

Sister Primi , Award to Dear Sr. Primi.

I am here on behalf of the Congregation of Sisters of Charity of Saint Anne, with gratitude to the Pontifical Mission Societies (PMO) that are contributing so much to proclaim the Gospel throughout the land, the main instrument of the Catholic Church to address the great needs that missionaries encounter in their work of evangelization throughout the world.

“The root of all good grows in the land of gratitude,” says the Dalai Lama:

Gratitude to each one of you, for this constant spiritual, material and solidarity support, no matter how small, distributed according to the existing needs in the mission territories, so that the missionaries can announce the Gospel and collaborate in personal and social development of the people in the midst of which they carry out their work. Thank you for your work as Church that goes out, Missionary in the World. I can only express our thanks and gratitude for joining us in helping to lift up so many vulnerable people who could not have a dignified and better future without our presence.

On this day of recognition towards my Sister of the Congregation, Sister. Primi, who has given herself in my country for 51 years and continues to give herself, I feel almost unable to find the right words to convey everything that is Sister Primitiva Vela for us in India. Receiving an award of these characteristics is a great and memorable experience, which Sister Primi and we as a Congregation are grateful, keeping in mind, at the same time, the words of the one who was our Superior General for more than forty years, Mother Pabla Bescós: “Let no one know that we exist because of the noise”... Therefore, we express as Congregation our feeling of gratitude with great humility and congregational simplicity. Thank you.

The unconditional and generous dedication of our Sister Primi is admirable, in the different tasks that the Congregation has entrusted to her, working as a Missionary in Social Development Projects, favouring the empowerment "of many people in danger of social exclusion", as well as seeking to improve their living conditions, both of the people who have neither roof nor bread, such as in education and offering possibilities for improvement...

Her experience at the Children’s Home, Ramón Pignatelli City School, property of the Local Government of Zaragoza, while she waited for her visas to enter India, in 1971, was a milestone in his life and had a very strong impact on her... That great house, full of little girls much in need of everything and that “predilection” in her missionary life always captivated her, as Sister Primi expresses : “In my more than fifty years of stay in India, I have cherished it with me and I live with it. It gives meaning to my existence.”

Sister Primi has been a missionary and continues today to be a charismatic woman for the poor. From a very young age, of 27 years old, while still a Sister of temporary profession, she went to India, a country in which she made her perpetual profession and her definitive consecration to the Lord, and where she has lived more than 50 years dedicating herself to announcing the Gospel to everyone, especially the youngest and most vulnerable children, such as the girls from the shanties of Mumbai, with whom she has been living and caring for almost 30 years.

Sister Primi has always been a woman of great Mission, leader, creative and entrepreneur. During her time as Provincial Superior of the then Province of India, she opened the

Congregation in this country to risky and frontier missions, such as caring for lepers, rescuing girls from prostitution, etc... and also opened the Congregation to new countries such as Macau, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines and Australia.

I met Sister Primi when I was 15 years old. Since then and to this day I admire and value her as a Social Mentor of our country. Her being and doing, her social commitment, her great love for the poor, her permanent dedication to them, her spirit of sacrifice, with a great vision of the future... I consider her as the second or another Francis Xavier, evangelizing and being Good News for the poor, the abandoned, widowed women, street children... She lives her vocation as Jesus lived: The spirit of the Lord is upon me... he has anointed me to announce the Good News to the poor; He has sent me to proclaim freedom to the captives, to set free the oppressed...

She lives her day to day life with great enthusiasm and joy, with the conviction of number 273 of Evangelii Gaudium: "I am a mission on this earth, and that is why I am in this world... marked with fire by that mission to illuminate, bless, vivify." lift, heal, release."

We have seen much of her life and work in the video. She performed and performs the service of giving visibility to those who are experiencing invisibility in society, recognizing people with dignity. Anyone who enters their community never leaves without hope, comfort or a remedy for their situation.... She brings to life the way of being of Jesus, his face and his public lifestyle as a woman of "a glass of water", "you give them something to eat", being the face and lifestyle of Jesus in society. .

For me and for many Sisters of our Congregation, Sister Primi has transmitted to us and continues to transmit, being as she is an inspiring woman, the authentic example of her Consecrated Life. Today, from her advanced age, she continues to teach us to do good at all hours, to live and do exactly what Jesus did in his society... to be an announcement and gesture of the Good News to the poor and to make transparent the glory of God...

Upon completing 50 years of missionary life in India, Sister Primi wrote to us some words of gratitude for everything that continues to be her life in this country to which she now gives voice:

"The ordinary fabric of my life has been woven of small duties, of ordinary occupations and concerns, of monotonous chores but that is currently giving meaning to my life and hope and love to these hundreds of children and families and people in great need whom we love, we serve, and we try to free from their poverty.

My favourable motto is "The glory of God is that the poor may live". My experience in these fifty years has been the conviction that the face of the poor is not only to be seen, it is to be heard and it tells us of so much need and misery. And it requires from me to overcome indifference then awaken compassion and getting involved in their fate, leading us to "open our house". These are the joy of my life in these fifty years, experiencing that life itself is love, and not a single investment of love is lost.

I have learn that God loves us, and not because of what we do, but because of what we are. Being aware of it is the happiness of my life. Love begets love. God wants to do something good through me and my Sisters for these people whom we serve, so I put myself at his service, and I let him do what he wants to happen. "I have come to bring life," Jesus said, "and life to the full."

At the end of these 50 years I can only say that it is a privilege to live in India. In its simplicity it teaches us values. In its poverty, compassion. In its overcrowded streets it reminds us that we are insignificant actors in the theatre of life, but with a greatness of origin: we are all equal, rich, created in the image of God”.

To conclude, if I have to put or if there is an opportunity to call our Sister Primi with a new name, I would give her two: Mother of Compassion and Mercy, because nothing in her is a lack of Compassion and Mercy...

“True human life is to give oneself generously,” says Rabindranath Tagore, the Indian social reformer. Appreciation and gratitude are the best rewards I can express. Thank you for the social commitment, the simplicity, the creativity, especially the effort you make to reach every corner with an attitude of availability and your ability to multiply goods for the poor... it is admirable...

Thank you for so many initiatives, for transforming the lives of the poor so that the poor have another way of living.

When communicating with Sister Primi and talking to her about this award, she told me, “Gracy, I don't want this recognition award to stay just for me”... She wants to dedicate it to all the missionary Sisters who are outside their country, giving their daily lives for the poor and serving others “as our Lords”, from the “you did it to me”... “With the greatest care, with all detail, with all love” of our Founders, Mother María Ràfols and Father Juan Bonal.

A week ago I returned from visiting the Communities of Sisters that our Congregation has in the Ivory Coast and Ghana. I have shared with my Spanish Sisters, evangelizers and sowers of faith in that land for last 50, 48, 40, 30 years... Likewise in other places of mission... These Sisters who have not only been merely evangelizers, but, as consecrated women, have been the reason and inspiration for many native vocations in each place and continent. They are the instruments that help and accompany us to live the religious vocation with more depth and authenticity. Therefore, with much gratitude and emotion, together with Sister Primi, I dedicate this award, on behalf of the Congregation, to all those dear Sisters...

We, as Sisters of Charity of Saint Anne, with the vocation of “Being Charity” and the demand of our Congregational Charism, are called to live it as a family legacy, as a Congregational Identity and as our own style. We live Charity by welcoming Christ in the most needy and poor, recognizing Christ in the poor and destitute anywhere and everywhere (Const. 39), especially in the signs of the times in which we live, being faces of hope, compassion and mercy as did Blessed María Ràfols, Venerable Father Juan Bonal and our First Sisters.

“Be yourself the change you want to see in the world”, “Whatever you do will be insignificant, but it is very important that you do it”, said Mahatma Gandhi and, precisely like this, these Sisters live in a land of mission, being a caress of affection, a compassionate look, a gesture of nearness and Hospitality that changes the situation of vulnerable people in our society, in our environment. This is how our Founders and First Sisters lived it, shaping their lives with Christ, doing everything for others, opting on a change for the common good of the poorest and most needy.

In the name of Sister Primi and on behalf of the Congregation of Sisters of Charity of Saint Anne,
I reiterate our immense gratitude: Thank you, thank you very much.