

**Lent of hope...**  
**time to choose**



**retreat March 2025**

**Training and Spirituality**  
PROVINCE OF OUR LADY OF THE PILLAR

Once we have identified the ember on which to blow, we build with our hands that safe space, in the form of a cosy cavity, where we can shelter and protect the discreet flame, a deep glow, a luminous manifestation of joy and the desire to live.

It is not a bad image to face **Lent**, but rather an accurate intuition that wants to face convulsive times. Playing with our hands, rehearsing the best posture, the one that does not allow the wavering wick to be extinguished, the one that allows the right flow for the flame to dance freely, draw impossible shapes and wiggle gracefully in our hands... knowing that it is not the hands that are the protagonists but the light they hold, the Light that points to an absolutely resplendent end, and although known, sure of amazement and truth.

*"The joy of being here, of breathing, of being part of this web of light and shadow does not always present itself in the obvious flashes of joy. There are many intermediate tones in which the hymn can be heard: hidden thresholds, tiny moments where life reveals itself to us in its naked gratuity. There is a quiet happiness in the fact of existing, a quiet celebration that welcomes us"<sup>1</sup> .*

In this Jubilee Lent, we welcome the invitation to contemplate and discover the mysterious invitations which, clothed in crisis, lead us ineluctably to Life. And the grace lies in recognising the nuances, the difficulties, the half-hearted responses, the changes of opinion and, of course, the mistakes, which bring out in us the least accurate shot, the ill-timed gesture and the most misguided attitude. Let's get down to it, it's the time for details.

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<sup>1</sup> V. Herrero

## CHOOSE AND YOU WILL LIVE

***Today I set before you life and death, good and evil,  
choose the good and you will live (Dt 30:15-20).***

Lent gives us the possibility to look this strange time in the eye and to ask ourselves whether we are not accepting to live in a crisis of hope: *We want peace and there is no well-being, a time of healing and there is fear (Jer 14,19).*

It is the consequence of accumulating disappointments, that one ends up despairing of people, of things that happen, of opportunities, of what is different, of the future... to end up believing only in oneself and one's own little circumstances. And in the name of God we can leave God out, renouncing a fullness that comes to us from "Another", such a gift and grace, that can only be received, hoped for, awaited, sustained and desired. *How I longed to celebrate this supper with you! (cf. Lk 22:15).*

*"For hope is for the hopeless; for those who need it to live, and in those situations where it alone can give reasons to move forward. The settled and saved do not need it. Hope reveals itself by contrast: it camps where it is not looked for, where it is least expected, in the peripheries and in the rumours of the victims because what is hidden from the satisfied is revealed to the sunken"<sup>2</sup>.*

Hope, courageous, shuts the mouths of those who allow themselves the luxury of living without the need for Transcendence, those who die every day full of pride and arrogance. It opens the way for us to choose: a choice, a decision to be made, a determination, something to confront...

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<sup>2</sup> J. García Roca

To choose the right word, the right look, the spontaneous gesture that triggers life, the choice that dignifies, the silence that accompanies, to invest in a shared coffee that triggers fraternity. Every day is a choice between life and death, between good and evil... choose hope, even in Lent... you will live!

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Behold this time that is neither distressing nor empty of reasons to walk, on the contrary, it is full of opportunities for greater faithfulness and more happiness, full of possibilities, various approaches, unlimited directions and winning choices:

- *Look up at the sky; count the stars, if you can. And he added: So shall your descendants be. Abram believed the Lord and it was counted to his credit (Gen 15:5-6).*
- *The Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, in the midst of great terror, with signs and wonders. He brought us into this place and gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey (Dt 26:8-10).*
- *Now my eyes shall be open and my ears attentive to prayer in this place; for now I have chosen and sanctified this house, that my name may be in it forever; and my eyes and my heart shall be there forever (2Cro 7,15).*
- *What has been, is already; and what is to be, has already been; and God restores what has passed away (Ecclesiastes 3,15).*
- *Behold him, and you will be radiant, your face will not be ashamed. The afflicted one called on the Lord, he listens to him and saved him from his troubles (Ps 33:6-7).*
- *Scripture says: No one who believes in Him will be disappointed (Rom 10,11).*

Choose your own quotes from the Word, the ones that give you life.

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## BE GUIDED BY THE TRUTH

"The opposite of sadness is reality"<sup>3</sup>, so we will have to make this Lent a time of truth if we want joy to accompany this journey. The invitation to reduce ornaments, to lighten liturgies, to silence noise, to seek sobriety, speaks more of stripping ourselves of appearances than of strange renunciations and committed fasting. The naked happiness that this time proposes to us is to sharpen our senses and, in truth, to recover something (as much as we can) of that first love?

*The angel writes to the Iglesia from Ephesus:*

*This says the one who holds the seven stars in his right hand and walks in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks:*

*-I know your works, your effort and your fortitude. I know that you cannot stand the wicked, that you have tested those who call themselves apostles without being apostles and found them to be liars. You have strength and have suffered for my name without giving up. But I must reproach you for having let love first grow cold. Remember then from where you have fallen; change your attitude and return to your first conduct. If you do not do so, if you do not convert, I will come to you and tear your candlestick from its stand. Nevertheless, you have it in your favour that you abhor the conduct of the Nicolaitans, as I also abhor it.*

*He who has ears, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God. (Rev 2:1-7)*

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<sup>3</sup> Simone Weil

You are known to the last fibre of your being, nothing is hidden from the one who walks through the labyrinth of your thoughts, emotions, feelings, motivations, reactions and ways of proceeding .<sup>4</sup>

Your courage, your honesty, your audacity, your uprightness, your integrity, the limit of your patience... nothing escapes the one who contemplates you and desires you day and night. Whether you walk or rest, whether you climb to the sky or fly to the edge of the sea, there he finds you, to envelop you and sustain you. Because from afar it penetrates your thoughts and knows your words almost without uttering them.

Abandon yourself in that gaze that does not question you, because it knows and understands everything about you. Rest in that gaze that loves you in the nakedness of your essence and that does not question you; that only regenerates you, that gives your bloodstream the oxygen, the strength, the speed and the temperature required to respond with all its love to that *loving gaze*.

Remember and recall that warm tenderness that led you in another time, that prose or that verse forgotten in an old notebook of reflections, that spark capable of turning your heart red and that may sleep the sleep of the harshness of time and life.

Rekindle in you the fire that is not consumed:

- that it does not extinguish the initiatives of others, but rather energises them.
- that does not choke the cry in the throat but channels it, bathing it in new and liberating strength.

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<sup>4</sup> Cfr. Retreat 2009. Prov. NSP.

- which does not forget the disinherited of the earth but places in them the hope of a shared future.
- who does not allow himself to be overwhelmed by fear and the desire to fight, but who seeks peace with those close to him and prays for dialogue for those far away.

Rekindle in you the fire of sincere and passionate love, of the first love for which you were created and for whose oblivion you have let so many realities, relationships, ways... cool down.

Perhaps your effort, your fortitude, your dedication... have lost closeness and warmth. Perhaps you allow yourself a certain rigidity and coldness in your relationships, even with yourself, a certain indifference and hardness in your perception of the Community, of the Congregación, of the world...

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Rekindle in you the fire of love first, of passionate and sincere love, in every circumstance, in every event, before every person... between firmness and tenderness... between the good and the best.

- *Let God's desire emerge in you, wherever you are, be a blessing to those who cross you, for you are deeply loved and you too choose to love.*
  - *It supports and pushes from within everything that is new, everything that grows, everything that is good and positive in every person, in every situation, in everything that happens, in every corner of the world.*
  - *He believes that from Him nothing is impossible, lost or exhausted.*
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Known in the depths of your being, nothing is unknown to the One who formed your womb and knit you together in your mother's womb, *even the hairs of your head are numbered (Mt 10:30)*. Nothing escapes his Presence: your gifts and your limitations, your joys and your sufferings, your successes and your failures, your hopes and your frustrations, your endeavours...

Abandon yourself once again to that gaze that does not question you and that at this moment only wants to hold you from behind and in front.

Do not let yourself be intimidated by the daily difficulties, by the daily pressures, by the frequent tensions, by the tense atmosphere, by the injustices of society. He is the first and the last word in history. In Him you are called to live, He comes so that you may have life and have it in abundance (Jn 10,10) and you are committed to generate life, to facilitate life, to work for all that dignifies people's lives.

Do not be seduced by those who would oppose justice and faithfulness, remember that *justice and peace kiss each other, that faithfulness comes from the earth and justice appears from heaven, that justice will go before him and righteousness will follow in his steps (Ps 84,11-12.14)*.

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Remain. Resist. Be faithful. Bet on life:

- *Name your weakness, your limitations and poverty. Acknowledge your tribulation, that which makes you suffer, that which keeps you awake, that which worries you, that which gives you reservations and prevents you from giving yourself fully.*
- *Name also your wealth, your strengths, your certainties, your possibilities, what makes you joyful, what encourages your*



*dreams and your hopes, what animates your generosity, what makes you resist, remain, be faithful.*

- *He believes that from Him everything is created to bear fruit.*
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## WHAT DO WE EXPECT FROM THIS LENT?

*"God is the foundation of hope; but not just any God, but the God who has a human face and who has loved us to the end, each one of us in particular and humanity as a whole. His kingdom is not an imaginary beyond, situated in a future that never comes; his kingdom is present where he is loved and where his love reaches us. Only his love gives us the possibility to persevere day by day in all sobriety, without losing the impulse of hope, in a world which by its nature is imperfect"<sup>5</sup> .*

And at this point we ask ourselves: **What are we waiting for?** Perhaps this is the main question of this time of discernment, of this particular joyful Lent, because only with hope can we live, work and maintain dignity, enlighten, be in solidarity, speak of Salvation... without hope, our fragility and the fate of the weakest will always be in the hands of the bullies of the day.

Let us go out into the street, or let us look for that sister at home with whom I have difficulties, and let us tell her that we are in the Lent of Hope, that we are waiting for Someone, that we are walking in absolute trust, that we are pointing to God. A God who decentres us, who moves us from our waiting self to the Expected One, who has created a new dynamic of Encounter and Salvation in which it is He who expects so much from us.

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<sup>5</sup> SpS, 31

The place where God dreams of us is fraternal life, for us sisters, lived in Community, letting "love first" also renew the hope of vocation. Rekindle the gift of God in the passing of the day with your sisters, with whom you form that group of followers who left everything to follow Him: comforts, demands, excuses, nephews and nieces. To leave, to welcome a shared existence, to live under the universality of the gift, to give space to the essential desire, to let Him speak to the heart.

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Go to the desert, take advantage of what it has to offer:

***Fasting: To deprive oneself, to renounce...***

*Mt 12,1-8*

*Don't put bitter or overly spiced words or indigestible comments on your plate. Fast from what you know will not fit on a shared table (or you will have to swallow what you know will not sit well). Don't intoxicate yourself, take the opportunity to fast.*

***Limosna: to give, to give us...***

*Mk 7, 24-30*

*And it is not what I give or what I do... it is how I give or how I do it. Share the pavement of the little ones, of the disinherited, of those excluded from our land, work for dignity, for just causes, for peace, push history so that what is in it of shadow, of injustice, of death is transformed into a cascade of life and hope.*

***Prayer: pray your wounds...***

*Lk 17, 11-19*

*To let gratitude be the incense that permeates everything, that invisible aroma that settles in the pit of the stomach. Pray in the hidden, pray in Community, pray in the street, pray while you laugh (or cry), pray when you sleep.*

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## PRAYER

*Every morning  
I will immerse myself in You,  
water of life,  
before being a vessel,  
nutrient in the furrow,  
play at the source,  
calm on the lake.*

*Every morning  
I will be attuned to you,  
Word of the Father,  
before being a whisper in the ear  
classroom discourse,  
announcement in the wind,  
silence in listening.*

*Every morning  
I will orient myself in You,  
the way of the Kingdom,  
before being passed on the street,  
route on the border,  
pause in the waiting,  
jump in the air.*

*Every morning  
I will rest in You  
wisdom incarnate,  
before being  
wakefulness in sleep,  
arrow in the bow,  
suture in the wound,  
tiredness in your hand.*

*Every morning  
I will look to You,  
image of the Father,  
before being  
joy on his face,  
strength in the arms,  
caress in the eyes,  
light in the mud.*

*(B. González Buelta)*

🎵 **Our place - RUAH** [[Click here](#)].



PROVINCIA  
NUESTRA  
SEÑORA  
DEL PILAR

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Formación y  
Espiritualidad

HNAS. de la CARIDAD de SANTA ANA