



**Clelian
MISSIONARY
YEAR**
To Love Is Our Mission!



GFASC – Missionary Year – Reflection 3

WITNESS

The first form of evangelization

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.” (Mark 16:15-18)



CLELIA MERLONI: TRUE WITNESS OF LOVE

... I want my only ambition to be Yours completely and always, O my beloved Jesus. I will try harder each day to give You new evidence of my love. How many things concern me while I should not think of anything but God alone! (*Diary of Mother Clelia Merloni, p.209*)

“... Everyone knows my weaknesses; I alone know nothing or very little about them. Either my vision is confused by the false and deceptive splendor of my pride, or shifting my glance far from myself, I lose sight of myself, or the excessive love that I have for myself blocks me from seeing what I really am. When I began to know myself better, I admitted that all that is good in me belongs to God, I enjoy it, and in the meantime I look at my merit as a vain young woman looks at herself in her mirror; I exalt myself considerably, thinking that celestial gifts rain down more on me than on many others, and I quietly take for myself the most exquisite of these gifts. Many times, I recounted to myself my acts of humility, patience, and unselfishness; I used them to support my self-confidence and to give me proof of my own righteousness.” (*Diary of Mother Clelia Merloni, p.226-227*)

WITNESS OF THE EARLY APOSTLES OF THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS

On the ship to Brazil, November 1900

“...Dear Mother, think of how many moments of holy and filial intimacy we spent with you... Imagine the unmeasurable distance that now divides us; the days on this ship seem like an eternity and boredom sometimes takes us by surprise. Oh, Mother, but we keep it from entering our souls, for a soul possessed by boredom cannot do any good. This gloomy and fatal spiritual illness is not becoming to a Sister. It must not be the companion of a soul who, consecrated totally to God, must know nothing other than holy, gentle joys, the intimate, inconceivable consolations that come from a sacrifice made for the glory of God and the good of others—consolations that can come only from heaven. And do you know what we do to avoid boredom? ...On board our ship are 850 emigrants; the most moving sights are constantly before our eyes. Here, groups of children in ragged clothes gathered around a kettle of steaming soup; there, poor, fragile elderly women imitate the example of the children; and everywhere one hears lamentations, expressions of anguish, outbursts of crying and and pain.

This morning we were struck by something very moving: there was a poor mother squatting at the bow of the ship, dejected and discouraged. She was sitting on the ground with two tiny pale and suffering children next to her, their faces marked by misery. We hurried over to her and asked what was causing her to suffer; and she silently pointed to her two children, who were seasick. Then, her eyes brimming with tears, she said with desperation: “Oh, if I had known that my children would suffer like this, I would not have left my country. No, even if we would have had to eat stones.” Poor woman! It tore our heart to see and hear her! We encouraged her to suffer for Jesus, teaching her in this way to find meaning in her martyrdom, and we commended her to our very good and Reverend Father Francesco Brescianini, who quickly brought the two children to the doctor who, in turn, promptly gave them the most caring and loving attention.

...Mother, bless us once more. We send our most loving wishes to all the Sisters and we leave you to form new Apostles for the life of the Missions.

Hail to the sea that leads us to souls!

Hail to the ship that takes us to where we will seek them!

The Word of the Church

“People today put more trust in witnesses than in teachers, in experience than in teaching, and in life and action than in theories. The witness of a Christian life is the first and irreplaceable form of mission: Christ, whose mission we continue, is the "witness" *par excellence* (Rv 1:5; 3:14) and the model of all Christian witness....The first form of witness is *the very life of the missionary, of the Christian family, and of the ecclesial community*, which reveal a new way of living. The missionary who, despite all his or her human limitations and defects, lives a simple life, taking Christ as the model, is a sign of God and of transcendent realities....The evangelical witness which the world finds most appealing is that of concern for people, and of charity toward the poor, the weak and those who suffer. The complete generosity underlying this attitude and these actions stands in marked contrast to human selfishness. It raises precise questions which lead to God and to the Gospel.” (John Paul II, *Redemptoris Missio*, 42)

“I am a mission, always; you are a mission, always; every baptized man and woman is a mission. People in love never stand still: they are drawn out of themselves; they are attracted and attract others in turn; they give themselves to others and build relationships that are life giving. As far as God’s love is concerned, no one is useless or insignificant. Each of us is a mission to the world, for each of us is the fruit of God’s love.” (Pope Francis, *Message for World Mission Day 2019*)

Pledge

- We have the task of witnessing to Christ, but we must remember that the work is God’s; we need only assure ourselves that we are useful instruments in His hands, and to be so we need only surrender to Him and obey his word!
- We are necessary to the work of God, but if we do not let God fill us and guide us through our prayer, we become useless. Our witness is effective when prayer is a part of it. Pray to the Holy Spirit first for yourself, so that He may open the doors to bring your witness to others; then pray for those to whom you

wish to bring your witness. The Lord will reward your constancy and faith.

- The primary church is the family; it is the right place to witness to Christ! If we do not know how to bring our families to Christ, we cannot claim to be able to bring Him to others. It is, then, important to pray for your family and in your family; your witness must be your transformation!
- Inside us must be the clear vision that we are instruments of God, valuable people who do not stand still. It does not matter if we feel that we are weak. The Holy Spirit will give us the strength to move!

PRAYER

Lord, open our eyes
that we may see you in our brothers and sisters.

Lord, open our ears
that we may hear the cries of the hungry

Lord, open our hearts
that we may love each other as you love us.

Renew in us your spirit.
Lord, free us and make us one.
(Mother Teresa of Calcutta)

"May the Heart of Jesus be our all!"

Clelia Merloni

