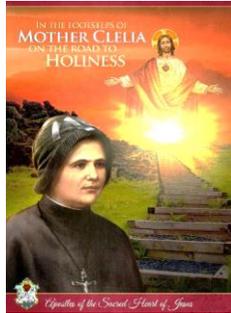




GFASC Holiness Reflection 8



Clelia in the Footsteps of the Immaculate Heart of Mary

John 2: 1-11 The Wedding at Cana

On the third day there was a wedding in Cana in Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Jesus and his disciples were also invited to the wedding. When the wine ran short, the mother of Jesus said to him, “They have no wine.” [And] Jesus said to her, “Woman, how does your concern affect me? My hour has not yet come.” His mother said to the servers, “Do whatever he tells you.” Now there were six stone water jars there for Jewish ceremonial washings, each holding twenty to thirty gallons. Jesus told them, “Fill the jars with water.” So they filled them to the brim. Then he told them, “Draw some out now and take it to the headwaiter.” So they took it. And when the headwaiter tasted the water that had become wine, without knowing where it came from (although the servers who had drawn the water knew), the headwaiter called the bridegroom and said to him, “Everyone serves good wine first, and then when people have drunk freely, an inferior one; but you have kept the good wine until now.” Jesus did this as the beginning of his signs in Cana in Galilee and so revealed his glory, and his disciples began to believe in him.

From *Woman of Forgiveness*

Clelia decided to enter the Daughters of Saint Mary of Providence in Como. The Founder himself, Fr. Luigi Guanella (1842-1915), welcomed her personally on August 14, 1892, sensing that before him was a very special soul. In the new Congregation, Clelia began to live fully her consecration to God. She was entrusted with the care of the orphans: she taught them singing, catechism, reading, domestic work, and arithmetic. Unfortunately, even this experience had a dramatic ending. Due to excessive work, toward the end of 1893 she became so seriously ill with tuberculosis that she was fast approaching the end of her life and she asked to receive the sacraments. Her confessor sensed that this young sister had a mission to accomplish. Clelia confided to him her desire to found a work dedicated to the Heart of Jesus. The priest, believing that God had a plan for her, asked the sisters to pray for the healing of their sister and had the orphans begin a novena to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. If she was to found this work dedicated to the Heart of Jesus, she would be cured. Heaven's response was clear: Clelia was cured and her superiors encouraged her to pursue her plan. She spoke with Fr. Guanella, who allowed her to dedicate herself full time to this new mission.

On March 4, 1894, Clelia left the Daughters of Saint Mary of Providence along with Elisa Pederzini (Maria), who had assisted her during her illness. The first stop on her journey in search of God's will was Milan. She remained in the capital of the Lombardy region for a few months, soliciting funds for the new foundation. Apparently, in a dream the Lord indicated to her the location He had chosen: Viareggio, a small town on the Tuscan coast, not far from Lucca, up to then unknown to her. Father Guanella had written a letter of introduction for her to present if needed, in which he gave excellent references on the work of the two women and on their charitable activities in favor of the sick and the orphaned.

TO LOVE JESUS WITH THE HEART OF MARY - "Entrust yourself to your dear mother Mary; tell her that you want to love her Jesus and that you want to love Him very much: tell her to lend you her maternal heart so that you can genuinely love Him." (Mother Clelia, Spiritual Anthology, 4.3., p. 195)

Pope Francis – Mary knows what we need - In the miracle at Cana, Mary instructs the servants, “Do whatever He tells you.” Jesus orders the servants to fill the jugs with water, and the water turns into wine, better than all the wine that had been previously served (cf. *John 2:5-10*). This intervention of Mary shows the care she has for all. She is attentive to our most real needs: Mary knows what we need! She cares for us, she intercedes to Jesus for us and asks for each of us the gift of “new wine,” that is, love and the grace that saves us. She intercedes and prays for us constantly, especially at the hour of difficulty and weakness, at the hour of discouragement and bewilderment, and especially when we sin. That is why in the Hail Mary we ask her: “Pray for us sinners.”

Testimony – My name is Claudio Manfredi. I am a practicing Christian, but I must confess that although I am 57 years old, I never knew about Mother Clelia! I heard about her for the first time one Sunday in October 2017 from the Apostles of the Sacred Heart of Jesus who live at the Church of the Annunciation in Viareggio. They came to St. Rita Parish to introduce the future Blessed to our community, but I knew nothing of her nor that she had founded a Congregation right here in my city. Curious, my wife and I began to visit the devoted Sisters of their foundress.

Personally, I saw a little of myself in her because I have suffered very much in my life, especially with my family of origin. Like her, I had serious difficulties with my father. So I began to pray to this Sister whom I did not know and participate at various catechetical sessions that explained Mother Clelia’s life of suffering. We began to feel her spiritual closeness to us immediately, as if we had always known her. We have pictures of her in our home, a holy card of her is always with us, and not a day goes by in which we do not pray to her. I am certain that her intercession arrived straight to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and to the Most Holy Virgin Mary. Every day I asked that she would take to heaven my prayer for a grace that was very important to me but that I did not think was possible to receive. But nothing is impossible for God, and Blessed Mother Clelia helped me so much at this particular time in my life.

For over 27 years I had not had any contact with my brother nor my parents. Three years ago I lost my father, with whom I was able to reestablish a relationship a year before. But I could not reconcile with my mother and brother. Every day I asked the new Blessed's intercession to restore our relationship. On this past December 14, I made peace with my mother. But the miracle that I am convinced was from Mother Clelia was that just two hours before my mother went into a coma (she had been hospitalized in Versilia for 5 days), my brother and I were reconciled in a truly odd and unexpected way. Two days later our mother died, but Blessed Clelia worked it out that she would see her sons together again! Smiling, she said to us, "I am happy." For me it was an extraordinary happening, and who better than Mother Clelia could understand my prolonged suffering having herself gone through unending ups and downs with her father and Sisters! I must say that praying through the intercession of the new Blessed was key. I am sure that she heard and answered me. Long live Blessed Mother Clelia and the Apostles of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in Viareggio! (Torre del Lago Feb. 10, 2019)

➤ **How is your relationship with Mary?**

PLEDGE

Pray 10 Hail Marys for all GFASC families and pray the rosary for peace in the world and for the conversion of sinners.

Prayer

O Immaculate Heart of Mary, you are my Mother, and on behalf of God you love me very much. Accept my consecration to you. I give you my life and all that I am, I give you my body, my thoughts and feelings, my deepest capacity to love and know the truth. All that is mine is yours and belongs to you. I give it to you so that I can belong completely to Jesus, the life of my life. With trust and love I repeat: Immaculate Heart of Mary, lead me to the Heart of Jesus. Amen.

