cf. *Gen*34:1-5) and that of the Levite of Ephraim speaking to the concubine who had abandoned him (cf. *Judg*19:3).

This is a language to be interpreted in the context of love. Thus action and speech together, delicate and encouraging, remind us of the intense emotional bonds of God, the ‘spouse’ of Israel. This *comfort*must be an epiphany of reciprocal belonging, an interplay of intense empathy, ferment and vital connection. These are not superficial, cloying words, therefore, but mercy and deep-seated concern, an embrace giving strength and patient accompaniment in the rediscovery of faithful pathways.

 **In silence I contemplate:** ***How do I live my love relationship with God?***

**Bringing God’s embrace**

**8.**“People today certainly need words, but most of all they need us to bear witness to the mercy and tenderness of the Lord which warms the heart, rekindles hope, and attracts people towards the good. What a joy it is to bring God’s consolation to others!”(45)

Pope Francis entrusts this mission to consecrated men and women: to discover the Lord who comforts us like a mother, and to comfort the people of God.

Service in the Church arises out of the joy of meeting the Lord and from his call. This mission is to bring to the men and women of our time the consolation of God, to bear witness to his mercy.(46)

In Jesus’s view, consolation is a gift of the Spirit, the *Paraclete*, the Consoler who comforts us in our trials and awakes a hope that does not disappoint. Thus Christian consolation becomes comfort, encouragement, hope. It is the active presence of the Spirit (cf. *Jn*14:16-17), the fruit of the Spirit. And *the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control*(*Gal*5:22).

**In silence I contemplate: *My community is in need of the presence of God. I think seriously of how to give her this presence in this jubilee year of mercy which will be lunched on 8 December.***

In a world of distrust, discouragement and depression, in a culture in which men and women are enveloped by fragility and weakness, individualism and self-interest, we are asked to introduce belief in the possibility of true happiness, in the feasibility of hope that does not depend solely on talent, superiority or knowledge, but on God. All are given the possibility of encountering him, if they only seek him with a sincere heart. The men and women of our time are waiting for words of consolation, the availability of forgiveness and true joy. We are called to bring to everyone the embrace of God, who bends with a mother’s tenderness over us – consecrated women and men, signs of the fullness of humanity, facilitators and not controllers of grace,(47) stooped down in a gesture of consolation.

**In silence I contemplate: *Did I allow myself for God to embrace me? Am I aware that if I don’t welcome the mercy of God, I put myself far from the history of salvation? How will I show the motherly tenderness to those who will approach me wherever I will be?***

1. **Let us pray!**
* **Let us ask for the ability to open ourselves to the tenderness of God and to give us the intelligence to transmit it to others.**

* **Let us give thanks to God for our sisters Georgina Ofori-Kyei and Mary Efua Mensah consecrated and called by God to be witnesses of His mercy on the 1st of August.**
* **Let u spray for our sisters Kanga Cathérine and Yeo Marie-Noëlle, who will on the 30th of August and on the 12th of September respectively, take their perpetual vows; that they will feel the tenderness of God, embrace it and transmit it.**
* **Let us pray for our sister Foresta Kikwenzi Kinzanza who finishes her novitiate on the 30th of August and who after pronouncing her first vows will be called to extend the mercy of God where the obedience will take her.**
* **Sisters Manuela Marco and Gema Gil celebrate their golden jubilee, sister Ana Silvia Escanero has celebrated her silver jubilee. Pray that this moment in their lives will bring them with strength, the experience of the love of God towards them.**
* **Let us ask/pray for vocations for our congregation. A good vocation for each community of our delegation.**