



Dear Sisters!

This letter is written in the context and spirit of the Christmas greeting, by which we embrace you and express our wishes of joy and hope. Also, we are motivated to a new step, a step in response to the merciful love of God, who is sending - today as always -, his only Son into the world, so that "life in abundance" may live among us.

Today, on the feast of the Immaculate Conception of Mary, the Jubilee year of mercy begins; a blessed time for an encounter with God, with one-self and with so many people, who are waiting for an embrace of love, which grants forgiveness and leads to new life. Already at the beginning, as the Jubilee Year of Mercy was announced, the connection between the Christmas message and this Holy Year became clear: ***Jesus Christ is the face of the Father's mercy. These words might well sum up the mystery of the Christian faith. Mercy has become living and visible in Jesus of Nazareth, reaching its culmination in him. The Father, "rich in mercy" (Eph 2:4), after having revealed his name to Moses as "a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness" (Ex 34:6), has never ceased to show, in various ways throughout history, his divine nature. In the "fullness of time" (Gal 4:4), when everything had been arranged according to his plan of salvation, he sent his only Son into the world, born of the Virgin Mary, to reveal his love for us in a definitive way. Whoever sees Jesus sees the Father (cf. Jn 14:9). Jesus of Nazareth, by his words, his actions, and his entire person reveals the mercy of God.*** (Pope Francis)

This thought that we want to initiate today in our heart and in our life, is well expressed in our Constitutions (No. 2): ***Faith in Divine Providence should also in future mark our whole religious life. In this faith we know that God offers his love in a way that is beyond recall to all men and that this love is present here and now. His love, incarnate in Jesus Christ, who, through his life, his death and his resurrection, reveals to us that the Father's will is directed to the ultimate salvation of all men. Trusting in this love of God we can and must make ourselves ready, without reservation, for the concrete situations of our life, especially poverty, and open ourselves to the working of his Spirit.***

We, the General Coordination Team, encourage every fellow sister and each community to deal thoroughly with this Holy proposal of the Church and of the Constitutions, to appreciate appropriate offers, to find times and places to read and discuss the content and to foster a "culture of encounters", so as to talk with people, who want to encourage anew in themselves the merciful love of God.

On this occasion we let each one of you already know, that it is our desire to **celebrate very intensively the anniversary of the Sisters of Divine Providence, whose theme will be: 'MERCY', in 2017.**

On 03rd November 2017, we celebrate **the foundation of our Congregation 175 years ago.** The long and fruitful time of existence and mission gifted us with countless opportunities to witness to God's love. But like any human history, it left also with us signs of suffering. Therefore, we shall emphasize mercy and love in our anniversary year. In due time there will be supportive materials provided for reflection and prayer.

To all of you we wish a blessed closing of the year, as well as much joy for the New Year. With this we embrace you with our love.

Yours, Sr. Márian Ambrosio, Sr. Lydia Liong, Sr. Lucia Weiler,
Sr. Maria Rita Xavier Mendes, Sr. Ursula Kuhlmann