

## **Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal, Sign of Hope for us today.**

My very Vincentian greeting to all the participants of the II General Assembly of the Miraculous Medal Association.

It is through you that we hear the voice of tomorrow, you bring us hope, articulation, projects, dreams of the novelty of this Association that makes the Miraculous Medal a sign of hope for today.

In the world we are living in, ravaged by so much pain on the part of those who are suffering deeply, we see in Our Lady a sign of hope and consolation. We all know the Virgin Mary well, we love her and we are committed to being a concrete sign of this love through the AMM. We know that Mary accompanies us daily on our journey of faith. We all look in a particular way to our Mother in Heaven, Mother of this Association.

And as for me, I'm just going to share with you the way I see it. The Gospel texts clearly show Mary's faith, her openness and her total availability to God, allowing her to give herself fully. This faith of Mary nourished the meditation of our Founders, of Saint Catherine and today, without a doubt, nourishes our faith.

"However, just as the Mother of Jesus, already glorified in body and soul, is the image and beginning of the Church that will be consummated in the age to come, so on earth she shines as a sign of sure hope and consolation, for the People of God still on pilgrimage, until the day of the Lord" (LG 68).

Man, separated from God by sin, needed to be rescued from death. "God sent His Son, "born of a woman" (Gal 4:4), and not just any woman, but one whom He had preserved from sin and prepared to be a true sign for humanity. "The Lord himself will give you a sign: a virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and he will name him Immanuel." (Is. 7,14)

Mary went through all the trials that we, her children, go through, and she always placed God above all things, accepting to conceive and give birth to the Son that the Angel announced to her, even at many risks. "Behold, the handmaid of the Lord, let it be done to me according to your word" (Lk 1:38).

Soon after the birth of her Son, she receives the prophecy that he would be the cause of the fall and rise of many and that a sword would pierce his soul (Lk 2,35), which would be fulfilled on Calvary. She saw her Son doing good to everyone and being rejected, persecuted, betrayed, slaughtered and killed, but she stood until her death before the cross (Jn 19, 28-37), without attacking anyone, without rebelling against God, that that he had heard that his Son would inherit the throne of David, and that he received him dead in his arms. Why, then, do we, who are his children, not follow his footsteps, his example? Why is humanity walking so inhumanly, so empty of God's presence and action? What would be the remedy for this disease that disfigures the children of God in this world?

I reflected a lot on what would be the remedies to overcome universal indifference, which seizes so many men, and I found the Miraculous Medal that wants to be a sign that allows us to enter the Gospel. The Medal is the expression of the way of

act of God. When He is among us, He is always through simple and unexpected resources: in a cave, on a donkey, on the slaves' cross... As for us, we are always looking for more effective means to evangelize, however, through of her Medal, Mary invites us to conversion, to the humility of God, to divest ourselves of our pride in order to clothe ourselves in the spirit of humility. Evangelization requires humble and simple evangelizers. Through the Medal, Mary teaches us a lesson that speaks to the heart: it is not necessary to know how to read and write to discover the message, it awakens our trust in God. Evangelization will be "new" if we are able to adapt to the new conditions we face today and to arouse trust in the hearts of the poor. The Medal was given to everyone without distinction.

Humanity needs to turn wholeheartedly to God, to return to prayer, to penance. You need to learn to follow in Our Lady's footsteps, that is, to seek a life of Communion with God and with others, and only then will we walk again under the grace of the Lord.

The November 27 apparition symbolically confirms the intimate bond between Mary Immaculate and the Holy Spirit. The Virgin Mary is represented distributing the graces of the Spirit over the earth through the rays that flow from her own hands. The Union between Mary and the Holy Spirit is so perfect that she has all the gifts of the Holy Spirit and the Spirit works through her. Where Mary is, the Spirit is present. Mary communicates without reservation the grace of which she is full. This apparition helps us to be more aware that the Lord wants to come to us through the Virgin Mary, through the Miraculous Medal. Evidently God is Almighty, he doesn't need Mary, but he wants to need her. Before being man's choice, the Virgin Mary is God's choice. God's choices are divine, eternal, uninterrupted choices. Mary's choice is eternal, from all eternity and continues to be in every moment of our lives.

Mary reveals her concern for the fate of the human family; for her, the salvation of every man is vital. Mary suffers, she worries when she sees that her children do not ask her for the graces of the Spirit that they so much need to live as brothers and sisters of Jesus; we can imagine what goes on in her mother's heart when she sees the indifference of her children, their distance or rejection of God, their unhappiness at living without God. Mary invites us to ask a lot of her, because her heart is full of the grace of Spirit, invites us to ask her even the impossible, because she wants to give us the most: "Ask and you will receive, seek and you will find". Our prayer to Mary is not determined by our personal sensitivity, by our almost spontaneous attraction to her, but by the conviction that through Mary, we receive the Holy Spirit in abundance. Mary is like the "source" of the Spirit, so what makes her joyful is to give her children the graces of the Spirit to help them become, after her example, the temple of the Spirit and find true happiness, the joy of the Gospel: "I pour out graces on all those who ask me... what a joy I experience in granting them" and we can say what a joy to receive them.

In our spirituality, with Mary, Our Lady of Graces, we want to be close to each brother in need of care. We see in each suffering brother Christ disfigured, scourged by so many injustices.

To welcome everyone, like Saint Catherine... She is not only the Mother of the Church that recognizes and confesses Jesus as Lord, but the Mother of Humanity created by God and called to the happiness of salvation, of full life with God. That is why he entrusts to his children the mission of propagating, praying and sacrificing themselves for the restoration of all to the dignity to which the Lord has called us: to be his children in fact, through love and life in grace, in order to make the Kingdom of God be visible to all. It is the Message of the Miraculous Medal that strengthens us, makes us return to our essence as children of God, seeking peace, fighting to establish the Kingdom of God in this world.

With Pope Francis who says: "The Church without Mary is an orphanage", we can say as disciples of Catherine: "the AMM without Mary is an orphanage". Let us entrust ourselves unreservedly to Mary, our Mother, to be totally given to Jesus, let us entrust our AMM to her, all our brothers and sisters at the service of whom we find ourselves.

And I pray that in the footsteps of the Virgin Mary, Lady of the Miraculous Medal, we walk with our eyes fixed on Jesus.

"O Mary Conceived, without sin, pray for us who have recourse to you."

Thanks.

Sister Ana Amélia Guedes da Cunha

Daughter of Charity

Questions:

- 1) In light of the knowledge about the Miraculous Medal and our experience with the Association, how can we be a sign of hope for people who still do not know the Miraculous Medal?
- 2) As members of the Miraculous Medal Association, what concrete gestures can we put into practice the "new" evangelization, adapting our mission to the new conditions that we face today in our countries?