



Homily - Claudel Petit-Homme, CSC

Jubilee of the Sisters of Holy Cross

Saturday, June 17, 2017

(Isaiah 60: 1-5a.19 ; Ps119 ; John 1: 1-5.9.14.16)

1. Dear Jubilarians:

Inomine Codio, CSC
Lucienne Landry, CSC
Denise Martin, CSC
Elaine Poitras, CSC
Theresa Malouin, CSC

Celebrating
YEARS
50



Bearers of light
on the pathways
of Resurrection

"Already fifty years!" could very well be your own expression of amazement.

Yes, it's been fifty years.

Deo gratias, Mèsi GRANMÈT mèsj, Thanks toyou, Lord!

2. For your golden jubilee, –certainly inspired by the symbolism of *shared light* of one of you, in particular the experience of Sister Denise Martin, CSC– the committee formulated this theme with which you are undoubtedly familiar and will be for the rest of your days in Holy Cross, namely: *Bearer of light on the pathways of Resurrection*. In my opinion, it is more than a personal and communal life program. According to the biblical texts read, this theme invites us to go to the source of light to contemplate God made man in Jesus Christ who is, *"the true light", "light born of light"*. To better understand the scope of our light-bearing ministry *in the Church and in today's world*, we must have the courage to identify our sources and resources first and then accept to be constantly engaged –as was Christ– *on the pathways of death* to make –with him and in him– *pathways of life and resurrection*.

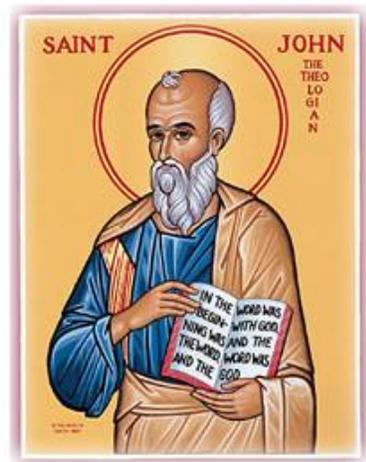
3. As you celebrate your jubilee, Saint John the Evangelist presents his hymn as an original rendering of Genesis 1 to 3, of which he also reiterates the first words *IN THE BEGINNING*, meaning "at the origin of all things". Thus he recapitulates salvation history. According to him, the eternal Word took a preponderant part in the work of creation; he was at work with God in the creation of the cosmos: *"And nothing that is has been created without him,"* he said. Through his optimism and taking into account all the evil that exists in us and around us – from the cunning of the serpent, the fall of Adam and Eve, the violence against and fratricide of Cain, etc... qualified as the first events of humanity's darkness– St. John affirms: *"The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it."*

4. We must note that the inequality of combat is underlined in the present: *light shines*. For God, in his essence of uncreated light, is the one who enlightens everything. And his first act of creation was light: *"Let there be light, and light was."* (Gen 1: 3). In fact, this Prologue of St. John does not leave us in Antiquity or in the past. He brings back to the present *the light of salvation*. Just like the prophet Isaiah who proclaims to the Holy City: *"Stand, Jerusalem, shine!"*



And the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee ... In the day, thou shalt not have the sun as light, and the light of the moon shall not enlighten thee: the Lord shall be for thee light Eternal God, your God will be your splendor." What the Apostle Paul repeats in these words: *"For the God who said, Let darkness shine the light, Who shone in our hearts, to shine knowledge Of the glory of God, which radiate on the face of Christ "* (2Cor 4: 6) (BJ).

5. Dear Jubilarians, I would like to believe that the *Lord Jesus* is your *source of inner light and of your unlimited resources*. As a matter of fact, Blessed Basile Moreau wrote on the subject: *"Pass on in your soul and in your external conduct the feelings and the way of acting of Jesus Christ."* Inasmuch as you follow Jesus Christ, *"you shall not walk in darkness"* (Jn 8:12). And with the resources you have at hand such as the Bible, the Rules and Constitutions of the Sisters of Holy Cross, community life, the Church, *the school of saints*, your spiritual exercises, your hope, your professional skills, and your faith are but complements and without charity, they are not worth much (1 Cor 13: 3).



6. In Saint John, the word *flesh* designates the human being affected by its weakness that ends in death. And this statement *"The Word made flesh"*, which characterizes the

Pathways

mystery of the *Incarnation / Redemption* and teaches us that "light is not opposed to the flesh", and that we "cannot journey on the pathways of Resurrection without dying to self, without experiencing neither the fragility of others nor our own. The flame of hope that we carry is fragile and always exposed to the winds. If we do not take the means to protect it, we risk

failing to transmit it wisely. Thus, even having "*participated in its fullness*" by Baptism, having "*received grace upon grace*" through our religious consecration, it demands on our part a process of discernment, conversion, and constant reorientation.

7. There is no shortage of *pathways to death*. There is not a single day in our world without *mourning, violence and hatred* reaching new heights. Often enough we are inclined to become discouraged. The good news of health, joy, peace, and justice are becoming more and more rare. Yet you have within you a light that cannot be extinguished. Even more than the *vigilance of keeping your lamps lit (Mt 25: 1-13)*, you are, in Christ Jesus, *women of light, children of light, bearers of light*. However, avoid being dazzling or blinding lights. Be *bearers of light* who know how to position themselves alongside other pilgrims like a lamp that illuminates the night, like the sun of justice that illuminates *both the good and the bad (Mt 5: 45)*, like the Risen One who makes to shine upon the world *the glory of God*.

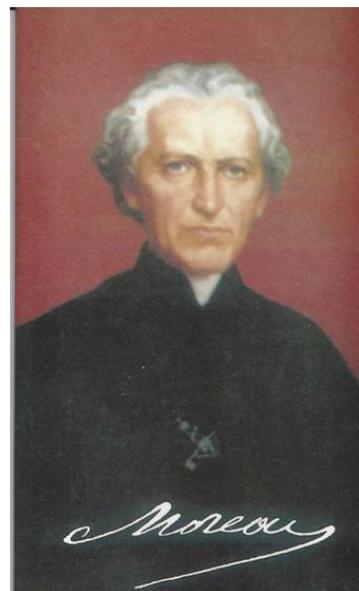
8. As for clearing dark paths into *pathways of resurrection*, we need patience, wisdom, and hope to go to the end. Above all we must *live as resurrected with Christ (Col 3: 1-2)*. "*For, without me,*" says Jesus, *who is the light of the world, "you can do nothing"* (Jn 8: 12b, 15, 5c).

**Do we need to be
in the decision-making bodies to radiate?**

I think NOT.

Your many talents and your dedication during these fifty years in the service of God and the Church prove it. Artist, painter, innovative teacher, human relations woman, career educator, missionary of the emergency, among others, *the light of your faith can not be hidden (Mt 5: 14-16)*.

As you celebrate these fifty years of religious consecration, it is not the time to take stock, but rather it is the time to advance, to begin again, *to take risks* as our Blessed Father Basil Moreau, our Founder, would say, with the assurance of perfecting in witness and mercy. You have become, dear Jubilarians, *the jewel, the flagship* of the Congregation of Holy Cross for the new generations. You are now among the predecessors, *the vigorous and inspiring women*, full of goodness and gentleness, able to grasp the essential and to preach *by example and silence* rather than *by words* that are often empty or sterile.





9. Like torchbearers who accompany the cross-bearer in a liturgical procession, and *like the disciples of Emmaus*, go –with Jesus– on the pathways of Resurrection. In this sense, make yours, like Pope Francis, this prayer attributed to St. Francis of Assisi, namely: *"Lord, make me an instrument of your peace..."*

Dear Jubilarians: *Inomine, Lucienne, Denise, Elaine, Theresa,*

Forerunners, women of audacity and zeal, beloved daughters of Blessed Basile Moreau, bearers of light in the Church and in today's world, experienced collaborators in our religious family—in communion with the General Administration whose time in office is ending as with the new Administration that will soon be named—, I would like to remind you of this teaching of St. Augustine to the Christians who participated in the Eucharist: "Become what you contemplate, contemplate what you receive, receive what you are: the Body of Christ."

10. In the hope that one day the *eternal light of the Lord* will shine on us, let us meditate these words of St. Paul to the Ephesians (5: 8-11): *"In the past,"* he said, *"you were darkness; Now, in the Lord, you are light; Lead ye as children of light; and the light of the light is fruit of all goodness, justice, and truth, and know how to recognize that which is pleasing to the Lord. Do not take part in the activities of darkness, they produce nothing good; Unmask them instead."*

Let it be so for each and every one of us!

And let Mary,

the Virgin of Light,

accompany us on the pathway to eternal life.



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