



TO ALL IBVM MEMBERS

Celebrating the Year of Consecrated Life

People today certainly need words, but most of all they need us to bear witness to the mercy and tenderness of the Lord which warms the heart, rekindles hope and attracts people towards the good. What a joy it is to bring God's consolation to others!

Pope Francis quoted in *Rejoice* pg. 42

November 24, 2014

Dear Companions,

Greetings to each one from all of us in Casa Loreto where endings and beginnings are very much in the air!

As we move towards Advent, the beginning of a new liturgical year, we are very aware that it will be the special year of Consecrated Life. Here in Rome this year will open with a formal Vespers in the Basilica of Mary Major and a special Eucharist in St. Peter's Basilica. We will be aware of you all and we know that Conferences for Religious in many parts of the world have planned special events for this weekend and for the year ahead.

We hope that at various times throughout the year it will be possible for many of you to participate in such events. This year which reminds us of our original call and commitment, will be a wonderful opportunity for us to *reclaim the freshness of the Gospel, allowing Jesus to transform our lives* as we were urged to do by GC 2014.

While this year will be a time for reflection, going to the core of our being, it is not a time for looking only at ourselves. As the words of Pope Francis, quoted above, encourage us, we must engage with others sharing hope and warmth and nourishing the goodness already present in everyone we meet.

This is quite a challenge in our world today where many dark clouds make it difficult to see the light and goodness in people and in situations. Yet we can make a difference beginning within ourselves, our communities, our IBVM circles. Light will radiate from these if we have contributed our little spark. The Season of Light – Advent – is the time to 'fan into a flame' those sparks of ours. Let's do it!

Sandra, Carmen, Barbara and Beatrice join me in sending good wishes at this special time.

Affectionately,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Marian'.