



Clelian
MISSIONARY
YEAR
To Love Is Our Mission!



GFASC – Missionary Year – Reflection 13 **To love is our mission**

“LOVE WITH THE HEART OF CHRIST, SEE WITH THE EYES OF CLELIA”

FROM THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK (16: 15-20)

He said to them, “Go into the whole world and proclaim the gospel to every creature. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved; whoever does not believe will be condemned. These signs will accompany those who believe: in my name they will drive out demons, they will speak new languages. They will pick up serpents [with their hands], and if they drink any deadly thing, it will not harm them. They will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.” So then the Lord Jesus, after he spoke to them, was taken up into heaven and took his seat at the right hand of God. But they went forth and preached everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the word through accompanying signs.

Proclaim the Gospel to every creature, in all the world. The first Apostles accepted this challenging call with courage.

Travel was very difficult in the world of their time. They covered interminable distances almost completely on foot or on small, fragile, and unsafe ships. Yet the Apostles did not hesitate to set out. Even today, missionaries fearlessly risk their lives to respond to Jesus’ call.

But what is it that “drives” these men and women? **Love. The “motor” is love for Jesus and for his Word.** The joy that comes from reading and meditating on the Word is too great to keep to themselves. They need to share it.

Proclaiming the Gospel is not proselytizing. Evangelization is witnessing to the Word of God. It aims to show others that following that Word brings new life. Proselytism, on the other hand, implies imposing one's ideas, sometimes even violently. Jesus does not call us to proselytize, but to evangelize: *"Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved; whoever does not believe will be condemned"* (v. 16). We must not impose anything. We need only proclaim. The listener is free to believe or not believe. Whoever believes will be saved.

"Signs will accompany those who believe" (v. 17). These were actual miracles that God performed through the Apostles: *"The Lord worked with them and confirmed the word through accompanying signs"* (v. 20). Among the most remarkable were the raising back to life of the young man Eutychus by Saint Paul (Acts 20: 7-12), the raising of the little girl Tabitha by Saint Peter (Acts 9: 36-42), the healing of the paralytic Aeneas (Acts 9: 33-35), and many others. We read: *"Yet more than ever, believers in the Lord, great numbers of men and women, were added to them. Thus they even carried the sick out into the streets and laid them on cots and mats so that when Peter came by, at least his shadow might fall on one or another of them."* (Acts 5: 14-15).

Great signs, strong faith. We know that Jesus accomplished extraordinary acts. Now we see that the first Apostles also worked marvels. **And today? Is it really true that God works no more miracles?** God continues to work them. We are the ones who no longer notice them. We try to give everything a scientific explanation, without ever considering the supernatural. We simply refuse to believe.

THE CHURCH

"The Gospel always involves a certain outgoingness and being on the move. 'A Church on the move' is not a fashionable expression that I invented. It is the command of Jesus, who in the Gospel of Mark asks His followers to go into the whole world and preach the Gospel 'to every creature.' The Church is either on the move or she is not Church. Either she evangelizes or she is not Church. If the Church is not on the move, she decays, she becomes something else." (Pope Francis, *Interview with Gianni Valente*)

“Proclaiming Christ and bearing witness to him, when done in a way that respects consciences, does not violate freedom. Faith demands a free adherence on the part of man, but at the same time faith must also be offered to him, because the ‘multitudes have the right to know the riches of the mystery of Christ—riches in which we believe that the whole of humanity can find, in unsuspected fullness, everything that it is gropingly searching for concerning God, man and his destiny, life and death, and truth.... This is why the Church keeps her missionary spirit alive, and even wishes to intensify it in the moment of history in which we are living.’” (*Redemptoris Missio*, John Paul II, n. 8)

MOTHER CLELIA AND HER MISSIONARY DAUGHTERS

The first Apostles sent to San Paulo, Brazil (departure on August 10, 1900)

Sr. Maria Elisa Pederzini – from Caprino Veronese

Sr. Maria Assunta Bellini – from Bergamo

Sr. Maria Maddalena Pampana – from Pisa

Sr. Maria Carmela Tomedi – from Mantova

Sr. Maria Agnese Rizieri – from Genova

Sr. Maria Antonietta Fontana – from Monza



“Good bye, dearest Sisters. We are separated in body, but our spirits are closer and more united than ever before. Faith! Love! Courage! Yes, raise to the heights the banner of the Sacred Heart in those lands; make Him known, loved, and praised everywhere! Draw all under his expansive wings, shelter every soul in that

Holy Refuge of peace. The first Apostles were fishermen, and you Apostles also must fish for souls and hearts in the great sea of the world. That is our mission! Carry it out generously, Sisters, until your last day. Then you will speak to us with jubilation of the inconceivable joy of a satisfied heart, the unmistakable comfort of a peaceful conscience.” (*Notebooks of Spirituality*, n. 4)

“Let us learn to be Apostles, not in name only, but according to the spirit of the twelve Apostles. Zeal is the duty not only of the Apostles but also of every Christian: it is the practical consequence of the great commandment of charity. (*Spiritual Anthology* pp. 327-8)

CONSIDER

- The Lord is always near. **Every day he gives us “small miracles” as signs of his love.** We need only a “grain” of faith to recognize them: *“Amen, I say to you, if you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you” (Mt 17: 20).*
- **Let us try in our daily lives to have at least a dash of faith.** If we have even just a tiny bit, even smaller than a mustard seed, we can bet that God will gift us with his loving embrace.
- **You are a mission** and Jesus calls you to go out to evangelize and proclaim his Word. How can you respond to this call in your family?

PRAYER for the XVIII General Chapter (July 4- 30, 2022 – Rocca di Papa)

O Most Holy Trinity, womb of love that creates, unites and enlivens, we entrust to you the Eighteenth General Chapter of the Apostles of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, our religious Family.

Father of mercy, You created the world with wisdom and love and made us capable of knowing and loving You with the freedom of the children of God; fill us with joy in knowing that we are Your daughters and give us the desire to enter into communion with one another.

Son and Redeemer of mankind, luminous Face of the Father, in your gentle and humble heart You have taught us the Gospel of reconciliation; help us to respond to the love with which you have “loved us first” by showing heartfelt charity to the poor among us. Spirit of truth, sanctify the Church with abundant fruits of goodness; sustain us in our prayer for this General Chapter, teach us to love with the Heart of Christ and to see with the eyes of our Foundress.

Blessed Clelia Merloni, intercede for us, so that we might remain Apostles of the love of God “not only in name but in the true spirit of the first Apostles.” Amen.

