

Statio Conference February 2008

**As the Father has sent me,
so I send you. Jn 20:21**



***11th General Chapter
Our Missionary Benedictine Response to the Challenges of our
Contemporary World***

My dear Sisters,

*Consecrated for Mission - We cannot but proclaim.
Caritas Christi urget nos - The Love of Christ impels us 2 Cor 5:14*

I believe these words from the last General Chapter are still ringing in our ears. You find them on the cover and first page of the Message which each one of us received in October 2006.

Let us use this Statio, this month of February in our Jubilee Year to deepen the Message of the eleventh General Chapter. May it really go from our ears to our heart, or let me say: to my heart. May I ask each Sister to slowly read again the whole Message and listen what the Lord is telling you at this particular time.

I was struck by the well known word of Jesus:
As the Father has sent me, so I send you. Jn 20:21

The glorified Jesus stands before me, before our Sisters in the Priory. He talks out of his deepest core, the source of the incarnation, the work of redemption for the whole world, for all times. That was his *missio Dei*, the sending from the Father. How much was this knowledge, experience strength in his life on earth to continue his mission in spite of so much resistance, indifference, hostility. The Father has sent him, the Father does not forsake him, and the Father should not be disappointed by him. This was the stronghold of his life. Jesus in his love involves us, draws us into the same relationship, into the life of the Trinity, into his mission. Why? That is what pleases him in his unconditional love. He says this word to me personally, with all his love and knowledge of my personality. And he begs that I accept his call to be sent. How much ashamed am I because of my indifference. Do I really grasp what it means that Jesus sends me and begs me to accept his message?

Three points are needed to be successful as messenger, as the sent one of Jesus:

- I have to understand the message,
- I have to understand the messenger, to know him;
- I have to understand my target group of the message.

The message, the sending is the love of God, *Deus caritas est*, the salvation of the whole world, the reconciliation through Jesus, son of God, son of man. The more I understand Jesus, the deeper the relationship with Jesus as a personal one develops, the better I shall understand why and for what He sends me. Jesus was sent for the whole world. He sends us to pray for the whole world, but he sends us as well to specific groups. The better I understand the people to whom I have been sent, their language, their problems, the better I can be with them on behalf of Jesus himself.

As the Father has sent me, so I send you.

Yes, we thank Jesus, we marvel joyfully to be sent by Jesus. But that is not much. In order to fulfill the task I have to work on all three levels mentioned:

- How can I grow in my relationship to Jesus?
- How can I better understand his mission and my part in it?
- How can I find ways to the heart of the people with whom I live, to whom I can reach out, so that they can accept Jesus and their salvation?
- Do I live this mission of Jesus out of the Trinity with my whole life as continuous process of conversion?

We can learn a lot from the *Apostle Paul*, from his zeal for proclaiming the message of Jesus Christ the Crucified, from his love for Jesus and from his efforts to make the message understood for different groups of people. Marvel, how he adapted to the Greek people in Athens. First he learned by listening and observing what is going on in this city, meditated upon it and worked on his message, his speech. Some followed him. Acts 17:16ff

His letters are a treasure box for us to learn what it means to be missionaries. When we say nowadays: we are missionaries where ever we are, then this means the same as when Paul said, that we are the letter God writes for the people to read, the letter of his salvation. *Our primary evangelization is our life itself.*

The Mission of God, the Mission of Christ will be the main focus of the life and activities of our Congregation for the next six years.

We commit ourselves to this decision again as community and as individual sister.
The first Direction Statement says:

To deepen our missionary Benedictine Spirituality

One way of deepening is our meditation of our sending by Jesus. Yes, we all have to go deeper and deeper from our shallow superficiality. Examine your life according to the words written in the paragraph on the first direction Statement. It is a life programme.

Let me close with the last sentence of the Message:

Our hope is that together we may help in realizing Christ's words:
"I came to cast fire upon the earth, and how I wish it were already enkindled!" Lk 12:49

Sr. Raphaela Haendler OSB