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“Fidelity in the observances of rules will help you to detach yourself from the miserable world and fly to God on the wings of perfect love.” Bp. S. Ferrando

Dear Sisters,

We are already in the Platinum Jubilee year of our Congregation. It was by the grace of God that many MSMHCs got the chance to attend the retreat preached by the Attapadi team at Hatigaon. The days that we spent there presented us an occasion to begin the jubilee year with much fervour and enthusiasm as it motivated us to make a difference in our way of living. It made us feel the need for a transformation in all areas of our life and to take ahead our congregation according to the wish of our beloved Founder.

The platinum Jubilee of our congregation was officially inaugurated at our Generalate on 26 October, 2016. We shall also mark the occasion in our own communities with minimum procedures and celebrate the Jubilee later in an appropriate time meaningfully. We had the inter-provincial council meeting soon after the retreat and it was an occasion for us to study and see how we live the general and provincial chapter directives. It called us to live the jubilee year with much dedication and determination to become persons of God.

We are about to enter into the season of advent and I would like to reflect with you a few thoughts on the same. Why did Advent matter so much to us? Why do we love this season? There are many reasons: we find that observing Advent will enrich our celebration of Christmas and allow us to have a precious, peaceful, God-focused experience during Christmas. Taking four weeks to focus on the hope of Christ’s coming can make us much more joyful when we finally get to celebrate it. The more we intensely long for a Savior, the more we rejoice at the Savior’s birth. It helps us to prepare spiritually than materially. St. Paul writes in his letter to the Romans, *“For the creation waits in eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed. For creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the freedom and glory of the children of God”* Rom.8:19. The “freedom and glory” that we realize in remembering Christ’s coming at Christmas gives us the fervor to await His

return and encourages us to continually prepare our hearts for Christ, wherever we are. Advent is also about an *encounter*. We remind ourselves throughout this season that we are on a pilgrimage of faith to encounter the Lord and most of all, to allow ourselves to be encountered by Him. His is not an abstract love; “it is concrete.” Letting ourselves be encountered by God means just this: letting ourselves be loved by God! And through our encounter, we will have even great passion to expect the renewal of our hearts and of our society. Pope Francis said, “It isn’t just a temporal celebration of the memory of a beautiful event”. Dear Sisters, the Church has given us this season of advent to make a deeper look into our religious life and make the necessary amendments to add quality and beauty to our lives and mission. Let this time of Advent give us an opportunity to come closer to our Saviour and Redeemer.

The feast of Mary Immaculate Conception reminds us of God’s will in our lives. “I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength” Phil.4:13. Mary took great risk putting herself beyond any hope of security; she accepted the pain, showed the trust of letting go and remained radically open to God. Mary knew all the problems ahead and still said ‘Yes’. Dear Sisters, all of us have annunciation stories of our own. Let us examine and see if we have the courage to accept God’s will in our life. Let us cling on to our blessed mother for the courage to live our lives meaningfully giving Jesus to all those who come into our lives. Not all of us possess boundless energy or a conspicuous talent nor are we equally blessed with great intellect, physical beauty or emotional strength. But we have all been given the same ability to be faithful. Let us continue to make an inward journey of our religious life, re-commit ourselves and be a blessing to others.

Wish each of you dear Sisters happy feast of Mary Immaculate and a meaningful celebration of the day.

Yours affectionately



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