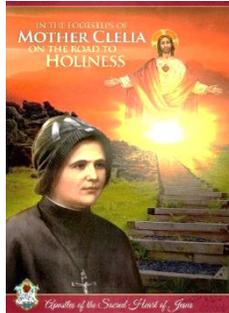




GFASC Holiness Reflection 10



Mother Clelia Woman of Prayer

Mother Clelia's life was full of suffering. She engaged in great human and spiritual combat in order to overcome those deep temptations that could have dragged her down to a more comfortable way of being. But she never gave in and she courageously chose to follow the narrow way "armed" with prayer and "clothed" in humility. Her strength is admirable!

She conversed with Jesus in prayer and maintained always a profound union with Him in times of dryness and barrenness. If her heart and senses were unable to feel the Lord's presence, her mind illuminated by faith assured her that He was always present. How many times she had to submit her human reason to faith.

Nothing escaped her prayer. Every human event, every suffering, every concern or difficult situation found a welcome in her and a reason to give of herself. How much prayer, however, to arrive at being able to say with the Apostle Paul: "I live, no longer I, but Christ lives in me"!

Mother Clelia can be compared to Moses at the peak of the mountain, holding God's staff high in the air while Israel fought its enemies. Mother Clelia, by her prayer, the only thing she was allowed to practice freely, was like Moses: with raised arm she enabled her daughters to accomplish their works. She was like Mary, hidden from the eyes of most, who through her humility allowed the Lord to fill her with his Spirit and become flesh.

Mother Clelia was a woman of prayer. Her union with God was nourished daily with prayer full of trust and hope in the One who could do all things. Who knows how many times her prayer and her sacrifice were a blessing for her daughters working in the vineyard of the Lord to bring to all the joy of the Gospel proclamation and the perfume of Christ's love.

Prayer was a way for her to enter into herself and converse with Jesus. She needed no aid to prayer; she needed only to withdraw into the secret place of her heart, there to find Jesus who awaited her. Wherever she was, she was able to carve out moments of peace speaking one on one with Jesus. It was not a question of time or space, but of heart. Nothing around her mattered. For Mother Clelia, prayer was as indispensable as bread and air are indispensable to life.

"Beg Jesus to speak incessantly to your soul. I assure you that His voice will teach you more in a single day than can the schools of learned men in many years" (Spiritual Anthology [SA] p. 56).

"Besides the material temple where the Lord wants to receive the homage of our prayers, Jesus has another spiritual temple, where He wants to be honored, and this is our heart" (SA p. 58).

"If you sometimes find yourself so troubled and disturbed that you cannot find peace, turn immediately to prayer and persevere in it" (SA p. 62).

Matthew 6: 5-15 - When you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, who love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on street corners so that others may see them. Amen, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you pray, go to your inner room, close the door, and pray to your Father in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will repay you. In praying, do not babble like the pagans, who think that they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them. Your Father knows what you need before you ask him. This is how you are to pray: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread; and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and do not subject us to the final test, but deliver us from the evil one. If you forgive others their transgressions, your heavenly Father

will forgive you. But if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your transgressions.

Pope Francis – The first condition for prayer is *trust and confidence*, as a child toward his parents; to know that God remembers you, takes care of you, of you, of me, of everyone. The second condition, too, is being precisely like children; it is to let ourselves be surprised. A child always asks thousands of questions because he wants to discover the world; and he even marvels at little things because everything is new to him. To enter the Kingdom of Heaven we must let ourselves be astonished. In our relationship with the Lord, in prayer — I ask — do we let ourselves be astonished or do we think that prayer is speaking with God as parrots do? No, it is trusting and opening the heart so as to let ourselves be astonished. Do we allow ourselves to be surprised by God who is always the God of surprises? Because the encounter with the Lord is always a living encounter; it is not a museum encounter. It is a living encounter, and we go to Mass, not to a museum. We go to a living encounter with the Lord. (*General Audience, Nov. 15, 2017*)

➤ **How do you pray? What do you pray? When do you pray?**

PLEDGE

I will dedicate some time in my day to prayer. I will not forget to pray when I get up in the morning and before I go to bed.

Prayer – The Most Precious Blood of Jesus

The Blood of Christ is All-powerful. The Blood of Christ embraces the salvation of our entire being and is particularly effective against the powers of evil. The Blood of Jesus protects us. Holy Spirit, You who “take from Jesus and give to us” for our salvation, immerse me in the Most Precious Blood of Jesus: immerse my entire spirit, soul, and body. Praise to You, Jesus, because your Blood cleanses me, purifies me, forgives me, frees me. Praise to You, Jesus, because your Blood heals me, blesses me,

gives me life. Praise to You, Jesus, because your Precious Blood penetrates my entire being and brings your peace, your salvation, and your very divine life. Praise be to You, Jesus, because your Blood redeems me, protects me, and enables me to win the battle against the powers of evil. Lord Jesus, your Precious Blood enfolds me, surrounds me like a powerful shield against the assaults of evil in such a way that I can live fully in every instant in the freedom of the sons of God and can feel your peace, remaining securely united to You, to the praise and glory of your Holy Name. Amen.

Testimony - My name is Rocco, and for 25 years I have been consecrated to the Sacred Heart with my entire family. I have been in GFASC since its inception in Milan. In the 1980s, darkness came into my life; I lost my sight and great suffering afflicted me. What was I to do? Was I to become hostile to God and to all those around me? I don't know why, but I was unable to do so. Little by little, when problems arose, something mysterious always happened that accompanied me and helped me find some solution. The presence of my wife, Gina, was decisive and still is each day. In time I recognized what a great gift from God she is. With her support I began to be convinced that a mystery was accompanying me and I decided to follow it. In time I was able to give a name to this mystery: Jesus and his love for me.

One day I heard about Mother Clelia. Her life clearly reflects mine and I understand that she can be an example to follow in my suffering. From then on I was more determined. Today the Bishop of Trapani read the following from Mother Clelia's Diary: "The time to seek You is in life; the time to find You is in death; the time to possess You is eternity." When I heard that I understood that my life and my suffering are the road that the Lord chose for me so that someday I may possess Him for eternity. This gives me great peace. (GFASC Milano)