

WALKING IN SOLIDARITY

APRIL 2018

IN ADELE'S WORDS – Nº 3

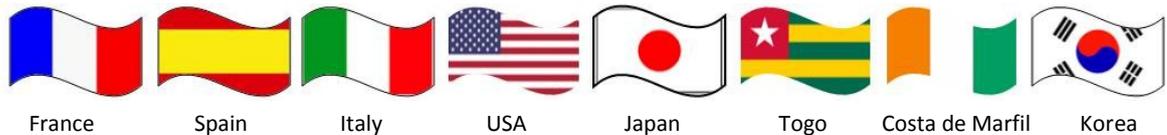
Saragossa Community
Province of Spain

ADELE – A WOMAN IN SOLIDARITY WITH THE POOR

The witness of Adele's life awakens us and invites us to open our hearts to the needs of others, to the poor and to both welcome and go out to encounter those with the greatest needs. Adele created the "Little Society" to live out the Gospel. She invited all who were part of the project to be missionaries where they live: in their family, among friends, through participating in catechesis, as well as in responding to the needs of the poor, in visiting the sick and prisoners. Adele opened a small school in her family château. Concerns about education of the whole person and Christian education of youth excited her.

Let us be transformed by love, so we will be able to be "weak with the weak and infirm with the infirm". (364.8)

HISTORICAL PRESENCE



AND NEW WAYS OF SOLIDARITY



We recall what was said in the 32nd General Chapter Document

2. SOLIDARITY

Consecrated men and women who are rooted in recognition of the primacy of being over having, and of ethics over economy, should assume an ethic of solidarity and sharing as the soul of their action.
CIVCSVA, *New Wine in New Wineskins*, No. 28.1, 2017

2.1 The Chapter calls us to discover and travel new paths of solidarity. God shows solidarity with us in having become human and one with us in Jesus. God invites us into Jesus' experience – to have the feelings and attitudes necessary for walking along this path. Our Marianist vocation is one of solidarity; like Mary, who follows her son, ever attentive to the needs of others. (cf. Jn 2, 1-11). Our call to share the Good News of the Gospel has led us to now be in sixteen countries. Adele might write this to us today: "How we have increased... We are spreading far and wide; may we go far in our love of God, and run with giant steps along the path to perfection." (Letter # 88.9, July 16, 1807).

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(32 G.C. 2.3)

Adele’s willingness to go to the ends of the earth for a single soul is a model for our living in solidarity.

2.2 God also invites us into Jesus’ experience of bringing the reign of God into our world, day and time. Our religious life is a response to call for a vibrant living of the Gospel, searching for the “pearl of great price”. It requires inner work, ongoing conversion for openness to God’s call and openness to others. Without cultivating a deep relationship with Christ, we will not be able to let go of self-interests. Our communities are a support and help on this path. Together, we are living the paschal mystery in service of the mission.

2.3 We have always lived the spirit of solidarity inside our Congregation: it is not altogether new. We have shared formation in international novitiates; the new foundations have become possible because of generous collaboration between units. This continues today. Solidarity among us, from local communities to units, will ultimately strengthen our missionary dynamism as a Congregation that is responsive to our changing times.

2.4. Two aspects of our solidarity together within the Congregation are essential for our presence among the economically poor, disadvantaged and vulnerable, and for answering the needs of the church and world:

- **Financial:** Our sharing of assets is an important collaboration, especially in having the finances necessary to ensure that the needs of each unit are met. It is particularly vital for new foundations, so that they will be able to carry out their mission.
- **Personnel:** To support the mission of other communities, including beyond our own local areas or units (e.g. Agen) or for international experiences of formation or exchange, sisters may come to live for a time in a unit other than their own.

You are invited to read the rest of the section on solidarity (2.5 – 2.8) in the Chapter Document.

The 6 keys that Pope Francis gives us for living in solidarity

« *If each of us do a work of mercy every day, a revolution will take place in the world* » Pope Francis said in a tweet, inviting all Christians to cultivate a true culture of encounter, « *where no one looks indifferently at others, nor turns away from those who suffer.* »

1. IDENTIFY THE FACE OF THE POOR

"Poverty has the face of women, men and children exploited by vile interests, trampled by the perverse logic of power and money. What an endless and cruel list we find when we consider poverty as the outcome of social injustice, moral misery, the greed of a few and widespread indifference. God created heaven and earth for all; it is people, unfortunately, who have created borders, walls and fences, betraying the original gift destined for humanity without excluding anyone." (Message of Pope Francis for the First World Day of the Poor.)



2. LOVE WITHOUT EXCUSES

"Faced with this situation, we cannot remain inactive, nor resigned. We must respond with a new vision for life and society. "My children, let us not love by word or mouth, but by truth and good works" (1 Jn 3,18). These words of the apostle John express an imperative that no Christian can ignore. Love does not admit excuses: the one who wants to love as Jesus loved, must make Jesus' example their own; especially when it comes to loving the poor. If we wish to contribute effectively to changing history and generating true development, it is necessary that we listen to the cry of the poor and commit ourselves to removing them from their condition of marginalization. "(Message of Pope Francis for the First World Day of the Poor)

3. CREATE A TRUE MEETING

"The great challenge of our world is the globalization of solidarity. Do not think of the poor only as the recipients of a good volunteer service work to do once a week, and even less so of improvised gestures of goodwill to soothe your conscience. These experiences, although valuable and helpful to sensitize us about the needs of our many brothers and sisters and the injustices that often provoke them, should introduce us to a true encounter with the poor and lead us to a sharing that becomes a way of life. If we really want to find Christ, we need to touch his body in the wounded bodies of the poor. "(Message of Pope Francis)

4. BREAK THE CIRCLE OF SOLITUDE

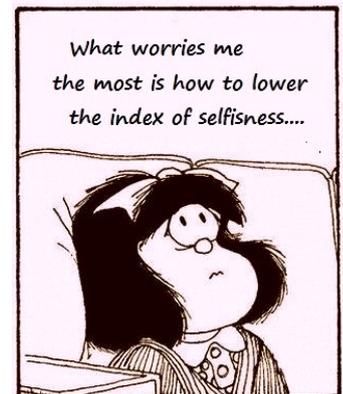
"The important thing is not to look from a distance nor to help from afar, but to go out to encounter them. That is what Jesus teaches us it means to be Christian. Go encounter the most needy like Jesus who always went out to meet people where they are. We are called, therefore, to reach out to the poor, to meet them, to look them in the eyes, to embrace them, to make them feel the warmth of love that breaks the circle of loneliness. "(Message of Pope Francis)

5. RECOGNIZE THE VALUE OF THE POOR

"Their hand extended to us is also an invitation to leave our certainties and our comforts, and to recognize the value of being poor. With their confidence and willingness to let themselves be helped, the poor show us in a simple way, and often joyfully, the importance of living with the essential and abandoning ourselves to God's providence. "(Message of Pope Francis).

6. ENLARGE THE HEART

"May Jesus lead your way to find and encounter those with the greatest need. When you meet someone in need, your heart will begin to enlarge, enlarge, enlarge, because the encounter multiplies the capacity of love and enlarges the heart." (Message of Pope Francis to the faithful of San Cayetano in Buenos Aires 2013)



**“THE GREAT
CHALLENGE OF OUR
WORLD IS THE
GLOBALIZATION OF
SOLIDARITY”**
(P. FRANCIS)



In Adele's Words

If we are to be little apostles, our zeal will need to be constantly invigorated. But since example is the best teacher, let us begin with ourselves. (172.3)

Let me add ... that we also have free schooling for the children of the poor, catechism classes for first communicants, and a sewing class for young girls. (334.13)

Yesterday I was present while Sister Saint Vincent gave her instructions to the poor; she does very well. I ask you to pray every Thursday for this promising work. 5 Have you had any adult women to teach? I hope to see that type of apostolate inaugurated very soon. I shall send you a sister as soon as I can. (405: 3,5)

Sister Saint Vincent gives instructions four times a week to a large group of women. 6 Have you begun classes yet? How is your project for helping the indigent? (407.4,6)

We would like our sodalists to become little Missionaries, if I may put it so, who could spread among their families and in their towns the seed we have sown in their hearts. That is the spirit of our Sodality groups. Let there be no misconception on that score. Many sodalists are engaged in good works: some teach the children in the country, others teach catechism to the prisoners, etc., etc. (414.11)

I am most pleased to hear that your Sodalities are doing well. The Sodality is my work of predilection and has been ever since I was sixteen—which may surprise you. Yes, at that age, I was driven to form a spiritual association of young women. Because I was

living in the country, it was by correspondence that I directed that Society; some of my young friends lived a hundred miles away. It is this Little Society that was the cradle of the Institute, for our first candidates were all formed in it. (438.3)



Lompian, place where the
“Little Society” used to meet.

We hold retreats in the convent. The retreatants are housed in separate quarters adjoining the convent and can stay for one or two weeks. One of the sisters is appointed to direct them by meditations, interviews, etc., and by readings appropriate to the needs of their souls. Some good is done by this means. (438.6)

It is always with satisfaction that I hear of your zeal in propagating devotion to Mary and, in so doing, opening the path of salvation for our interesting young people... (460.3)

Let us love to repeat these words of Mary: “I am the handmaid of the Lord.” But we must put them into practice even more. Let us be truly God’s servants, ready to do the will of our adorable Master. (714.4)

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(ADELE DE BATZ)

SUGGESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND PRAYER

Personal Reflection:

Read the texts given paying attention to the dimensions of solidarity that are reflected in them.

- How do I live solidarity ?
- Who do I need to see, accompany, help and share with? How can I collaborate with other groups in solidarity ?
- How am I compassionate with people who suffer from social injustice, loneliness, depression, marginalization, and other ills?
- Adele was moved by the reality of poverty lived by people in her midst and she sought solutions. What steps do I feel invited to take given the realities in which we live in our day?

In Community :

- For deepening understanding and sharing, use the theological reflection method with the texts: see, judge and act.
- Engage in lectio divina with the Biblical texts
- To help us look at our reality with new eyes, reflect on page 5 of the 32nd General Chapter Document (August 2018) on our context.

CLOSING PRAYER

Happy are those who follow Jesus
on the path of the good Samaritan.
Those who dare to walk in His steps :
to overcome the difficulties of the way.
to overcome the fatigue of walking.

Those who walk are creating new paths
for others to enthusiastically follow,
and continue the Lord's work.
Those who, attentively and actively
change their route to go out and encounter the
living God
in those in whom He suffers
so present in these times,
some so close, others further away.

Happy those who give their lives for others.
Happy ALL those who think first of their sister and
brother
and who find their joy, and the joys and meaning

of life in working for others, for the Kingdom and
for God alive in our midst...

Happy ALL who work for the poor.
On behalf of the poor. united with the poor.
With the heart of the poor.
Contemplating sister death daily, she who arrives too
early,
Unjustly and painfully, in the faces of forgotten
children,
Without healthcare, education or play.
Happy are those who express their love concretely in
actions.
Those who do not just speak words
But who show their true love
Through life-giving works, companionship
and heart-felt service.

HAPPY ARE THOSE WHO LIVE
THE FIRST COMMANDMENT
THE LOVE OF GOD AND OUR BROTHERS
AND SISTERS.

