

As we mark the anniversary of the Dedication of this Chapel, I am reminded of a statement from *On Good Ground* that Sister Mary Ruth used when she wrote about the sisters who came before us -- those who dared ***to dream the impossible***. She wrote that it was due to the *sisters' **stubborn faith** in believing that God wanted them in this corner of the Kingdom*, that their dream to build this beautiful Chapel dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus came to fruition.

Today, eighty-nine years later, we give praise and honor to the glory of God in this Sacred Heart Chapel as they did on its dedication day. It is with grateful hearts that today we celebrate the tenacity of those faith-filled religious women. Those sisters **waited patiently**, **prayed fervently**, and **worked hard** while planting the seed for this magnificent structure, until God's time called it into being. Their ***stubborn faith*** has been passed down through our 118 years of existence.

Those sisters believed with their whole being that this Chapel would be more than a material structure of stones and mortar. With Jesus Christ as its Cornerstone, the sisters responded to the call: "Beloved, Come to the Lord, a living stone. Like living stones, let yourselves be built into a spiritual house." And, come we did over these past eighty-nine years... sisters, students, family, friends. This structure that towers 75' above the good ground upon which it stands, continues to beckon to us daily: Come, enter the walls of this architectural structure of stones and mortar, arches and artwork, come and be transformed.

This Chapel is where we come with our prayers of joy and sorrow, our moments of silence and song. In this Chapel, we are fed with the Body and Blood of Christ. We come here to praise God in our liturgies. In this Chapel we give ourselves in total surrender to God and to this Community. It is here in this Sacred Heart of Jesus where we are

transformed into one Body of Christ, where we are washed clean with the living water of Christ, and are transformed into a spiritual house.

It is out of this spiritual house that the living water of Christ flows through the streets of Cullman, of Alabama, and beyond further boundaries. Sisters, we are that living water of Christ's love that flows from this sanctuary. The reading from Ezekiel tells us that the water flowing from the temple brought life to all that it touched. When we enter the walls of this temple, we enter into the very Heart of Jesus and the very heart of this religious community. It is here, in this temple, that we are nourished and renewed by the Spirit of God that dwells within us. Out of this union with our source of strength, Christ and one another, we are able to share love, hope, and joy with others. This was the dream of our earlier sisters. Is this not our dream as well: to continue to be strengthened in this Sacred Heart as we walk in the footsteps of our foremothers bringing the love of Christ to others.

We are indeed God's chosen people, and we are blessed. God's blessing is our faith in a future that reflects the radiant beauty of God's love. This love is strengthened daily from within these walls enabling us to go out to transform the world.

Like those sisters before us, may **we** dare to dream the impossible. With ***stubborn faith*** may we wait patiently, pray fervently, and work hard to plant the seed for what is yet to come until God's time calls it into being.

May those who gaze upon the loveliness of this magnificent structure, this Sacred Heart of Jesus Chapel, know that this is a spiritual house and that the sisters who dwell here are living stones strengthened by their Cornerstone, Jesus Christ.

May our lives show our belief that in all things God may be glorified!