

MY EXPERIENCE WITH THE DAUGHTERS OF MARY AND JOSEPH.

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Since I met the Daughters of Mary and Joseph, I have been touched by three values: hospitality, joy and simplicity. The first day I visited one of their communities, in search of my vocation, the sisters welcomed me in a way that enlightened and determined my decision to become a member of their family. In the community, I found a family spirit that makes whoever enters there for the first time comfortable and at ease.

Their joy attracted me at the first contact. I was impressed by the way they were happy to see me without even having known me before. It is a very important element, especially when a person is living challenging moments. Sister Christine, my first formator, always made sure that in community there was that spirit of joy of which our Founder reminds us very often in his writings. I remember the phrase she repeated to us on different occasions: "When you have no joy in you, that joy which is deep within your being, it means that there is something wrong; you must then do all you can, as soon as possible, to restore order within yourself, otherwise, you don't give life". Indeed, the joy we communicate has its roots in our hearts, and its external expression conveys what is within us. A peaceful and smiling face can relieve great pain and revive hope.

The simplicity that I found there can chase every feeling of shyness or of inferiority. In community, as well as outside, the sister who has a more important responsibility behaves like other members of the community, she is more servant than authoritarian. That attitude brings trust, openness and a more relaxed community life.

To those three qualities that I found in all the communities where I have lived, I would add the art of work well done and well presented. Here, I remember Sister Esther who used to tell us often: "My friends, order, everything in its own place", saying, at times, about something: "That is not how it should be done." I was challenged by her dedication to make of the community a good place to live because of order and time keeping in everything, and when I read later in the Exhortations of our Founder, some of the words she repeated often, I discovered that she knew how to match action to word. In the same line, I will cite Sister Anna Mary who told me one day: "When you do something, do it well."

Member of this Congregation that I love so much, life has always confronted me with these simple but profound realities that I would call pillars of a fulfilling consecrated life. Thanks to my Sisters who guided me on the way of hospitality, of joy and of simplicity. Long life to those who received, lived and transmitted faithfully the values of consecrated life as Daughters of Mary and Joseph.

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