

January 27, 2024

Dear Teresian Family,

Once again this year we are gathered together by St. Henry de Osso, a man of God, whom we approach as our Founder Father, as teacher and catechist, as the great Teresian apostle who was passionate about Jesus and his interests. On this day we give thanks and celebrate his life in every place where his word has reached and where his desire to *"know and love Jesus and make him known and loved"* has been embodied in a variety of initiatives, works, and projects that continue to inspire gospel-based responses to the needs of our times. Let us celebrate and never tire of giving thanks for the life of our Founder Father and for the great gift of the Teresian charism that we have received!

On this occasion I have the joy of presenting, together with this letter, the final Document of the XVIII General Chapter of the Society of St. Teresa of Jesus. It has already been formatted and translated, and we have titled it **"WE ARE ONE"**. In this document we present the vision and the Chapter option that we hope will guide and energize our life and mission: like Jesus, we feel called to collaborate with others, so that this world, both locally and globally, may be a place where every person can be happy¹, where everyone, especially the smallest and most vulnerable, can enjoy life, life in abundance².

A new community identity, being one with others, diversity, inclusion, together... These are key words and phrases that have been with us as we discerned the Chapter option. In the document we are sending today, these words are symbolized by two different speech balloons that merge into one to create something new. Beginning on the cover and as a connecting thread, they become a statement of our intentions for the coming years. The simplicity of the drawings and the soft and luminous colors are intended to evoke the importance of dialogue, plurality, encounter, unity, and collaboration in a common project based on the example of Jesus.

Sharing with everyone the **VISION** within which the Chapter option of the Society of St. Teresa of Jesus is situated commits us and directs us to continue walking together, sisters and laity, in the eight years ahead. We are invited to do so by learning to live interculturally, promoting a synodal style in our relationships and in the way we exercise leadership, collaborating with others in the search for the common good and in the

¹ One day Naomi said to her daughter-in-law Ruth: "Daughter, I desire to find a place where you will be happy." (Ruth 3,1)

² John 10, 10

construction of global citizenship. We are aware that we are not walking towards a goal but towards a horizon. This is more of an "exodus" than a long-distance race, more a way of being that is based on the Gospel values than of ready-made solutions and answers. It is a way of embracing our paradoxes and limits, with hope and reconciliation.

We listen to this invitation of the Spirit in times of uncertainty and complexity. In many of our countries, political polarization and social injustice, which is increasingly institutionalized, seem to impede the possibility of a more just, humane, and dignified world for all. In this context, celebrating Henry de Osso and honoring his life, becomes, for us, the Teresian Family, a call to journey with hope and with confidence in our true Friend Jesus. As Henry tells us, *"which of us, even if his soul is one of the weakest, would not be encouraged to undertake an arduous enterprise if he could count on the sure protection of a powerful friend? And has not God, our true friend, promised this to those who trust in him, saying that they will renew their strength; that they will soar like eagles and fly without growing tired and faint?"*³

And so, we continue to hear him say, *"Let us get to work, for this reform is urgently needed for our good. Fewer words and more works; fewer laments and more prayers; fewer complaints and perhaps murmurings about our neighbor and more amendment of our own life, and we will have taken a great step towards true social reform".*⁴

May Henry de Osso encourage us to get down to work and to live with trust in God, so that we may walk together in hope.

A warm hug from your sister,



³ RT N° 5, February 1873, pp.113-117

⁴ RT N° 232, January 1892, pp.81-83