16.1 BAPTIZED AND SENT

Dearest sisters:

Baptized and sent is the theme of the recent Extraordinary Missionary Month convoked by Pope Francis.

When we hear about mission, a special string vibrates in us as Marianists. We feel this word resonate within us, activating certain emotions, feelings, desires, and images. This is the word that made the heart of young Adele, Blessed Marie of the Conception, so excited when she first heard our Founder say: “You will all be Missionaries!”

Missionary Apostolic is the only title that Father Chaminade desired, requested and obtained from the Holy See. This title allowed him freedom of action and movement. The Founder did not want to be in charge of a parish or an episcopal see, and neither did he want to be a university professor. His only ambition was to be a Missionary of Mary! And for this Woman, Mary, to be able to go wherever he was called, wherever he could enliven and form other missionaries.

In the exhortation Christus Vivit, which was born of the Synod on young people, Pope Francis invites us to ask ourselves a question. Let’s not waste too much time, he says, asking ourselves “who am I?” but rather, “who am I for?” The fundamental motivation of our lives is outside of us: we exist for others. You are a mission! “I am a mission,” the Pope repeats in Evangelii Gaudium (273). The entire people of God are called to be in a "permanent state of mission.”

Why have an “extraordinary missionary month?” It’s certainly not just to celebrate the centenary of Benedict XV’s letter Maximum Illud from 1919. Rather, it is above all to rekindle the ardor and passion for the mission of Jesus. We remember the terms loved by Adele and Chaminade: rekindle, passion, mission. The life of our Founders — every thought, every moment, every action — was oriented towards the mission, which was to illuminate the faith, to illuminate the darkness of their world with the light of Christ.

We are to be missionaries, but not generic missionaries: we are Missionaries of Mary. This is the Founder’s unique intuition, that is, our charism: each member of the Marian Sodality, founded upon his return from Spain, is to be on Mary’s side, prolonging her mission.

It is the same for the religious men and women who were founded in 1816-1817, thanks to Adele and Father Chaminade’s full collaboration: our reason for existing is the mission, that is, the mission of Mary. This commitment to Mary’s mission is sealed by the alliance we make in our vow of stability.

Each month—really, each moment—is “Missionary” for a Daughter of Mary; there is no need for an extraordinary missionary month. However, we know that, because of our

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fragility and our inconstancy, we need special moments to renew our enthusiasm, to rediscover the beauty of the vocation we have received and to be able to live it to the fullest. This is the “giving everything” without calculating or measuring which the saints and Adele speak of.

The month of October has already passed, but the missionary movement it has launched pushes us forward. The spiritual, pastoral and theological purpose of this extraordinary missionary month is to recognize, live and convince us that the mission is, and must, increasingly become the paradigm of the life and work of the whole Church and, therefore, of every Christian. 2 Our life only makes sense if we live it as a mission. The Spirit urges us to go out into the world to announce the crucified and risen Christ. 3

We have been called to renew our hearts, language, works, and organizations. We must re-form ourselves and reinvent the mission. How do we renew ourselves? How do we become new? How do we invent new ways of being in mission? Is there anything we can and should change in our way of understanding and living the mission today? Discernment is the key to reading, interpreting, evaluating, and directing our missionary presence in today’s world. If we give space to the Holy Spirit, His encouragement will lead to new ideas and intuitions.

Baptized and sent! Being baptized and being sent are synonymous. One is not possible without the other.

This mission is part of our identity as Christians; it makes us responsible for enabling all men and women to realize their vocation to be adoptive children of the Father, to recognize their personal dignity and to appreciate the intrinsic worth of every human life, from conception until natural death. Today’s rampant secularism, when it becomes an aggressive cultural rejection of God’s active fatherhood in our history, is an obstacle to authentic human fraternity, which finds expression in reciprocal respect for the life of each person. 4

In this circular, I would like to focus on the second word: sent. We will try to deepen the richness of this word that seems so simple but really is so challenging and attractive. We will reflect on:

- Being sent
- Sent by
- Sent to
- Sent with
- Sent for

16.2 BEING SENT

Being “sent” is to be someone who has received a task, a mandate, a mission, or a service to fulfill. It is to be someone who brings a letter or a message, to perform a specific action. Being “sent,” or being an “envoy” is to represent another person.

In – via – to, en-voi-yée, en – via – do: in these three languages of Latin origin, an “envoy” is someone who is on the way, on a journey, on the move. It is someone who is directed towards a goal. And “the road” is the place where the mission takes place.

Being sent means leaving; it means putting oneself on the path. Stagnancy does not exist in the vocabulary of the envoy. All this implies the ability to change, to dialogue, to interact with others, to welcome, to respect, to be open. The “envoy” brings a message that is not her own, transmitting it and waiting patiently, respectfully, for the response to the sender.

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2 FILONI Card. FERNANDO, Letter to Bishops, Vatican, 8 April 2018
3 Ibid.
Being on the road means leaving, to use a term dear to Pope Francis; it means leaving the comfort of home, our safe haven, the “warmth of the nest,” and the comfort of our loved ones. To be on the road is to be permanently traveling and searching, convinced that, as the mystic Julian of Norwich affirmed, “searching is as good as contemplating.”

Being on the road offers you the possibility of stopping at the crossroads of life, living on the borderlands, crossing “no-man’s land,” the space forgotten by the powerful and inhabited by the small, the marginalized, the beloved of God.

We are sent, we are called, to set sail and lift the anchor, letting ourselves be guided by the breath of the Spirit that always precedes us and is in the creative space born of the encounter between our charism and history.

### 16.3 BY WHOM?

Who sends us?

Usually, we find special envoys when we see extraordinary situations and events: an earthquake, a terrorist attack, a negative news report, a political, athletic, or artistic event, etc... These envoys are journalists and reporters who are sent by their communication companies to document, collect information, and publicize certain events.

In relations between nations, governments send representatives, or secretaries of State, to mediate in certain situations, preparing the ground for a meeting between the parties. This is the task of political diplomacy, above all. But we see this, too, in families and between individuals; there are envoys, there are mediators. In the agricultural environment of my childhood, there were some mediators in the town who were called when a herd of cattle had to be sold. The person guaranteed the two parties in question that the negotiation would take place in accordance with justice.

God also uses envoys, people chosen by Him to carry a message to the people, to make people feel His closeness. This is a God who listens, who hears the cry of His people, a God who wants to be close, a God who wants to walk the path of His people. This is a God who uses collaborators, a God who calls and sends.

At all times and in every age, there has never been a lack of people sent by God. Prophets have always existed among God’s people, from Moses to the present day. And it is moving to note the care and solicitude with which God sends His prophets, never getting tired despite the hardened and rebellious heart of His people: “The Lord promptly sent you to his servants the prophets, and you did not want to listen or pay attention” (Jer. 25:4). “I struggled to send you all my servants, the prophets”... (Jer. 44:4).

God is at the origin of each call. “The impetus is always from God, who wanted to call us to collaborate with Him and enliven us with the strength of His Spirit.” God’s envoy is aware that she has been chosen, called and, therefore, sent. At the beginning of each calling, there is always a strong experience of God’s call that bursts into the life of the chosen one.

So it is for Moses, Samuel, Isaiah, Jeremiah and Amos who fed the flock; so it was for Matthew sitting at the tax counter; so it was for Paul on his way to Damascus to persecute the followers of the new doctrine.

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5 GIULIANA VITTORIA FANTUZ, Giuliana di Norwich. La mistica della gioia, Ed. Vaticana, 2018, pag. 59
7 Cfr. CICLSAL, Proclaim, 53.
8 Ibid. 12
Moses, wanted for murder, returned to Pharaoh knowing that he risked death: *The Lord, God of the Hebrews, has sent me to you with this assignment: let my people go out to worship me in the desert* (Ex. 7:16).

Moses accepted this mission with difficulty, but once he accepted, he had no more doubts. It was God who sent him; it was God who spoke to him; it was God who gave him the words to say, the gestures to make. God was with him. And with this certainty, the prophet went out! He went on a mission that he would never have chosen, a mission that had been entrusted to him on behalf of another person. And because that "other" was God, all fear and uncertainty disappeared. This envoy did not hesitate because he knew that God Himself was with him. The Lord replied to Moses: *I am with you, and this is the sign that I send you: that when you take the people out of Egypt, you will worship God on this mountain.* (Ez. 3:12)

*The Lord sent me*, Samuel said to King Saul to anoint you King of his people, Israel. Therefore, listen to the words of the Lord. (1 Sam. 15:1)

The envoy of God is strong, not so much physically as inwardly, because she knows that she carries a message that is not hers; she knows that she carries out a mission that she would not have chosen: *See, the Lord has a strong one, a mighty one, who, like an onslaught of hail, a destructive storm, like a flood of water, great and overflowing, levels to the ground* (Is. 28:2).

Those sent by God never act on their own initiative. Moses said, *This is how you shall know that the Lord sent me to do all I have done, and that it was not of my own devising* (Num. 16:28). This does not mean that we should not be creative. Quite the contrary. Precisely because an envoy is sent by God, she is the one who knows how to create new paths of solidarity, new ways of reaching everyone without excluding anyone, *without being paralyzed by ecclesial or congregational introversion.*

Christ is the Messenger of God par excellence. *But when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law* (Gal 4:4).

The theological debate on the “messianic consciousness” of Jesus is broad. The truth is that, at the beginning of his public preaching, Jesus knew that he was proclaiming a message that was not his own but was of the Father who sent him. (cf. Jn 7:16)

Sending out his disciples, he reassures them by saying: *Whoever receives you receives me, and whoever receives me receives the one who sent me* (Mt. 10:40). 

* Whoever rejects you rejects me. And whoever rejects me rejects the one who sent me* (Lk 10,16).

This is a call that is made specifically by the Church and through the Church. *The Congregation receives its mission from the Church, and, whatever the function of its members, it is always the Congregation that sends them on mission* (RL 1.64).

For us and for each member of the Marianist Family, something very peculiar is added to all this: we are called by Mary herself to prolong her mission. This is a call within a call. Baptism makes us Apostles; the Marianist alliance makes us missionaries of Mary. It is Mary herself who chooses and sends us. Our profession is a response to the call of Mary. It is the biggest, the most beautiful, the most exciting thing that could be. The Founders were deeply convinced of this.

The Congregation has been called, loved by Mary. The *Institute of Mary*, as the Founder called the Daughters of Mary and the Society of Mary, belongs to her and is her family. It is *in her name and for her glory* that we embrace the religious state, devoting ourselves to it *with all that we have and are,* happy to start every new day deeply convinced that we are sent by Mary.

9 Cfr. Ibid. 27
16.4 TO WHOM?

To whom are we sent?
Jesus said that he was sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel (cf. Mt. 15:24). He would avoid staying in the same place for a long time: To the other towns also I must proclaim the good news of the kingdom of God, because for this purpose I have been sent (Lk. 4:43). Jesus, whose nourishment is to do the will of the one who sent him (cf. Jn 4:34), wants to reach everyone, without excluding anyone, knowing very well those who consider themselves healthy and self-sufficient exclude themselves (cf. Lk. 5:31).

And us, to whom are we sent?

In the first place, we are sent to our sisters, to those who share with us this missionary dream of the Founders. We are committed to each other. Where is your brother? I want to send you to your brothers... is still valid at all times. For yesterday, for today, for tomorrow.

Our brothers and sisters are not only those with whom we share blood, culture, ideals, projects, missions. Our brothers and sisters are everyone. As the teacher who asked his students this question understood well: At what precise moment can I distinguish between the end of the night and the beginning of the day?

The responses from his students varied: when I can distinguish a lion from a panther ...; when I can distinguish a larch tree from a birch tree, another added, when I can distinguish a person from a tree ... and so on. The thoughtful silence of the teacher made it clear that none of these answers were what he expected. Finally, the students gave up. The teacher took the floor and gave the long-awaited response: When looking into the eyes of every person you meet, you recognize in them a brother or a sister, the night is over for you. For you, the day begins.

So to whom are we sent? To the brothers and sisters we meet along the way and to whom we must recognize as such. To each person, whatever culture or religion they belong to. But above all, we are sent to those whom society does not notice. Those who are treated as goods to be exploited, as objects to be used and disposed of. The marginalized, the forgotten, those affected by disease or the death of loved ones; those who are suffering and living without hope, without comfort. We are sent to them.

We know that Adele’s missionary heart was wide-open towards others, towards anyone who needed it. Adele went from house to house, knew her neighbors in the surrounding villages. Do we know our neighbors? Do we know who lives in the next building? In our cities, the risk of anonymity is great. The respect of privacy is so strong that sometimes people die next door and we do not realize it. Is this respect for privacy or is this indifference?

The Pope invites us to go to the peripheries knowing that, as he says: the most desolate periphery of all is where mankind, in need of Christ, remains indifferent to the faith or shows hatred for the fullness of life in God. All material and spiritual poverty, every form of discrimination against our brothers and sisters, is always a consequence of the rejection of God and his love. POPE FRANCIS, Message for World Mission Day 2018, Vatican, 20 May 2018

Adele was willing to go to the ends of the earth to save one soul. What are the limits of the world for us today? Especially for young people, the limits are easy to reach, "navigable." The digital world, the Internet, erases distances and reduces differences. It may seem easy, therefore, to reach the peripheries of today. But today, as in the past, the essential
thing is the gift of oneself. Being a missionary means being willing to abandon yourself, to go out of yourself to embark on the path that leads to the other. This exit from oneself, this overcoming of the "I," is what gives meaning and value to everything. The true value of a man is determined by examining to what extent and in what sense he has been able to get rid of the "I."  

Local and global perspectives must be held together, just as inspiration and exhalation are two movements of the same respiratory act—one prepares the other. One cannot do without the other. We need to pay attention to the global so as to avoid narrowness and banality. Yet we also need to look to the local, which keeps our feet on the ground.  

### 16.5 WITH WHOM?  

“Being sent” can apply to a single person, a single envoy. This is especially true in the first book of the Covenant. However, Jesus inaugurates a new path: the Master prepares his disciples and then sends them two by two or in groups, with precise instructions:

*After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others whom he sent ahead of him in pairs to every town and place he intended to visit (Lk 10:1).*

Jesus seeks workers to be sent to the vineyard (cf. Mt 20:4); and sent to the main roads to find guests for the wedding (cf. Mt 22:9). Ask to pray the owner of the harvest to send workers; *because the harvest is plenty, but the laborers are few* (Mt. 9:38). In the most dramatic moment in history, Jesus entrusts women with the great announcement of the Resurrection to be taken to his brothers (cf. Mt 28:10).

It is the community that is sent; it is the community that receives the mission of *going around the world to proclaim the Gospel to every creature* (Mk 16.15). The community of Jerusalem, after the Resurrection, would follow the example of the Master. *Then the apostles and priests decided, according to the whole Church, to choose among them some men and send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas; and these were Judas, called Barsabas, and Silas, who were leaders among the brothers* (Acts 15:22). Peter and Andrew, James and John, Barnabas and Paul, Priscila and Aquila .... and the list could continue.

It is a shared mission. The Gospel does not belong to us individually. It is a gift that we have received as a community and that we cannot keep for ourselves. It is a talent to be used, to be multiplied. This gift must be shared; it must be offered. The gift grows and multiplies as it is shared. Father Chaminade would talk about *contagion*, growth by contagion. To spread to others our joy, our service, our love, our listening, our closeness, and to spread this above all to those most in need.

If, as Christians, we have the missionary vocation in common with all the baptized, we as Marianists find the roots of our mission in the Marianist Family. We are sent on mission along with other members of the four branches that make up the Marianist Family. It is with the Family and as a Family that we live the mission, helping make the Marian face of the Church be more alive and bright. This is expressed in the document on *Common Mission in the Marianist Family* that is worth rereading:

*Deriving from the particular way of understanding God’s plan and its realization in the world, inspired by the Spirit in our founders, the Marianist Mission is specified in the “Marianist Family” through each one of the four institutions, the four branches, of which it is composed. The four branches have common roots, those which derive from their reference to their common origin in the particular gospel vocation of the founders....*

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In a synthetic way we could say that our “common mission” is, precisely, to constitute ourselves and to live as a Family, in a fraternal communion of the diversity and plurality of vocations and ministries. Each one of us, whatever be the branch to which s/he belongs, feels him/herself to be a member of a broader Family and takes to heart the concern for the life and development of the other branches. Through our common Marianist vocation we feel called to contribute to this kind of development of the “Marianist face” of the Church, more fraternal than hierarchical, based on the common dignity which derives from baptism, sensitive like Mary to the needs of the world and, with Mary, unconditionally open through faith to what the Lord tells us.\(^{16}\)

### 16.6 FOR WHAT?

Why are we sent? How do we describe, how do we characterize, the mission of those being sent? Why does God care to send envoys? What is the main objective of the mission? Is there a constant in the message that God has delivered throughout the course of time and history through his messengers, his apostles? Can we find a common thread between the alternation of history and circumstances? Surely, yes.

God has the fate of his children in his heart; therefore, by the mouth of Jeremiah he will say: Time and again I sent you all my servants the prophets, saying: Turn away, each of you, from your evil way and reform your actions! Do not follow other gods to serve them that you may remain in the land which I gave you and your ancestors. (Jer 35:15).

God sends his envoys to make known his crazy love for humanity. He is the one who always takes the first step: In this way the love of God was revealed to us: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might have life through him (1 Jn 4:9).

It is a love that does not judge, but saves: For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him (Jn 3:17).

The one God sends is the one who announces joyful things (cf. Is 41:27), like Gabriel to the young woman of Nazareth, to whom he carries an extraordinary and at the same time disconcerting message: Behold, you will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to give Him the name Jesus (Lk 1:30).

God sends his messenger to heal, to open eyes, to enlighten, to release. Raphael was sent to heal them both: to remove the white scales from Tobit’s eyes, so that he might again see with his own eyes God’s light; and to give Sarah, the daughter of Raquel, as a wife to Tobiah, the son of Tobit, and to rid her of the wicked demon Asmodeus (Tob. 3:17).

Along the same lines is the great mission of the Messenger par excellence, Jesus: The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring glad tidings to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free (Lk 4:18).

They are not just messages of happiness. God sends his prophets to call, admonish, correct, invite to conversion and repentance, to return to Him with all their hearts (cf. Jl. 2:12). A mission that makes the life of the prophet difficult, risky and heavy. So why did you send me? (Ex. 5:22), Moses says full of bitterness. Curse the day I was born, Jeremiah says (cf. 20:14).

God’s envoy knows how to retire when the mission is over. She knows how to return to her place. She does not stop to receive honors, medals, awards. Her mission is over. No doubt, it is not considered indispensable; she retires, returns to the place she had or to

\(^{16}\) WCMF, The Common Mission in the Marianist Family, par. 3, 2012
the new place assigned to her. So now bless the Lord on earth and give thanks to God. Look, I am ascending to the one who sent me. Write down all that has happened to you.” And he ascended (Tob 12:20).

The apostolic church from the beginning is a church that announces the joy of the gospel; a church that is concerned with strengthening the faith of the baptized. Paul often uses collaborators to strengthen the new communities in faith. Paul sent Timothy, our brother and co-worker for God in the gospel of Christ, to strengthen and encourage you in your faith (1 Thess. 3:2).

And we, the Marianist Family, why do we exist? Why did our Founders have the intuition that, as Father Chaminade said, was unique, new, and did not exist in any other order of his time?17

In fact, coming out of the joyful and hope-filled experience of our fraternal communion, and following the intentions of our Founders, our presence and our action as Family in the Church and in the world have as their fundamental purpose our witnessing to that faith, the faith of Mary, passing it on and forming those around us in it, with particular attention to the young.18

This is to say, in other words, to make Mary known, loved and served with the certainty that there is no safer way to make known, loved and served her Son, Jesus Christ to our brothers and sisters. We are called to make an alliance with her; as her chosen sons and daughters, we are willing to fly wherever she calls us.19 As he had already experienced in Mussidan, where the seminary was considered a permanent mission, the Institute of Mary is to be a permanent mission. As our Rule of Life reminds us: We cooperate in the work of evangelization as a community. Each community is a “permanent mission” that acts and evangelizes through the diversity of gifts and tasks of its members (I.66).

Permanently in mission. There are no special and extraordinary moments for those who feel in the deepest fibers of their being that they are missionaries of Mary. Always, everywhere, and in all ways, we are Missionaries of Mary. Every occasion, every situation, every task, is an opportunity to make Mary known, to love and praise her.

The Marian heart of the Permanent Missionary, as the Founder was, is contained in this desire he wrote to Pope Gregory XVI: Hopefully they will make her known, make her be praised and loved throughout the earth!! 20

And this is what we promise when we profess our vow of stability: We promise to work to make Mary known, loved and served and to collaborate with all our strength in accomplishing the mission which the Church entrusts to the Congregation (RL. I.8)

It is useful to return to what the Rule of Life suggests (II.1):

Living the vow of Marianist stability leads us:
- to seek personally and as a community to grow in awareness of the role of Mary in the history of salvation,
- to deepen our relationship with her,
- to acquire her attitudes and to work to make her known, loved and served, especially in collaboration with other groups in the Family of Mary,
- to take the concrete means to understand and penetrate our charism,
- to work for the extension of the Family of Mary.

17 G.J. CHAMINADE, Letter to the retreat Masters, 24 August 1839
19 Cf. G.J. CHAMINADE, Letter to the retreat Masters, 24 August 1839
20 W.J. CHAMINADE, Letter to Pope Gregory XVI, Bordeaux, 16 September 1838
When I read these texts, when I think of the ardor of the Founders, of Father Chaminade who, at the end of his life, could say that *he had not lived and breathed for a long time except for Mary*... I realize how far I still have to go. How many times, when developing a project for our community, for our Unit, have we asked ourselves: what can we do this year so that Mary is known, loved and served?

Ours is a small religious family compared to others. In some areas, few people know who we are. But where we are known, what do they say about us? That we are experts in education, in social ministry, in working with young people...? And what else? I have in mind, as I imagine all of you do, too, movements, groups, and associations whose names I immediately associate with Mary. Their commitment to making Mary known, to living a Marian spirituality, inspires my admiration and, at the same time, encourages me to ask questions. What about me? What about us? What makes us stand out? I am not talking about environments hostile to religion in which it is necessary to act cautiously and without being noticed too much.

In cases where action can be taken, do we wonder what we could do in our community to respond to the commitment we make in our vow of stability? Does the secular environment in which we find ourselves slow us down? Maybe shyness stops us? Or does shyness stop us from feeling sufficiently prepared to ...? What do we need to be bolder in life and make our charism known? The digital world is so powerful and so known to many of us; how could it be used to make Mary known, loved and served?

I have met many sisters whose deep love for Mary has inspired me. Mary is loved in our communities; her presence is concretely visible through many external signs: songs, images, statues, writings, flowers ... The creativity and richness of each culture is best expressed when it comes to highlighting something from the Mother of God.

I like to think that we still have a lot of creativity left to explore, to realize the motto we know well: *make her known, loved and served*, as a privileged means of preparing the way for her Son Jesus.

**CONCLUSION**

Thinking about Adele’s enthusiasm for the mission, the privilege she felt in carrying the title of Missionary, we can ask ourselves:
- How much enthusiasm is in my heart to carry out the mission entrusted to me?
- Do I live this mission with joy or resignation?
- Am I aware of the gift I have received?
- Who am I sent to?
- Who is our community, our Unit, sent to?
- Where, how, can we reach our brothers and sisters who are alone and abandoned in the existential peripheries of our society?

And as our Rule of Life says (I.73):
- Am I happy to have been called to prolong Mary’s apostolic mission?
- Am I convinced that the Lord does not cease to call men and women whom the Church needs?
- Am I interested in working so that others may come to know the joy which inspires us and commits us to the mission of Mary?

It is also true that, as *Evangelii Gaudium* says, *Sometimes we lose our enthusiasm for mission because we forget that the Gospel responds to our deepest needs, since we were created for what the Gospel offers us: friendship with Jesus and love of our brothers and sisters. If we succeed in expressing adequately and with beauty the essential content of the Gospel, surely this message will speak to the deepest yearnings of people’s hearts: The missionary is convinced that, through the working of the Spirit, there already exists in...*
individuals and peoples an expectation, even if an unconscious one, of knowing the truth about God, about man, and about how we are to be set free from sin and death. The missionary’s enthusiasm in proclaiming Christ comes from the conviction that he is responding to that expectation.\textsuperscript{21}

To announce Christ and his message, therefore, is not to violate the freedom of the other. It is to be convinced that the other person is waiting for this message. Certainly, in all this comes into play respect for the freedom of the other, interreligious dialogue, respect for the religion of the other person. Therefore, this is not a question of proselytism: We do not have a product to sell. It has nothing to do with proselytizing; we are not selling a product. We have a life to communicate: God, his divine life, his merciful love, his holiness! It is the Holy Spirit who sends us, accompanies us and inspires us. He is the source of our mission.\textsuperscript{22}

Let us listen again to the invitation that the Church gave us in the year of consecrated life: We invite you to look at your own charismatic and missionary experience with truth so that it is not just a name that identifies the Institute, but the relationship that was born between the Founders, the times that followed them, and history, creating the history of salvation. The present does not allow for closed horizons.\textsuperscript{23}

We are sent with the certainty that the Holy Spirit, the true protagonist, precedes us. We are sent with the certainty that Mary walks with us.

Dear Sisters, we are sent! You are sent! You are a Missionary of Mary!

Happy Patronal Feast, from all of the Councilors, too!

\textit{Sr. M. Franca Zonta}

\textit{Mother General}

\textsuperscript{22} POPE FRANCIS, To the national directors of the pontifical mission societies, Rome, 1 June 2018
\textsuperscript{23} CICLSAL, Proclaim, 53.