 **PRAYER FOR THE VOCATIONS**

**28th December 2015**

**ENTER INTO THE PRAYER!**

**Create the atmosphere of contemplation¡**

**Reading and meditation:**

As a global network in which we are all connected, where no local tradition can aspire to a monopoly of the truth, where technologies affect everyone, the world throws down a continuous challenge to the Gospel and to those who shape their lives in accordance with the Gospel.

In this historical process, through choices and ways of living, Pope Francis is building up a living hermeneutic of the dialogue between God and the world. We are introduced to a style of wisdom rooted in the Gospel and in human eschatology, which interprets pluralism, searches for equilibrium, invites us to facilitate the capacity of being responsible for change so that the truth of the Gospel might be better communicated, while we move “within the limits of language and of circumstances”.(70) Aware of these limits each one of us becomes*weak with the weak... all things to all people*(*1Cor*9:22).

We are invited to promote a generative, not simply administrative, dynamic to embrace the spiritual events present in our communities and in the world, movements and grace that the Spirit works in each individual person, viewed as a person. We are invited to commit ourselves to dismantling lifeless models, to describing the human person as marked by Christ, who is never revealed absolutely in speech or actions.

Pope Francis invites us to a wisdom that should be demonstrated by flexible consistency, the ability of consecrated people to respond in accord with the Gospel, to act and to choose in accord with the Gospel, without losing ourselves among the different spheres of life, language or relationships, maintaining an awareness of responsibility, of the networks that bind us together, of the finitude of our limits, of the infinite number of ways in which life is expressed. A missionary heart is a heart that has known the joy of Christ’s salvation and shares it as consolation: “[This heart] realises that it has to grow in its own understanding of the Gospel and in discerning the paths of the Spirit, and so it always does what good it can, even if in the process, its shoes get soiled by the mud of the street.”(71)

Let us welcome the encouragement that the Pope offers us to see ourselves and the world with the eyes of Christ and to remain concerned about it.

***REFLECTION !***

**Questions from Pope Francis**

* I want to say one word to you and this word is “joy”. Wherever there are consecrated people, seminarians, men and women religious, young people, there is joy, there is always joy! It is the joy of freshness, the joy of following Jesus; the joy that the Holy Spirit gives us, not the joy of the world. There is joy! but – where is joy born?(72)
* Look into the depths of your heart, look into your own inner depths and ask yourself: do you have a heart that desires something great, or a heart that has been lulled to sleep by things? Has your heart preserved the restlessness of seeking or have you let it be suffocated by things that end by hardening it? God awaits you, he seeks you; how do you respond to him? Are you aware of the situation of your soul? Or have you nodded off? Do you believe God is waiting for you or does this truth consist only of “words”?(73)
* We are victims of this culture of the temporary. I would like you to think about this: how can I be free, how can I break free from this “culture of the temporary”?(74)
* This is a primary responsibility of all adults, of formators: to set an example of consistency to the youngest. Do we want consistent young people? Are we consistent? On the contrary, the Lord will say to us what he said to the People of God about the Pharisees: “Do what they say but not what they do!” Consistency and authenticity!(75)
* We may ask ourselves: am I anxious for God, anxious to proclaim him, to make him known? Or do I allow that spiritual worldliness to attract me which impels people to do everything for love of themselves? We consecrated people think of our personal interests, of the functionality of our works, of our careers. Well, we can think of so many things... Have I, so to speak, made myself ‘comfortable’ in my Christian life, in my priestly life, in my religious life, and also in my community life? Or do I retain the force of restlessness for God, for his Word that makes me “step out” of myself towards others?(76)
* Do we feel the restlessness of love? Do we believe in love for God and for others? Or are we unconcerned by this? Not in an abstract manner, not only in words, but the real brother we come across, the sister who is beside us! Are we moved by their needs or do we remain closed in on ourselves, in our communities which are often “comfortable communities” for us?(77)
* This is a beautiful, beautiful way to holiness! Do not speak badly of others. “But father, there are problems...”. Tell the superior, tell the Bishop, who can rectify them. Do not tell a person who cannot help. This is important: brotherhood! But tell me, would you speak badly of your mother, your father, your siblings? Never. So why do you do so in the consecrated life, in the seminary, in your priestly life? Only this: think, think... Brotherhood! This brotherly love.(78)
* At the foot of the Cross, Mary is at the same time the woman of sorrow and of watchful expectation of a mystery far greater than sorrow, which is about to be fulfilled. It seemed that everything had come to an end; every hope could be said to have been extinguished. She too, at that moment, remembering the promises of the Annunciation could have said: they did not come true, I was deceived. But she did not say this. And so she who was blessed because she believed, sees blossom from her faith a new future and awaits God’s tomorrow with expectation. At times I think: do we know how to wait for God’s tomorrow? Or do we want it today? For her the tomorrow of God is the dawn of Easter morning, the dawn of the first day of the week. It would do us good to think, in contemplation, of the embrace of mother and son. The single lamp lit at the tomb of Jesus is the hope of the mother, which in that moment is the hope of all humanity. I ask myself and I ask you: is this lamp still alight in monasteries? In your monasteries are you waiting for God’s tomorrow?(79)
* The restlessness of love is always an incentive to go towards the other, without waiting for the other to manifest his need. The restlessness of love gives us the gift of pastoral fruitfulness, and we must ask ourselves, each one of us: is my spiritual effectiveness healthy, is my apostolate fruitful?(80)
* An authentic faith always involves a profound desire to change the world. Here is the question we must ask ourselves: do we also have great vision and impetus? Are we also daring? Do our dreams fly high? Does zeal consume us (cf. *Ps*68:10)? Or are we mediocre and satisfied with our “made in the lab” apostolic programmes?(81)

**LET US PRAY!**

***Hail, Mother of Joy***

***Rejoice, full of grace*(*Lk*1:28), “the greeting of the angel to Mary is an invitation to joy, to a deep joy, announcing the end of sadness […]. It is a greeting that marks the beginning of the Gospel, the Good News”.(82)**

**Alongside Mary joy expands. The Son she carries in her womb is the God of joy, of contagious, engaging delight. Mary throws open the doors of her heart and runs to Elizabeth.**

**“Joyful in achieving her desires, sensitive in her duty, thoughtful in her joy, she hurries towards the mountain. Where, if not towards the summit, should she set out so kindly, she who was already full of God?”(83)**

**She went *in great haste*(*Lk*1:39) to bring the happy news to the world, to bring all the uncontainable joy she held in her womb: Jesus, the Lord. *In great haste*: it is not only the speed with which Mary went. We are told of her diligence, the careful attention with which she undertakes the journey, her enthusiasm.**

***Behold the servant of the Lord*(*Lk*1:38). The Lord’s servant ran *in great haste*, to become the servant of all people.**

**In Mary the Church is all who journey together: in the love of those who go out to the most fragile; in the hope of those who know that they will be accompanied in their going out and in the faith of those who have a special gift to share. In Mary each one of us, driven by the wind of the Spirit, fulfils our own vocation to move out!**

***Star of the new evangelisation,   
help us to bear radiant   
witness to communion,******service, ardent and generous faith,   
justice and love of the poor,   
that the joy of the Gospel   
may reach to the ends of the earth,   
illuminating even the fringes of the world.   
Mother of the living Gospel,   
wellspring of happiness for God’s little ones,   
Pray for us.   
Amen. Alleluia!***

***Merry Christmas***

***And Happy New¡***

***PEACE¡***