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Dearest Sisters,

Two months already passed in this new year, if we take a look back we will see how much the Lord loves us, accompanies us, sustains us always in our journey sometimes easy, sometimes arduous and tiring. 2016 had been marked with the death of 5 sisters; not less promising is 2017. Just in the month of January two sisters left us to enter in the house of the Father. Nothing left to us but say "Lord, let your will be done" certain of his eternal love.

Lately we have witnessed terrifying dramas caused by natural calamities that devastated many families. All makes us think of the fragility of life, the insecurity, the frailty of our living. Certain things should not leave us indifferent: they should shake our consciences not only to go to whoever is in need but above all to ask ourselves on the gift of life, how do we live it, how do we use it; is it really Christ the center, the beating heart for which we can say: "I have no other God but you, Lord".

In Rome we numerously participated to the encounter of permanent formation; it was really interesting, an edge all Carmelite. The facilitator introduced to us talking about the importance of the Rule and good works, credibility, being aware of our choices, of our own identity. I ask myself how frequent do I approach my Constitutions, to the norms of life of my Institute to verify personally and communally my way of behaving. The Father was exhorting us to cultivate our spiritual life, on Christian life that conforms to Christ, loving with the heart of God. "Yet I live, no longer I, but Christ lives in me" (Gal. 2:20) being God for participation, a process of humanization.

Each person has a God's capacity to participate. Lives in a challenging love, guaranteed, strongly attractive. A behavior that attracts. A love that is good for us and makes us feel good. Yes, because a testimony of fraternal communion is attractive and bright. All must contemplate on how we take care of each other, how do we mutually encourage each other and how do we accompany each other: "It is by your love for one another, that everyone will recognize you as my disciples". (Jn 13:35).

The testimony of an authentic fraternal and reconciled community is a light that attracts, Pope Francis said.

Let us ask the Lord to let us comprehend the laws of love: "Do not be conquered by evil but conquer evil with good". (Rm. 12:21).

Formative contribution of those two days was also the participation of our sister Sr. Maria Stella who gave us our part of her laborious research and profound knowledge on the life of our blessed Madre Maria Teresa Scilli.

We cannot say "let's not do it" and "we are not" because we don't know.

Jesus, through the Spirit, moves us to live and act according to what is said to us in those two days of grace. He repeats to us: Do not conform yourselves to this age but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and pleasing and perfect (Rm. 12:2).

We are approaching the door of Lent, a period which, after the insistent appeal of the Church to conversion in the holy year of Mercy, offers us again a favorable time to discover ourselves who are in need of salvation, a strong call to prepare ourselves to profoundly live the central event of our faith: the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. A God that, seeing our incapacity to love and therefore to become unhappy, decides to become man in his Son and to destroy sin and death and give us freely, through His Spirit, true life, full, happy and eternal, a new creation.

To convert one's self means to believe that Jesus gave himself up for me, died on the cross, resurrected, live with me and in me.

The Church, in this time, highly recommends to practice prayer, fasting and almsgiving.

Prayer expresses the demand of communicating intimately and personally with the Lord, to establish with Him a profound relationship to find in it our own happiness.

The fasting that the Lord asks of us is not really depriving ourselves with food but of the words that often adversely affect the charity and create around us an unhappy and unfraternal situation. How much pain can one rancorous word provoke, said with anger! Then the critical destruction is the murmuring, if it is done above all outside the community, they are bombs that obscure our credibility as consecrated. To discover one's self needy in front of God will make our eyes open towards them who are in the same condition with us; it makes brothers/sisters (unites us), it drives us to sharing and mutual aid.

In almsgiving it's not the first place giving something that we possess but giving one's self: a concrete expression of charity. It is the love of God that "push" us to give a hand fraternally to walk together. Above all granting forgiveness: "Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgive each other reciprocally. It is a need to put in prevention the wrongs of others and therefore to forgive seventy times seven. (Mt. 18:21).

Thus prayer, fasting and almsgiving become instruments for our vital relationship with the risen Christ and with our brothers.

May the Virgin Mary, accompany us in this journey of Lenten conversion so that every good proposal may really be a transition that will bring us to sing in unison our alleluia, with that of Christ.

On April 3, together with the Councilor Sr. Valentina, I will go, God's willing it, to the Philippines (Manila and Cebu) and in Indonesia (Maumere and Kupang). A pretty challenging trip that's why I ask you to accompany us with prayer. There will be an inauguration of the novitiate house in Kupang; at present there are 10 novices. Let us not forget to pray for vocations: even in Indonesia they are starting to be scarce. Where the well-being do arrives that has forgotten God who is its author. Today, unfortunately, the consecrated life remains strange to the concrete choices of young people. We will come back to Rome on May 3. May the Virgin Mary be our companion in this trip.

I reach out to you in advance my most affectionate best wishes of a Holy Easter.

May the Lord bless us.

Rome, 12.02.2017

Madre Angelisa Spirandelli  
Superior General