

LEAVEN, SALT AND LIGHT

MANUAL OF THE FAMILY OF JESUS AND MARY

Third Edition
(alternative to the second one)

LEAVEN, SALT AND LIGHT

“The kingdom of heaven is like the yeast a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour till it was leavened all through” (Mt 13,33)

“You are the salt of the earth.” (Mt 5,13)

“You are the light of the world” (Mt 5,14)

MANUAL OF THE FAMILY OF JESUS AND MARY

“The images taken from the gospel of salt, light and leaven, although indiscriminately applicable to all Jesus’ disciples, are specifically applied to the lay faithful

They speak of the deep involvement and the full participation of the lay faithful in the affairs of the earth, the world and the human community” (CL 15)

Like Claudine, the members of the FJM want to be the leaven which makes love penetrate and grow around them; they want to be the salt which brings flavour, joy and meaning to those with whom they live; they want to be the light which is put on a lampstand and makes known the goodness of God.

SHORT HISTORY OF THE ASSOCIATION

The lay Association “Family of Jesus and Mary” which is closely linked to the Congregation of Jesus and Mary began in 1981 at the moment of the beatification of Claudine Thévenet, its Foundress.

CLAUDINE THÉVENET AND THE CONGREGATION OF JESUS AND MARY

The Congregation of the Religious of Jesus and Mary owes its existence to the burning love for God and the apostolic zeal of Claudine Thévenet, Mother Mary St. Ignatius who, in fidelity to the charism received from the Holy Spirit for the good of the Church, surrendered herself unreservedly to God’s plan for her.

She was born in Lyons on March 30th, 1774. Her youth was profoundly influenced by the violent repercussions of the French Revolution, especially by the brutal execution of two of her brothers which she herself witnessed. Her heroic forgiveness, in imitation of Christ on the Cross, opened her heart to every form of human misery, and led her to dedicate herself to works of mercy in a pious Association so that she might lead to God those unfortunate enough to be ignorant of His love.

Her experience of the goodness of God and of the needs of her time urged her to devote herself particularly to the education of the young. In this work she was helped by a few companions who were attracted by her radiant zeal. On July 31st, 1818, she offered herself totally to God, obeying in faith the injunction of Father André Coindre: “You must form a community”. It was then that she made a definitive choice to work for the Christian education of the young, especially for the poorer among them. On October 6th, of the same year, at Rue de Pierres Plantées, on the hill of Croix Rousse (Lyons), Claudine Thévenet began, in extreme poverty and solitude, the work destined to become the “Congregation” of which she was elected the first Superior General.

The first diocesan approbation, granted on February 4th, 1823 by the Bishop of St. Flour Apostolic Administrator of the diocese of Le Puy, gave the Congregation official recognition by the Church, and thus confirmed its mission of Christian education. A second diocesan approbation dated July 25th, 1825 was followed by five others subsequent to the death of the

Foundress on February 3rd, 1837. On December 21st, 1847, Pope Pius IX granted Pontifical Approbation without the customary Laudatory Brief. This departure from the usual procedure was due to the remarkably rapid expansion of the Congregation in India.

In 1842, on the advice of Cardinal de Bonald, and in order to avoid confusion with other Congregations, the title of the Congregation was changed from “Congregation of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary” to “Congregation of the Religious of Jesus and Mary”.

Numerous establishments were subsequently opened and the work, based on the solid foundations so energetically laid by Mother Mary St. Ignatius, has expanded to such an extent that from every Continent today there rises that prayer of thanksgiving which overflowed from her heart in her last words: “How Good God is!” (Constitutions, p. XIX – XXI)

THE FAMILY OF JESUS AND MARY

On the occasion of the Beatification of Claudine Thévenet, in October 1981, the Religious of Jesus and Mary clearly understood that the Church in recognizing publicly the charism of Claudine Thévenet, the Congregation was not the unique owner of it and, therefore, should make it known to and share it with the laity. A few months before, the members of the General Council of the Congregation had already begun to take steps in view of forming an Association of lay persons, and during the General Conference (International meeting of the Religious of Jesus and Mary) which was held after the Beatification, the project was launched. The Family of Jesus and Mary had just been born. Some Provinces soon began to form groups.

In 1983, the General Chapter accepted the Family of Jesus and Mary as a project for all the Congregation and in 1985, the General Conference on Apostolic Mission, clarified some points and gave a new impulse. From 1983 to 1989, other groups were formed in several Provinces and from 1990 to 1995, the Association developed much. With the collaboration of all the existing groups, Sister Judith Mary Cuff, at that time, responsible for the Family of Jesus and Mary, at General level, began the redaction of the Statutes of the Association which were approved by the General Chapter of 1995.

PART 1:

**THE LAY MEMBER OF THE FAMILY
OF JESUS AND MARY**

**1. THE FJM: AN ASSOCIATION OF THE
FAITHFUL**

“The lay Association ‘Family of Jesus and Mary’ which is closely linked to the Congregation and which governs itself by its own statutes, participates in a special way in the charismatic grace of Saint Claudine Thévenet”.
(Constitutions of the Religious of Jesus and Mary, No 12 bis)

“The Family of Jesus and Mary is an association of committed believers, linked to the Congregation of the Religious of Jesus and Mary. The members, in response to the universal call to holiness, (cf. LG 40) and in order to accomplish the apostolate which is proper to them, (cf. AA 1), wish to live their Christian life participating in the charism and spirituality of Saint Claudine Thévenet” (Statute N° 1).

“Often as a result of new situations, many Institutes have come to the conclusion that their charism can be shared with the laity. The laity are therefore invited to share more intensely in the spirituality and mission of these Institutes” (VC 54).

“A significant expression of lay people’s sharing in the richness of the consecrated life is their participation in various Institutes under the new form of so-called associate members” (VC 56).

2. THE CHARISM OF CLAUDINE THÉVENET

*“Claudine Thevenet, entirely given over to the action of the Spirit, filled with an intimate knowledge of the active goodness of God and touched by the miseries of her time, had only one desire, to communicate this knowledge; one anguish, to see abandoned to their misfortune those who did not know God.”
(Constitutions of the Religious of Jesus and Mary, No 3).*

“The Spirit who guided the beginning of the Congregation continues today, through the same charismatic grace, to well up within it a life that is ever renewed.” (Ibid. No 12).

The word charism is a Greek word: kharisma, which means “gratuitous gift” and is related to the same root: kharis, “grace”. The first of these gifts is the Holy Spirit.

The gifts of the Spirit are very diverse (1 Cor 12, 4ff). Among the innumerable charisms of the Spirit, is the foundational charism, the gift which men and women, whom He chooses, receive gratuitously from Him, so that from their “Yes”, a religious family is born.

Among all these is the gift which God has given to the Church in Claudine Thévenet, to create a religious family and to make her the mother of innumerable daughters and sons who also receive, by divine election, the same charismatic grace, throughout the centuries.

A charism demands fidelity but it also gives a special sensibility, a characteristic way of reaching humanity, a particular focus in the way of presenting the message. It is a spirit which marks the life-style, the way of seeing and acting. We can find the expression of the spirit of Jesus and Mary in the life of Claudine Thévenet and of her companions, it is written in the Constitutions and in the hearts of the persons who have been called to follow it, extending it throughout the history of all times.

The Church, in canonizing Claudine Thévenet, confirms that her life was an imitation of that of Christ.

The intimate experience of God’s goodness, of the needs of her time and her ever faithful response, make of Claudine Thévenet, the Foundress of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary. One same and unique experience in

which she feels herself affected by God (spiritual experience) and by reality (challenges of the mission).

“Mysticism” and “Mission” are the two inseparable sides of the same founding experience. Both nourish and condition one another, to the point that they cannot exist separately. The experience of God would be different without the impact caused by the discovery of the reality and the commitment with reality would cease to be a living experience of God if it were not permeated by it.

The Religious of Jesus and Mary live out this charism as consecrated women.

The lay members of the FJM, live out the same charism in their condition of lay persons.

In Annex N° 1, one can find a more detailed explanation.

3. THE JESUS AND MARY SPIRITUALITY

“Each Associate shall strive to do all her actions with the view of pleasing God and from a principle of faith; joy of heart, liberty of spirit, confidence and generosity are their characteristics” (Rule of the Association of the Sacred Heart, Title 2)

“The Spirituality of the Family of Jesus and Mary has its source in the charismatic grace of

Saint Claudine Thévenet: the active goodness of Christ which is centered on the Love of God, revealed in the Heart of Jesus, reflected in the Heart of Mary, and expressed in the Eucharist” (Statute N° 4)

“The essential means by which this spirituality is developed are the practice of personal and community prayer, participation in the liturgical and sacramental life of the Church as well as reading and meditation of the Word of God and the spirituality of the Religious of Jesus and Mary” (Statute 5).

What is a spirituality?

A spirituality is a commitment in faith. Without this commitment in faith it is not possible to have nor to live a spirituality.

What is a Christian spirituality?

It is the way in which a person, animated by the living presence and the action of the Spirit of Christ, habitually acts and reacts with the specific Christian gifts received.

The spirituality of Jesus and Mary

The source of a spirituality is the charismatic grace with which the Spirit, in an original and creative way, attracts a person. The source of our spirituality is expressed in the last words of Saint Claudine: How good God is! Words filled with the intimate knowledge of the active goodness of God; this charismatic grace marks our spirituality.

The central elements of our spirituality are the Heart of Jesus, the Heart of Mary and Eucharist; these are not three separate elements, but three different aspects of a central grace: the active goodness of God, revealed in the Heart of Jesus, reflected in the Heart of Mary, expressed in the Eucharist.

Heart of Jesus:

Our Mother Foundress drank from the sources of this inexhaustible contemplation, the ardent zeal and the dynamism which were at the origins of our Congregation. They the RJMs and the members of the FJM) shall endeavour to spread this fire which they have drawn from the Sacred Heart of Jesus in the hearts of all”. (ENJM 28).

Heart of Mary:

The contemplation of Our Lady in her faith, in her humility, in her poverty, in her obedience and in her desire to serve, is to allow her to fashion, little by little, our being as apostles; to keep, like her and to ponder in our hearts, the actions of God in order to discern His love and His will, is to abandon ourselves to the influence of the Holy Spirit in order to be available for the humble service of God and of our neighbour” (ENJM, 31).

The Eucharist:

For Claudine the Heart of Jesus and the Eucharist were the expression of one and the same reality. If she discovered in the Heart of Jesus the sentiments that she wished to make her own, she found in the Eucharist the strength that was needed to reproduce the attitudes of Jesus in her own life and the courage to sustain the pains and difficulties of her apostolic work.

Influence of St. Ignatius:

St. Ignatius on the threshold of modernity, was very attentive in his life to the action of the Holy Spirit and made of the “discernment of spirits” the center of his spiritual pedagogy; an eminently lay pedagogy oriented to “seek and find” God’s Will in all things in the daily life of the one, who like him, one day decides to dedicate himself to the service of His Lord.

In Annex N° 2 one may find a more detailed explanation.

4. VOCATION AND MISSION OF THE LAY PERSON IN THE CHURCH AND IN THE WORLD

“We must be united among ourselves, united with those who are the object of our zeal, and united with God. He is the link between the first two kinds of union which, without the third, could not continue to exist. Our mutual union is that spirit of charity which must bind us into one heart and soul, of which the life and bond is Jesus Christ. Union with those who are the object of our zeal. We must deal with them and speak to them in a gracious and calm tone of voice that attracts, touches and wins them all over to Jesus Christ. Lastly, union with God by sanctifying grace, by the communion we establish with Him when we draw near to Him through love and confidence.”
(Meeting of the Association of the Sacred Heart, 9th September 1817).

The mission of the lay person has its origin and meaning in the very depth of its being.

- ❖ Baptism and Confirmation incorporate the lay person in Christ and make him/her a member of the Church;
- ❖ The lay person participates, in his/her own particular way, in the priestly, prophetic and royal function of Christ, and exercises it according to his/her condition.
- ❖ Fidelity and coherence with the riches and requirements of his/her being give him/her the identity of man and woman in the Church in the heart of the world and of man and woman in the world in the heart of the Church.

In fact, the lay person, has his/her place in the Church and in the world, according to his/her vocation.

Member of the Church, faithful to Christ, he/she is committed in the building up of the Kingdom in its temporal dimension” (Puebla, 786-787).

It is therefore at the heart of daily life that the lay vocation is lived out: family life, life at work and leisure; parish life; insertion into economic and political life, in the world of culture, art, mass media, science, technology, etc.

5. THE UNIQUE CONTRIBUTION OF EACH PERSON’S VOCATION

“It was not when Jesus drove the profaners harshly out to the Temple that He converted people, but when He treated sinners with kindness. It was to them especially He spoke in a friendly way, that He even revealed His secrets.”
(Meeting of the Association of the Sacred Heart, 1st September 1816).

“This lay spirituality should take its particular character from the circumstances of one’s state in life (married and family life, celibacy, widowhood), from one’s state of health and from one’s professional and social activity. All should not cease to develop earnestly the qualities and talents bestowed on them in accord with these conditions of life and should make use of the gifts which they have received from the Holy Spirit.” (CL 56).

“To discover and make others rediscover the inviolable dignity of every human person makes up an essential task, in a certain sense, the central and unifying task of the service which the Church, and the lay faithful in her, are called to render to the human family.” (CL 37)

Claudine had understood this need and her charism helps us to live it:

- ❖ To welcome the experience of the goodness of God in each person and first in ourselves as beloved sons and daughters of God.
- ❖ To become increasingly aware, according to our state of life and our personal vocation, of the reality of suffering in today’s world and to our particular way of responding to it.
- ❖ To penetrate ever more deeply into the hearts of Jesus and Mary so as to discover the dignity of each person in the eyes of God.
- ❖ To make Jesus and Mary known and loved according to our particular state of life, family situation, civil position and spiritual call.
- ❖ To grow ever more deeply aware of how we must live out the preference for children and the poor as Claudine did.
- ❖ To witness to the Goodness of God by our attitudes, our kind actions, pardon of those who offend us, our trust and our prayer.

6. THE COUPLE AND THE FAMILY

“We considered the blessed Virgin especially in her simple and ordinary life /.../ She was happy to live in obscurity, she did what we are obliged to do every day, she remained in her house, busied herself with the smallest and humblest actions, working with her hands to clothe the divine Son, taking care of His upbringing...”
(Meeting of the Association of the Sacred Heart, 17th August, 1817).

“The first and basic expression of the social dimension of the person, is the married couple and the family” (CL 40).

It is possible for the members of the FJM to embody the charism of Claudine in their married and family life:

- ❖ The family is entrusted with the mission:
- ❖ To guard, reveal and communicate love, as a living reflection and real participation in the love and merciful goodness of God for humanity.
- ❖ To promote and defend the family from all violence against its identity and mission, from the anti-demographic and birth control campaigns and from the aggression of mass media which imposes a culture which stimulates hedonism and consumerism and destroys the genuine family values.
- ❖ To strengthen the family spirit, expression of the charism, by unconditional acceptance, mutual help and forgiveness, attentiveness, respect and interest for all, where each one wishes to contribute to the happiness of others (cf.AC 29).
- ❖ To educate the children as Christians, having a preference for those who are weaker, more difficult, with greater needs, and sensitize the whole family concerning the miseries of our times.
- ❖ To pray for our children.

7. THE WORLD OF WORK

“The section of almsgiving shall undertake to find work or suitable positions for workers or domestic servants”
(Rule of the Association of the Sacred Heart, Title 3)

“By work an individual ordinarily provides for self and family, is joined in fellowship to others, and renders them service; and is enabled to exercise genuine charity and be a partner in the work of bringing divine creation to perfection. Moreover, we know that through work offered to God an individual is associated with the redemptive work of Jesus Christ, whose labour with his hands at Nazareth greatly ennobled the dignity of work” (GS 67; CL 43).

The members of the FJM, assume the responsibility to carry out their work in conformity to the charism, and for this:

- ❖ Foster the human and Christian value of work, the virtues of labor and responsibility.
- ❖ Carry out the work with a professional conscience, honesty and exactitude (cf. AC 29).
- ❖ Encourage the defense of the legitimate rights of the worker, especially that of a just salary and create new forms of work, as a responsible action on the part of those who have more resources.
- ❖ Moved by faith, give impulse to new enterprises, even at the risk of one’s capital, for the good of the workers, peasants and indigenous peoples.
- ❖ Work towards the formation of a right conscience in accordance with the ethical and moral principles.
- ❖ Foster attitudes of goodness, forgiveness, trust in the different situations which may arise in the place of work.
- ❖ Try to be honest and responsible in their work.
- ❖ Pray, offering the prayer to God and for the other workers, for the employers so that they will act justly.
- ❖ Reflect on the Gospel together with the companions at work.

8. ECONOMY AND POLITICS

“There was a lengthy talk on the freedom of spirit /.../ We should not withdraw from society under the pretext that all we see and hear there is detrimental to our spiritual progress; but on going into it we should keep our hearts continuously fixed on God /.../The great secret for acquiring liberty of spirit is to be detached from everything, because he who is attached to nothing is never disturbed by any event...” Meeting of the Association of the Sacred Heart, 3rd February, 1818).

“In order to achieve their task directed to the Christian animation of the temporal order, in the sense of serving persons and society, the lay faithful are never to relinquish their participation in public life, that is, in the many different economic, social, legislative, administrative and cultural areas which are intended to promote organically and institutionally the common good ... the defence and promotion of justice and peace” (CL 42).

The charism of Claudine can enlighten this commitment; here are some examples:

- ❖ to look at the world with the eyes of the merciful and good God who wants the salvation of all mankind and be sensitive to the miseries of our contemporary world: injustice, violation of human rights, violence, etc.
- ❖ To know financial and political mechanisms of neoliberalism which hurt the human person and destroy the harmony in creation, in order to counteract its effects and to awaken the sense of democratic participation by means of continuous education in politics.
- ❖ Form the conscience of persons in the knowledge and defense of human rights, particularly right to life, to work, to education, to health, to personal experience, to rest, to religious freedom and to peace.
- ❖ With renewed decision assume the preferential option for the poor, accompanying them in order to overcome all forms of injustice, promoting structures for participation, encouraging the organization of economy in solidarity, practising communication or sharing of goods and encouraging austerity of life.
- ❖ Foster an economy which is human, which takes more into account the inviolable dignity of each person, ethical values in social life and the universal destiny of goods.
- ❖ Know and diffuse the Social Doctrine of the Church, proclaiming the social dimension of the Gospel and promoting social pastoral work.

9. THE WORLD OF CULTURE ARTS, SCIENCES, MASS-MEDIA

“The Church calls upon the lay faithful to be present, as signs of courage and intellectual creativity, in the privileged places of culture.” CL 44.

The charism of Claudine gives hints for taking up this call:

- ❖ to welcome the experience of the merciful goodness of God manifested in the beauty of nature and art, in human intelligence, in discoveries, etc;
- ❖ to be sensitive to the poverty and deviation from values which all these realities can provoke;
- ❖ to draw from the Hearts of Jesus and Mary the light to understand these realities and to become more and more involved in this world; to draw spiritual nourishment at the Eucharistic table; to offer to God all these realities, to give Him thanks and to ask Him His grace;
- ❖ according to our gifts, possibilities and profession, to make Jesus and Mary known and loved in words and actions in the world of culture;
- ❖ on our own level, to see how to form Christian values in these domains;
- ❖ with a preference for the young and the poor;
- ❖ by attitudes of goodness, forgiveness, praise, confidence and simplicity.

10. THE WORLD OF SUFFERING

*“The section of consolation shall visit the suffering members of Jesus Christ, whether it be in the hospitals or prisons, or in private houses.”
(Rule of the Association of the Sacred Heart, Title 3)*

“Charity towards one’s neighbour, through contemporary forms of the traditional spiritual and corporal works of mercy, represent the most immediate, ordinary and habitual ways that lead to the Christian animation of the temporal order, the specific duty of the lay faithful.” (CL 41)

The charism of Claudine directs us

- ❖ to welcome the experience of the goodness of God in our lives and allows us to open our hearts to the needs of our brothers and sisters.
- ❖ to discover the new and numerous forms of poverty in today’s world; drugs, violence, broken families, battered children and women; AIDS, and other diseases
- ❖ to open ourselves up to the great international problems, problems of the poorest countries of the world, to the needs of certain countries and the way to development
- ❖ to present to the Lord all these persons who are wounded in mind or body
- ❖ to seek and set going the means of relieving the suffering of persons around us
- ❖ to try to train the young and persons with whom we live or work to join this movement of bringing help and solidarity to needy persons
- ❖ to develop attitudes of kindness, humility and generosity as Claudine did.

11. LIFE IN THE PARISH

“The section for instruction shall undertake to give catechism classes to children being prepared for their First Communion /.../ The section for edification has for its object to sustain the fervour of young persons, to turn them away from dangerous occasions, to lead back to the teachings of the Church those who have abandoned them, to encourage those who do not approach the sacraments, to appease discord, to inspire devout persons to perform the spiritual and corporal works...” (Rule of the Association of the Sacred Heart, Title 3)

“In the present circumstances the lay faithful have the ability to do very much and, therefore, ought to do very much towards the growth of an authentic ecclesial communion in their parishes in order to reawaken missionary zeal towards non-believers and believers themselves who have abandoned their faith or grown lax in the Christian life.” (CL 27)

The charism of Claudine can help us to live out this commitment:

- ❖ Consider the sense of belonging to the local Church (the Parish) as a value and become aware of being member of the universal Church, to strengthen communion with God and with the brothers and sisters.
- ❖ Support the Parish projects participating, in a responsible way, in its life and mission, accepting to be a member of the Parish Councils, if these exist.
- ❖ Collaborate in the Parish; participate, as far as possible, in Parish groups and the apostolates proposed by the Parish.
- ❖ Concrete commitment to help with one’s time, using one’s qualities and goods in the Parish.

So that the members of the FJM can better strengthen their vocation and lay mission, it is suggested that they know the documents of the magisterium of the Church.

12. THE FJM AND THE RJMs

“A person who undertakes a long and difficult journey alone soon grows weary and finds only ordinary and commonplace means to encourage him. On the other hand, those who travel together do so with confidence, courage and the benefit of mutual support.” (Rule of the Association of the Sacred Heart, Introduction.)

“...to facilitate more intense cooperation between consecrated persons and the laity in view of the Institute’ mission. Moved by the examples of holiness of the consecrated members, lay men and women will experience at first hand the spirit of the evangelical counsels; [on the other hand] the participation of the laity often brings unexpected and rich insights into certain aspects of the charism, leading to a more spiritual interpretation of it and helping to draw from it directions for new activities in the apostolate.” (Vita Consecrata, No 55)

The family of Jesus and Mary is a real family. This is expressed through

- ❖ bonds of friendship and solidarity, lay and religious members, sharing and helping each other
- ❖ the riches of the teaching given by the Sisters as spiritual animators in the group, the witness of members who accept to share their life with their “companions “ in the family prayer for one another, shared prayer in the group or with the Sisters
- ❖ the collaboration of members with the works of the Congregation; sharing their time and interest; adopting a mission of Jesus and Mary (in schools or other works of the Congregation)
- ❖ communication between groups of the same country and with members of different countries

ANNEX N° 1

Reflection on the Charism of Claudine Thévenet

The word charism is a Greek word: kharisma, which means “gratuitous gift” and is related to the same root: kharis, “grace”. The first of these gifts is the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the “gift of the most high God”. His essence is to be gift, donation, grace which God gives to man or, better, in which God gives himself to man with the fullness of his joy and his entire being.

The Holy Spirit himself has been poured into our hearts and fills them with charity.

Already, in the Old Testament, the presence of the Spirit of God manifested Himself in men whom he inspired, by giving them extraordinary gifts. In the New Testament, the Spirit manifested Himself on the day of Pentecost. After that the presence of the Spirit manifests Himself in different ways: by the repetition of the signs of Pentecost (Ac 2,4, 8-11).

The gifts of the Spirit are very diverse (1 Cor 12, 4ff). Among the innumerable charisms of the Spirit, is the foundational charism, the gift which men and women, whom He chooses, receive gratuitously from Him, so that from their “Yes” , a religious family is born, comes into being. Among all these is the gift which God has given to the Church in Claudine Thévenet, to create a religious family and to make her the mother of innumerable daughters and sons who also receive, by divine election, the same charismatic grace, throughout the centuries. God, in giving the charisms, never repents and will always remain faithful.

There are four essential features which characterise the foundational charism:

Pneumatic dimension. The founder is a person moved by the Spirit of God.

Christological and Evangelical dimension

Historical dimension: social and ecclesial

Dimension of fecundity. The founders are capable of transmitting their experience.

The history of our Congregation is in reality the history of a love which becomes incarnate, the history of a “Yes”. As the response of a woman who

was faithful to God's fidelity. The whole history is filled with interest, even the shadows, because everything is enlightened by the light which does not cease to call, to send, to make disciples to all peoples; before a difficult situation, an urgent need, God chooses, calls, sends, arouses prophets and places a mission before them.

The charismatic action is fundamentally an experience of God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is God giving himself in order to be himself more present in other men and women through the Founder so as to reach others in the form of an experience which can be humanly assimilated, in order to go and meet others.

"Everyone who is called to the Congregation of Jesus and Mary shares in the charismatic grace of its Foundress" (C 4). We have received a charism from Claudine Thévenet.

A charism demands fidelity but it also gives a special sensibility, a characteristic way of reaching humanity, a particular focus in the way of presenting the message. It is a spirit which marks the life-style, the way of seeing and acting. We can find the expression of the spirit of Jesus and Mary in the life of Claudine Thévenet and of her companions, it is written in the Constitutions and in the hearts of the persons who have been called to follow it, extending it throughout the history of all times.

The Church, in canonizing Claudine Thévenet, confirms that her life was an imitation of that of Christ, as St. John tells us in his first letter, 2, 6: "He who says that he remains in Christ, must live as he did". That is why, all those who feel committed to respond to God's call to holiness, make an effort to live their "Yes", in imitation of Christ (Rom 8, 29). "For those whom he knew beforehand, he also predestined them to reproduce in themselves the image of His Son". And we know that "the Son of man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give his life in ransom of many" (Mt 20, 28).

The intimate experience of God's goodness, of the needs of her time and her ever faithful response, make of Claudine Thévenet, the Foundress of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary. One same and unique experience in which she feels herself affected by God (spiritual experience) and by reality (challenges of the mission).

"Mysticism" and "Mission" are the two inseparable sides of the same founding experience. Both nourish and condition one another, to the point that they cannot exist separately. The experience of God would be different without the impact caused by the discovery of the reality and the commitment with reality would cease to be a living experience of God if it were not permeated by it.

"In this spirit the Congregation seeks to carry out its mission according to the Constitutions in indefectible fidelity to the Church and in filial devotedness to the Holy Father" (C 10).

From the same grace of foundation, and given the content of the charism, sprang the grace of the mission, and this is why the call to foreign and distant lands continues today, to arouse in the Congregation concrete responses, realizations inspired by faith. "The Spirit who guided the beginnings of the Congregation continues today, through the same charismatic grace, to well up within it a life that is ever renewed" (C 12).

ANNEX N° 2

Reflection on the spirituality of Jesus and Mary

What is a spirituality?

A spirituality is a commitment in faith. Without this commitment in faith it is not possible to have nor to live a spirituality.

It is therefore a fundamental, practical, habitual attitude in a person; it is the consequence and expression of the way a person understands and personally assumes her religious life. The starting point is religious existence: it comes from the root “religare”, it is a relationship with God. It includes and always has this relationship with God; this is why it is an experience of God, since it is not possible to have friendship with anybody if there is no personal experience” (Herbert Alphonso, S.J.). Hence, it is necessary to have this personal experience of God.

This relationship with God is grasped, understood in a personal way, by a concrete person, starting from her experience of God. Therefore, this grasping or understanding of the relationship with God, impels the person to a basic, practical, habitual attitude which governs her whole life. It is not one among many attitudes, but it is the fundamental attitude which permeates the practical, not the theoretical life.

It is not something occasional but habitual.

What is a Christian spirituality?

It is the way in which a person, animated by the living presence and the action of the Spirit of Christ, habitually acts and reacts with the specific Christian gifts received. “It is the process of the following of Christ, under the impulse of the Spirit and under the guidance of the Church. This is a Paschal process: it progressively leads to identification with Jesus Christ, which in the Christian takes the form of death to sin and to egoism in order to live for God and for others. To follow and to identify oneself with Jesus Christ is to participate in his Paschal Mystery, like “passing from death to life, and this is conveniently underlined in the symbols of Baptism which, objectively, is the moment of the initiation in spirituality for the Christian” (“El camino de la espiritualidad” – Segundo Galilea).

The spirituality of Jesus and Mary

The source of a spirituality is the charismatic grace with which the Spirit, in an original and creative way, attracts a person.

The source of our spirituality is expressed in the last words of Saint Claudine: How good God is! Words filled with the intimate knowledge of the active goodness of God; this charismatic grace marks our spirituality.

The central elements of our spirituality are contained in our Constitutions article 9: the spirituality of the Congregation, Christocentric and Marian, has its source in the love of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary...

Our spirituality is centred in the Eucharist, gift of love and fruit of the sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross.

It has always been influenced by the doctrine of St. Ignatius.”

Heart of Jesus, Heart of Mary, Eucharist; these are not three separate elements, but three different aspects of a central grace: the active goodness of God, revealed in the Heart of Jesus, reflected in the Heart of Mary, expressed in the Eucharist.

Heart of Jesus:

Worship to the Heart of Jesus is worship of the love with which God has loved us in Jesus and is, at one and the same time, the essence of the love which we ourselves have for God and mankind. The contemplation of the Heart of Christ invites us to look at creation and thus leads us back to the Mystery of the Trinity, to the very center of the Mystery of God and of his plan of salvation.

The Heart of Jesus is the heart of the Apostle who goes in search of the lost sheep, who takes pity on the crowds, who nourishes them with His Word and with His Bread and for whom the only driving force is the glory of God and the salvation of mankind. To contemplate the Heart of Jesus is again to gaze upon the mystery of the divine Person of Jesus and his infinite and eternal love for His Father and for humanity. It is to call on that which is most personal in Him and which demands an equally personal response from us, a response from the “heart” (cf. C 35).

Our Mother Foundress drank from the sources of this inexhaustible contemplation, the ardent zeal and the dynamism which were at the origins of our Congregation. It was through this contact with the burning fire of the love of Christ that she felt the urge to make a total gift of herself to God and to humanity. It is not surprising that she sought to transmit this spirituality to her daughters (in reference to the religious) so that they would, in their turn, inspire others: They shall endeavour to spread this fire

which they have drawn from the Sacred Heart of Jesus in the hearts of all". (ENJM 28).

Heart of Mary:

Our Mother Foundress made no separation between the Heart of Mary and that of her Son. Because she had experienced the power of her intercession and her maternal protection, she spontaneously entrusted to her all of her undertakings: "The Blessed Virgin does not want anything to be done without her, nor outside her house", she liked to repeat. She has left to her Congregation a trusting and filial love for the Virgin Mary and she teaches us to learn from her who is the perfect model of one who allows himself/herself to be transformed by the Spirit in order to participate fully in the plan of God for mankind.

The contemplation of Our Lady in her faith, in her humility, in her poverty, in her obedience and in her desire to serve, is to allow her to fashion, little by little, our being as apostles; to keep, like her and to ponder in our hearts, the actions of God in order to discern His love and His will, is to abandon ourselves to the influence of the Holy Spirit in order to be available for the humble service of God and of our neighbour" (ENJM, 31).

The Eucharist:

For Claudine the Heart of Jesus and the Eucharist were the expression of one and the same reality. If she discovered in the Heart of Jesus the sentiments that she wished to make her own, she found in the Eucharist the strength that was needed to reproduce the attitudes of Jesus in her own life and the courage to sustain the pains and difficulties of her apostolic work. She has profoundly marked her Congregation with devotion to the Eucharist, "sacrament of love, sign of unity, bond of charity", which is at one and the same time "sacrament and sacrifice, sacrament and communion, sacrament and presence" (ENJM, 29).

Influence of St. Ignatius:

The Exercises of St. Ignatius, whose doctrine has always influenced our spirituality, are a support to express it and to deepen it in a concrete way. In number 187 of the Spiritual Exercises, concerning election, we read: "Everyone must bear in mind that progress in every department of the inner life will be proportionate to the degree in which he gives up self-love, self-seeking and self-interest..." "Only if our heart is free and open for God will we be able to be active instruments of the active goodness of God. The whole dynamics of the Exercises consists in this progressive liberation of

the heart. Only then will one be prepared to receive the love of God which has been poured into our hearts in order to become instruments of the love of God for others. God for us, and we for God. "Seeking God in all things and all things in Him" (cf. C 7).

St. Ignatius on the threshold of modernity, was very attentive in his life to the action of the Holy Spirit and made of the "discernment of spirits" the center of his spiritual pedagogy; an eminently lay pedagogy oriented to "seek and find" God's Will in all things in the daily life of the one, who like him, one day decides to dedicate himself to the service of His Lord.

Conclusion:

Our spirituality has its source in the charismatic grace of our Mother Foundress and its axis in the love of God, revealed in the Heart of Jesus, to reproduce his meekness, his humility, his mercy, his compassion, to enkindle in us the fire which he came to bring upon earth. Reflected in the Heart of Mary to make our own her sentiments and to acquire the delicacy, tenderness, preference for those who suffer more, for those who are more abandoned, for the poorest. Expressed in the Eucharist, Bread of Life so that we also may become broken bread, bread of unity, bread that is shared

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Part 2: Explanation of some articles of the Statutes

During the International Meeting of FJM, the Statutes will be discussed: meaning, amendments, etc. That part of the Manual could therefore be drawn up after the Meeting.

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Annex

