



THE LETTER OF THE WOMEN'S SECULAR INSTITUTE OF THE HEART OF JESUS

Summary

Reflections on the Church

Testimonials

Possible lines of reflection

Going further

Some news



The Jubilee Year of 2025 is now at hand. We thought it would be appropriate to take this opportunity to reflect a little on what the Church is. It is not a question here of being exhaustive, but of addressing some aspects of the Church that will help us to unite more fully with all our sisters and brothers in the universal Church.



When Jesus calls the first disciples to the lakeside, it is already the Church. It is the beginning of the Church-communion, of acting together with Christ. From the very beginning, Christ creates unity and brings people together. The gift of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost makes frightened disciples witnesses "in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth". (Acts 1:8). "I know for a fact that God is not partial, and that in every nation everyone who fears him and practices righteousness will find a home with him... his message, the good news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all", said Peter (Acts 10:35ff).



Throughout the Acts of the Apostles, the Church continues to be enriched by many new baptised people from all over the world. Thus the Church, after Pentecost, is no longer the community of Jewish disciples of Jesus of Nazareth, but opens up to the whole world.



Pentecost celebrated God's Covenant with his people, the giving of the Law at Sinai after the exodus from Egypt (Ex 19:1-20, 21 and 24:1-11)

We pray, Lord, for your Church, and for each one of us who make up this Church.

Help us to love her as she is, in her greatness and weaknesses.

Help us to recognize her unity in the thousand faces of your people.

Help us to overcome divisions, avoid hasty judgments and banish caricatures.

Help us to discover, beyond appearances, the immense network of hidden saints, who are the living stones of the Church.

May your Church find the freshness and strength she needs to proclaim the Gospel today.

May she also strengthen the bonds of unity between bishops, priests and laity.

May she appear to all as an open door and a source of life.

May she be ever more the Church of the poor and saints.

*We ask you through Mary, mother of the Church
Amen. by Jean Sauvenay (Prier·be)*



The death and resurrection of Jesus seal the New Covenant. The gift of the Spirit opens the New Covenant to all nations. The Holy Spirit establishes the Church in the juridical sense of the term, just as the Decalogue was the constitution, the fundamental law of Israel. The risen Christ, the Head of the Church, undertakes to be with her and each of her members in particular, every day until the end of the world (Mt 28:16-20).



The Church

**The Church, People of God,
body of Christ and
Temple of the Spirit**



L'Église, peuple de Dieu

Today, as in the past, Christ continues to gather his people through those whom he calls and incorporates through Baptism. The image of the people applied to the Church shows that it is not a juxtaposition of individuals looking to God without looking to others but a people gathered together in the unity of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. "God's good will was that men should not receive sanctification and salvation separately, without any mutual bond; he wished to make of them a people who would know him according to the truth and serve him in holiness". (LG,9).

The Church is a people journeying through history to meet the Bridegroom. All her members are partners in the mission entrusted to the apostles. "You are a chosen offspring, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people destined for salvation, that you may proclaim the wonders of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light". (1 P. 2, 9). It makes visible in history an invisible reality:



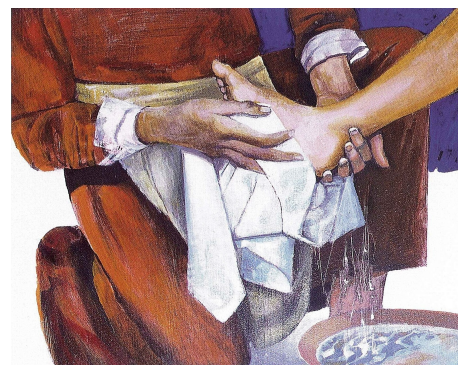
intimate union with God and the unity of the whole human race.

The Church is the Body of Christ

The metaphor of the body refers directly to Paul's meditations on the Church. The Apostle uses this image to specify the internal structure of the Church of God - it is a body made up of several members, each of whom has a particular function but is absolutely necessary for its missionary life (1 Cor 12 and Eph 4). It is organised as a society that receives itself from an Other. The visible aspect of the Church justifies the necessary organization to accomplish its mission and ensure its unity. But this image of the body also refers in Paul, perhaps in a more fundamental way, to the intimate and mysterious relationship that binds Christ to his Church. "Truly participating in the Body of the Lord in the breaking of the Eucharistic bread, we are elevated to communion with him and with one another. Since there is but one bread, we all form one body, for we all share in this one bread" (1 Cor 10:17).

Here, the body expresses the mystery of this dynamic and vital union between Christ and the Church. For the Council Fathers, "the Eucharist makes the Church", the Eucharistic body makes the ecclesial body. By taking up Christ's call to serve him in others (Mt 25:31-46), each one brings about the Church as the sacrament of salvation, the sacrament of the brother.

In the Eucharist, Jesus gives himself body and blood for the Covenant. He invites believers to become members of this body, to form one body together and to be members of one another (Rom 12:5; 1 Cor 1:10-



14). The act of washing feet becomes a model: "By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (Jn 13:35). And it is on the basis of this love that the Risen Lord entrusts Simon Peter to watch over his Church (Jn 21:15-19). In this sense, the Church, the body of Christ, takes shape at the moment of the Eucharist institution. In every Eucharist, the Church sacramentally renews the death of Christ, she is born and reborn to herself and to her mission.

The Church is the Temple of the Spirit

According to LG 4: "The Spirit dwells in the Church and in the hearts



of the faithful as in a temple; in them he prays and bears witness to their condition as sons of God by adoption."

The earthly condition is characterised by an "already here" and a "not yet", both of which are true. "Already here" in what it is, the Kingdom of God on the move, whose members are already children of God (1Jn 3:1; Rom 8:14-17), but they do not "yet" enjoy the glorious freedom that characterises these children of God (Rom 8:21ff). All form a single body in the same Spirit. The Holy Spirit in the Church is the uniting force of the community. The spirit works and gives life to the Church so that she may fulfil the mission that Christ has entrusted to her in the name of his Father. The Spirit gives hierarchical



The Church

gifts and charisms to all, free gifts to be used to help the Church grow and "By the virtue of the Gospel, he makes the Church young and constantly renews her" LG 4.



The Church, One, Holy and Apostolic

At Vatican II, the Council Fathers took up the creed to describe the Church: *"This is the one Church of Christ, whose unity, holiness, catholicity and apostolicity we profess in the symbol (creed), the Church which our Saviour, after his resurrection, entrusted to Peter so that he might be her pastor (Jn 21:17), to him and to the other apostles to spread and direct her (Mt 28:18)"* (LG,8).

These four terms characterise the Church, both visible and invisible.

The One Church



The Church is one and unique because she has as her origin and model the unity of one God, in the Trinity of Persons. As founder and head, Jesus Christ gathers all peoples into the unity of a single body. The Holy Spirit unites all the faithful in communion in Christ. Unity between the members of the Church comes

from the fact that they all share the same faith. It is the principle of unity. The sacraments express this unity. It is also manifested in "communion" ("koinonia"), the exchange or flow of life between the faithful (1Jn 1,3,6f). This unity will only be consumed "when God is all in all" (1Cor 15:28).

This unity cannot be confused with "uniformity", because Christ willed for his Church this complex interweaving of "unity" and "diversity". In the Church, therefore, there is a wide spectrum of people, rites and cultures, "striving to preserve the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace" (Eph 4:3-5; LG, 8).

In the Churches, which are separated from the full communion of the Catholic Church, there are many elements of sanctification and truth that we sometimes have to hear. All these elements come from Christ and tend towards Catholic unity. The members of these Churches are incorporated into Christ and the People of God through Baptism. The desire to re-establish union between all Christians is a gift from Christ and a call from the Holy Spirit. It concerns the whole Church and is achieved through



3 conversion of heart, prayer, mutual fraternal knowledge and theological dialogue.



Secular Institute of
The Heart of Jesus

The Holy Church



The qualification of saint can only be attributed to a reality insofar as it is in relationship with God (the Holy of Holies), it proceeds from him, it is consecrated to him. In fact, the People of God are holy, and he establishes "a holy nation" (Ex 19:6) because they are of God and for God. As Paul says: *"Christ loved the Church and gave himself up for her, that he might make her holy by purifying her with the washing of baptismal water with a word; he wanted to present her to himself, this Church, shining, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing; he wanted her to be holy and immaculate"*. She is the Church of the saints, of all those who are already sanctified and glorified by the Father, but also of all the men and women who strive to live out their baptismal consecration and their condition as members of the Body of Christ. It is, in this world, a mixed body of saints and sinners moving forward



together, under the guidance of the Spirit, towards the Kingdom of God. This holiness is therefore a process of conversion at work from the very beginning of the Church and which develops until the end of time.

The Catholic Church

The Church is *catholic*, that is *universal*, because Christ is present in her and proclaims the totality, the completeness of the faith and remains in her the fullness of the means of salvation for all human beings (Mt 16:15ff; Acts 1:8). The Church has been Catholic since her public manifestation at Pentecost. She is sent on mission to all nations, peoples and times.





The Church

the cultures of all peoples. She responds to the deepest



aspirations of every person, regardless of language, culture or social condition. Like unity, Catholicity is in no way diminished; on the contrary, it is enriched by the existence of a plurality of traditions, as long as they remain in communion with the Church of Rome.

closely united to him and be his messengers (Mk 3:14; Acts 1:21f). The apostle is the one who accompanied the Lord Jesus "from the beginning, when John baptised him, until the day he was taken up". (cf Acts 1:21-23)



The Apostolic Church

Since the 2nd century, the sense of universality has become common, without, however, excluding that of authenticity, in other words: the bearer of the fullness of the means of salvation instituted by Christ. From the 3rd century onwards, "Catholic" also refers to the particular Churches (diocese or eparchy) in communion in faith and sacraments with their ordained bishop in apostolic succession and with the Church of Rome, which "presides in charity" (St. Ignatius of Antioch).

The Second Vatican Council, in LG, 13 and 17, unites the affirmation of the catholicity of the Church with her mission: *"All men are called to this catholic unity of the People of God, which prefigures and promotes universal peace. The Catholic faithful belong to it and are ordained in various ways, but so do other believers in Christ, and finally all men in general, called to salvation by the grace of God". "Thus, the Church prays and works at the same time, so that the fullness of the world may enter into the body of the People of God, Body of the Lord and Temple of the Holy Spirit. And in Christ, the Head of all, may all honour and glory be given to the Creator and Father of all things".*



Thus, the Church is also Catholic in her visible dimension because of the universal character received from Christ. She has the capacity to integrate into her unity the richness of



It is said that the Church is apostolic in her *origin*, because she has "the Apostles as her foundation" (Eph 2:20). It is apostolic in her *teaching*, which is that of the apostles, and in her *structure*, because it is built up, sanctified and governed, until the return of Christ, by the apostles through their successors, the bishops, in communion with the successor of Peter.

The apostolicity of the Church concerns the apostolic Tradition of which the apostles and their successors are the guarantors: it is therefore an essential dimension of the Church. Nothing in the Church escapes the mediation of the apostolic college as guarantor of the truth. It takes various forms: doctrinal, existential, missionary and ministerial.

"Apostolos" means "sent". Jesus chose twelve apostles from among his disciples so that they might live more

Jesus instituted his apostles, making them witnesses to his resurrection and the foundations of his Church.

The identification of the present Church with the Church of the Apostles is manifested by a verifiable fact: the uninterrupted historical apostolic succession. Christ wanted to leave the sacrament of Orders as an instrument to perpetuate the Church built on the apostles, preserving, over the centuries, the essential elements that Christ entrusted to her: the means of sanctification, governance, teaching and mission. The apostolic magisterium is linked to the word of the Lord.



When speaking of the apostolicity of the Church, the question of primacy comes to mind. The text of Mt 16:16-19 recalls the primacy of Peter. The office that the Lord has given in a special way to Peter, the first of the Apostles, must be passed on to his successors, since he is the head of the College of Bishops, Vicar of Christ and Pastor of the whole Church on earth.



The Church

These four dimensions - **one, holy, catholic and apostolic** - as essential features of the Church, are inseparable. We must reaffirm that these are not conditions set by interest, but the essential properties of the Church, confessed in the Creed whose 1700th anniversary we will celebrate in 2025.

So the Church was not created to seek earthly glory, but to "*bring the Good News to the poor, to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim a favourable year from the Lord*". Lk 4 18-19)



Testimony

Give them something to eat (Matthew 14:16)

Huoi Thung is a mountain village located in the province of Dien Bien. Like many mountain villages, Huoi Thung is considered an area of "lowlands". This means they lack everything.

Despite the free education, "going to school" remains a luxury for children. They are so poor that children have to help their parents work to get food every day. The words of Jesus were repeated there, at Huoi Thung: "Yourselves, give them food". That is why the local Church began a mission by opening a kitchen for 60 children aged 10 to 16. Thanks to this meal, they can go to public school in the morning. In the afternoon, they receive tutoring to learn to train themselves and work together. The local Church has chosen to contribute indirectly and silently to the development of this minority community.



An invitation to participate was sent to me.

As a member of the ISFCJ, being in the middle of the world and living close to many classes of society, I experienced difficulties, worries in my country. During my brief visits to these highland villages, I also understood their difficulties and concerns.

I accepted the invitation to go to Huoi Thung with great fear and anxiety: because on the one hand, this kitchen had just been opened with difficulty and that there were significant cultural differences and that on the other hand I had to take care of many things in my family. But the sense of belonging to the Church helped me to become aware of the urgency of the mission of the local Church. I had the courage to leave the safety of my family and my village to travel alone more than 600 km on dangerous roads to Huoi Thung. I learned to touch the flesh and bones of Christ in the poor of Huoi Thung.

My daily job was to prepare lunch for the 60 children. After preparing the meal, I accompanied them to the fields to plant and collect firewood. A local woman helped me to understand their culture and took me to visit families in their village. Many families have many children. Little by little I understood their poor life better: lack of food, lack of clothes, lack of medicines, lack of knowledge..., but they love each other very much. I received lessons from them about love, sincerity and trust in life.

I thank God for the days I spent there. I only stayed there for a short time - less than three months - but I felt very happy and at peace. Despite the differences in language and culture, I integrated and communicated with them in a new language - the language of love and compassion. Today I went back to my daily work as a saleswoman at the rural market. Sometimes I remember the days I spent in Huoi Thung. I like them very much and hope to have the opportunity to return there one day.

PS: Some members of the ISFCJ in Hung Hoa continued this mission until the conditions were more favorable for the presence of a religious community.



By Thérèse in Fraternité Hung Hoa



The Church

Come Holy Spirit



On May 19 of this year, we celebrated Pentecost and the coming of the Holy Spirit on the Church. In the passage, Acts 2: 4-11, the Apostles were able to proclaim the Word of God so that all present in all languages were able to understand the words, if not the meaning. Throughout the following days, despite prison, physical abuse, threats on their lives and, ultimately, martyrdom, they were compelled by unshakable faith and hope to continue to proclaim the Good News. They bore their crosses, the ultimate testimony to faith, hope and love.



We are called to the Cross, to see the necessity of the Cross, to carry the cross with hope and courage. Through our consecration to God, we voluntarily open ourselves to God's will and to the sufferings that often accompany obedience. And through our consecration we cry out to the Holy Spirit to come and enkindle in our hearts that same fire that compelled and sustained the Apostles.

We live in a troubled world as the world has been troubled since the fall of Adam and Eve. While people may not actively hate, they are uncomfortable with each other. They are disturbed by those things and ideas that are not their own. They cling to what they "know" with eyes and ears closed to what God reveals is truth. The world continues to suffer the curse of Babel—we do not understand each other. And we fear what we do not

understand. And fear leads to conflict and violence.

Come Holy Spirit! Instill in us courage so we do not fear to remain the living witnesses to hope. We cannot do that from within the limits of our experience.

Every day I drive to work, I pass through farm country. The blessing of this drive is that I am privileged to see the cycle of growth and life. This spring I have come to appreciate a particular part of that cycle. In late winter the remnants of the previous year's planting are mulched and ground back into the soil in preparation for planting. The soil is disturbed, so to speak. It is the broken ground that receives the seed.

Like the apostles, we are called to sow the seeds of hope in the love and mercy of God. We are called to sow the seeds of the Kingdom. We need to release the experiences of the past to receive the seed of new hope. And we need to recognize that even the smallest seed will ultimately bear fruit—even outside of our ability to see the



result. "God has not called me to be successful. He called me to be faithful."

Mother Teresa

He said, "This is how it is with the kingdom of God; it is as if a man were to scatter seed on the land and would sleep and rise night and day and the seed would sprout and grow, he knows not how. Of its own accord the land yields fruit, first the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear. And when the grain is ripe, he wields the sickle at once, for the harvest has come." Mark 4:26-29

All men are called to belong to the new people of God. Wherefore this people, while remaining one and only one, is to be spread throughout the whole world and must exist in all ages, so that the decree of God's will may be fulfilled. In the beginning God made human nature one and decreed that all His children, scattered as they were, would finally be gathered

together as one. It was for this purpose that God sent His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, that he might be teacher, king and priest of all, the head of the new and universal people of the sons of God. For this

too God sent the Spirit of His Son as Lord and Life-giver. He it is who brings together the whole Church and each and every one of those who believe, and who is the well-spring of their unity in the teaching of the apostles and in fellowship, in the breaking of bread and in prayers.

It follows that though there are many nations there is but one people of God, which takes its citizens from every race, making them citizens of a kingdom which is of a heavenly rather than of an earthly nature. All the faithful, scattered though they be throughout the world, are in communion with each other in the Holy Spirit, and so, he who dwells in Rome knows that the people of India are his members".

Lumen Gentium – n°13

Through our consecration we sow the seeds of faith, hope and love through our visible practice of virtue, through our ministry of prayer, through the actions to which we are called by our obedience to God's will. Beth

Be not afraid.

Come Holy Spirit





Topics for personal or group reflections :

- What speaks to me in this text?
- What poses questions for me?
- How do I see myself in the Church?
- How does it relate to the Synod of Bishops?



If, then, you wish to understand the body of Christ, listen to the Apostle as he says to the faithful "You are the body of Christ, and His members" (1Cor 12:27). If, therefore, you are the body of Christ and His members, your mystery has been placed on the Lord's table, you receive your mystery. You reply "Amen" to that which you are, and by replying you consent. For you hear "The Body of Christ," and you reply "Amen." Be a member of the body of Christ so that your "Amen" may be true.

But why in bread? I provide nothing of my own at this point, rather let us listen together to the Apostle who said, when he was speaking about this sacrament, "We, though many, are one bread, one body" (1 Cor 10:17). Understand and rejoice. Unity! Verity! Piety! Charity! "One bread." What is this one bread? "Many... one body." St Augustine - sermon 272



INFORMATION



Bernadette Habana from Benin celebrated her entry into formation period on June 7, the feast of the Heart of Jesus.

Along with her, one PCJ and 4 SVE also entered formation.

Thank God for Togo's lively Cor Unum family!



Visit to Portugal, May 24-26

Marie visited members in Portugal with Nuno Fernandes.

José Carlos, ISM of Portugal, contributed greatly to this visit.

Because of their age, the members in Portugal can no longer meet, but they keep their vocation close to their heart and lives it deeply in the conditions they face today.



The France region is organizing a spiritual vacation for those who want it, from August 17 to 25, at Fort Mahon in northern France.

On the menu: prayer, sharing and relaxation

Annual Retreat in the USA from June 16 to 21

On this occasion, Kathy Baroody, will renew her temporary vows



FCU Madagascar celebrates its 35th anniversary!

To mark its 35th anniversary, the Cor Unum Family of Madagascar is organizing a retreat for all members from July 29 to August 4, 2024.



The Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith publishes a document on human dignity.

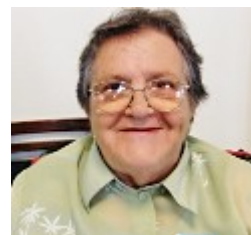
Available as an attachment



INFORMATION

General information

- **Upcoming trip : Vietnam from June 23 to July 17**
- **Anne-Marie Paulhe** from the France region returned to the Father on June 2. She had been ill and disabled for a long time. She played an active role in founding the Institute in France.



- **The institute publishes its accounts** - Presented to General Conseil by treasurer MF.Monchamps

PRODUCTS		EXPENSES	
2023		2023	
Contributions in France	7729,00	Payout FCU - 35%	2705,00
Contributions outside France	5255,00	Payout outside France to FCU - 10%	525,00
Donations	4720,00	Payout donations to FCU – Year : 2022	9607,00
TOTAL contributions + donation	17704,00	Total Payout FCU	12837,00
Participation of the members	8156,00	Other expenses (mainly accommodation and meals for the weekends)	8768,00
Investment products	775,00	travel expenses in France, administrative costs, postage, book purchases) CMIS	1779,00
		Provisions for future AG	3000,00
		Depreciation charge	0,00
OVERALL TOTAL	26635,00	OVERALL TOTAL	26384,00
		SURPLUS	251,00
	26635,00		26635,00

Accounts closed on December 31, 2023 with a surplus of €251

- Vows in the institute :

For greater clarity, the General Council proposes that we no longer speak of commitments, but of vows. Indeed, what we pronounce are vows. This is also what determines, in part, our membership of the consecrated life.

It is now possible to take perpetual vows in a parish (and only those vows), provided the parish priest agrees and the vows are taken outside a regular parish celebration.



A retreat was held in Hanoi from May 22 to 31 for the 10 members who will be celebrating their perpetual vows this year.

Here are two photos of the perpetual vows celebration in Nha Trang on June 7.



WE of the France region on April 27 and 28, 2024

The theme of the meeting was "How can the changes in our lives be a source of hope"?

During this meeting, we celebrated 3 entries into formation and 2 renewals of vows



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