



INSTITUTO CALASANCIO
HIJAS DE LA DIVINA PASTORA



**Communion begets communion:
essentially it is likened to a mission on
behalf of communion.**

Madrid, June 19, 2020

**To the sisters and religious communities,
To those who Share the Calasancian Educational Mission
Of the Daughters of the Divine Shepherdess,
To those who feel attracted by the Calasancian Charism
Of the Daughters of the Divine Shepherdess,
Bequeathed by Saint Faustino Míguez de la Encarnación**

J.R.E.N.C.

On the day we celebrate the Sacred Heart of Jesus so important for our Institute, I
ANNOUNCE the

CELEBRATION OF THE XXIII GENERAL CHAPTER

That will begin on June 20, 2021, in our Casa Santa María Do Mar, de Dorrón
(Pontevedra).

Our own Law, Constitution n°173, on the General Chapter:

Above all, its purpose is to defend the spiritual patrimony of the Institute and to procure amendments and renewal of agreements for it, to elect the General Government, to deal with more important business matters, to review the Memories of Government and Administration, to study the state of the Institute, to give decrees and norms and to plan for the future.

The announcement to all the Houses of the Institute is done one year before its celebration. During this period all the issues that will be studied by the Chapter will be prepared and given to the General Government three months before the date set for its beginning. (R 175).

1. General Chapter preparatory phase

This joyful announcement is an invitation to each and everyone to live this time by directing our personal, community, and congregational energies to the Chapter celebration. And to do so in the conviction that the preparation to which we are called is, above all, that of preparing our hearts, personally and congregationally, to listen to the Spirit. The Chapter time, which we begin with this announcement, is a privileged time for listening; it is a time to discover and accept the will of God.

The setting of the Chapter, in which we want to place ourselves as an Institute, urges us to remain attentive, above all, to the Word of God. This word comes to us in the daily liturgy, as nourishment, and through each of the sisters and other persons with whom we share the mission, who experience it, live it and proclaim it. And to remain also in openness and acceptance of the word that comes through the Spirit, who continues to speak to the Church today through the signs of the times and the different places of our world, and the challenges we want to address, as a charismatic family of Daughters of the Divine Shepherdess, in obedience to the same Spirit.

2. Chapter Theme

As you will remember in the September 20, 2019 letter sent to all communities, we asked for your participation in the Chapter theme. We thank you for all the received answers and suggestions.

From a reflection on the reality that the Institute is living, on its dreams and on the response that it wants to give today to the needs of our context, the chosen theme is:

**Calasanzian Religious Women and laity rooted
In Jesus, in the mission
To respond to today's challenges.**

**I am the vine; you are the
branches...
I chose you so that you
might go and bear fruit
(Jn 15, 5.16)**

As we look at the Institute, and the path travelled, we recognize that together, religious women and laity, called to live our condition as believers based on this charism, want to continue to journey rooted in Jesus. Just like the branches that remain united to the vine, knowing that we are mission and in mission, the Gardner will transform us into an abundant and generous fruit for the world of today.

The Holy Spirit can and wants to lead us in this time to a joyful state of re-encounter with our vocational reality.

If each one of us allows it, the Chapter, from the reflection on this theme, wants to put us in contact with the most genuine part of our identity, with our first call. It will lead us to question ourselves on how we live our vocational dialogue on a daily basis, how we revitalize at every moment the faithful following of Jesus Christ, Master and Good Shepherd, from our common Calasanzian vocation as Daughters of the Divine Shepherdess. Asking ourselves how we remain rooted in Him.

This Chapter can be an opportunity to go back to Galilee and rediscover, anew and with strength, that covenant of love from which we feel called *to seek and journey*, and announce the Good News of our Father's love and mercy.

3. Keys from which to live the General Chapter

This Chapter celebration is a special time for our Institute. I invite you to stay open to the Spirit so he can allow each one to make this time a reality of life, of dynamism, of sharing, of meeting, of discernment, of listening; a "kairos" for the Institute.

It can be helpful for each one of us to welcome and live this chapter space from the following keys, among others:

- **A call that involves us all**

The announcement of the Chapter is made to all of us, because the Chapter, its celebration and its preparation, concerns us all and not only for the elected capitulars. We are all necessary to make our XXII General Chapter an event of grace and life for our Institute.

**He cuts off every
branch in me that
bears no fruit
(Jn 15, 2)**

Together we must live and carry out the Chapter, which needs the contributions and prayers of each and every community. It needs all of us to be actively and joyfully involved.

I encourage you to consider the Chapter and its preparation as a historical moment in which we all get together, with the same spirit, to share experiences, to encourage one another, to "dream" a future together, to offer paths and commitments.

- **An “event”**

An event always introduces something new in our history. Thus, my desire is for us all to turn the General Chapter into an event for the Institute.

As believers we know that it is God who gives novelty and surprise. From this, we need to acknowledge that we are not the ones to turn this Chapter into an event. It is not our capacity or our talent that produce novelty in something. Only our certainty that God acts in our Chapter and its preparation, will allow us to turn it into an event.

... **Apart from me you can do nothing**
(Jn 15, 5)

Our chapter will be an event only if we live it as an encounter with God and as a dialogue with his Will. If we welcome it as a meaningful expression of God's closeness to our institute, He will whisper through the Holy Spirit new paths to take in responding to today's reality.

- **Opportunity for a new charismatic impulse**

I propose you live this time of grace that we are about to begin in our Institute, convinced that the Holy Spirit himself who spoke through Saint Faustino continues to be present today in our current institutional reality and to talk to our hearts.

The Chapter can also be an opportunity to give a new impulse to our charism. Saint Gregory of Nyssa (IV century) used to say that in Christian life we go forward “from beginning to beginning, across beginnings that never end.”

From this statement we can conclude that our life is an ongoing beginning and therefore the Calasanzian Institute of the Divine Shepheress was not born once and for all in 1885, but continues to be born today.

The General Chapter can be a chance to begin once again, to be born once again, recreating today our charismatic origins as an evangelical answer to the emergencies of the time. Thus, the Calasanzian Institute continues to be born every day with the vocation of being a current answer to the challenges and concerns of today.

Therefore, the Chapter is a great opportunity that can lead us to rediscover what we need to focus on in a bold and decisive way, and what we have to let go of.. It's the Father's pruning so we can bear more fruits.

Every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful
(Jn 15, 2)

A possibility for each Calasanzian religious woman and lay person to feel newly and deeply in love with the charism.

- **Remember God's action.**

We are called to live the Chapter as a time to remember the action of God in our Institute and how we respond and collaborate in the Kingdom's Project.

We cannot be born again if we do not trust ourselves, if we do not acknowledge the gift of God, who is the Gardner among us. Because in His action, there is much more richness and fruits in the Institute than we are sometimes able to discover.

**I am the true vine, and
my Father is the
Gardner
(Jn 15, 1)**

The Chapter invites us to remember the road travelled in order to give thanks and the road regressed in order to redirect our lives to Him and His Kingdom.

- **Time of discernment**

The General Chapter is asking us a clear conversion to discernment. It is a propitious time to discern if we remain in Him, if we are responding with fidelity to our vocation and to the calls that the Spirit makes to us from the events and the clamor of the young, of the small, of the needy, of those to whom we are sent.

**Remain in me, as I also
remain in you
(Jn 15, 4)**

I wish that the celebration of the Chapter, already from this moment in which we begin its preparation, be in each one of us an opportunity, from our identity as believers, as religious and lay Calasanzians, to prepare ourselves to discern and reflect on how to respond, in a new and creative way, from our charismatic reality, to the challenges presented by the present reality of our world.

In this time that is given to us today, the feast of the Heart of Jesus, may we know how to accept Fr. Faustino's invitation to look at and learn from Him, as *the book and school of the most sublime perfection* (MSC 29).

Finally, I would like to reiterate the invitation to all to participate in this preparatory stage through personal and community prayer, a process of serious reflection and discernment according to your possibilities.

I also encourage you to place some sign in our chapels or oratories that reminds us of the Chapter and invites us to prayer and communion with the whole Institute and to look at the reality of our world where we are invited to go out to announce and proclaim the Good News.

Happy Chapter Journey. A fraternal embrace.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Sacramento Calderón R. de G.', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

M. Sacramento Calderón R. de G.
Superior General