JUSTICE: “YOU ARE THE SALT OF THE EARTH” MT. 5:13

On July 13, 1835, Saint Mary Euphrasia Pelletier, wrote to Sister M. of St. Stanislas Bedouet, Superior of Poitiers: “…everything will be precious to your souls that thirst for holiness and justice.” She also described the work in Poitiers as “the glory of the Generalate.” Saint Mary Euphrasia described her friend and sister M. of St. Stanislas Bedouet as "a real daughter of the work,” and described the importance of the sister’s work for the Generalate: “her struggle, her works, her unalterable fidelity.”

As you can see, these quotes come from a very positive and significant moment for the development of the Congregation. They demonstrate the joy and determination of this particular moment, for the development of the mission in Poitiers.

Let us reflect: what message does Saint Mary Euphrasia’s quote about justice convey to us today? What are the similarities or differences with our modern realities?

The message that it conveys to us is to maintain the joy, motivation and charism of the Good Shepherd in the Mission, which characterize the search for justice and peace.

This spirit exists wherever the Congregation is present, in the warmth of the welcome that is always provided, which reflects the Good Shepherd.

The differences from the Holy message to Sister M. of St. Stanislas Bedouet can be seen in the different realities that are lived in each country, the great needs in the world today, such as hunger, poverty, discrimination, and the lack of solidarity and commitment to the most marginalized people.

According to the 2020 Political Risk Outlook 2020 study, 25% of the countries in the world experienced social struggles and protests during the year 2019¹. These struggles demonstrate the need to change perspectives, with a view to emphasizing the prevention of violence and its causes in order to achieve peace. These movements also highlighted the need to strengthen efforts to determine risks and act together, with the aim of increasing responses to these situations.

According to the Pathways for Peace: Inclusive Approaches to Preventing Violent Conflict study by the World Bank and the United Nations, conflict prevention saves lives and saves up to 70 billion dollars annually.² This significant economic figure can be used for world justice and peace, to overcome the conditions that lead to the marginalization of people around the world, especially in the poorest countries. Likewise, the suppression of conflicts and social struggles would allow us to obtain better results in the fight against poverty, in line with SDG 1.

All this can be done in response to the cries we hear from different peoples and countries, cries for justice, peace, equality and equity, in search of a world that is more fair, understanding justice as equity. In this way, the beautiful expression of Saint Mary Euphrasia could become a reality in a greater number of countries: “everything will be precious to your souls thirsting for holiness and justice”. We aspire to these graces, and work so that they become a reality, as we are the salt of the earth.

Prayer prepared by Huberth Blanco Lizano, Province of Central America