

8

INTERVENTION

From the Superioress General

Sister Kathleen Appler, DC

**XLII General Assembly of the
Congregation of the Mission**

DePaul University Chicago, IL, 29 June 2016

Good morning, Father Gregory, Fathers and Brothers of the Congregation of the Mission.

I am very happy to be here with you. It is indeed a special joy to have the opportunity to publicly assure you of the prayers of the Daughters of Charity – close to 16,000 faith-filled members – as the beginning days of your 42nd General Assembly unfold with its invitation for you to be renewed by the missionary vitality of our Vincentian vocation. Your theme highlighting your Congregation's 400 years of FIDELITY to the Charism and the New Evangelization truly touches our hearts as it simultaneously offers you the opportunity to be reenergized and renewed with a zeal for your service to those who are most poor and marginalized. Our world needs your witness, your creativity, your courage, and your passion. Thank you for your willingness to walk this journey of accompaniment with/to those who are poor. You can be sure that our entire Company of the Daughters of Charity is following your work closely and again, I repeat, you can most certainly count on our prayers. Through these words of mine, I am also voicing our Sisters' best wishes for many graces for each of you during your Assembly and BEYOND!

Please allow me to take this moment to specifically thank you and Our Lord for the close, fraternal bonds that exist between our two congregations: the Priests of the Mission and the Daughters of Charity. Our connectedness reflects the unique spirit, which has animated us all, dating back to our common and extraordinary founder and, it is also a consequence of one persistent and determined woman – NAMELY, Saint Louise de Marillac. As is concretely evidenced in her writings – recorded as formulated BEFORE 1628 and the foundation

of our Congregation – Saint Louise always held the needs and the blessings of the Congregation of the Mission in her heart and prayers! Saint Vincent was willing conscientiously to assist our Little Company in its beginning days, and Saint Louise consistently and ardently voiced her desire to receive his guidance. At the same time, we know that she advised the Sisters to pray with and for the Congregation of the Mission. We have written evidence that she even verbalized specific motives for bringing your members and your intentions before our Blessed Mother. Our “singular institution” – that is, considering that the Priests of the Mission and the Daughters of Charity have the same Superior General in the person of the successors of Saint Vincent – is, in fact, unique in the history of congregations and is an arrangement that is oftentimes surprising for those who do not know the history of our spiritual families. The presence of a Superior General, a Director General, and a Provincial Director in our various councils are realities that are sometimes difficult to explain to Sisters of other congregations. However, we proudly share our explanation of this gift of our heritage! Truly, it is very much due to Saint Louise’s insistence that we have this singular institution, and it is very much as a result of her insistence that the originality, unity, and the identity of the Company so intertwined with you have been preserved. We are grateful!

This morning, I wish to express our thanks to Father Gregory GAY in the name of the Company of the Daughters of Charity, as well as in my own name, for his presence among us during these past 12 years. Thank you very much, Father Greg! I have only served in my capacity with Father Greg for just over one year – but my connections with and admiration of him date back much further. Father Greg, thank you for your leadership and for your close brotherly accompaniment of us. Your visits to our Sisters and our missions – near and far - have touched us deeply. You have gone to the far corners of the world – literally to the ends of the earth – to our peripheries, to connect with us. You have done it continuously – even extending it to the final days of your mandate! Please be assured that we appreciate ALL!

Likewise, I express my thanks for the presence of the Director General – so valuable to us – as the representative of the Superior General. Father Bernard SCHOEPPER is not present here in Chicago, but I would like publically to offer my gratitude for his unwavering availability to us in Paris and to the Company throughout the world. His discreet accompaniment and his astute wisdom are invaluable gifts to us! In the same way, those of you who assist our Visitatrixes and

their Provincial Councils as Provincial Directors in our respective provinces offer us, through your presence, dynamic Vincentian animation and accompaniment, which permeates all of our endeavors as we seek to faithfully respond to our vocational call as Daughters of Charity. There are no words to encompass fully my gratitude!

Furthermore, I bring to each of you – Fathers and Brothers of the Congregation of the Mission – our genuine appreciation for your collaborative presence among us. Since the beginning of the Company of the Daughters of Charity, you have been “there” for us – guiding us spiritually, enriching and supporting our focus on those who are poor, and encouraging us to live our Community life well. How can we ever thank you? Your never-ending generosity is reflected in your availability to assist us through your celebration of the Eucharist, your preaching retreats, your visits to our local communities, your offering of conferences, spiritual direction, and accompaniment to so many of our Sisters. I am especially grateful for your attentive listening to our elderly Sisters, your support of our Sisters in initial formation, and our Sister Servants as well as of our Visitatrixes and their Councils. You can be sure that each of us pray that the good we have experienced through you in the past will continue to deepen in the years ahead! We genuinely desire to continue our close collaboration with you. We are counting on you to be willing to walk this spiritual road with us as we each humbly seek to serve mutually, reverently, and passionately those who are the most poor. I am confident that today we are truly united in thought and spirit. You can count on my prayers to assure that the Holy Spirit, the spirit of your Congregation and of our Company according to Saint Vincent and Saint Louise, will continue to bless our collaboration and will assist us so that, TOGETHER, we may face any challenges that may lie ahead. May our shared passion for Jesus Christ – which sends us out to those who are most poor with courage, compassion, and creativity – continue to be enriched by the audacious ways we seek to serve together! I look forward to the ways that we shall be blest to respond boldly well into our future!

Again, please be very assured of our prayers for you in the days ahead as your Assembly progresses. May the Holy Spirit graciously and ardently guide your sharing and your work!

This morning, I pray especially that during your days together God will open your eyes to see what He wishes you to see in the presentations and the sharing that will encompass your program. May He open your ears that you may hear clearly what He wants you to

hear. May He open your hearts that you may feel passionately as He feels, giving particular attention to those who are in most need of your love, respect, and assistance. May our Blessed Mother, as well as Saint Vincent, Saint Louise, and our Communion of Vincentian Saints and Blessed, intercede for you – and may Jesus, Himself, truly be the Center of your reflections and your resolutions!

Thank you!