

“My life was abandoned from the time I joined the congregation”

“You must begin to fight against your own violence”

Sr Paul-Hélène Saint-Raymond

With those sentences pronounced by Sister Paul-Hélène, the silence enveloping the loss of so many women and men who have given their life for the cause of the Gospel is again united

today with the silence of Peace and Communion of the Holy Martyrs. Our brothers and sisters, who have gone before us in the faith, have passed along a difficult path of persecutions and of escapes, so as to live in the service of the Word and die as a witness: their testimony is that strength which transcends time.

Our memory proclaims the life, the mission and the death of many persons who have courageously done their best in an ordinary life, offering simple gestures in the service of human dignity.

A seed thrown on to Mother Earth, plunged in dampness and gratitude, begins silently and mysteriously to develop and to explode… and then an extraordinary, inexplicable and indescribable force, gives life to the depths of the earth … The blood of the martyrs, fallen on the dry earth, moistens and soaks the life of so many persons who have shared their testimonies, their courage in life through many liberations.

To celebrate our martyrs of the Assumption family is to leave the latent memory of those simple people who, in their ordinary daily life, were living what was extraordinary in the faith; “To lay down one’s life for one’s friends.” (John, 15:13)

The seed sown on the soil, planted and fertilised, bears fruit “a hundredfold” (Matthew 13:23), it gives a harvest that satisfies the hunger, and which is shared by so many persons of good will. Through blood and water, the martyrs become the cry and the strength that lead to freedom.

In the name of God, women and men have announced and spread their faith in the service of the glory of God and of those who are most vulnerable.

We bear that mark of blood from which the fruits come, it continues to spread on all so as to remain alive in the struggle, a fight for environmental and social justice. We are also called:

to take care of the “common home”, of integral ecology

to cultivate and to respect the diversity of types, of beliefs, of ethnic groups,

to participate in the networks and grassroot groups who defend Human Rights,

to accompany the young people in their cries, the migrants and the refugees in their rights…

… In the name of God, we announce the word that generates life and bears profitable fruits.

We are called to keep alive:

the voice and the memory of those who have lived with us and who have struggled for a worthy and just life…

in the name of those who are awaiting freedom and who gain each day the resistance that urges them to reconstruct and to reinvent their life, to reinvent the struggles of the people.

Inspired by a concrete reality, our Sister Paul-Hélène greatly loved her mission country in Algeria. Sent by the Congregation, she always kept it informed, as well as her family, of the state of the civil war which was under way in the interior of the country … battles and the death of many brothers and sisters.

Present in the marginalised places of our world, our Congregation is continuing to plant, to care for, to echo, to resist …

The germination of the Charism is at work and the Spirituality, as well as like the Mystique of the Congregation, are developing on the five continents of the planet… without division and in unity, the basic inspirations of the Congregation are continuing to bear fruit.

We are invited to seek in our realities the same reaffirmation of the choice made by Sister Paul-Hélène… In our missionary assignment, lived out in a sisterly way in community, we walk and are always walking with the people of God, that people whom we are invited every day to follow.

To plant, to water and cause to bear fruit the Spirit of the Congregation which existed before our existence and which will remain; when our attitudes directed towards the promotion of life will follow their course as attitudes of love revealed by the attitudes of Christ, Lord and Servant, our elder Brother in martyrdom.

Let us pray with our Sister Paul-Hélène, in the space of our specific context … our mission country … We cannot forget it … Sister Paul-Hélène lived and gave her life for the good of the poor, of those considered to be unimportant, the vulnerable …

/ What are their faces like?

/ Where are their itineraries?

/ What are their roots?

/ What responses, what lights, can we offer as religious and lay people of the congregations of the Assumption?

The apostolic life of the Congregation is in the country, the town, where we are, thanks to the time of reflection, of sharing and of deep prayer …

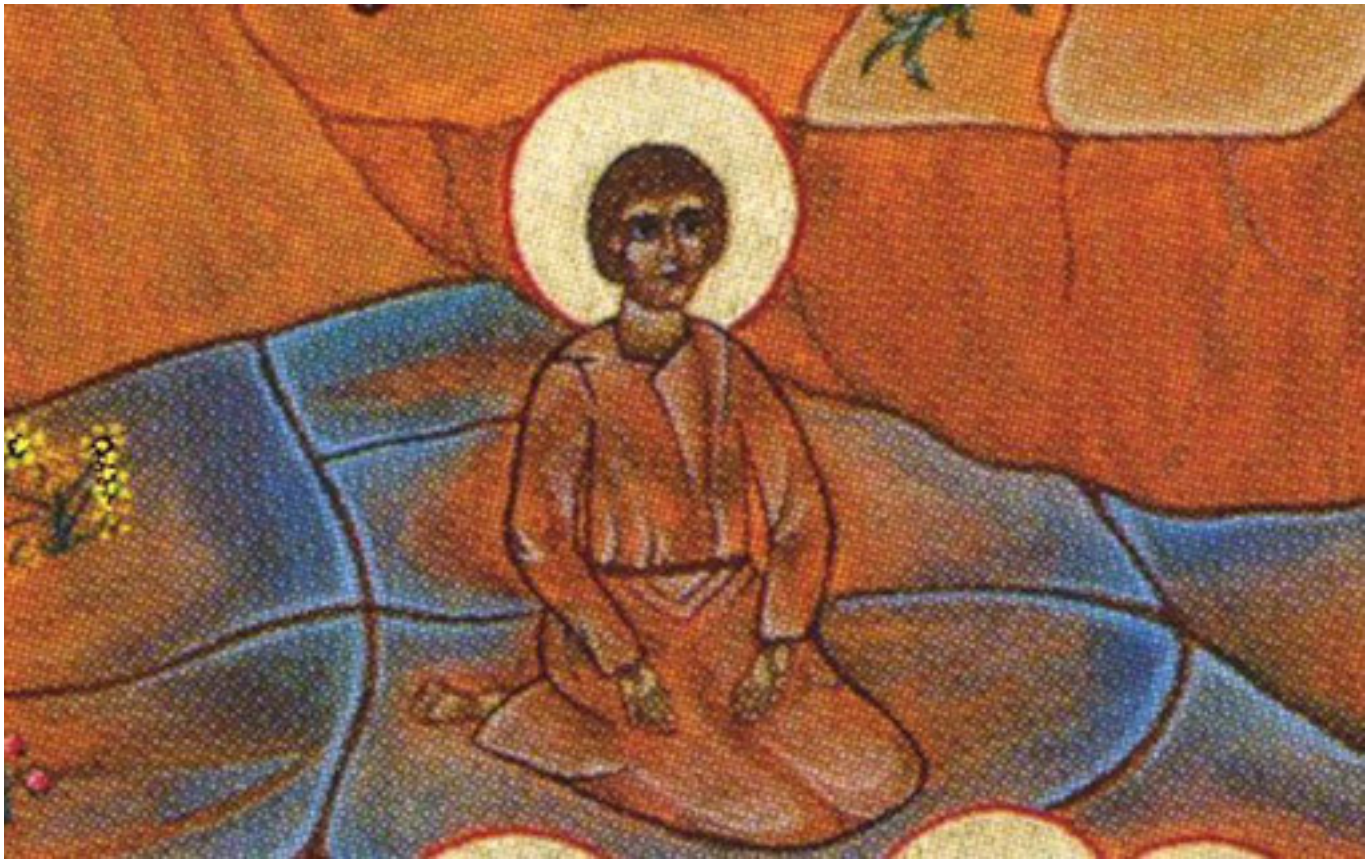
We invite each of us to pray and to meditate on the martyrdom of sister Paul-Hélène, to meditate on the choice of our options, the daily attitudes of mercy. Her blood on the ground

calls for peace … Let us look at ourselves, with the certainty of recognising when our attitudes are violent and domineering; let us change, so as to be really able to live the encounter with the others, to welcome all that is different to me, completing myself by this diversity.

To go to encounter the peace that dwells in each human heart, planted on the earth; it will be transformed in a pavement of peace that would irradiate our world thirsting for life and for life in abundance.

“There are three things that last: faith, hope and love; and the greatest of these is love.” (1 Corinthians 13:13) A person who plants love in life, succeeds in gathering more fruits. Our fruits do not really belong to us, but they are a pure gift of the Creator. The blood of the martyrs has watered the paths of human history … Sister Paul-Hélène made unity between faith and life: in the daily life of her relations with deep spiritual connections but also with all of creation.

To put the seed into the earth, will not be in vain!



Sister Paul-Hélène, the smallest, humble, kneeling, in the service of those who are most vulnerable. Her prayer is enclosed in the daily service. She has the colour of the earth that unites with the sky to the point of spreading her blood: a new source giving fruit in abundance! (An icon made at the time of the beatification of the 19 martyrs of Algeria)

"Each choice, even small, is a type of seed that we throw on the bed where we are. One day, all that we plant now in silence or that we will plant in ourselves, will be a plantation visible from afar"... Father Fabio de Melo

Marcia Ferreira
Little Sister of the Assumption