



Congregación
de Hermanas de la Caridad
de Santa Ana

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Estella (Navarra – Spain), November 3, 2024

TO ALL THE SISTERS OF THE CONGREGATION AND LAITY OF SAINT ANNE FAMILY

*“Your ideal was love, prayer your secret,
humility your richness, poverty your gift.”*

- Your ideal (Song to Maria Rafols) -

Dear Family,

Just reaching the anniversary of the birth of Maria Rafols, I come to each one of you to congratulate you on this Family feast in which we remember our Mother with gratitude.

There are many aspects of her life in which we can stop in order to remember, to contemplate her in her attitudes and allow ourselves to be influenced by her, but this year, following the inspiration of one of the chaplains of our General House, Fr. Jose Manuel Berruete (OAR), I want to focus on her stage as sacristan of the Hospital of Our Lady of Grace.

It was a stage in which **Maria Rafols** did not take on responsibilities of government, nor tasks facing external people to whom serve, such as nurse or in charge of the foundling home, for which it would be easier to receive recognition, gratitude or love from others, but rather she focused on more hidden and simple tasks, without shine, which allowed her to unite herself more with the Lord in what is small and daily, and to grow in the gratuitousness of love.

During all that time, besides preparing things for the liturgy and taking charge of keeping the Hospital church clean and welcoming, she worked hard to make bouquets of cloth flowers with which to decorate it; **she became**, as our chaplain said, **an artisan of the flowers of good.**

She devoted a lot of time and a lot of calm and patient effort to the repetitive task of cutting fabrics of different colours with different dies, so as to make petals and leaves, which she would then sew together, in order to keep on making, flower by flower, all the necessary ones for one bouquet after another... and there must have been many, given the ones that we still preserve today in the museum of her humble memories.

This is what **we are all called for**, whatever the vital circumstance in which we may find ourselves, whatever the context in which we are, our age, our health, our community or our family: **to become artisans of the flowers of good**, to live each moment and to do each thing with the greatest love, to decide to place our whole heart into the small things that we daily live, do and/or suffer, into the joyful or pleasant ones and also into

the repetitive, tedious, prosaic, discreet and dull ones, those that perhaps only God and we know.

We may live through pleasant or hard circumstances, stages in which we feel more fruitful and productive, and stages in which we take on tasks that are more within the scope of our families or our community (bathing, dressing, combing and feeding small children, elderly people or other Sisters; cleaning, cooking, setting or clearing the table, washing up, keeping accounts, decorating, practicing songs, accompanying others...), stages of health and autonomy, and stages of illness, fragility or dependence in which we may only be able to allow ourselves to be cared for with docility and be grateful for what others do for us... but **we can always live everything with love**, offering each thing as one of those petals that Maria Rafols cut with her die so as to go on stringing together flowers of good that make life more pleasant for those with whom we live or who are close to us.

It is always time to pray, to unite ourselves to the Lord who is the source of our life, and to trust in Him, leaving ourselves in His hands... Life always has stages or moments of sacristy in which we are invited to live the encounter with God in greater gratuitousness, and in the heroism of what is daily, welcoming and living everything *with the greatest love*, like Maria Rafols.

HAPPY FAMILY FEAST FOR ALL OF YOU!

A very warm embrace, from my heart, together with the Sisters of the Council,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sr. Carmen Mora". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a blue line that extends to the right.

PS: We invite those of you who can come to celebrate the feast by participating in the **Eucharist** that we will have on **November 5 at 7 pm in the Chapel of the General House**.

I would also like to inform you that the alleged miracle of Maria Rafols (the healing of the blindness of a young man from the Canary Islands) of which I share about with some of you during my canonical visit to the Province of Spain, has unfortunately turned out to be a fraud. I encourage you to continue praying for her intercession so that we may be able to see her holiness recognized soon in the Church... I am sure that, in due time, the miracle will come.