“Of any color which is their tears, they are always very bitter.” SME

The joy expressed in the free, sincere, open and tender friendship of women who have left the prostitution and today are Apostles of God’s mercy and reconciliation; women whom God is watching them with the sensitivity expressed by Jesus, -the Good Shepherd, the friend who gave his life for them and for all of us. This friendship is inspiring the prayer for these women and for women who are still in a situation of prostitution and others who can falling into the trap of this economic structure of exploitation (controlled by pimps); women of whom Jesus said "they come before you to the Kingdom of God" (cf. Matthew 21.31), so welcome the proposal of Paul and ‘do not conform yourselves to this age but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and pleasing and perfect for these daughters of God and our sisters in Christ’ (Romans 12.2).

In addition, that these women discover and recover their dignity, and no longer bear the burden of a social morality that constantly oppresses, stigmatizes, and marginalizes them, even after having left prostitution. This can help to regain the trust: in themselves, with other women, their families, religious life, the Church and society; through the recovery of speech in sacred spaces of conversation, in order to promote change of socio-cultural patterns that perpetuate prostitution in a world that accepts this behavior, but not the person who is or was in a situation of prostitution.

Once, when Jesus went into the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked his disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” If today a woman in prostitution asks us this question, how do we respond to her? What have you heard in your family about these women? What were you told when you say that you work on behalf of this population? What do public and private institutions with whom you relate, say about these women and how do they treat them? What have you heard among members of other religious congregations? What have you heard from representatives of the local Church? Jesus, after listening to what others said about Him, asked His apostles: "And you, who do you say that I am?" Now, if this woman asks us the same question, what do you think and what would you respond to her?

What we think about people much defines our way of relating to them. We can take a moment of silence in which we internalize previous questions along with these ones: what did I learn in my culture that guides my thoughts, feelings and actions towards these women? What must I unlearn about them? How can we restore these women, whom even we have marginalized in their own tears with expressions as “women who are leading an easy and happy life?” In Luke 8: 36-50 what did Simon the
Pharisee think of a woman washing the feet of Jesus with her tears? According to the words of Jesus to Simon and then to the woman, what was Jesus thinking of her? What potential did Jesus see in this woman? To what are we invited?

How the Good Shepherd Position on Prostitution of Women and Girls, that the Holy Spirit inspired in the Congregation, is transforming my mind and the way I meet (directly or indirectly, in prayer or ministry) women who are or were prostituted? How is this position manifested in the proposals and projects in which I work? How is it expressed in my personal and community prayer?

“The prostitution of women and girls is a chronic form of gender violence that has been structurally embedded in societies over the centuries. Good Shepherd’s position echoes the UN 1949 Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others “that prostitution is incompatible with the dignity and worth of the human person, and endangers the welfare of the individual, the family and the community…” Prostitution is, by its nature, exploitative and is never part of a global decent work agenda” Please read the entire document of the GS Position in the following link: [http://www.buonpastoreint.org/downloads/index/333](http://www.buonpastoreint.org/downloads/index/333)

¿What is crucial?

“To emphasize the universal validity of human rights and the need to transform the cultural patterns that threaten them. For this reason, the Special Rapporteur of the United Nations on Violence against Women recommended a “cultural negotiation” to “educate society about the oppressive nature of certain practices carried out in the name of culture, using the positive cultural elements and other expressions of masculinity which respect the rights of women”.

Expanding the look: integration of the approaches for gender, interculturality and human rights in development programming.

"Respond fully to our Congregational Position as Good Shepherd about Prostitution" (Good Shepherd Position on Prostitution of Women and Girls)

We can conclude our prayer-reflection taking the Canticle of Mary, whose central theme is God, and pray it from the place where Mary did it: that of humility. With Mary, may we become aware of God's work in us, in the world and with people, so that, guided by the Spirit; we continue to bring life to where people living in poverty are crying out.

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