

Installation of Leadership Team Homily

July 1, 2018

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Today we gather to pray for and with our new Congregational leaders. This day is important for each of us – for Christa, Delouise, Barbara, and Annette whose lives are forever changed by their acceptance of the ministry we have asked them to embrace. For us Sisters of Saint Francis who are called “to humble, mature listening and dialogue” with them. For our Associates, our families, and friends who are challenged by the readings and songs chosen for today – challenged to live their lives for others.

Our first challenge comes from Paul’s letter to Timothy “I want to remind you to stir into flame the gift of God which is in you. God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of Strength, of love and of good judgment”. Often we wonder if we are really the ones who are supposed to work for others. Paul says that we ARE. God has given us that gift!

In “Vision and Journey”, the spiritual document of the Sisters of Saint Francis, we find that “those sisters entrusted with leadership in our congregation are to draw us to unity and to articulate our communal response to the direction of the Spirit”. I believe that these Sisters have given us a definite path to follow. “Clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. Over all these virtues, put on love.”

“You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit – fruit that will last – and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you.” What a gift – to know that we were chosen and that whatever we ask in Jesus’ name, we will receive – possibly not in the way we envision, but in the way we need.

We are to stir into flame the gift of God which is in us. This sounds good to us, but do we really want God to Send Down the Fire? Do we really want to listen and to respond?

Send down the fire of your justice,
Send down the rains of your love;
Call us to be your compassion
Give us hearts that sing,
Give us deeds that ring

Call us to learn of your mercy
Teach us the way of your peace
Give us hearts that feel
Give us hands that heal
Make us walk in the way of your peace.

Call us to answer oppression,
Teach us the fire of your truth;
Give us righteous souls,
"Til your justice rolls
Make us burn with the fire of your love.

We also sing
As a green bud in the springtime is a sign of life renewed,
So may we be signs of oneness mid earth's peoples many hued.

Christa, Delouise, Barbara, and Annette call us to
Celebrate community
Be justice, forgiveness
Be mercy and love
Celebrate as family

Their selections for the liturgy give us much to think about in the coming days and years. It seems to me that they call us to follow them in working for "The Harmony of Love" with all we meet. What part of their challenge will you and I take for ourselves and for the good of all?

In the early 2000s, we talked about "Freeing the Fire". Today we are called to renew that freeing. They invite us to join them in this venture. Will we?