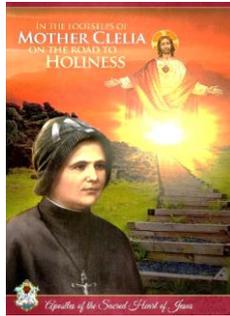




## **GFASC Holiness Reflection 9**



### ***The Sacred Heart and Mother Clelia***

It is impossible to understand or explain Mother Clelia's spiritual path without admitting that she was a woman in love.

In the Sacred Heart she saw the most tangible sign of how much Jesus loved humanity, of how He sacrificed Himself for all, and how He stretched out His hand in search of love. He is like a beggar who knocks on the door of hearts to find love. Yes, Mother Clelia wanted to open her heart and do her part so that other souls would also open theirs. Suffering thus became lighter for her because she was able to help her brothers and sisters to know the immense love Christ had for them. In this way she became a witness to divine Providence, a seeker of those farthest away from God, a mediator between Jesus and souls. Nothing escaped her prayer. Every human event, every sorrow, every concern or situation of hardship found a welcome in her and a reason to give of herself.

Her every breath was for Him, every beat of her heart was for that Sacred Heart whom she loved so much. The more she loved, the more she had to suffer. She learned that the Cross and Love always go together and that union with the Lord is won at the cost of sacrifice and abnegation. (*Woman of Forgiveness, Introduction*)

Mother Clelia shows us the way: we must enter the school of the Heart of Jesus through the wound of love. The side pierced on that Good Friday is filled with a meaning that can be understood only through contemplation. His Heart is the nuptial chamber where spousal love is experienced and lived. It is the chamber of purification, of the bath of God's love. It is the room where one enters to taste love. It is necessary to enter, says the Holy Father, to "read the mystery of the Heart of the Crucified One, who is the Son of God, to enter to understand the dimensions of Christ's love."

Mother Clelia, remaining in the Heart of Jesus, experienced love and described it with magnificent expressions and images: "*The only refuge for tired and tried souls,*" "*the only ship that no storm can sink.*" "*Ocean of love,*" "*ocean of peace,*" "*mystical home,*" "*blessed ark,*" "*furnace of love,*" "*eternal home,*" "*sea of divine graces and consolations,*" "*refuge of peace.*" She adds that to assure full access to that Heart we must arrive at "total self-emptying." (*GFASC Handbook*)



**Matthew 11: 28-30** – "Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart; and you will find rest for yourselves. For my yoke is easy, and my burden light."

**Pope Francis** - He is in you, he is with you and he never abandons you. However far you may wander, he is always there, the Risen One. He calls you and he waits for you to return to him and start over again. When you feel you are growing old out of sorrow, resentment or fear, doubt or failure, he will always be there to restore your strength and your hope. (*Christus Vivit, 2*)

“A God who comes near out of love: he journeys with his people and this journey leads to an unimaginable end. We could never believe that the same Lord becomes one with us and walks with us, remains with us, remains with his Church, remains in the Eucharist, remains in his Word, remains with us on our journey. This is nearness: the shepherd near to his flock, near to his sheep, who knows each one.”

“Tenderness! But the Lord loves us with tenderness. The Lord knows that beautiful science of a caress, that tenderness of God. He does not love us with words. He comes near to us and gives us that love with tenderness. Closeness and tenderness! These two kinds of love of the Lord who comes near and gives all his love with even smaller things: with tenderness! This is a strong love, because closeness and tenderness make us see the strength of God’s love.”

-----  
➤ **How is my relationship with the Sacred Heart part of the way I live? Do I bring a ray of the tenderness of the Heart of Jesus as Mother Clelia did?**

**PLEDGE**

I will try to treat all people with the sentiments of the Heart of Jesus: mercy, pardon, goodness, respect, acceptance, joy.

**Prayer**

- Love of the Heart of Jesus, inflame my heart.
- Charity of the Heart of Jesus, abound in my heart.
- Strength of the Heart of Jesus, uphold my heart.
- Mercy of the Heart of Jesus, forgive my heart.
- Patience of the Heart of Jesus, do not weary of my heart.
- Wisdom of the Heart of Jesus, teach my heart.
- Will of the Heart of Jesus, dispose of my heart.
- Zeal of the Heart of Jesus, consume my heart.
- Kingdom of the Heart of Jesus, be established in my heart.

## **Witness**

I met Mother Clelia through GFASC, to which I was introduced through a couple who are friends of mine. Through GFASC my whole family was consecrated to the Sacred Heart. Not surprisingly, I began to perceive in myself a spirituality different from the one to which I was accustomed, a more intimate, profound, and lived spirituality. This curiosity led me to learn more about her. I wondered who Mother Clelia really was and why she awakened such interest in me.

I practice my faith. The light of faith, through God's grace, has always sparked in me an interest in the lives of the saints, but Mother Clelia awakened in me something more beautiful and greater: her unfailing confidence in abandoning herself to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, with what fervor she entrusted her daughter "Apostles" in prayer to the Heart of Jesus, locking them in that Heart to protect them. How magnificent that the divine gift of Mother Clelia was given also to me, that it led me gently into the Heart of Jesus, making me understand a little bit more the verse from Matthew's Gospel: "Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest"!

My whole way of experiencing the presence of Jesus in my soul has changed. I no longer dwell on the weight of life's problems, no longer on resentment about the past, no longer on the insurmountable daily difficulties, but I experience him with a new heart joined to a mind that thinks in a new way. I now say to Jesus, "Jesus, I can't change things, but I can accept them with constant trust in you. Help me to rely on you with no ifs or buts, because with you I can handle all things."

My inner miracle, if I can call it that, happened through Mother Clelia's intercession. Approaching Jesus in a new way, I sense the lightness of abandonment. I pray you, Jesus, through the intercession of Mother Clelia, help me to bring you to all those I meet, to those who journey with me. Let me see with the light of your eyes and transmit love, much love. I give you my hands, my eyes, my mind, my steps. Guide me, because if you will to do it, you can. Thank you, Mother Clelia, thank you, Jesus. *(Anna Esposito, GFASC Rome)*