

# The Forge

in our daily life

SPIRITUS DOMINI

Easter

4

AS SONS OF THE IMMACULATE  
HEART OF MARY

# SPIRITUS DOMINI - 2014

**T**

he arrow forged  
on the anvil is  
not saved in a

museum. Its destiny is to be launched, although nicked with the passage of time. We are called to be missionary arrows: "The ministry of the Word, through which we communicate the total mystery of Christ to humanity, is our special calling to the People of God. For we have been sent to proclaim the Lord's life, death, and resurrection, until he comes, so that all who believe in him may be saved. (CC 46).

## GENERAL OBJECTIVE

To help individuals, communities, Provinces and Delegations to be consciously aware of their present reality, rekindling their experience of Fire and missionary zeal following the methodology of the Forge.



## OBJECTIVES

- To pass from passive attitudes to creative attitudes.
  - To believe in the experience of the Spirit who anoints us to be ministers of the Word in the prophetic mission of the Church.
    - To deepen in the Cordimarian dimension of our missionary spirituality
      - To personalize the significance of our belonging to the Congregation today and to value its charismatic diversity and universal mission.
      - To recapture the experience lived throughout the Forge Project to continue progressing in the missionary life.

## CUADERNOS

1. The Spirit of the Lord is Upon Us (Advent-Christmas)
2. We Have Been Anointed to Evangelize (Ordinary Time I)
3. In the "Today" of the World and the Church (Lent)
- 4. As Sons of the Immaculate Heart of Mary (Easter)**
5. Servants of the Word in the Church (Ordinary Time II)
6. In the Style of Claret (Ordinary Time III)
7. In the Missionary Congregation (Ordinary Time IV)
8. Open to the Whole World (Ordinary Time V)
9. Progressing in the Missionary Life (Ordinary Time VI)

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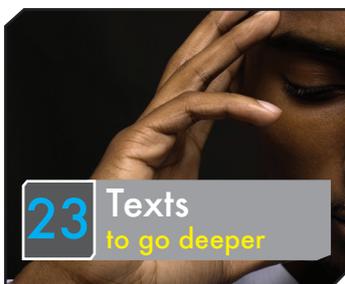
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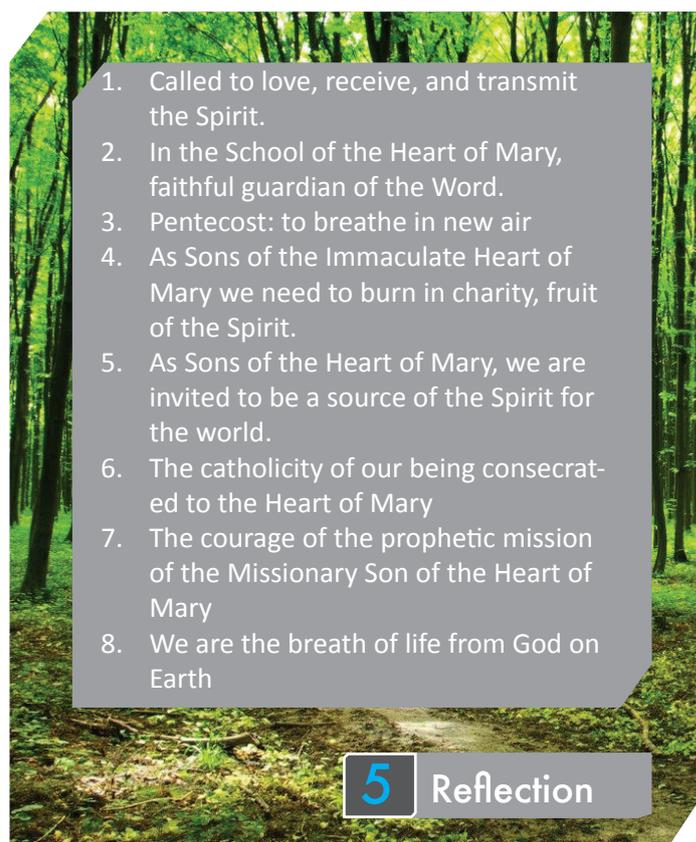
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## 1. Introduction

**E**aster surprises us one more year. It is an event too new to be understood by us men who are subject to the routines of the time. This year we contemplate it **from the perspective of the Spirit** that the Risen One communicates to his community and the world. **And also from the Mother** who, after having been next to him on the cross, is pleased with the resurrection of her Son. Therefore, together with the whole Church, we sing: "Regina Coeli laetare, Alleluia", Christ, the Word that you welcome in your womb - in your heart - has risen, according to his promise.

Throughout the diverse stages of The Forge we have been close to the figure of Mary on various occasions. In reality, for our Founder, she is the true "forge" in which we are formed as missionaries (cf. Aut 270, 447). On this final stage of our journey we dedicate the Easter notebook entirely to deepen our Cordimarian spirituality, trying to not repeat some aspects that have already been addressed in previous booklets. To a great degree, this phase also coincides with the month of May, which in many parts of the world is dedicated to the Mother of the Lord.

In Mary, the word had been received, made life and shared from the incarnation. After the pain of the cross, the mother remains standing, full of hope, trusting that the story could not end that way. Mary, sustained by the power of the Spirit that made her fertile, hopes that this same Spirit will now recreate the community shattered by pain.

In the center of this community there is a heart that is not left to be overcome by lack of perspective, by discouragement or disillusionment. The heart of Mary gathers the disciples in prayer ("one heart, one soul" – Acts 4:32), with the fervent desire of not staying with the bitter taste of death in the soul. The mother knows that God's plan had not yet been fully consummated; it lacked something,

what was essential: Jesus and his message could not be trapped in the grave. The Lord had to resurrect "as was promised".

Fear reigns where hope is weak. Thus it was experienced by the disciples, whose insecurity made them close the doors and hide in the upper floor of a house. Even after having been witness to the resurrection of the Messiah, the disciples were not fully convinced. They had learned to love their teacher, but their faith was still very limited. If the story had ended there, today we would not be heirs and proclaimers of the Good News.

**However, the promise of the Lord became a reality; the Paraclete was sent to lead them to the full truth.** A strong wind filled the entire House where they were locked up and the face of the Earth was transformed. When the Spirit acts, the house is filled; the soul is brimming with joy so great that we are pushed to go out, to communicate, and to announce.

Mary knew that the confinement of the disciples was transitory. She, who at the Annunciation had experienced the anointing of his being by the power of the Holy Spirit; She who after the announcement had traveled in haste through the hill country to visit Elizabeth; She, who had sung the Magnificat praising the action of the Almighty in her life and in the history of mankind, knew that she could not remain silent just as the emerging church could not. That is why, as a sister, as a disciple and as a mother, she prays with the community in the hope of the transforming power of the Spirit and with "her maternal love cares for the brethren of her Son who pilgrimage and are caught up in dangers and anxieties, and fight against sin until they are brought to the happy homeland" (LG 62).

From Pentecost, the disciples, animated by this love, no longer remained locked up or lying prostrate, but they risen, like Jesus, to run, fly, and give testimony without fear. The power of the Spirit enabled them to sacrifice their lives to proclaim the truth.

The same would happen in Vic, in 1849, as we will remember with more detail in **Booklet 7**. Claret and his companions, together in a small room, were taught by the Mother's Heart. **Mary Immaculate, the victorious woman against Satan, ignites in this small community the perennial fight against evil that seeks to dominate the world.** In her children, the new Eve continues to forming her "descendants", who will have as their mission the "defeat of the infernal dragon" and the triumph of the reign of God. So filled with the Holy Spirit, the sons of the Heart of Mary will rise-up and will go throughout the world announcing the Good News: "Surrexerunt filii eius..." (motto on the Congregational shield).

Although we are consecrated Christians who profess our faith and Claretians conscious of our identity, it is probable that we are still "locked up", through fear or shame. Many of us are locked up within ourselves, in a bubble that we consider "se-

cure"; it is as if we were fearful of being ourselves. We are witnesses of the action of God in the lives of others, but we are not always capable of recognizing the miracle of God carried out within our own house, within our own flesh, within our own Congregation.

In the nascent community, in the eyes of Mary, the disciples are raised with an attitude of availability and service. There is no time to lose; there are plenty of sorrows, memories of a past that has not worked, depression. It is time decide how to live one's life: Jesus said that "whoever would save his life will lose it" (Mk 8:35).

If we say that we have received the spirit and he has anointed us, but continue cultivating fears, we are prisoners of old situations; we are not happy, we are unable to forgive; we are full of resentment, and are insensitive to the pain of others; then, we live in the lie.

**Claret understood the importance of Mary in the formation of the community that is made fertile by the spirit;** thus he proclaims her "Patroness" of the Mission (cf. Aut 5). We cannot say that we are Sons of the Immaculate Heart of Mary without a Marian attitude the evangelization: "We commit ourselves to her that we may be conformed to the mystery of Christ and may cooperate with her in her maternal role in our Apostolic mission" (CC 7). To welcome the Spirit who opens our eyes to the signs of the times is essential in our missionary work. Mary conveys to us a true testament to all generations of Claretians on the importance of having our eyes fixed on this objective. Like Mary, our goal is the proclamation of the Word of life. Therefore, as Claret teaches in the "definition of a son of the Heart of Mary"; for the missionary, nothing wearies him, nothing daunts him, nothing holds him back, nor sees him locked up in his fears (cf. Aut. 494; CC 9). To be Sons of the Immaculate Heart of Mary means to burn in charity until one is completely consumed by missionary zeal.

In this booklet we are going to consider the themes which will help us to better live this paschal time and prepare us to live the feast of Pentecost in the company of Mary. At the end of each theme various exercises are suggested whose intention is to place you in harmony with Claretian Cordimarian spirituality.

In many parts of the world, the month of May is dedicated to the Virgin Mary. Hopefully this booklet of the Forge, which largely coincides with this month, helps to enliven your filial cordimarian spirit and share your convictions with the people in the Apostolic mission.



## 2. Reflection

### 2.1. Called to love, receive, and transmit the Spirit

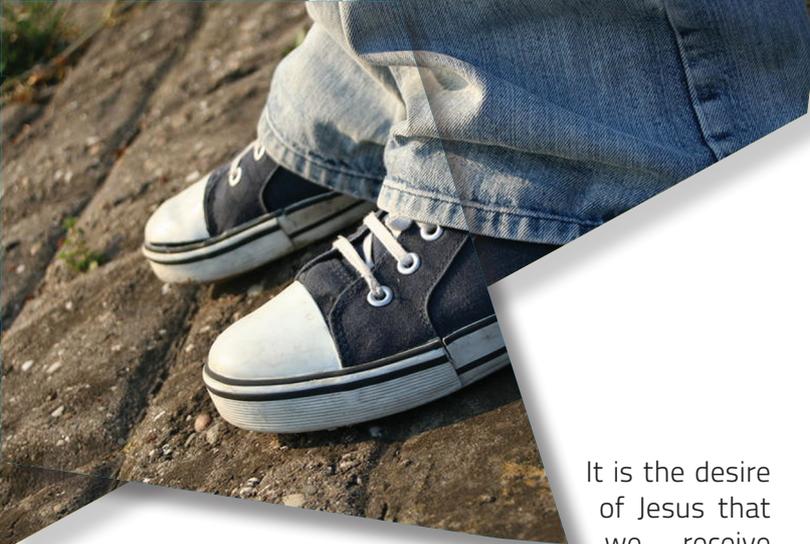
*“If you love me ...” (Jn 14:15)*

In the context of the Last Supper, the Lord Jesus said to his disciples: “If you love me, keep my commandments, and you will pray to the Father and he will give you Advocate to be with you always” (Jn 14:15-16).

Here is revealed the praying heart of Jesus, his filial and fraternal heart. This prayer comes to its fulfillment and completion on the cross, where the invocation of Christ is identified with the total gift he has made of himself, and therefore the act of prayer becomes, so to speak, the exact expression of his self-giving in the fullness of love to the Father and to humanity. The invocation and the gift of the Holy Spirit are encountered, understood, and converted into a single reality: “And I shall pray to the Father and give you another Advocate so that I can be with you forever”.

In effect, the prayer of Jesus - that of the Last Supper and of the Cross - is a prayer that goes beyond the limits of the earth and extends to complete liberation, up to heaven where Christ is seated at the right hand of the Father.

In fact, Jesus lives his priesthood of intercession for the people of God and humanity, and thus he prays for all asking the Father for the gift of the Holy Spirit. But it is necessary to love and commit oneself to others, especially with the smallest ones that they receive this gift.



the Spirit, but our  
open to universal love.

In this context, we hear the eloquent claim that Pope Francis made to the “pastors” at the beginning of his pontificate: “We need to “go out”, then, in order to experience our own anointing, its power and its redemptive efficacy: to the “outskirts” where there is suffering, bloodshed, blindness that longs for sight, and prisoners in bondage to many evil masters... Those who do not go out of themselves, instead of being mediators, gradually become intermediaries, managers. We know the difference: the intermediary, the manager, “has already received his reward”, and since he doesn’t put his own skin and his own

It is the desire  
of Jesus that  
we receive  
task is to be

heart on the line, he never hears a warm, heartfelt word of thanks. This is precisely the reason why some priests grow dissatisfied, become sad priests, lose heart and become in some sense collectors of antiques or novelties – instead of being shepherds living with “the smell of the sheep”. “This is what I ask you: be shepherds, with the “odor of sheep”, make it real (...)” (Pope Francis, Chrism Mass Homily of Holy Thursday 2013)

For us, Claretians, the “anointing” with the Holy Spirit, beseeched by Jesus to the Father for his disciples, will be displayed in the fire of our passionate love for God and his people. Thus, the Founder tells us: “In truth, the fire of love acts in a minister of the Lord in much the same way that material fire acts in the engine of a locomotive or a ship: it enables them to move the heaviest cargo with the greatest of ease. What good would either of these two huge machines be without fire and steam to move them? None at all. What good is a priest who has finished all his studies and holds degrees in theology and canon and civil law if he lacks the fire of love? None at all. He is no good for others because he is like a locomotive without steam. Instead of being a help, as he should, he may only be a hindrance. He is no good even for himself. As St. Paul says, If I speak with human tongues and angelic as well, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong, a clanging cymbal.” (Aut 441).

## Exercise 1: The Immaculate Heart of Mary is the “mark” of our missionary identity

Stop in contemplation before a traditional image of the Heart of Mary: for example, a reproduction of the painting called “of Thuir” or one of the “Mother of beautiful love” (the “painting of the Foundation”). If you prefer, you can also stop before a more modern image or logo which in recent years has become a popular emblem of the Congregation.

Observe the iconographic details centered in the heart: the color, the fire, the flowers, the light, the cross, the sword, etc. Very evident in the logo is the presence of the Spirit and the Gospel.

1. What do all these details evoke in you? Do they help to evoke in you elements of cordimarian filiation, characteristic of our Congregational family? In what sense or how?
2. Your filial and apostolic “giving of yourself” to the Immaculate Heart of Mary (cf CC 159), does it make you a person more open to the Spirit and to the commitments this implies?

### When we are filled with the Holy Spirit we convey Joy

*“When Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, the infant leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth, filled with the holy Spirit, cried out in a loud voice and said, “Most blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And how does this happen to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For at the moment the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy. Blessed are you who believed that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled.” (Lk 1: 41-45)*

It was a kind of small “Pentecost”, that exploded in praise and joy in the hearts of Elizabeth and Mary: one who was sterile and the other a Virgin. Both became mothers thanks to extraordinary divine intervention (cf. Lk 1: 41-45).

Mary tells us that we are all called to be open to the action of the Holy Spirit so that we are able to arrive to our final destination: to be immaculate, full, and completely free of evil and all kinds of corruption. She tells

us this in her own sanctity, with a gaze full of hope and compassion.

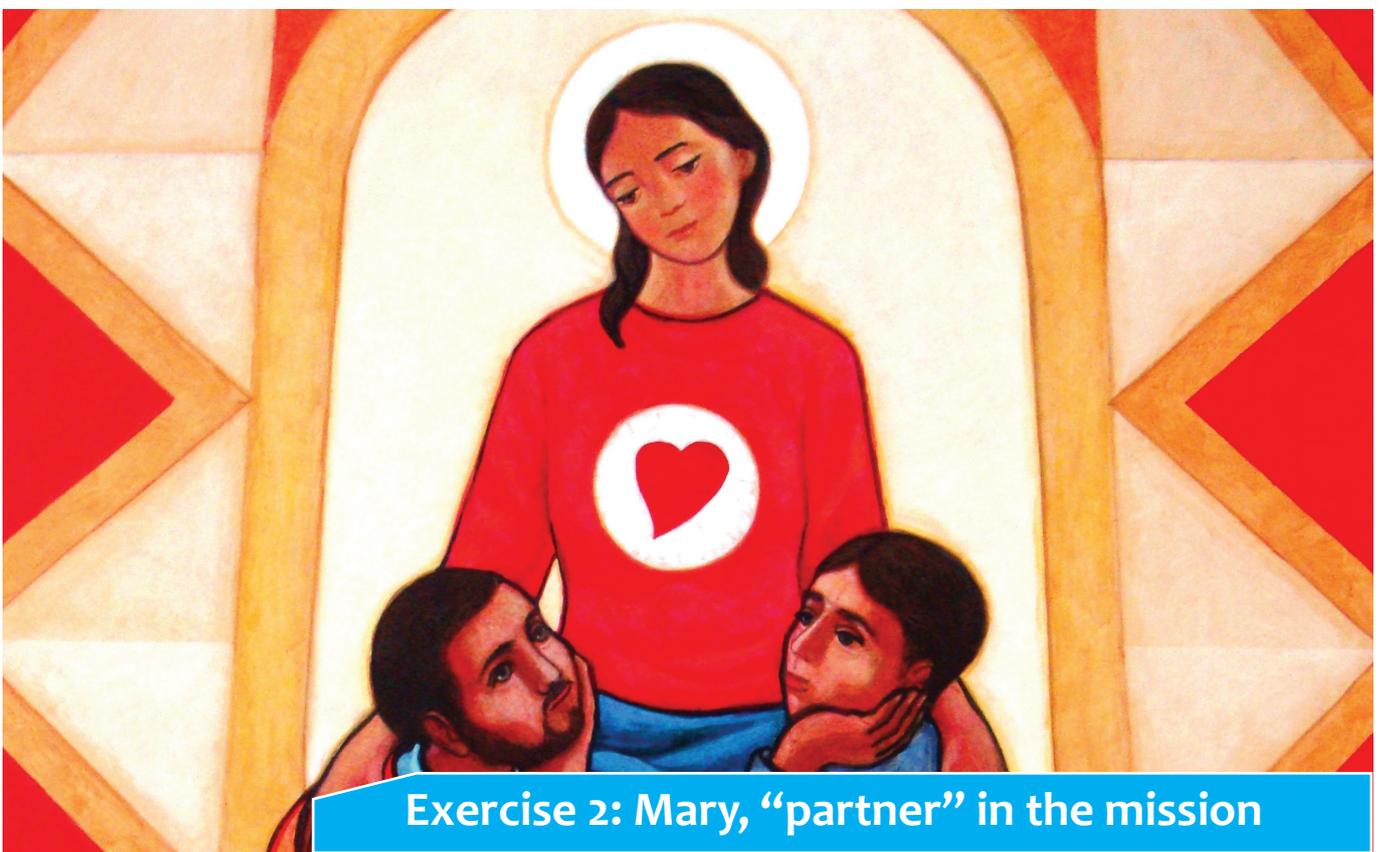
**The gaze of Mary is God's gaze over each one of us.** She looks with the same love of the Father and blesses us. She acts as our "advocate". Thus it is how we invoke her name in the Salve Regina: "Advocata nostra". The poorest of distinct parts of the world and all generations see in Mary the necessary defense against all the "dragons" that try to silence those who scarcely have a voice.

That is how she sees our community, our Congregation: not as an anonymous conglomeration, but as a constellation where God knows everyone personally by name, one by one, and calls us to shine like the light in the darkness. And that in the eyes of the world the last are, for God, the first and the greatest in the Kingdom.

Mary, our Mother, looks at us as God looked at

her, humble maiden of Nazareth, insignificant in the eyes of the world, but chosen and precious before God. She recognizes in each one a resemblance with her Son Jesus, although we are so different! But, who better that she knows the power of divine grace? Who better than she knows that nothing is impossible for God, who destroys evil with the force of the good?

That's why, with Claret, we invoke it and beg the same Spirit that covered her with its shade, the Spirit of the love that made him conceive the Verb: "Mary, my Mother, Mother of Divine Love, I can ask for nothing more pleasing to you, nor anything that you are more ready to grant, than the love of God. Grant me this, my Mother and my love. My mother, I am hungry and thirsty for love; help me, satisfy my need. O Heart of Mary, forge and instrument of love, kindle in me the love of God and neighbor." (Aut 447).



## Exercise 2: Mary, "partner" in the mission

The Immaculate Heart of Mary teaches us to rely on the love that overcomes all doubt, pessimism and pain in the face of reality. With Her, blessed because she believed, we can be bearers of hope.

According to your situation, take a tour through the streets or neighborhood in which you live. Make conscious the presence of Mary who accompanies you as Mother, "Companion" of the mission and sister. Attempt to observe very consciously the reality that unfolds before your eyes: poverty or the contrasting richness, the faces and conversations of the people, the activity in which each one is involved.

1. What thing do you think is missing in the environment or you believe is out of place?
2. Do you notice a problem or difficulty? What kind of reactions do you feel?
3. Aware of the company of Mary, what would you say to her? What do you think She will tell you?
4. Does a simple exercise like this make you aware of some of the implications of cordimarian filiation?

## 2.2. In the School of the Heart of Mary, faithful guardian of the Word

*“And his mother kept all these things in her heart”  
(Lk 2:51b)*

From the Immaculate Heart of Mary we learn that we cannot live today asking about tomorrow. Worse still is when we live fantasizing about the future and forgetting that the life happens now. We will never be able to transform ‘the today’, if our head and heart project into the future what is urgent and necessary right now.

When we dream of the future, to which we aspire, and turn this into our life’s goal, we risk living frustrated because, even if we got it, we would not feel fulfilled since happiness is never identified without wanting more in the attainment of our goals.

Mary who puts the future in the hands of the Father who chose and loved her, works in ‘the today’, and dreams according to the will of God. He himself directs history with every thing, fact or event at the right time.

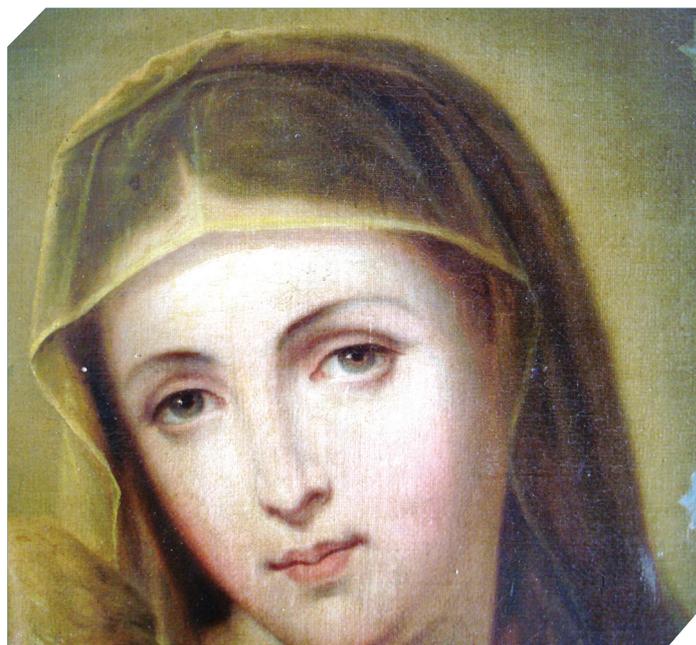
“His mother kept all these things in her heart”. Mary teaches us that we do not have total control over our history. We are not born when we want, nor do we always live in the way we like, nor do we die when we feel the time has come. All is a mystery; all is the grace of God.

**To guard all these things in her heart is a wise attitude.** When we are sensitive, we know how to find treasures in the desert. Those instructed in the things of the Kingdom of God “can be compared to the father of a family who takes out of his cabinet things new and old” (Mt 13:52).

Mary knows how to keep the word in her heart, because she is now experiencing in faith the previous teaching of Jesus: “Do not be concerned about tomorrow: tomorrow will take care of itself. Sufficient for a day is its own evil” (Mt 6:34). The Heart of Mary is immaculate because she only keeps within it what is really important. Neither hatred, revenge, nor the feeling of pride stains the Heart of Mary.

To imitate Mary is to be able to purify the heart, to clean it of everything that removes us from feelings proper to God. It is not compatible with a pure heart wishing that God dwell in it and not strive to prepare a home worthy of the Almighty. This is the reason why the Holy Spirit found in her a worthy abode: “Whoever is joined to the Lord becomes one in spirit with him” (1 Cor 6:17).

“Most Blessed Mother, may the courtesy of your Immaculate Heart, in accepting us as your Sons, be praised a thousand times! Mother, make us cooperate with such kindness by becoming daily more humble, fervent, and zealous for the salvation of souls.



I tell myself: A Son of the Immaculate Heart of Mary is a man on fire with love, who spreads its flames wherever he goes. He desires mightily and strives by all means possible to set the whole world on fire with God's love. Nothing daunts him; he delights in privations, welcomes work, embraces sacrifices, smiles at slander, and rejoices in suffering. His only concern is how he can best follow Jesus Christ and imitate Him in working, suffering, and striving constantly and single-mindedly for the greater glory of God and the salvation of souls!" (Aut 494-494).

## Exercise 3: My CMF identity

Write with your own hand the "Definition of the Missionary Son of the Immaculate Heart of Mary" (CC9). You can express it in our own words and update its contents. Keep it so that you can always bring it with you or see it often (for example in your Bible or Breviary) and you can say: "I preserve it in my heart".

This "Memorial" of your missionary identity:

1. Does it arouse in you joy, confidence, hope...?
2. How does it lead you to committing yourself to the congregational mission, from the place in which you live?
3. In spite of your limitations, do you think your community can expect from you a renewed enthusiasm in the mission entrusted?

## 2.3. Pentecost: to breathe in new air

*"When the time for Pentecost was fulfilled, they were all in one place together. And suddenly there came from the sky a noise like a strong driving wind, and it filled the entire house in which they were"*  
(Acts 2: 1-2).

As we saw in **Booklet 1**, in referring to the Holy Spirit in the story of Pentecost, the Acts of the Apostles uses one of two main images: the image of the "mighty wind" and the "fire". In doing so, St. Luke has in mind the theophany of Sinai, which is described in the books of Exodus (cf. 19: 16-19) and Deuteronomy (cf. 4: 10 -12,36). In the ancient world, the storm was seen as a sign of divine power, in whose presence man felt subjugated and terrorized. It is important to emphasize another aspect: the storm is described as a "mighty wind" and this brings to mind the air, what distinguishes our planet from other planets and enables us to live in it.

**What the air is for biological life, the Holy Spirit is for spiritual life.** In the same way as there is air pollution that poisons the environment and living beings, there is as well, pollution of the heart and the spirit, which mortifies and poisons spiritual existence.

Just as we cannot get accustomed to the toxic substances of the air – which is why ecological commitment is a priority nowadays – in the same way must act with regard to what corrupts the spirit.

However, it appears that there are many "prod-

ucts" that pollute the mind and the heart, and that circulate in our societies: injustice, violence, crime, images that show pleasure as a spectacle and, in general, contempt and lack of respect for the dignity of man and woman. Unfortunately, it seems that we have become accustomed to this without difficulty. Also this is freedom, it is said, without recognizing everything that it contaminates, poisons the soul, especially of the younger generations, which ends up compromising their own freedom. The metaphor of the mighty wind of Pentecost makes us think, on the contrary, in how we need to breathe fresh air: with the lungs, the air and with the heart, the spiritual air, and the healthy air of the spirit which is love!

"The Lord told me both for myself and for all these missionary companions of mine, *Non vos estis qui loquimini sed Spiritus Patris vestri, et Matris vestrae qui loquitur in vobis*. So true is this that each one of us will be able to say: *Spiritus Domini super me, propter quod unxit me, evangelizare pauperibus misit me, sanare contritos corde*" (Aut 687).

## Exercise 4: The air of the Spirit

Go away to a forest or garden in which you are able to feel at peace. Be conscious of your own breathing, as well as the purity, or unfortunately, the contamination of the air and the environment (dust, trash, noise...).

1. In the physical environment, Does it help you to perceive the presence/absence of the Spirit of God?
2. Your community, Do you create times and spaces to so that new air of the Spirit blows on each one of its members?
3. What you can you do so that the newness of the Spirit descends upon your community and directs its evangelizing action?

### 2.4. As Sons of the Immaculate Heart of Mary we need to burn in charity, fruit of the Spirit

*“And suddenly there came from the sky a noise like a strong driving wind, and it filled the entire house in which they were. Then there appeared to them tongues as of fire, which parted and came to rest on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in different tongues, as the Spirit enabled them to proclaim” (Acts 2:2-4).*

At Pentecost, the Holy Spirit manifests itself as fire. **Just as in the burning Bush, flame of the Holy Spirit burns but it doesn't burn out.** And, nevertheless, it becomes a transformation, a purification that consumes something in man: the refuse that corrupts the relationship with God and neighbor.

Sometimes, it seems that this effect of the divine fire frightens us, we're afraid of "burning ourselves", we would prefer to stay as we are. Often this happens because our lives are delineated according to the logic of having, possessing, and not giving of ourselves. Many people believe in God and admire the figure of Jesus Christ, but when asked to leave something of themselves, step away, afraid of the demands of faith. There is the fear of having to renounce something beautiful to which they are attached, the fear to see ourselves deprived of liberty in the following of Jesus, the fear of seeing a part of us ourselves annihilated. On the one hand, we want to be with Jesus, to follow him closely, but on the other, afraid of the consequences that this entails.

We need to listen to the Lord Jesus who tells us what he repeated to his friends: "Be not afraid!" (Mt 10:26). Like Simon Peter and the others, we have to let his presence and grace transform our hearts, always subject to human weaknesses. We need to acknowledge that to lose something is to lose oneself

in the God of love and life, which is, in fact, to win and find oneself completely (cf. Mt 16:26).

Whoever entrusts himself to Jesus already experiences in this life the peace and the happiness that the world cannot give, nor can it be removed, since they were granted to us by God.

It's worth it being touched by the fire of the Holy Spirit! The pain caused by the purification of trash in our lives is necessary for our transformation. It is the reality of the cross. It is not a coincidence that in the language of Jesus, the "fire" is, above all, a representation of the mystery of the cross, without which there would be no Christianity. Therefore, enlightened and comforted by these words of life, we raise our invocation: Come, Holy Spirit, light us with the fire of your love!

The baptism of Jesus, which is part of the logic of humility, is the gesture of one who sympathizes with us, who puts himself in line with sinners. He who is free from sin, it is treated as sin (cf. 2 Cor 5:21), to carry on his shoulders the weight of the guilt of all mankind. His humility is defined by the desire for full communion with the humanity, the desire to achieve a true solidarity with the man and his condition. The gesture of Jesus anticipates the cross, the acceptance of death for the sins of human beings.

This gesture of "kenosis" or "descent", through which Jesus is fully identified with the Father's plan of love, expresses the full harmony of the will and intention that exists between the Persons of the Trinity. Through this act of love, the Spirit of God is manifested and descends like a dove on Jesus, and at that moment the love that unites him with the Father is witnessed by a voice heard from on high by all present. The Father manifests and openly declares to men the deep communion that unites his Son with Him. For this reason, the Father is pleased with Jesus, because it recognizes in the act of the Son the desire to fulfill his will in all things: "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased" (Mt 3: 17). And this word of the Father also refers, in advance, to the victory of the resurrection.

As the disciples of Jesus and missionaries of his Gospel, we cannot burn in love without embracing humility. He who burns in love does the will of the Father: to love until one's life is spent.

Claret who discovered in Mary the woman who perfectly lived in humility, he prays that she gives him this same gift: "I will ask the Blessed Virgin Mary for a burning love, perfect union with God, the most profound humility, and a desire to be held in contempt" (Aut 749:1)

## Exercise 5: Evaluation of my missionary life

With humility and a desire to improve yourself, would you be able to ask the people of the community in which you perform your Ministry to make an assessment of your missionary work?

With complete creativity, prepare a scheme to get the answer, especially with those can be be the most sincere with you. Don't forget that "he who loves you well, will make you suffer" and that the humility to recognize your strengths and your weaknesses can be the foundation of a more committed missionary life.

1. Ask, above all, if the people perceive in you: fire, enthusiasm, and joy in your vocation.
2. Asks for "feedback" in regards to your preaching, its contents, the methods, and the forms you use.
3. Don't forget to ask if what you preach consistently corresponds to what you live.

The answers, if they are sincere, can be disconcerting; but if we do not burn internally in love and passion for the Kingdom, our ministry will be cold and dying. We run the risk of losing even the sense of the consecration.

## 2.5. As Sons of the Heart of Mary, we are invited to be a source of the Spirit for the world

*"If you knew the gift of God and who is saying to you, 'Give me a drink', you would have asked him and he would have given you living water." (Jn 4:10).*



Jesus is the living water who quenches every thirst, and this water is his own Spirit. In the encounter with the Samaritan woman what is highlighted in the foreground is the symbol of water, which clearly refers to the sacrament of Baptism, the source of new life from faith and from the grace of God. In **Booklet 1** this iconic gospel is already addressed, beloved by our Founder. You may find it useful to return to it.

For this reason, this passage of the Gospel is part of the journey of preparation of Catechumens for Christian initiation, which achieves its culmination in the great Easter Vigil. "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again; but whoever drinks the water I shall give will never thirst; the water I shall give will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal Life." (Jn 4: 13-14).

This water represents the Holy Spirit, the "gift" par excellence that Jesus came to bring from God the Father. Whoever is born of water and of the Holy Spirit, that is to say, in baptism, enters into a real relationship with God, a filial relationship, and there-

fore can worship “in spirit and in truth” (Jn 4:23.24 ). Thanks to the encounter with Jesus Christ and the gift of the Holy Spirit, the faith of man reaches its fulfillment as a response to the fullness of God’s revelation.

Each one of us can identify with the Samaritan woman. Jesus waits for us to speak to the heart. Let us hear his voice that tells us: “If you knew the gift of God ...”. May the Virgin Mary help us to not miss this encounter on which we depend for our true happiness.

However, we must not forget that, like us, the world is thirsting for God. As missionaries, we are called to communicate this presence of the Spirit that dwells in us and satisfies our thirst. Only imbued with this spirit we can be a font for others.

## Exercise 6: Remembrance of Baptism

Find a moment for prayer-meditation in the baptistry of any parish church.

1. If possible, touch the water and make grateful “memory” of your own baptism: Do you know the date and the place? Do you remember the names of your godparents? Do you or your family have any symbols in memory of it? Have they told you or have you taken into account of the important events that were happening in our world at this time?
2. Over the years, you’ve tried living in the depth of your baptismal consecration, making your religious-missionary profession as a Son of the Heart of Mary. Having been “satisfied in your thirst”, do you consider yourself a “Samaritan” who, through apostolic action, has sought to quench the thirst of others? Make memory of a person or deed in your life in which you’ve experienced the grace of being the bearer of the “water” of the Good News.
3. Thinking about the baptistry as a symbol of the “womb of the Church” in which the God’s children are reborn, and thinking about Mary as a figure of this mystery, conclude this moment remembering this text of our Constitutions: “Since we are called and truly are Sons of her Heart, we venerate her in love and trust. And we commit ourselves to her that we may be conformed to the mystery of Christ and may cooperate with her in her maternal role in our apostolic mission” (CC 8).

### 2.6. The catholicity of our being consecrated to the Heart of Mary

*“And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in different tongues, as the Spirit enabled them to proclaim... we hear them speaking in our own tongues of the mighty acts of God”  
(Acts 2:4, 11).*

The Son of God, died and risen, who has returned to the Father, emanates over mankind an unprecedented energy, the divine breath, the Holy Spirit.

And what does this new and powerful auto-communication of God do?

Where there is injury, it creates unity and understanding. It starts a process of reunification between all parts of the human family, divided and scattered. People, often reduced to individuals in competition or conflict among one another, when they are touched by the spirit of Christ, are open to the experience of communion that can engage them to make of themselves a new body: the Church.

This is the effect of the work of God: unity; for this reason, unity is the sign of recognition, the “calling card” of the Church throughout its history.

From here a practical criterion of discernment for the Christian life is discerned: when a person or

a community are closed on their particular way of thinking and acting, are demonstrating the absence of Holy Spirit. The way Christians and the particular churches must always act is to confront this in the Church, one and Catholic, and to be harmonize with it. This does not mean that the unity created by the Holy Spirit is a kind of egalitarianism. On the contrary, at Pentecost the Apostles spoke in different languages, but all understood the message in their own language.

**The unity of the Spirit is manifest in the plurality of communication.** The Church, as well as our Congregation, is by nature one and multiple, destined to live in all nations, among all peoples, and in diverse social contexts. She responds to her vocation to be a sign and instrument of unity for all mankind (cf. *Lumen Gentium*, 1), only if she remains independent of all ideologies and any particular culture.

Always and everywhere, the Church must be truly catholic and universal, the home of all, in which all can be found to feel welcome. **Booklet 8** will focus precisely on the universality and the catholicity of the Claretian charism: “Besides, I would be tying myself down to a single archdiocese, whereas my spirit goes out to all the world: But even on that small dot on the map I wouldn’t be able to preach as I would like, since I have seen with my own eyes how many business affairs an Archbishop has to attend to” (EC, 1, 305-306).

## Exercise 7: To see things “in a different way”

Try to write a letter, homily or brief message in a language of which you know something, but do not have complete mastery. What are the difficulties you experience? How do you judge, from your own experience of limitation, the difficulties other brothers encounter when they have to express themselves in languages different from theirs?

Look for another opportunity to go into the street and, without saying a word, seek to be generous or convey a message of mercy to someone you see as “needy”.

1. What differences do you experience in your level of communication? Do you think that the “Catholic” language of love for God and neighbor is indispensable, made of sophisticated methods, or the developed from great communication skills?
2. What aspects of your ministry do you have to check to make them an element of the “universal mission”, which is not attached to people, things, methods and tasks?
3. How you contemplate this openness to all from the Heart of Mary?

### 2.7. The courage of the prophetic mission of the Missionary Son of the Heart of Mary

*“And now, Lord, take note of their threats, and enable your servants to speak your word with all boldness, as you stretch forth [your] hand to heal, and signs and wonders are done through the name of your holy servant Jesus. As they prayed, the place where they were gathered shook, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness. (Acts 4: 29-31).*

The Holy Spirit conquers all fear. We know that the disciples sought refuge in the Upper Room after the arrest of their Master and there remained isolated for fear of suffering the same fate.

After the resurrection of Jesus, the fear of the

primitive community did not disappear suddenly. But behold, on the day of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit manifested itself upon them, they came out without fear and began to proclaim to the Good News everyone.

**Yes, where the Spirit of God is, fear disappears.** It makes us know and feel that we are in the hands of Love that can do everything. Whatever happens, his infinite love does not abandon us. This has been proven by the testimony of the martyrs, the courage of the confessors of the faith, the fearless momentum of missionaries, the sincerity of preachers, and the example of missionaries.

It is demonstrated by the existence of the Church itself that, in spite of the limits and defects of human beings, keeps on crossing the oceans of history, driven by the breath of the spirit and animated by its purifying fire. With this faith and this joyful hope we repeat today, through the intercession of Mary: “Send your Spirit, Lord, and renew the face of the Earth”.

## Exercise 8: The Paul of Claret

Read the following text of Claret about the example of St. Paul. Underlines the verbs, make them yours and combine them in present indicative form. Look for these same verbs or their form as nouns in No. 9 of the Constitutions.

*Also the zeal of St. Paul has always awakened my deepest enthusiasm. He went from place to place, a chosen vessel, carrying the teaching of Jesus Christ. He preached, wrote, and taught in synagogues, prisons--everywhere. He worked and made others work, in season and out of season. He suffered scourgings, stonings, persecutions of all sorts, as well as the fiercest calumnies, but he was never daunted; on the contrary, he so rejoiced in tribulations that he could say that he did not wish to glory, save in the cross of Jesus Christ. (Aut 224).*

- Do you identify with these experiences of courage and missionary audacity?
- Have you ever lived this experience in any moment of your life?
- Pray to the Lord from your answers to the previous questions.

## 2.8. We are the breath of life from God on Earth

*On the evening of that first day of the week, when the doors were locked, where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in their midst and said to them, "Peace be with you." When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. The disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. [Jesus] said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the holy Spirit" (Jn 20: 19-22).*

The Holy Spirit is represented as the breath of the risen Christ. St. John evangelist here recaptures a picture of the history of creation, which tells us that God blew the breath of life into the nose of man (cf. Gn 2: 7). The breath of God, His 'Ruah', is life, is the ability to love.

Now the Lord inspires in our soul the Holy Spirit, his innermost being, and thus introduces us to the family of God. By Baptism and Confirmation we received this gift in a specific manner, and with the sacraments of the Eucharist and Penance it is repeated continuously. All the sacraments, each one according to its own form, communicate to human beings the

divine life through the Holy Spirit who works in them.

"The disciples were glad when they saw the Lord". What he offers is not just any joy, but its own joy, the gift of the Holy Spirit. Yes, life is beautiful because I am loved, because the One who is the Truth loves me.

In Pentecost, we make ours the happiness of the disciples of Jesus because in the faith we can see; in the faith, He comes to us and also shows us his hands and its side. With the entire Church we pray: "Lord, show yourself! Grant the gift of your presence to us and we will have the most beautiful gift: your happiness". A joy that nothing can snatch from us and which urgently spreads to the entire world in the Apostolic mission.

"The same Holy Spirit, by appearing in the form of tongues of fire above the Apostles on Pentecost, showed us this truth quite clearly: an apostolic missionary must have both heart and tongue ablaze with charity. One day the Venerable Avila was asked by a young priest what he should do to become a good preacher. His ready answer was, love much. And both experience and the history of the Church teach us that the greatest preachers have always been the most fervent lovers." (Aut 440).



### Exercise 9: My ideals

Make a list of people, things, or ideals for which you would be ready to give life... Your sincere answer will indicate who or what things you love.

The breath of God, the Holy Spirit in us, makes us free to love as God loves: unconditionally. His presence in us is the source of apostolic zeal and perennial joy.



**T**o see in community one of two movies that are mentioned next from the perspective of the maternal presence of Mary in our lives. The woman, who accompanies, keeps vigil, cares, but who does not want to be the center. She leaves the scene, fades, so that “who is most important appears”. This is precisely what Mary did in the life Jesus, in the primitive community, and this what she does with us, with our community. If at all possible, it would be good to share with the brothers in community any reflections that the movie stirs up.

#### **Movie 1: “Extremely Loud and Close”**

At the age of 11, Oscar Schell is an exceptional child: amateur inventor, admirer of French culture, pacifist. After he finds a mysterious key belonging to his father, who died in the World Trade Center on 9/11, he embarks on an incredible journey through the city of New York. Meanwhile Oscar wanders around the city, encounters all sorts of people, all survivors in their own way. Finally, Oscar’s journey ends where it began, but with the comfort of the experience most human of all: love.

Original Title: *Extremely Loud and Close* (USA, 2011 – drama, 129 min.)

#### **Movie 2: “Babette’s Feast”**

In 1871, on a stormy night, Babette comes to a town in Denmark, fleeing France during the Suppression of the Paris Commune. She is employed as a housekeeper and cook in the house of the two spinster daughters of a rigid Lutheran preacher. There she lived for fourteen years, until one day he finds out that she had won a fortune in the lottery, and instead of returning to France, asks the sisters permission to prepare a “French dinner” to commemorate the centenary of the Pastor. The guests are frightened at first, fearing to contravene the rigid laws of their community, but end up attending and enjoying the party offered by Babette.

Original Title: *“Babette’s Feast”* (Denmark, 1987 – drama)

3. Suggestions for the community meeting

From apostolic-times **the feasts of Easter and Pentecost were primary, and the paschal mystery was the first celebration** to have both a time before the feast of preparation and a time afterwards for the extension and completing the celebration. In the new Sacramentary and Lectionary the Sundays following Easter are no longer termed "after" for they are "of" Easter, since they do not follow a solemnity, but they are to be taken as a unity to form one season of solemnity and exaltation at the triumph of Jesus over sin and death.

In the former understanding of the season the feast of the Pentecost was set off because it had its own octave. In the reformed calendar this situation is remedied for the solemnity of the Ascension does not end the season of Easter; it is one special day within an entire special season. The Easter candle is no longer extinguished on the Ascension for it should remain in prominence in the sanctuary until Pentecost and then be placed in the baptistry. It can be used at funerals and at the sacraments of baptism and confirmation.

**The feast of Pentecost now concludes the Easter season and the week between Ascension and Pentecost should be a time of preparation and expectation for the coming of the Spirit.**

The major principle of the calendar reform called for at the Vatican Council—that the paschal mystery be the center of the Christian year—is made obvious in the new Sacramentary because of the emphasis on Easter as the great feast of fifty days.

The Easter candle, lighted for the first time from the new fire of the Easter Vigil, is placed in a prominent place in the sanctuary between Easter and Pentecost and should be lighted for all liturgical services in this season and should be incensed whenever incense is used in the fifty days.

The color of the vesture for the season is white, and the cloth or frontal for the altar should be white as well. Liturgical hangings or banners should be made of white and contrasting colors and should reflect the season of new life, fulfillment, rejoicing and joy at the season.

All penitential elements in the eucharist should be eliminated in this season of sung Alleluias, water, candles and lights.

## 4. Guidelines for "Lectio Divina"

## SUNDAY, APRIL 20, 2014. EASTER SUNDAY

- Acts 10: 34-37,43
- Col 3: 1a- 4
- Jn 20: 1-9

I realize that this is the day that the love of God rang for me? St. Paul tells us: “If then you were raised with Christ. Seek what is above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Think of what is above, not of what is on the earth”. For me, Is the resurrection an “event” that happens after death, or is it now being fulfilled in the here and now” of my existence? To be an “arrow” forged in the Easter of Christ implies walking in a new life.

## Monday, April 21, 2014. Monday of the Octave of Easter

- Acts 2: 14.22-32
- Ps 15
- Mt 28: 8-15

During the Octave of Easter, immersed in “the great day” of the Resurrection of the Lord, the Word insists that we abandon fear and accept the testimony. We are invited to a new beginning, to return to Galilee where it all began, to return to our “first love”. The Resurrection of the Lord illuminates our past, often incomprehensible, and opens the doors of hope.

## Tuesday, April 22, 2014. Tuesday of the Octave of Easter

- Acts 2: 36-41
- Ps 32
- Jn 20: 11-18

The appearance of the Risen Lord to Mary Magdalene is the encounter of the fullness, of redemption and love. It is clear that the Risen One lives in the hearts of those who love Him or have been touched by love. Love is the shortest way to acknowledge the Master. Love opens the way, not only to God, but also to human beings. “Love can do anything; love dares to everything; love is not only free and intimate, but also bold and enterprising”. (Rainer Maria Rilke)

## Wednesday, April 23, 2014. Wednesday of the Octave of Easter

- Acts 3: 1-10
- Ps 104
- Lk 24: 13-35

“Stay with us, because it is already late”. How many times we have convinced ourselves or have we been persuaded that it is too late to dream? How many pessimistic voices shout around us: “it is too late”? When the Lord chooses to stay with us, He accepts our whole reality and weaknesses. For Him it is never too late, it is never night. He makes our hearts “burn”, to beat at their own pace, and to “resume” the road to regain hope. “Stay with us, Lord!”.

## Thursday, April 24, 2014. Thursday of the Octave of Easter

- Acts 3: 11-26
- Ps 8
- Lk 24: 35-48

When we did not understand the Scriptures, when the mystery of life overflows, when the call to be “arrows” in the fight against the evil seems a little disproportionate, Jesus in the Gospel goes out to meet our difficulties: “Then he opened them up to understand how they could comprehend the Scriptures”. Yes, he is the risen Lord who breaks our limits and helps us to understand God’s call!

## Friday, April 25, 2014. Friday of the Octave of Easter

- Acts 4:1-12
- Ps 117
- Jn 21: 1-4

The Risen Lord again calls us “friends” and invites us to cast the nets where hope seems to have been exhausted. We have many challenges to overcome to continue launching the nets and, without doubt, the largest are discouragement and fear. How do we overcome these challenges? We overcome fear and discouragement whenever, like John, carried by love, we are sure that it is the Lord who feeds us and send us. The presence of the risen Lord that guarantees the effectiveness of our witness and mission!

## Saturday, April 26, 2014. Saturday of the Octave of Easter

- Acts 4: 13-31
- Ps 117
- Mk 16: 9-15

The Lord censures the unbelief and hardness of heart of his disciples. However, He continues to rely on them: “Go to the entire world and announce the Gospel to every creature”. To be faithful to the missionary mandate of Jesus, we need grace. Only with it shall we overcome the unbelief that prevents us from recognizing and accepting the testimony of those who have seen their lives transformed by the power of new life. May Mary, who had crossed the mountains to communicate the good news since the announcement of the incarnation of the word in her bosom, teach us the audacity to confess the faith.

## SUNDAY, APRIL 27, 2014. 2ND SUNDAY OF EASTER

- Acts 2: 42-47
- Ps 117
- 1 Pt 1: 3-9
- Jn 20: 19-31

The great desire of the human heart is peace! To confirm this longing, the risen Lord insistently desires it for his disciples. Faith in the resurrection is a basic condition for peace. Am I convinced of this truth or is there still some doubt in my heart? Today, Lord, my prayer is for all those who live locked-up and suffocated in their fears and anxieties. Lord, open the doors of their hearts so that they may listen to the friendly and joyful greeting that goes beyond the gates and dispels all fear: "Peace to you!"

## Monday, April 28, 2014

- Acts 4: 23-31
- Ps 2
- Jn 3: 1-8

Today, more than ever, consumer society feeds and sells the old dream of eternal youth, forgetting that our bodies have an expiration date. But, as Christians, we may be born again, "born from on high", reaching the eternal youth of the meaning of life. He who assures us of this grace is the Holy Spirit with his creative and refreshing force. "Born from on high", in a missionary perspective, will involve immersing yourself in the Spirit who, with his creative force, guides you to respond to the aspirations of people's lives.

## Tuesday, April 29, 2014

- Acts 4: 32-37
- Ps 92
- Jn 3: 11-15

We live in the world of information. We know everything about everything, and we have even managed to overcome distance and time. However, Jesus calls us today through Nicodemus: "You are the teacher of Israel, and you don't know this?". We extend our vision to the outside, but we become myopic to the inside and to the things of God. May the Lord broaden our minds and hearts to understand the mysteries that give us abundant life.

## Wednesday, April 30, 2014

- Acts 5: 17-26
- Ps 33
- Jn 3: 16-21

Our God is a God in love with his children, to the point of having delivered his only begotten Son! Before this wonderful revelation we can not remain indifferent and cold. No one can say that he is not loved or that he does not have a light that guides his steps. God loves us and illuminates our lives through Jesus Christ, the risen Lord. We experience this infinite love, let us be guided by his light so that our hearts beat with joy and hope!

## Thursday, May 1, 2014

- Acts 5: 27-33
- Ps 33
- Jn 3: 31-36

Jesus is the faithful witness because he responded affirmatively to the love of the Father. Let us fill Jerusalem, and all the squares in the world, with his teachings and with our witness. Let us pray saying: "We glorify you, Father, because we have been reborn in the Risen Christ who is the way, the truth and the life. He is the way, and no one can reach it without walking with him. He is the truth, and no one can know you without believing in Him. He is life, and no one is reborn without dying with him" (Basil Caballero). May the month of May we start today help us to become aware of the fact that Mary of Nazareth walks together with her Son's disciples in the pilgrimage of faith, proclamation and witness.

## Friday, May 2, 2014. Memorial of St Athanasius, Bishop and Doctor of the Church

- Acts 5: 34-42
- Ps 26
- Jn 6: 1-15

To sharing the bread to satisfy physical, emotional and spiritual hunger is, and always will be, the main mission that Jesus has entrusted to his Church and to all the men and women of goodwill. To understand the deeper meaning of this mission, we must let ourselves be guided by the "sister solidarity"; we need a heart of child willing to share. We need to overcome the selfishness that impoverishes and weakens our heart. Lord, give us the grace of generosity and sharing!

## Saturday, May 3, 2014. Feast of Saints Philip and James, Apostles

- 1 Cor 15: 1-8
- Ps 18
- Jn 14: 6-14

The legitimate desire of Philip: "show us the Father, and we shall be satisfied", there is no other answer than the exhortation to believe in Jesus and his works, as living and true testimony of the Father. If we believe in the testimony of Jesus, we will do the works that He did - and even greater-, and we will remain in Him and with Him in the Father: "fall in love with Jesus Christ and souls, and you will understand everything, and you will do much more than I" (Claret).

## SUNDAY, MAY 4, 2013. 3RD SUNDAY OF EASTER

- Acts 2:14, 22-23
- Ps 15
- 1 Pt 1: 17-21
- Lk 24: 13-35

As with every celebration of the Eucharist, Jesus is close to our miseries, instructs us in the understanding of the Word, Relights the hope in our hearts, and feeds us with the bread of his permanent presence in the world. His sacrifice was necessary to give us life and to defeat the powers of death. Authentic missionaries-disciples have to resume the way to communicate this Good News: We have recognized Him in his generous dedication to the breaking of the bread!

### Monday, May 5, 2014

- Acts 6: 8-15
- Ps 118
- Jn 6: 22-29

When we ask ourselves seriously about the motivations that exist behind our searches and even in the image that we have of God, we are evaluating the maturity of our faith. Often we toil looking for what perishes and even claim that God is an accomplice of our feeling of unease. The gospel reveals not only God's desire, but also the way that He leads to the ripeness in faith: "The work of God is this: to believe in that one that He has sent", to believe in his cause and to labor for it.

### Tuesday, May 6, 2014

- Acts 7: 51-8:1
- Ps 30
- Jn 6: 30-35

The desire to live - and to live in abundance - has its roots in our hearts, and is a kind of insatiable hunger. We all long for the bread of happiness and we would give everything for a miracle; but, we have never had so many loaves in society, so much variety and, at the same time, we have never had so much hunger! Gives us, Lord, "your bread", which, in addition to making us enjoy, frees us and helps us to recover true happiness.

### Wednesday, May 7, 2014. The Canonization of St. Anthony Mary Claret

- Acts 8: 1b-8
- Ps 65
- Jn 6: 35-40

How many new names to invoke Jesus! Today's Gospel presents Him as the bread that gives life, the host who receives those who knock at His door and does not leave them outside, who takes care of those who have been entrusted to him. You have to honor Him who does not lose anyone. He is the source of living water who communicates with those who see Him with the eyes of faith. He makes of those who believe in Him participants in His Resurrection. St. Anthony Mary Claret, whose canonization we remember today, is deeply identified with Jesus. Configuration and communion with the Lord is to live "always in the presence of God, even in the midst of His prodigious exterior activity" (Pius XII).

### Thursday, May 8, 2014

- Acts 8: 26-40
- Ps 65
- Jn 6: 44-51

Every day we feel attracted by many things, people and situations, but our heart is restless. Let us be open to the real attraction that guarantees us "the living bread which came down from heaven", to give "eternal life". Jesus draws us to what truly gives us security and confidence: "No one can come to me if the Father who sent me does not draw him". The attraction and the meeting are born of faith.

### Friday, May 9, 2014

- Acts 6: 52-59
- Ps 116
- Jn 6: 52-58

After the consecration at mass we are exhorted to acclaim the "mystery of our faith" and, at the moment of communion, we say: Amen! In this way, we accept the Eucharist and its profound content. To come to this requires faith. Faith is the premise of the sacrament and this is expressed and is fed by it. We have this certainty in our hearts: the Body and the Blood, is to say, the person of Jesus Christ, received in faith, are the font of the resurrection and of life eternal.

### Saturday, May 10, 2014

- Acts 9: 31-42
- Ps 115
- Jn 6: 60-69

There are moments in which questions are posed similar to those that Jesus makes to its disciples: "Does that scandalize you?". Often we get tired of the commitment and of the consequences of being authentic Christians. Who has not had or has fallen down in this temptation? That's why, today and always, let us ask the Lord to keep us firm in following Him, because "to whom will we go, Lord? You have words of eternal life. And we believe and know that you are the Holy One of God".

## SUNDAY, MAY 11, 2014. 4TH SUNDAY OF EASTER

- Acts 2: 14, 36-41
- Ps 22
- 1 Pt 2: 20b-25
- Jn 10: 1-10

Jesus is not a thief or Bandit, but the Shepherd willing to give his life for his sheep. He is “the door” through which the true disciple comes to live, celebrate and bear witness to his faith and hope. He who recognizes the voice of the good Shepherd and passes through this gate will find “life in abundance”. May we, missionaries and servants of the Word of life, be “pastors with the smell of sheep” (Pope Francis), willing to give life for the sake of the Kingdom of God and his justice.

## Monday, May 12, 2014

- Acts 11: 1-18
- Ps 41
- Jn 10: 11-18

For a semi-nomadic people in its origins, the figure of the Shepherd was one of the images that best reflected the behavior of God towards them. Jesus is presented as the definitive pastor, expected by everyone, and joins something surprising in the Jewish tradition: a unique and personal relationship established with each of those who follow Him. Each one of us, called by our Shepherd, can be known by his name and called to have life in abundance.

## Tuesday, May 13, 2014

- Acts 11: 19-36
- Ps 86
- Jn 10: 22-30

Let us return to some of the expressions that Jesus assumes as the Pastor of our lives. Let his Word touch our hearts and rekindle our hope: “I know you”, “I give you eternal life”, “They will never perish”, “No one shall snatch them out of my hands.” Today our day will be completely different! After a moment of reflection and with a heart filled with hope pray slowly Psalm 22.

## Wednesday, May 14, 2014. Feast of St. Mathias, Apostle

- Acts 1: 15-17, 20-26
- Ps 112
- Jn 15: 9-17

Love is the main sign of the Kingdom. Love is not imprisoned by prejudice nor does it have reservations, because it is the most sublime feeling. Motivated by the love for the Father and to the brethren, Jesus was capable of the greatest sacrifice. Love is the main element in following Jesus, because with Him we feel motivated to give ourselves completely. Love is forever, because it generates a life-long commitment. This is the case of Mathias, chosen from among the witnesses of the origins, to replace the traitor.

## Thursday, May 15, 2014

- Acts 13: 13-25
- Ps 88
- Jn 13: 16-20

The Beatitudes are not only a list supplied by the Gospels of Luke and Matthew. They reappear in other moments in the life of Jesus as happy statements addressed to his disciples. What St. John recalls for us today is the final scene of the “washing of the feet”: “Blessed are you if you understand these things, and put them into practice”. Jesus proclaims as happy those who, delving deep into his teachings, prolong their gestures of unconditional service to others.

## Friday, May 16, 2014

- Acts 13: 26-33
- Ps 2
- Jn 14: 1-6

One of the causes of human restlessness, perhaps the main one, is the “lack of meaning in life”. Where do I go? In whom and in what do I believe? What is life? Questions very serious and decisive. Before doubt and disturbance, the Risen Christ invites us to peace and confidence: “May your heart be not disturbed... “I am the way, the truth, and the life”. Hopefully our hearts find rest in these words of the Master!

## Saturday, May 17, 2014

- Acts 13: 44-52
- Ps 97
- Jn 14: 7-14

Jesus is the “human face” of the Father. Like Jesus, as his disciples we have a mission: to be the visible image of Christ and God in the world Lord, May your grace keep us firm in living our vocation! Sustain our testimony and announcement, because only in this way we will be sure that, despite our weaknesses, your image will continue to be reflected in our humanity. Mary, prototype of response to your call, teach us to be a consistent reflection of your love.

## SUNDAY, MAY 18, 2014. 5TH SUNDAY OF EASTER

- Acts 6: 1-7
- Ps 32
- 1 Pt 2: 4-9
- Jn 14: 1-12

The words spoken at the end of life take on a deep significance and reveal who is this person who is finalizing his existence. This is the case of the words we hear today in the Gospel. We must listen to them in reverential silence and in a loving relationship with him who has given his life for us. The last words of Jesus are of consolation (“let not your hearts be troubled”); hope (“in my Father’s House there are many rooms... He will take you with me”); greatness (“I am the way, the truth and the life”); but also of the commitment and requirement of discipling (“he who believes in me will do the works that I do and even greater”). The road of the Forge, Are you helping to better understand your Master and Lord?

## Monday, May 19, 2014

- Acts 14: 5-18
- Ps 113
- Jn 14: 21-26

When we talk about the House of God, what frequently comes to mind is the image of a church. This design lends itself to a dichotomy: over there is God and here are we. Today’s Gospel corrects and eliminates this dichotomy. It reveals to us that God’s true dwelling place is the heart of the disciple of Jesus Christ, the heart that loves and fulfills his word. The Holy Spirit guides us to the full truth, to putting into practice the Word of the Gospel and in cultivating obedience to faith.

## Tuesday, May 20, 2014

- Acts 14: 19-28
- Ps 144
- Jn 14: 27-31a

One of the greatest gifts the risen Lord gives to his disciples is the gift of peace. But, What kind of peace is this? Jesus himself clarifies: “I do not give it to you as the world gives”. The peace that the world offers is the result of the balance of forces. The peace that the risen Christ gives us is not based on force, but on faith, trust, and hope. We do not seek the balance of forces, but guided by the Beatitudes, the absolute abandonment in God, contributing to the establishment of his Kingdom.

## Wednesday, May 21, 2014

- Acts 15: 1-6
- Ps 121
- Jn 15: 1-8

“I am the true vine and my Father is the vinedresser”. This is the ultimate reason why Jesus asks us: “Abide in me”. United to Him, the true vine that produces the “wine of the truth and faithfulness”, we will give abundant and hearty fruit. May we never be separated from you, O Lord; for only by being united to you will we have the fullness of life and produce fruits of fidelity, truth and love. Accept our discipleship, Lord! Accept our fruit!

## Thursday, May 22, 2014. St Joaquina of Vedrunga, Foundress

- Acts 15: 7-21
- Ps 95
- Jn 15: 9-11

“To stay in the love” of Jesus requires, for our part, human and spiritual maturity, therefore this staying is based on obedience and faithfulness; in other words, in the fulfillment of the commandments. Whoever dares to take this challenge is blessed with the gift of joy: “That my joy be with you, and that your joy may be complete”. Nothing and no one can take away this joy!

## Friday, May 23, 2014

- Acts 15: 22-31
- Ps 56
- Jn 15: 12-17

Words of tenderness: “You are my friends ... you did not choose me, I chose you”. But also a mandate: “this is my commandment, that you love one another”. Love, obedience and friendship are the attitudes that best identifies the communion between Jesus and his disciples. May our friendship be eternal, O Lord, may our obedience not be the result of fear, but the expression of true and risky love.

## Saturday, May 24, 2014

- Acts 16: 1-10
- Ps 99
- Jn 15: 18-21

To follow Jesus requires human and spiritual maturity. Life itself demands it! To follow Jesus will involve, as we remember in today’s Gospel, a suffering that keeps our option alive and effective. Our criteria and priorities will come into conflict with “the world” that is closed to God. Lord, we are counting on your help to be faithful messengers of the Good News. We also pray for all those who endure persecution for your cause. May Mary, with her maternal love “continue” to take care of the brothers of her Son, who still pilgrimage and find themselves in danger and anxiety until they come to the promised land.” (LG 62)

## SUNDAY, MAY 25, 2014. 6TH SUNDAY OF EASTER

- Acts 8: 5-8, 14-17
- Ps 65
- 1 Pt 3: 15-18
- Jn 14: 15-21

“I ask the Father to give you another advocate, who is always with you, the Spirit of truth.” We are not alone, the Lord repeats it in many ways. The memory of his words gives us security. By the action of the “another advocate” he does not abandon those who are carefully searching the Scriptures and live with a generous heart. Conscious of our weakness, we are comforted to know that the Spirit, “giver of life”, comes to our aid: to fill our emptiness, broaden our horizons, and give strength to our hearts shrunk with fear. If we are good hosts of the Spirit, with Him our hope will grow and we will live with joy and security as sons of God.

## Monday, May 26, 2014

- Acts 16: 11-15
- Ps 149
- Jn 15: 26 - 16:4

The decisive force of Christianity lies in the conviction of the witnesses of Jesus. They can speak in the first person and communicate their own experience. They are those who can say: “This is what makes me live in these times”. In Jesus lives “something” that is decisive in his life, something unique that is not found elsewhere. They do not believe theoretically in doctrines about Jesus; they believe in Jesus because they feel full of life and with a force that helps them to overcome all adversity and opposition to the Gospel.

## Tuesday, May 27, 2013

- Acts 16: 22-34
- Ps 137
- Jn 16: 5b-11

We live in a society that manipulates or denies the principles of our faith, we hear voices that proclaim that the sin does not exist, we see daily how justice is manipulated and the prophets of doom who throw fire on the earth in the name of the justice of God frighten us. However, the disciple of Jesus lives in obedience to the Paraclete, to the new presence of the Risen One. He guides us into all truth.

## Wednesday, May 28, 2014

- Acts 17: 15, 22-18:1
- Ps 148
- Jn 16: 12-15

“When the Paraclete comes, the Spirit of truth, he will guide you into the fullness of truth”. This is the task of the Holy Spirit: to guide Christians of all times, places, and cultures to a deep knowledge of the mystery of Jesus Christ, who died and rose to give us life. Yearning for this gift, let us pray with insistence, with faith, and hope. May the grace of the Spirit of truth make us free and give meaning to our living and dying.

## Thursday, May 29, 2014

- Acts 18: 1-8
- Ps 97
- Jn 16: 16-20

Who among us has not had the experience of abandonment by God, of darkness of the spirit, of “the dark night of faith”? The “silence of God”! An experience that is difficult and even painful; but it is precisely there where we discover the presence of Jesus as the center of our faith. This experience can take a little time or last many years. Whatever the time and intensity, we have this certainty: “you’ll be sad, but your sorrow will turn into joy”.

## Friday, May 30, 2014

- Acts 18: 9-18
- Ps 46
- Jn 16: 2-23a

The Lord, full of fidelity, assures us that no one will snatch away the joy of our faith. With these words of hope and comfort, confidence and freedom is reborn in each of us as the antidote to tiredness and discouragement, disbelief, and despair which often permeates our lives. Despite our weakness, Lord, we wish to collaborate so that your truth can give birth and reign in the hearts of all men and women of our time.

## Saturday, May 31, 2014. Feast of the Visitation of the Virgin Mary

- Zep 3: 14-18
- Ps (Is 12: 2-6)
- Lk 1: 39-56

In her song, Mary “the gaze of God with benevolence” is felt. For this reason, she, in looking at history through the eyes of God, discovers the true depth of reality: Who are the favorites of God? Or, on the contrary, who are those that are excluded from his mercy? The contemplative gaze of Mary reveals the compassionate heart of the heavenly Father, and this Good News needs to be communicated with urgency, moving in haste throughout the highways of our world. How do we communicate with new zeal the mercy with which the Lord looks upon his children?

## SUNDAY, JUNE 1, 2014. THE ASCENSION OF THE LORD

- Acts 1: 1-11
- Ps 46
- Eph 1: 17-23
- Mt 28: 16-20

“Today our Lord Jesus Christ ascended into heaven; our hearts also rising with Him. And as he rose without leaving us, we also rise with Him, even though it has not yet happened in our body what he promised to us”. (St. Augustin).

Meanwhile, we live now the time of the Church’s mission. From the holy mountain, the Lord expresses its confidence by sending us to win new disciples, who are distinguished by the coherence between their faith and the evangelical mandates. Jesus seems to be absent, but, in fact, is still present and alive among us by the action of his Spirit. Since his incarnation, He is and will be the Emmanuel until the end of time. Forged in the school of the disciples, Jesus now us hurls us as arrows to ignite other hearts in the fire of God’s love.

## Monday, June 2, 2014

- Acts 19: 1-8
- Ps 67
- Jn 16: 29-33

This week we prepare ourselves for the Solemnity of Pentecost. In instead of the habitual reflection, let us deepen ourselves in the opening prayer of the day and in one of the petitions of prayer to the Holy Spirit from Pope Paul VI. “We ask you, Lord, that the force of the Holy Spirit comes to us so that we may do your will and show it through a holy life.” What to call you, what name to give you, how to deduce a notion of who you are; Spirit who proceeds by way of the Love of the Father and the Son (...) O, Holy Spirit! I look and can only say the usual invocation: Come!

## Tuesday, June 3, 2014. Memorial of St Charles Lwanga and Companions, Martyrs

- Acts 20: 17-27
- Ps 67
- Jn 17: 1-11a

“O, God of power and mercy! Let the Holy Spirit who has come to dwell in our hearts, convert us into a temple of his glory.”

Petition: “O, Holy Spirit, give me a big heart, open to your silent and strong inspiring Word, closed to all the petty ambitions, foreign to any despicable human competition, imbued with the meaning of the Holy Church!”.

## Wednesday, June 4, 2014

- Acts 20: 28-38
- Ps 67
- Jn 17: 11b-19

“O, God of mercy, let your Church reunited in the Holy Spirit know it is consecrated to your service with one heart and one soul.” Petition: “O, Holy Spirit, give me a big heart, eager to become one with the heart of the Lord Jesus.”

## Thursday, June 5, 2014. Memorial of St Boniface, Bishop and Martyr

- Acts 22:30; 23:6-11
- Ps 15
- Jn 17: 20-26

“We ask, Lord, that your Spirit transforms us by the power of your gifts, and gives us a heart capable of pleasing you and accepting your will.” Petition: “O, Holy Spirit, give me a big and strong heart to love all, to serve all, to suffer for all!”

## Friday, June 6, 2014

- Acts 25: 13b-21
- Ps 102
- Jn 21: 15-19

“O God, by the glorification of Christ and the illumination of the Holy Spirit, open for us the doors of eternal life. Let us, by participating in such great gifts, to consecrate ourselves more to your service and to constantly grow in the faith.”

Petition: O, Holy Spirit, give me a big and strong heart to overcome all tests, all apathy, all tiredness, all disillusion, all which is offensive!”

## Saturday, June 7, 2014

- Acts 28: 16-20, 30-31
- Ps 10
- Jn 21: 20-25

“Grant, Almighty God, to keep forever in our life and in our actions the joy of the Easter celebrations that we are now concluding.”

Petition: O, Holy Spirit, give me a strong and steady heart up to the sacrifice when it is necessary! A heart whose joy throbs with the heart of Christ and fulfills humbly, faithfully, and courageously the will of the Father.

## SUNDAY, JUNE 8, 2014. SOLEMNITY OF PENTECOST

- Acts 2: 1-11
- Ps 103
- 1 Cor 12:3b-7, 12-13
- Jn 20: 19-23

The doors are locked by fear and despair. Also, the doors of the hearts of these fragile men trying to give value without getting it are also closed. In them we see a reflection of ourselves, we discover in them our weak humanity, and limits that often isolate us. But the Risen Lord manages to cross any barrier and knows to find the “key” to give us his peace. However, the peace that the Lord gives is not a sedative. To live in his peace means to welcome his mission and make it our own. It is to live entirely dedicated to proclaim the forgiveness and mercy of God; to strive to make possible his Kingdom made already present in our world. “*Spiritus Domini super me propter quod unxit evangelizare me pauperibus*” (Lk 4:18). Is The Forge project, causing this effect in you? May Mary, who consented that the spirit “cover her with its shadow”, accompany our process of faith and conversion.

## Appendix 1: Cordimarian Spirituality (Nilton Cesar Boni)

The devotion to Our Lady has always been a reality in my story. Although I was born in a Catholic Christian family, Maria in my childhood was not very venerated because my parents didn't have a visible Marian experience. I actually discovered the figure of Mary when I started to attend catechesis and later, with vocational discernment, this devotion became more pronounced.

When I entered the Congregation I still had no idea of the importance occupied by Mary in the Church. It was from the novitiate, at a "Marian workshop" when Mary, deeply touched my life and made me realize that it was within a congregation that belongs to her. Being aware that I am a "Son of the Immaculate Heart of Mary" fills me with enthusiasm and joy. I began to increasingly deepen, more and more, the spirituality that springs from the loving heart of the mother of God.

Mary is an important milestone in my life today, she is with me at all times and thanks to her I have received ample evidence that God calls me to be part of the Kingdom in the following of Jesus Christ. Mary has opened all doors and opportunities to make an authentic experience of faith and encounter with the Lord. She has stood-out in my ministry and walks in front of me like a light that leads me. I have devoted my entire ministry to her, who has made a marked difference in our evangelization.

The centrality of the figure of the Heart of Mary is for me the entry into heaven. I have always sought to contemplate the life and mission of Jesus from Mary and I see that she guided my path in the Church. I am an apologist for the Heart of Mary and, as her son, I defend her in all circumstances. I gave over to her my being and I believe that this holy devotion makes me closer to what is the source of joy: Jesus Christ.

5. Texts to go deeper

I'm looking for feed my experience with Marian readings, visits to Marian shrines, meetings, prayers, etc. I also write many articles on the subject. I believe that Mary is completely in my heart and I have a great respect and love for her maternal intercession. I love to repeat, like Claret, that "Mary is my everything after Christ, and we need to love her because God wants it, because she deserves it, and because we need her powerful intercession". This is the definition I like the most and it is recorded in my daily life. I always try to repeat this to people so that they also have a special affection for our Mother

The word that best describes Mary is tenderness. In contemplating it, I feel that her tenderness and her gaze invade my soul. She is always manifested with precision in my life, whether through dreams, signs, the everyday life, the people, etc. She has really shown me the goodness of God.

Without Mary the Christian life would be a poor and empty. This relationship of love and gratitude moves my heart to always be thinking about her. I see her as a woman full of affection and purity; I try to desmstify and fit it to my reality. Thus, it's much easier to be her friend because I treat her on equal terms and know that she listens to me, supports me, and encourages me.

My wish is that people resort to Mary as means of self-giving and meeting with the Savior. She is at our disposal and thirsts that we seek her. Contemplating her is to feel that the mercy of God encourages us and gives us more vitality to cope with the challenges of this life. I appreciate all the love and affection that Mary has for me and to her I give my missionary heart.



## Appendix 2: Mary, Formator of Apostles in the Forge of Her Mercy and Love (CMF, Initiation to the Missionary Life)

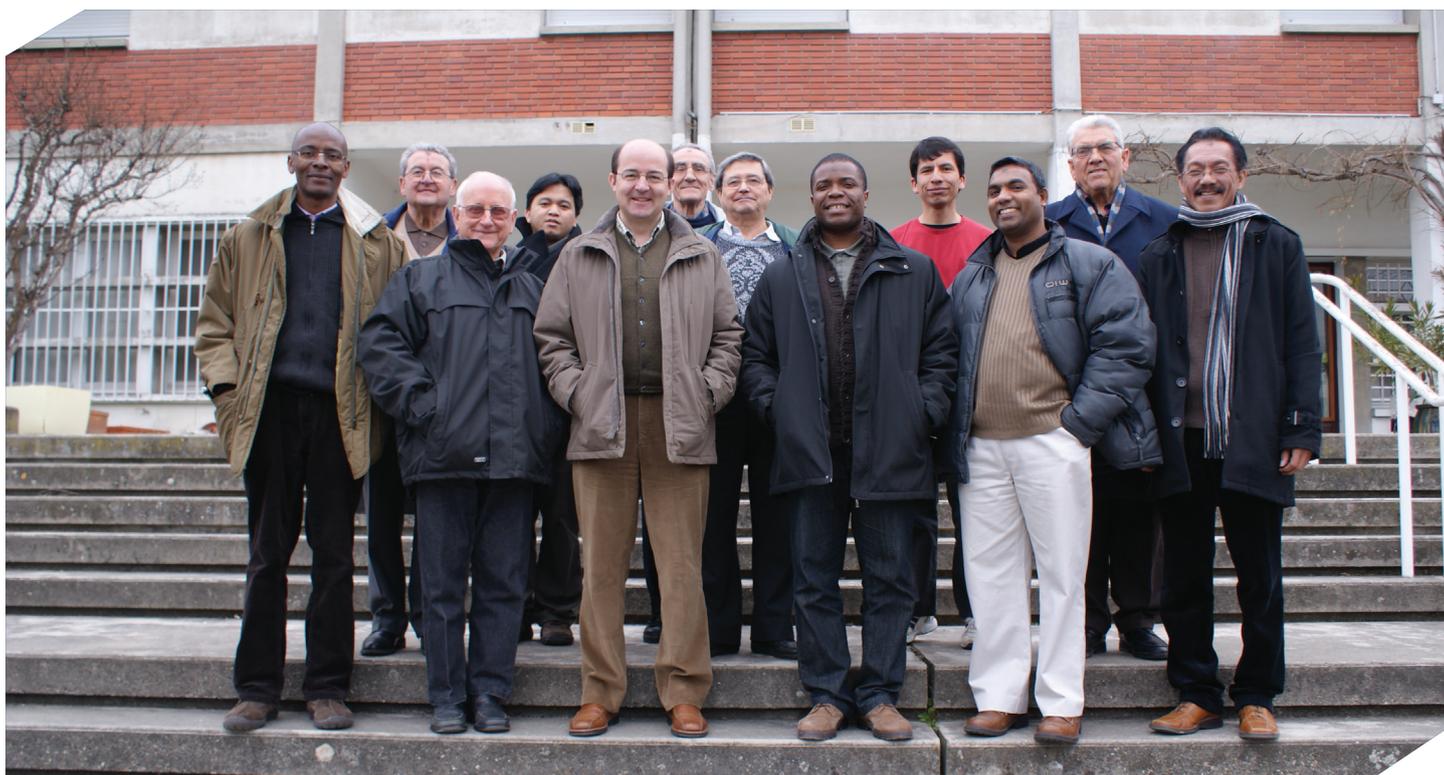
On two occasions the General Plan of Formation refers to Mary as formator: in numbers 13 and 100. Number 13 enunciates the work: “In this process, Mary, Mother of Jesus and the Church, formator of the Apostles, plays an essential mission. Therefore, we commit ourselves to it to be configured with the mystery of Christ, to imitate her faithful response as a follower, and to cooperate with her maternal role in the Apostolic mission. Only thus can we truly be missionaries who burn in love and embrace it wherever we go.”

Number 100 develops the formative implications: “With her maternal activity, she shapes us as true and authentic missionaries and Apostles. Just as she begat Jesus and shaped him as a missionary of the Father, in the same way she formed Claret, Apostolic missionary. More concretely, Mary in her maternal activity forms us, through an interior process, as Ministers of the word, as evangelizers to spread the Kingdom of Jesus throughout the world. She is also our godmother who accompanies us in the growth of our faith”.

This formative task of the Virgin is also interpreted from the allegory of the forge: “As our Founder, we are aware that our vocation as followers is also forged in the forge of the Heart of Mary. All of us can lead ourselves to Her with the same words used by Claret: You know well that I am your son and your minister, formed by you in the forge your mercy and love. I am like an arrow placed in your powerful hand. Thus, we feel empowered to proclaim the Gospel, and to face the evil that affects people and the structures in which they live. The Cordimarian dimension is essential in our missionary vocation. Thus, we should emphasize it especially formation” (PGF 23).

How does Mary carry out this function of the forge?

- She forms us in her heart making the traits of the perfect disciple of Jesus grow within us; who was conceived before in her heart as well as in her womb.
- She forms us to welcome into our hearts, as she did, the Word of God, of which we are ministers. She teaches us to listen to it, to meditate upon it, to make it life, and proclaim it throughout the world.
- She forms us in that Apostolic charity that drives us to work tirelessly until we become worn out for the Kingdom; who announces a God who is love and mercy and who has given his life for us; who makes us proclaim the Gospel with the stamp of humility, gentleness and warmth or motherly love and that moves us to love the chosen ones of the Lord, the poorest and most needy, to those who most need salvation and liberation.
- She associates us in the apostolic mission with her maternal role in the Church. The Founder felt himself to be a collaborator of Mary, the victorious mother, in the fight against the evil and its offspring. He felt himself to be an instrument of Mary, like an arrow in her hands to be thrown against Satan and his minions. From this experience transmitted to his missionaries, of whom we see as the arms of Mary, he could say to us, paraphrasing the Gospel: “It is not you who speak then, but the Spirit of your Father and of your Mother, who speaks for you” (PGF 101).



“In the Magnificat, we see Mary’s conviction that God’s presence will transform the harsh reality of those who are hungry, humiliated and exploited, because the presence of God is always a transforming presence, as she herself has experienced, being made the mother of His Son.” (Josep M. Abella, *Missionaries*)

# spiritus domini

The Forge in our daily life

[www.lafraguacmf.org](http://www.lafraguacmf.org)  
claretian missionaries