

OPENING RITE
FINAL PHASE OF THE CONSENSUAL GENERAL CHAPTER
April 9, 2017

(In the courtyard)

Leader: “The General Chapter is a significant moment in our congregational journey. It is a paschal event where we, together, will look at our reality and that of the world where we live to discover the passage of God in our history, listen to his summons in the cries of humanity and of the cosmos and advance towards the future with enthusiasm and hope”, as Lillian Ocenar, our Coordinator General, tells us up in the community, in the Cluster and in the Province convoking the XXII General Chapter.

From April 11, 2016 we have lived the chapter process together with our sisters in the community, in the Cluster, in the Province and in the Congregation. It had been a year of work, reflection, prayer and of search in the midst of our day to day living.

Jesus has come to meet us along this path. He rested in our own wells to talk with us as he did with the Samaritan woman, icon we have chosen as inspirer of our Chapter.

We are now in our present, today April 9 2017, we are at the final phase of the Chapter and we are gathered here in Cajar, very dear to us. We, the Siervas de San Jose of the communities of Granada, the lay Josepines, the Hijas de San Jose and the sisters of the support group, together with our sisters of the General Team and the sisters, delegates to this last phase and all the other Siervas de San Jose and members of the Josephine family who accompany us from their communities.

We will all be witnesses of the start of the last phase. We feel we are companions on the way of those who will participate and we give them our blessing.

All: In this period of work, reflection and faith which you are going to begin, may you be like Mary Magdalene, the Samaritan woman, Mary of Nazareth and many other unknown women who learned to own the utopia of the Kingdom and were daring followers of Jesus; and like Bonifacia who did not doubt in risking with courage what she had to raise up: a new undertaking in the Church and in the world, AMEN

SONG: “QUE SE ALEGREN TUS ENTRAÑAS”

The sisters of the General Team and the delegates acknowledge and greet one another, joyfully without hurry and start forming the groups: The General Team, Provinces, the Cluster of Congo. They show what they have brought along, happily ... and share with one another.

(In the place, 6 groups are recognizable. The rest are close witnesses)

Leader: Let us remember, in silence, the moments we have lived his year which have been source of life and have satisfied our thirst. We remember with gratitude: personal work in community, in the Cluster Assembly, ... work prayed and interwoven until we come today. We bring the experiences we have lived and we dispose ourselves to tread on another soil, to drink new water, and to change the heart.

Ma. Paz Ballesteros – 1st Reader

“I will take you from among the nations,
Gather you from all the lands,
And bring you back to your own soil.

I will sprinkle clean water over you
to make you clean
from all your impurities and
from all your idols I cleanse you;
I will give you a new heart,
and a new spirit I will put within you.
I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh
and give you a heart of flesh.

I will put my spirit within you
so that you walk in my statutes,
observe my ordinances and keep them.

You will live in the land I gave your mothers
(the sisters who have preceded us from the beginning)
You will be my people, and I will be your God. (*Ezequiel 36:24-28*)

Leader: Coming from different countries, we are entering a new place. Let us open our hearts to welcome the novelty of God and direct ourselves towards the door while listening to the song guiding us at this moment,

SONG : “DAME UN CORAZON NUEVO”

(We approach the door ready for this moment)

Leader: Our communities of origin, our Cluster, our Province... at this moment, they are united as one, in a unique experience, upon crossing that door, our sisters are called to feel that they are delegates of the whole Congregation and will occupy the Congregational sphere. With our prayers, let us give them the support at this significant moment.

LILLIAN WILL BE CALLING THEIR NAMES TO WHICH
THEY WILL ANSWER “YES” IN THEIR OWN LANGUAGE

SONG: “CAMBIA TODA CAMBIA”

(Already in the Congregational sphere)

Leader: Jesus to the Samaritan woman

Marcie (2nd Reader) – He proposes to find him in “spirit and in truth” (John 4:21-24) meaning, in the path of life, by means of processes of discernment, from a new and more holistic awareness of the world and of the cosmos, far beyond our accustomed spaces.

Elena (3rd Reader)- Invites us to make an interior, personal journey which will take us to find our own selves, with our wounds and fears, with our possibilities and riches, personal and congregational.

Marcie (2nd Reader)- Moves us to look for new religious experience which will impel us to get out of the familiar and to open ourselves to the seeds of the Kingdom which permeate our world.

Elena (3rd Reader) Sustains us to be transforming and co-responsible agents of our present and our future.

Mercedes Gonzales (4th Reader) Directs us to go to the spring where everything flows and nothing remains stagnant, to that spring “*that flows to produce eternal life*” (John 4:13-14) what is of God is not eternal stability but a continuous dynamism which accepts us in our circumstances, in our growth and our limits, in our advances and our moving back.

Leader: Encourages the others to read the theme

All:

Walking towards a global, ecological and solidary conscience,
we live the mission as disciples of Jesus in a changing world.

Ninoska (5th Reader) As followers of Jesus, we are also called, like the Samaritan woman, to allow ourselves to be seduced, once again, by the dynamism of the Kingdom, to form part of creative communities, risk-taking, prophetic which, from a “global, ecological and solidary conscience” try to respond to the challenges of our world and to offer a believing word which would help others to discover God who sustains their lives.

In the letter of convocation of the Chapter, Lillian reminds us:

“The very same spirit which took Fr. Butinyà and M. Bonifacia to bet with radicalness and passion, for the poor working world, specially the woman worker, will accompany us and encourage us along this chapter period, helping us to discern and to implement the ways which could impel our life and mission better.” They are present, as well as the Josephine Family and many persons with whom we share the mission.”

Leader: What the sisters carry in their hands represent the reality of the countries where they came from, the life of our Communities-Taller, the progress of the lay Josephines, the ordinariness of the life of those with whom we live and realize our apostolic projects, the whole life gathered in that soil and the lively colors of each place.

(They are invited to deposit it in the place reserved for it)

(Background Music)

We listen to the opening words of Lillian.

At the end, she lights a candle as a sign of the presence of the Holy Spirit, while it is being read:

Inmaculé- (**6th Reader**) The Spirit is the protagonist of this experience. He is stirred into flame in the interior of each person to light the way.

All: "... where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. All of us gazing with unveiled face on the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, as from the Lord who is Spirit" (2Cor. 3: 17-18)

Leader: From the place where they have deposited what they brought, each sister gets a candle and lights it near where Lillian lighted hers, it will be the LIGHT which will accompany them throughout this experience.

(Background Music)

Leader: Each of the sister who will undergo the experience the final phase of the chapter is a welcomed light and to each we ask:

All: Be light from within, cultivate your interiority and be light for each other in this period you will live together!

(While a song is heard)

SONG: "LEVANTAD LAS PIEDRAS"

Leader: We conclude our prayer listening to the commitment of the participants and the witnesses of this final phase.

The Participants: we trust in God who gives us the grace to allow ourselves to be found and be taken by surprise by Jesus and we promise to help bring about the best of ourselves and be recreated, leaving to one side the jars from which we have drunk and have given to drink, trusting in the fountain of eternal life which springs from within us and with what we dispose ourselves to serve.

The Witnesses: we promise to support with our prayers and our closeness, inspiring hope and enlivening the passion in the search for ways still unknown, to understand and to welcome new spaces of life and mission which are emerging in our world.

All: AMEN