



Congregación  
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## 244<sup>TH</sup> BIRTH ANNIVERSARY OF MOTHER MARIA RAFOLS

### TO ALL THE SISTERS OF THE CONGREGATION

*Wisdom is revealed to prudent people,  
and manifests itself in just and righteous deeds.  
Those who possess it are close to God, and their influence extends to all.*

*(Ws 6:12-14).*

*The saints are the shining witnesses  
who inspire and sustain us on life's journey.  
They show us that holiness is not something distant or unattainable,  
but a gift that we can all embrace and live.  
They invite us to be people "filled with God", who bring His love  
to our homes, our workplaces, and our daily lives.*

*(Pope Francis, Homily in the Solemnity of All Saints, November 1, 2021).*

Dearest Sisters,

Today we greet our Mother Maria Rafols, we give thanks for the gift of her life, her generous surrender, and we admire what this great woman has been, clothed in humility and simplicity. She embodied the Gospel in her life, learnt from Jesus how to love and surrender herself, how to live being always in the sight. With her gaze, her gesture, and her closeness, she transformed everything from the style of care in the hospital ward to hearts hardened by scrutiny, resentment, and power. Her total trust in God made her live like a robust and luminous tree that shelters, protects, and embraces. Her transformative presence is what makes of her a great soul.

Trusting in God means betting on humanity, on the reality as it is; it means building, betting on life, love, and unity. Faced with pain, suffering, abandonment, loneliness, and lovelessness, Maria Rafols spread the balm of presence, care, gentleness, tenderness, and hope up to heroism. Her compassion was always translated into understanding and love. Her gestures made everyone's existence more humane, recognizing dignity and sowing beauty.

In this world threatened by poverty, ecological degradation, and exclusion, humanity seeks security, new opportunities, and belonging. We, as Sisters of Charity of Saint Anne, seek how to live and make present the charism bequeathed

to us by our beloved Maria Rafols. The recently concluded 31<sup>st</sup> General Chapter wisely guides us on the Vereda (path) to follow.

Both for Maria Rafols, and for all of us, the Master par excellence is Jesus Christ. What He touched, He transformed it; and Maria Rafols' contemplative gaze made Jesus' gesture a reality in her life.

This Feast invites us to follow in her footsteps, to leave clear and firm footprints. May our community rooms and places of service, our encounters, gazes, words, gestures, and attitudes have that transformative touch.

And following the Lord Jesus, as our Founders did, I share with you the good news of a new experience in Indonesia, in the Archdiocese of Ende, which our Congregation will begin on December 3<sup>rd</sup>, through the Province of St. Francis Xavier, and three Filipina Sisters. I ask you to keep them in your remembrance and prayer, so that the Lord may bless these first steps with a new foundation in this country.

Let us be inspired by Maria Rafols, by her passion for God and her compassion for the least, so that we may continue to be, like her, balm, tree, and boundless love.

May the celebration of this Feast awaken in us the courage to uproot all that prevents us from living our commitment according to the style we have inherited. Into the hands of Mother Maria Rafols we place our desires to walk together, our hopes, and our dreams. May she be for all of us the strength that may impel us to live open to the Spirit and His inspirations, so that we may know how to live the charism she embodied and transmit it in our daily lives.

Let us create, with our very being and doing, a spiritual bouquet to greet Maria Rafols on the 244<sup>th</sup> anniversary of her birth. May her life and example continue to inspire in us the faith, compassion, and surrender that shaped her mission.

Happy feast to all, for it is our Feast Day, and we have ample reason to feel grateful and happy.

The Sisters of the General Council join in this greetings, wishing everyone a joyful, profound, and familial celebration that may be translated into gratitude, commitment, and hope. Guided by our Founders, we continue to embrace and live out the Conclusions and Agreements of our 31<sup>st</sup> General Chapter.

Receive a warm embrace with all love.



*To those of you who are able to attend, we invite you to celebrate the feast by participating in the Eucharist on November 5<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m. in the Chapel of our General House in Zaragoza, Spain.*

*We will have all of you very present before the sepulchre of our beloved Mother Maria Rafols.*