

THE GIFT OF FIDELITY



NOTHING IS MORE NOBLE, NOTHING MORE VENERABLE THAN FIDELITY

Every virtue is an expression of love. No virtue is really a virtue unless it is permeated, or informed, by love. Fidelity is a virtue closely related to truthfulness. Fidelity to God is a beautiful virtue that the Lord enjoys in the souls of those who love Him. It means putting every hope in God's fidelity to His Promises. Fidelity to one's word, to one's promises, and to one's vows to God is not something that can be taken for granted. This means in practice we are dependent one upon the other. And that is living in fidelity, faithful to God and reflecting Jesus who is Truth.

Since we are dependent, we need to trust each other in order to be able to build up our relationship. We are by nature social beings. If individuals are not truthful, not trustworthy, not faithful to what they say and promise, then the whole social system begins to crack. Even in the natural order, fidelity is a virtue, since it is truth in action. We are by nature social beings. This means in practice that we are dependent one upon the other. Since we are dependent, we need to trust each other in order to be able to build necessary social units, such as the family, local community, state, church, etc



Fidelity of God in the history of humanity, in the Church, in the Institute and in each person.

We refer the model of our fidelity to the fidelity of God. It is part of its essence and is one of its distinctive as God and as Father: "I am the first and the last. In the Old Testament, one of the essential attributes of Yahweh is his faithfulness (Exod. 34,6);). He is called the "rock" of Israel because of the truth of his words and the solidity of his promises (Deut. 32,4). I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore I have prolonged my faithfulness" (Jer 31,3). Abraham and Moses are models of fidelity, but even they had their faults. Perfect fidelity on this earth is found only in Jesus Christ, the faithful Servant who remains constant and endures to the very end.

God's faithfulness is fully manifested in Jesus. Jesus also loved his own who were in the world, and loved them to the end. (Jn 13,1). Consequently, every religious experience, twofold fidelity: the fidelity of God and the fidelity of man. God's love and fidelity are infinite. Our fidelity is limited and liable to some form of infidelity. His faithfulness is linked with mercy, "God is faithful who called them to live in union with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord" (1 Cor 1,9). God's fidelity is a patient fidelity, He is patient with His people, He listens to them, guides them, He explains slowly to them and He warms their hearts. We are given the grace and we are asked to respond in fidelity to the Father, through the Son the response of fidelity who loved us and gave himself for us. As He did with these two disciples who were going far away from Jerusalem: He warms their heart so that they might return home (see Lk 24,32-33). The whole person is involved in the encounter with God: we are called to live the total gift of ourselves, intellect and will, mind and heart, firmness and gentleness of consent. Fidelity, therefore, is combined with creativity: something must change and something must be maintained. The important thing is to discern what, in perseverance, must remain and must change.



Fidelity in the life of Blessed Virgin Mary

During her life on earth, God asked the Blessed Virgin Mary to be the humble Mother of Jesus and wife of Joseph. Her example of fidelity can be a model for anyone seeking to be faithful to the call God has given them. At the Annunciation, Mary gives an example of obedience to God's will, even when it is shrouded in mystery. Her fidelity as wife and Mother in the hidden life at Nazareth provides a model of humility and poverty, while her intercession at the wedding feast at Cana shows self-forgetful love.

God calls each one of us to a special mission. By listening to the Holy Spirit, we can find our joy and happiness by following the path God has set out for us.

One beautiful quality that our Blessed Mother had to perfection was fidelity. This fidelity towards her Son was first manifested in her fidelity to Elizabeth. She spent three months with Elizabeth. The virtue of fidelity is especially strong in a mother. As Jesus was dying on the Cross, His dear mother would have been nowhere else except on Calvary and the three long hours at the foot of the Cross. This manifested her great depth of commitment. She was unwavering in her love and faithful until the end.

Fidelity is a virtue that is demanded from each of us when we face the hardship of another. When we see others in need, suffering, sorrowful or persecuted, we must make a choice. We must either turn away in weakness and selfishness, or we must turn to them, bearing their crosses with them offering support and strength.

We, Sisters of Charity of Saint Anne, are women, consecrated and rooted in Christ, participating in the gift of the received from our Founders and First Sisters.: "are called, like Christ, to witness to the Father's love for all with a Universal Charity, chiefly to the poorest and the neediest, through the practice of Hospitality to the point of heroism" (Const. 6).

Actualization and fidelity to the Charism all the sisters are responsible to maintain this Charism always true to itself, renewing it according to the signs of the times, in the service to humanity, for the building up of the Kingdom (Const....7).

We are called to promote the Protection of minors and people in situation of vulnerability, which entails: To raise awareness of their importance to promote the formation of the Sisters and the people who collaborate with us, on this subject. We can say that our service is characterized by welcoming, listening, and valuing the person, serving them with humility and meekness... seeing Christ in the person. To be faithful to God requests us to be faithful to the person in the same attitude of love...living the values that are born from the Gospel and which were transmitted to us by John Bonal, Maria Rafols and the First Sisters.

"Faithful to this heritage, through the vow of Hospitality, we commit ourselves to surrender ourselves 'day by day', to the service of the needy chiefly of the poorest, even risking our own life in the mission to which the Congregation may send us" (Const. 18).

How can we acknowledge our own fidelity if we are not faithful to others?

Co-responsible for the fidelity of the Sister:

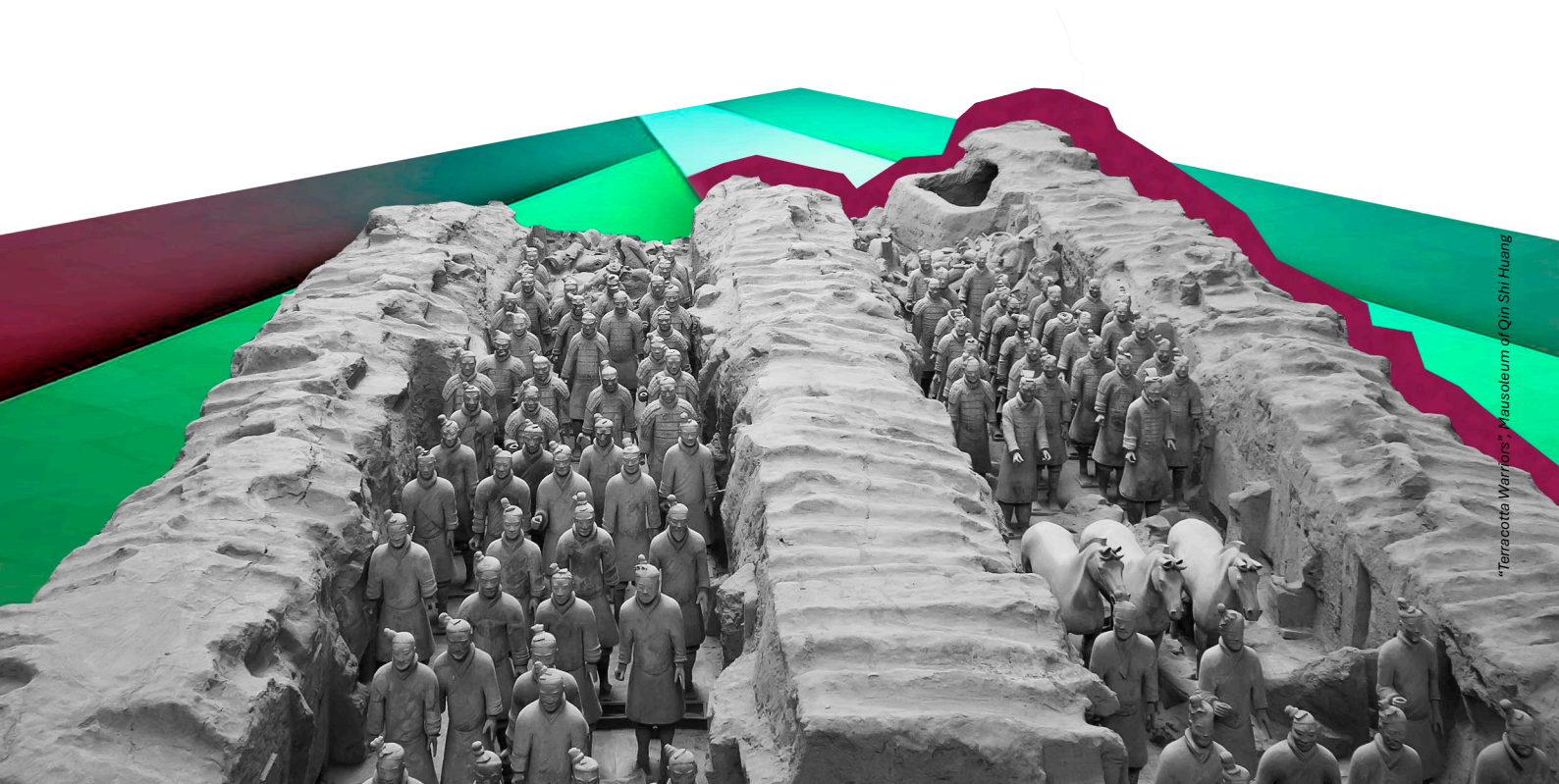
Fidelity continues through the different stages of life and, in the passage from one stage to another, there may be moments of insecurity and fragility. Although today we are witnessing a certain ease in not maintaining commitments and loyalties, we need to insist on commitments and fidelity, we need to insist on fidelity and help one another to be able to keep promises as a reflection of their inner freedom, their joy of living from the choices they have made. For this reason, it is important to highlight dynamic and creative fidelity.

In dynamic and creative fidelity, personal and community accompaniment is important as an illuminator of the deep meaning that each person seeks and person is looking for and can find in the institutions. These commitments do not guarantee fidelity, but they can give reasons for fidelity. It is a task that requires overcoming difficulties, seeking new horizons, walking in the right direction and in good company. The fidelity is linked to happiness and success.

The community helps to make and share deep experiences of God and faith.

It also shares the mission. It is the support in the mission and the incentives to solidify the option made and support to make visible the Kingdom of God. The community organizes the culture of accompaniment, necessary for the incentive to love and fidelity.

- a) Each person can take up again her itinerary of fidelity, her difficulties, overcoming difficulties; motivations for fidelity that were reinforced; or the practices that most helps to grow in fidelity.
- b) Each community needs to create a climate of trust, acceptance and understanding that facilitates the sharing of life, including vocational issues. It also needs to guarantee a human and affective religious support to its members.
- c) Fidelity to the Gospel in our life and mission, is a necessary reflection today no matter what generation you belong to. Evangelical fidelity is demanded of us through our baptism and our religious profession. It is the only thing that brings meaning to our life.





"Madonna and Child with Saints" by Andrea Della Robbia

Lets pray to our Blessed Mother the faithful woman who desires from us to live this virtue of fidelity in our consecrated life. (all together)

Mary, faithful woman, you were docile in welcoming the Spirit of truth that proceeds from the Father, through your Son Jesus, teach us to preserve the gift of a vocation and to rediscover its vitality day by day. We look to you, to contemplate God's work which renews our ability to love and heals our wounded fidelity. We look to you, persevering in following, watchful guardian and lover of the Word, to contemplate the blessedness of those who through fidelity bear much fruit. We look to you, persevering at the foot of the cross to stand beside the infinite crosses of the world, where Christ is still crucified in the poor and the abandoned, to bring comfort and support.

We look to you persevering with the Apostles in prayer to burn with the Love that never goes out, to walk in joy and to face defeats and disappointments without anxiety. Mary, faithful woman, pray for us. Obtain for us from your Son and our Redeemer a living and loving faith, a humble and diligent charity, to live the gift of fidelity in perseverance, humble and joyful seal of hope.

Amen.



**SISTERS OF
CHARITY OF
SAINT ANNE**