



My dear Sisters,

May God's Peace and joy be with you all as we begin our Provincial Chapter tonight.

Six years ago, in 2007, we had our Provincial and General Chapters. Where I am now, is where I stood during the Provincial Chapter of 2007, as I shared with you the significant events in the Life and Mission of the Philippine Province under my watch. Tonight, I will do exactly the same, but this time, I will take into consideration my nine years of being in office, with a different perspective, given the different situations and innovations that happened in the Philippine Province and our country.

First of all, allow me to welcome all of you with a sense of gratitude for your loving support. Had it not been for your zealous dedication and generosity, all the acts, and every act for that matter that we are capable of doing or, still in the process of doing and, those we have already done, will come to nothing.

In this Year of Faith, let us be courageous my dear Sisters, "not to labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to eternal life." (Jn. 6:27) As our theme says, "We are the salt of the earth, the light of the world." (Mt. 5:13-16) Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI says, and I quote from *Porta Fidei*, "This Year of Faith is a summon to an authentic and renewed conversion." Let this Provincial Chapter then be a beginning or a continuation of a life of authentic and renewed conversion to our Lord Jesus Christ.

My dear Sisters, at this point, allow me to retrace our steps on the strategic directions the Philippine Province has taken these nine years. In here I will present to you important events in the life and mission of the Province that have impacted on the life of each and every Sister of St Paul.

Our first Council of Province on January 2-9, 2005, echoed the theme of the Council of Congregation in Rome, August to September 2004, "Becoming More Creative for the Mission in Fidelity to our Charism." In this assembly, we have journeyed together to re-capture our identity, to re-discover in-depth the elements of our Charism, Spirituality, and Mission. We have indeed awakened to a realization that unless we re-discover our religious identity as SPC, we cannot be daringly creative for the mission. To be daringly creative demands prophetic presence: to be bearers of hope in a world battling with secularism, materialism, terrorism, injustice and corruption; and to be witnesses to the primacy of God's love in a fragile, fragmented and consumer-driven society. In this assembly as our response to this call of presence and relevance, we formulated our five Priorities that served as our guide-posts in the actualization of our Vision and Mission, and the living out of our Charism.

The Priorities of the Philippine Province are the following:

1. Direct Service to the Poor
2. Institutionalization of the Pastoral Ministry
3. Lay Empowerment
4. Holistic Formation
5. Alignment of Policies, Systems and Procedures to the SPC Identity, Charism and Spirituality

On November 28 - December 1, 2005, our Council of Province had the theme, "Deepening of the SPC Spirituality through Prayer and Discernment as Individuals and as a Province." Our SPC Spirituality has to permeate our whole life and all our activities otherwise we fall into the trap of "working for God instead of doing God's work."

It is very heartening to know that our communities in the Province have tried and are still trying their best to create a culture of SPC Spirituality through fidelity to a life of prayer, Bible study and BEC, regular faith sharing which has become an integral part of the horarium, practice of *Lectio Divina*, community discernment, constant awareness and vigilance in maintaining equilibrium in prayer and involvement in the apostolate, common study of SPC history, spirituality, and the like. The book, "Walking in the Truth: Maturing in SPC Spirituality," authored by the formators is being used as a guide to prayer.

More activities that would help in the deepening of SPC Spirituality were organized and made available to the Sisters, namely:

- Fr. Ramon Bautista SJ, gave conferences on Spirituality and Discernment for the Sisters of Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao.
- Retreat, both preached and directed, and recollections, including the year-end recollection, carried the theme, "The Prophetic, Evangelical and Eucharistic Dimension of our SPC Spirituality."
- Pauline Lecture Series, Lenten conferences on Christocentric Paschal Spirituality were also made available.

- All assemblies by age groups and ministries carried the theme, "The Deepening of SPC Spirituality."

A tool, "Self-Assessment in the Living out of SPC Spirituality," was crafted by a team of Sisters with the help of Dr. Mila Mendoza that would aid in the deepening of SPC Spirituality. The result was very revealing, which opened our eyes to our strengths, weaknesses and challenges that lie ahead of us in the deepening of our spirituality.

The Areas evaluated in the Self-Assessment Tool which were given to all the Sisters, are the following: Knowledge and understanding of the SPC Spirituality, Interiorization of the

Spirituality, and Living out of the Spirituality in the five priority areas. Interiorization ranked first, Holistic Formation ranked 2nd, and Knowledge and understanding of Spirituality ranked 3rd.

Sr. Rowena Gutierrez analyzed this as thus: Generally, the Sisters give importance to the integration of Gospel values in their lives. The Sisters submit themselves to a life of consecration, making the Eucharist the center of their daily activities. They also give importance to holistic formation. They put Gospel learnings into action and make themselves living witnesses of the Christian faith through professional and spiritual development programs. In this light, they give high regard to programs that evangelize and uplift the conditions of the Sisters and their lay partners.

Maturing in SPC Spirituality, as we all know, my dear Sisters, is an ongoing process and takes a lifetime, but it begins with small decisive steps. Our credibility as religious rests not on our achievements, not on our successes, not on our structures, but on Moral Integrity, which is a fruit of our religious experience.

Our Council of Province on November 27-30, 2006, with the theme Evangelization Today, echoed the conferences in Seoul, Korea with Fr. Philippe Lecrivain, SJ, as our main speaker. Before his session ended, Fr. Lecrivain asked this question to all the major superiors present, "How can the changes in the condition of the world today challenge you, Sisters of St. Paul of Chartres?" Then, he made this remarkable statement that I am quoting now.

"Sisters, you have to speak of Mission as Renewed Evangelization. Your communities should become communities of life, in the service of the poor, and a community where the Sisters invent the future of the Congregation together. The Sisters of St. Paul must present themselves not by what they do, but by the spiritual experience of God's love for them."

Thus, during our Council of Province in November 2006, we took up the challenge that summoned all SPCs to invent new paths of Evangelization wherever they maybe. Fr. Lecrivain was always stimulating the Sisters with his words full of dynamism and wisdom. He said,

"The SPC is a like a book. It would be necessary to turn a new page, but in writing a new page, you have to make a decision to turn the page of the past because if you don't, you will never write something new. Be careful not to tear the page of the past because it is your only link to the future. You have to read the past differently with intelligence and find in there the dynamism of your origins. This is the time for you to begin a new beginning. Invent new paths for the future while remaining faithful to your origins. Be the living memory of the Gospels in your midst."

Knowing that Evangelization Today can only blossom in communities that are signs of God's presence, these questions were asked and consequently responded to during the Council of Province: Does our fraternal life in community foster the human and spiritual growth of our Sisters, especially the young? Do we promote deep interpersonal relationships and create an atmosphere of openness and dialogue? Do we radiate the joy and the serenity of consecrated persons whose daily prayer is nourished by the Eucharist and the Word of God? The answers did not reveal perfect answers because our SPC communities are made up of human beings who are weak and fragile but, nonetheless, the best efforts to continue to strive, was very revealing in the responses.

The year 2007 was a blessed year. It was chapter year - Provincial and General Chapters were convened that year. The running theme of the Chapter was, "Strong in Hope, Fearless We Go." (2 Cor. 3:12)

The 46th General Chapter from September 6-28, 2007, brought about the following Capitular Acts:

1. Renew Our Missionary Horizons - "Widen the space of your tent, extend the curtains of your home, do not hold back! Lengthen your ropes, make your tent-pegs firm, for you will burst out to right and to left...." (Is. 54:2-3)
2. Provide Ourselves with a Strong Christocentric and Pneumatological Spirituality like St. Paul - "In the name of Jesus Christ and through the Spirit of our God." (1 Cor 6:11b)
3. Building Authentic Religious Communities - "These remained fruitful to the teachings of the apostles, to the brotherhood..." (Acts 2:42-47)
4. All Together Become Responsible for the Unity and the Future of the Congregation. "Just as each of us has various parts and each has a separate function, so all of us, in union with Christ form one body....Our gifts differ according to the grace given to us." (Rom. 12:4-8)

Other matters such as, Friends of St. Paul, Family Visits Abroad, etc. were also touched and given attention.

In November 2007, we convened the Session on Chapter Implementation of the Capitular Acts. Plans of Action were done in the level of the capitulars (Superiors were also invited) that were classified as Provincial and Local Plans of Actions. The capitulars also agreed on

the manner of implementing the Capitular Acts. The four chapter delegates to Rome and the Formators were given the responsibility to give the feedback to all the communities in the Province. This is very important because every Sister of St. Paul of Chartres should know what are the Capitular Acts of 2007, and for sure will only commit herself wholeheartedly to its actualization, if she knows and understands.

During the feedbacking, each local community came out with its own local plan of action in the implementation of the Capitular Acts. While in the province level, the Provincial Superior and the Council members took care of the actualization of the Provincial Plan of Action.

In the Council of Province of November 2007, we did an evaluation and assessment of the local communities' Plans of Actions. The Assessment Tool focuses on the individual Sister's

change of values, attitudes and behavior, than on the enumeration of activities accomplished or ongoing. I also presume you are all aware of your own local plans of action and how you implemented those, which could be seen in your responses to the survey questions sent by Rome, and the synthesis of which you are tasked to do at the last day of this Chapter.

These are some samples of the assessment done with the local communities' Plans of Action on the 4 Doors:

- Door A - Genuine interest in our missionaries, welcoming and attend to their needs; make resources available for the mission. Welcomes and accommodates needs of Sisters from other countries, re, formation, education.
- Door B - Fidelity to our Life of Prayer, regular community dialogue and sharing of faith experiences, integration of prayer life and apostolate, simple life style.
- Door C - Generous in giving affirmations, appreciative of individual's uniqueness and giftedness, readiness to give up one's comfort zones for others.
- Door D - Love and support for the appointed Superiors, acceptance of one's obedience; takes risks, courageous, always willing to learn more and be developed for a higher and good cause.

Let me share you some of the Plans of Action in the Provincial Level and how they were implemented:

1. Call to Internationality and Universality

- Accommodation of the Timorese Junior Sisters and Sisters from other countries for:
 - Formation
 - Study of the English Language
 - Studies - undergraduate and masteral
 - PhD
- Responded to new calls for expanding our missionary horizons

- Accepted 3 more parishes in Hawaii to help in the Christian Formation of the schools and parishes (Our Lady of the Mount, St. John the Apostle and Evangelist Catholic Church, St Joseph Church and School). We are already in St Anthony School in Kalihi since June 17, 2006.
- Accepted to administer the International School in Abu Dhabi.
- Accepted the administration of Antique Medical Center, a hospital owned by the Diocese; the only private, Catholic Hospital in Antique.
- Accepted the administration of the Hospital for Indigenous People (18 tribes) in Bayombong, Nueva Vizcaya.
- Accepted the administration of St. Andrew Catholic School in Bugallon, Pangasinan.
- Opened a medical clinic for the poor and pastoral center in Bagac, Bataan, with the land donated by the late Ambassador Valdez.
- Subsidized the school and pastoral ministry in Misereor Village, General Natividad, Nueva Ecija.
- St. Paul College Pasig opened the Fr. Louis Chauvet Foundation School for the poor.
- Mission Orientation and Re-entry Programs are richly provided, for first time and returning missionaries.

By the way, if you notice, the foundations that were established are all aligned with our 1st Priority, which is Direct Service to the Poor.

- Assemblies by age group on the Pauline Themes (Province wide), Human Rights and Social Concerns, Caring for the Environment
 - Sr. Severiana had been invited to talk on Missionaries and Migrants in some schools, as well as Advocacies for Human Rights and Social Concerns.
2. On-going development of the Website and a full time Sister had been assigned for systems' maintenance. We have Sr. Kathleen June Mariño as the Sister assigned.
 3. Adopted the SPC Health Care Ministry's Moral Stance, on the promotion and protection of human life.
 4. The re-organization of the Disaster Risk Reduction Management Team in August 2011 with Sr. Maria Eden Orlino as National Coordinator. This was done in order to effect a more dynamic response and faster delivery of relief operations and services. The creation of a Core Team from the regions of Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao allowed for a fast, sound decision-making without compromising accountability. Responded to calamities - Typhoons: Pedring, Quiel, Sendong; Habagat; earthquakes. Services provided were: Relief Operations, Medical Services, Critical Incident Stress Debriefing (CISD).

5. Continuous formation of a dynamic leadership that promotes initiative and unity through training in spiritual leadership especially for new superiors; conferences on New Evangelization for all Sisters of different age groups; ministry assemblies and congresses; renewals.
6. Researches to deepen our knowledge of unique culture and values of the Philippines, culture of SPC Mission countries; and foundation of other SPC provinces were started by Sisters Adelina Portillo, George Siriban and Dina Alilain.

Our Council of Province of November 26-28, 2008, was an echo of the Major Superiors Assembly in Chartres, France, on some important Canons of the Code of Canon Law, which was given by Fr. Lorenzo Lorroso, OP. The Council of Province was also enriched by the recommendations of Mother Myriam Kitcharoen, Superior General, and an overview of the newly published book, "The Service of Authority and Obedience." Each one was given a copy of the book.

To celebrate with the whole Church the Pauline Year, 2008 - 2009, to commemorate the 2000 anniversary of the birth of St. Paul, the Apostle of the Gentiles, the following activities were organized:

1. 2008 - Assembly by Age Group; Theme: All to All - Fr. Domie Guzman
2. 2009 - Assembly by Region; Theme: Paul, Apostle to the Gentiles - Fr. James Kroeger
3. 2010 - Assembly by Age Group; Theme: Towards a Renewed Spirituality - Christocentric and Paschal
4. Themes for the Monthly Recollection were taken from the Letters of St. Paul.

The year 2010 is a blessed year for the Philippine Province. Why do I consider it blessed? Because the Lord had inspired Mother General and her council to choose the Philippines to be the venue for the Council of Congregation for the first time.

The Council of Congregation with the theme, "Walk in Paul's footsteps to live and proclaim the Gospel with fresh audacity" (Phil 1:14), opened on February 4, 2010 and lasted until February 23, 2010, under the leadership of Mother Myriam Kitcharoen, SPC, Superior General. Fr. Gerry Whelan, SJ, was the resource speaker and facilitator from February 4-12, 2010. He articulated the aim of the assembly as, "To determine how are the SPCs putting into action the Charism of their institute in history since Chapter 2007."

The following were the topics of Fr. Wheelan's conferences:

- Mission, Fidelity and Creativity
- The Integrated development of the Individual: Self transcendence and Emotional Maturity
- The Integrated Development of the Individual: Authenticity on the part of the individual, and Grace builds on nature
- The Church in the Modern World

His Eminence, Gaudencio Cardinal Rosales, another speaker, gave a conference on, "How to Bring the Word to the World Today with the Faith and Courage of Paul."

Mother Myriam articulated the important points from the group reports of the major superiors, on the Ways of Revitalizing our Consecrated Life to Fully Live our Charism:

1. To become ever more women of prayer, women of faith, daughters of the Church and of the Congregation; preferring to live poorly in simplicity, taking Mary as our model.
2. To cultivate the virtue of hope, which is the trust of the children of God and not a seeking for security.
3. To help our Sisters become aware of the harmful effects of secularization on society, especially on the youth and in the religious life.
4. To help Sisters embrace solitude freely and joyfully as it is intrinsic in the choice of life we have made, being consecrated to God; by providing conditions conducive to interior silence characterized by peace and joy coming from the Lord; and by a responsible use of the communication media.
5. To encounter the poor in order to go up and encounter God, including the poor in our communities, to encourage missionary enthusiasm and audacious creativity of the Sisters.
6. To emphasize the importance of formation and the careful choice and formation of formators.

Sisters, I am so grateful for your all out support in making the Council of Congregation a venue for showcasing not only our talents and artistic character, our colorful heritage, uniquely Filipino arts and culture, but most especially, our very characteristically Filipino warmth and hospitality. Thank you, dear Sisters. They say, the Council of Congregation in the Philippine Province, was a phenomenon. *C'est magnifique!*

In the year 2010, too, the "Community Discernment Recollection" was given to all communities by the team of Formators. It was a two-day activity to accompany the Sisters toward a deeper sensitivity and appreciation of the movements of the Spirit, as they search for God's will for them personally and communally. "There can be no discerning Congregation without discerning communities and there can be no discerning communities without discerning individuals." (Capitular Acts 2007)

The year 2011 is a very important year. We celebrated the centenary of SPC Formation in the Philippine Province - 100 years in the Potter's Hands, which began in 1911, in Malate, Manila.

Formation, in a life of consecration, is primarily formation in the spiritual life, a life of conversion of heart and growth, in union with and configuration to Christ. Hence, utmost care and attention have been taken so that the Formation Program be truly responsive to the

needs of today's generation of formands and those of perpetually professed Sisters in manner that is holistic and integrated.

The centennial jubilee of the SPC Formation, was a celebration of joy and gratitude to our ever loving Potter who never ceases to inspire new vocations in the Church, and in particular in our own SPC Congregation.

Allow me then to thank all of you for the flourishing of vocations to our Philippine Province. The Lord of the Harvest has been very faithful in showering us with vocations, not because we deserve it, but because the field of Evangelization is so vast that we need hands to harvest. Each one of us is a promoter of vocations, so my dear Sisters, the only witnessing being asked of us is fidelity to our life of consecration as vowed religious. So that at the end of our life when we come face to face with our Lord, we can honestly say, I lived my life to the full, the Kingdom has indeed come.

The centennial jubilee celebration of SPC Formation ushers in a time for personal and communal renewal in the Philippine Province. May we Sisters of St. Paul of Chartres remain open and pliable in the skillful hands of the Potter, docile and receptive to the transforming power of the Holy Spirit, grateful and humble for the gift of our SPC vocation in the Church and for the glory of God's Kingdom.

The blessing of the centenary celebration of SPC Formation impels the Sisters in the Philippine Province to look forward to the future strong with the hope that dwells within us, with hearts full of gratitude, and imbued with confidence to announce Jesus Christ, right in the heart of the Catholic Church.

On the side, the jubilee celebration was made complete with the following activities: Photo Exhibit along the corridors of the Novitiate; the Formation House was opened to guests during the celebration; Via Sacra to the 3 Novitiates - Manila, Quezon City and Antipolo; Medical - Dental Mission and Soup Kitchen; Sharing of vocation stories and talks in schools; a concert by our Sisters, "100 Years in 100 Voices" was presented; Vocation Camp-in and another open house, especially for those who nurtures vocation to religious life.

On top of all of these gifts generously given to the SPC Philippine Province, is the pilgrimage to the Holy Land of which most of you were beneficiaries. Mother Myriam graciously granted our wish and we can't thank her enough for this act of kindness. You were completely taken by your experience. Some of you were also privileged to journey with St. Paul in Turkey. How lucky you have been. But walking in the footsteps of Jesus Christ, treading where He treads, has made you whole, completed. This is THE experience of a lifetime.

The International meeting in Cayenne, on April 11-21, 2012, of major superiors, had three-fold purposes: an orientation for the 47th General Chapter in Rome this September 2013; to celebrate the 285th anniversary of the arrival of our first four missionaries to Cayenne; and to

find meanings to deepen the Word of God. Mother Myriam expressed that the New Evangelization is the theme for reflection for the international meeting. Mother Myriam gave some recommendations and discussed some important points in the Papal Apostolic Letter "*Porta Fidei*." While the New Evangelization using the Encyclical "*Verbum Domini*," was ably discussed by Monsignor Karel Kasteel.

Monsignor Kasteel said that, as SPC, as consecrated persons, we are supposed to be models in announcing the Word of God. To be a prophet is a call to everyone.

Mother Myriam also said that the New Evangelization is a way of living according to the Spirit of Emmaus: a proclamation of faith. She reminded the Sisters not to get distracted from their mission of proclaiming the Good News, Jesus Christ. Distraction can be equated to destruction.

She also reminded the Superiors that the strength of the proclamation of the Gospel depends entirely on the community. The SPC Sisters should be fraternal, apostolic, and women of prayer. We are a missionary Congregation and we should live as missionaries. We have to be generous in giving our Sisters especially to the foreign missions.

The synthesis of the conferences in Cayenne underscoring the important aspects of the New Evangelization, *Porta Fidei*, and recommendations of Mother Myriam, was cascaded and feedbacked to the Sisters of the Province through the various assemblies: age groups, ministries, renewals, Superiors. Speakers were also invited to give insights on the New Evangelization, like, Archbishop Orlando Quevedo, and Fr. Jose Cecilio Magadia, SJ.

On October 11, 2012, together with the whole Church, the Year of Faith was launched in Our Lady of Chartres Convent with the theme, "Celebrating the Gift of Faith," and also in the local communities and ministries.

On December 22, 2012, we launched the golden jubilee celebration of Our Lady of Chartres Convent. It was a simple celebration marked by the presence of the Sisters all over the Philippines. The Eucharist was of course the center of the celebration. Cordial greetings and merry making could be felt as the Sisters partook of a hearty lunch, followed by the Christmas presentation by several communities. The golden jubilee celebration will be on December 26, 2013.

For 2013, we have the following activities: preparation for the Provincial and General Chapters; Marian Conferences, Medical Mission/Feeding, Vocation Camp-in, and Conferment of Service Awards.

Our process of interiorizing and integrating Christic values to deepen our SPC Spirituality continues, as our Life of Consecration never cease. But I am also aware of some areas to be addressed, areas that need more our attention in the future. They are the following: We have not yet struck an equilibrium and balance between prayer and work. We SPCs are really,

really, super efficient that our life of prayer almost always suffers. I think you will also agree with me that our witnessing both personally and communally in all aspects of Religious Life has yet to improve, especially our fraternal relationships in community and with our partners in the mission that is substantiated in the result of the Assessment of the Living Out

of SPC Spirituality. In the Ministry level, we have yet to pursue actively the continuous formation of a dynamic leadership that promotes initiative and unity through succession plans that banks on well-developed career path; a shift from Lay Empowerment to strengthening Empowerment of Partnership for the shared mission; and of course, training our Sisters for Leadership by Followership, ultimately leading to Servant-Leadership.

My dear Sisters, these are only some of the areas and issues that I prioritized and need to be confronted and dealt with. Definitely, I will endorse these to the next administration. I could safely say then that when they are taken positively they can become our challenges. That's our greatest consolation.

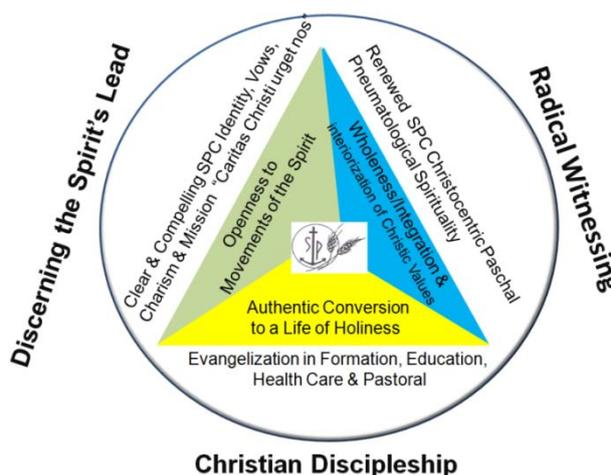
This framework was used during the Provincial Chapter 2007, in which I put into perspective the three Councils of Province emphasizing our Mission of Evangelization, deepening of SPC Spirituality, and recapturing our SPC Identity. We realized that once we have answered the question, "Who we are as SPC?" we become daringly creative for the mission, especially the Mission of Evangelization, a Missionary Spirituality.

FRAMEWORK



This new framework signifies the Process of the journey inwards, which I underwent and you too did, I suppose, for nine years with me. This is a personal transformation from a hospital administrator to a person trying hard to be docile in discerning the Spirit's lead. In all humility, I thank you for your sincerity and commitment in helping me to follow the Spirit's lead and so, together with you, facilitate the process to wholeness; interiorizing, and

PROCESS



integrating Christic values in the deepening of our SPC Spirituality, as we try our very best to become radical witnesses to our Vows, our Charism, our Identity as SPC, moving towards conversion to a life of holiness as disciples of our Lord. This has been my deepest desire since I took over the helm of the Philippine Province.

Before I finally end my dear Sisters, I thank the Lord for being patient with me and for trusting me to lead you and to journey with you that we may actualize our common aspirations. Thank you for the graces received by all of us as we celebrated all the centenaries during these nine years - 100 years as a Province, centennial of Dumaguete, Vigan, Culion, Tuguegarao, Surigao, Iloilo, and SPUM; Year of St. Paul; 100 Years of SPC Formation; Year of Faith; and launching of the golden jubilee of Our Lady of Chartres Convent.

To end, I call on each one of you, my dear Sisters, in this era of the New Evangelization, proclaim not only your genius, your knowledge, your intelligence, your talents, your excellence - but proclaim and share the richness of a well interiorized, integrated life of a religious; a life of spirituality, focused and centered in our one true God, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

In this Year of Faith, I challenge you my dear Sisters, to breakthrough the limits by becoming proclaimers of the Word. Let the Word breakthrough our short-sightedness and blindness to give us a far-seeing vision; and breakthrough our weakness to become our strength. As St. Paul the Apostle says, "Woe to me, indeed, if I do not proclaim the Lord Jesus Christ."

Thank you and may God continue to bless us all.