



## **“Rekindle the flame of Christ’s mercy in all the world!”**

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*(Theme of the 17th General Chapter of the  
Apostles of the Sacred Heart of Jesus 2016)*

### *Wake up the world with the joy of the Gospel*



The new evangelization is a call to live the Gospel with joy, renewed commitment, creativity, serious and courageous discernment, in order to foster an encounter with Jesus Christ. Evangelization is not only a task to carry out but the very identity of the Church and the reason for its existence. We need to see ourselves as branded with the mission to illumine, bless, enliven, raise up, heal, and liberate.

Pope Francis in *Evangelii Gaudium* reminds us that the joy of the Gospel fills our hearts and the entire lives of those who meet Jesus. Those who receive His salvation are freed from sin, sadness, emptiness, loneliness. With Jesus Christ joy is continually reborn.

#### *Luke 1: 39-45 - Mary visits Elizabeth*

During those days Mary set out and traveled to the hill country in haste to a town of Judah, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, the infant leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth, filled with the holy Spirit, cried out in a loud voice and said, “Most blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And how does this happen to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For at the moment the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy. Blessed are you who believed that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled.”

*Two women. A long journey. A simple and welcoming greeting. An encounter that warms the heart. It seems like a parable of every man and woman. Yes, because every encounter with another commits us to a journey: to go out of ourselves, our homes, our cities, to go toward the other, to run to where there is a need. And not with empty hands: it is the heart, the womb, freedom that bring newness. Whoever receives good news does not keep it to himself. We know that good news will also warm the hearts and enrich the lives of those we meet. Is it not also the parable of our God? He lived it in His son of Nazareth.*

### *Pope Francis*

“The Christian’s identification card is joy”: the “wonder” before the “greatness of God,” his love, his salvation cannot but bring to the believer a joy that not even the crosses of life can destroy, because even in trials there is the “certainty that Jesus is with us. Christians are men and women with joy in their hearts.” A Christian without joy does not exist. “The Christian’s identification card is joy, the joy of the Gospel, the joy of having been chosen by Jesus, saved by Jesus, renewed by Jesus; the joy of the hope that Jesus is waiting for us. Let us ask the Lord today to give us a sense of wonder before Him, before the many spiritual riches He has given us; and with this wonder may He give us joy--the joy of life and of living with peace in our hearts even amid our many difficulties. May He protect us from seeking happiness in many things that in the end bring only sadness: they promise much but they don’t bring us anything!...Be sure to remember this: a Christian is a man and a woman of joy, of joy in the Lord; a man and a woman of wonder.” (*Homily, May 23, 2016, Santa Marta*).



### *Mother Clelia*

“ Carry on your small apostolate and know how to sacrifice yourself to console whoever may need your advice and your consolation” (*Spiritual Anthology 3.2.4, p. 119, Mg. II, p.151*).

“... If the people with whom you converse are disagreeable to you, know how to hide behind a gracious countenance the interior repugnance they arouse in you. Don't allow sadness, annoyance, or austerity to be evident in your words and actions because charity obliges us to sympathize with them and to give them good example, that they might amend those defects which render them disagreeable” (*Spiritual Anthology 3.10, p. 178-179, Mg., II, p. 107*).



**A Story - The Circle of Joy** - One day, not long ago, a farmer appeared at the door of a convent and knocked energetically. When the porter opened the heavy oak door, the farmer, smiling, showed him a magnificent bunch of grapes. “Brother,” said the farmer, “do you know to whom I wish to give these grapes, the most beautiful in my vineyard?” “Maybe to the abbot or to one of the brothers?” “No, to you!” “To me?” The brother blushed for joy. “You want to give them to me?” “Of course, because you have always treated me like a friend and have helped me whenever I have asked you. I want these grapes to give you some joy!” The simple and genuine joy that he saw on the brother's face lit up the farmer as well. The brother placed the grapes well in his view and gazed at them all morning. They were truly marvelous. Then he had an idea: “Why not bring these grapes to the abbot so I can give him a litty joy, too?” So he took the grapes and brought them to the abbot. The abbot was truly happy. But he recalled that there was in the convent an elderly brother who was ill and he thought: “I will bring the grapes to him to cheer him up a little.” So the grapes traveled once again. But they didn't stay very long in the room of the sick brother. He thought that they would give some joy to the cook, who spent his days at the stove, and he sent them to him. But the cook gave them to the sacristan (to bring some joy also to him), and he brought them to the youngest brother in the convent, who gave them to someone else, who thought to give them to another. Until, from brother to brother the grapes returned to the porter to bring him some joy. With that the circle was closed—the circle of joy.

*Don't expect someone else to start. It's up to you, today, to begin a circle of joy. Often a tiny spark is enough to set off a huge explosion. Just a spark of goodness and the world will begin to change.*

*Love is the only treasure that multiplies when it's divided: it is the only gift that grows the more it is given away. It is the only enterprise in which the more you spend, the more you earn. Give it as a gift, toss it away, scatter it to the four winds, clear out your pockets, empty your baskets, turn the glasses upside down, and tomorrow you will have more than you had before.*

## *Pledge*

- ✓ Wake up the world with your joy, your gentleness, your goodness and mercy, because whatever you do to your neighbor you do to Jesus.
  
- ✓ Evangelize with your smile and your joy. Make an effort to invite others to encounter Jesus, the only one who can remove sadness, emptiness, and loneliness from the heart to fill it with the joy of his infinite love.

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## *Prayer*

God, our Father, you so loved humankind that you sent us your only Son Jesus, born of the Virgin Mary, to save us and lead us back to you. Good Father, give your Blessing to us, too, to our parents, to our families and to our friends. Open our hearts, so that we may be able to receive Jesus in joy, always do what he asks and see him in all those who are in need of our love. We ask you this in the name of Jesus, your beloved Son who comes to give the world peace. He lives and reigns forever and ever. Amen. *(Pope Benedict XVI)*

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*"An evangelizer must never look like someone who has just come back from a funeral! Let us recover and deepen our enthusiasm, that delightful and comforting joy of evangelizing, even when it is in tears that we must sow."* (Pope Francis)

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