

A sister to the poor

Maria Clara do Menino Jesus
Foundress of the Congregation of the
Franciscan Hospitaller Sisters of the Immaculate Conception

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WITH NINE FINGERS...

“With nine fingers I point out to the mission and with the rest to everything else” – declared Cardinal Martini, Archbishop of Milan, in Italy. Mission – he meant to say – is the filter, the criterion that determines how the life and action of the Church is to be. Mission is the oil that lubricates all its activity. The axis around which everything gravitates. That was the case of Sister Clara. Everything in her, really, pointed out to the mission. Her loving, sensitive, compassionate nature, naturally attracted her to the peripheries of human suffering, where, what is lacking most is the balm of the Gospel. The children felt irresistibly drawn towards her. A good education had boosted certain qualities with which God had blessed her: intelligence, resilience, administrative ability. Other virtues which she cultivated – humility, self-denial, spirit of sacrifice, detachment, availability – equipped her for the constant and generous service. Let us add to this the providential encounter with Fr. Raimundo Beirão, who only filled his mouth to speak of the poor. And, more important still, the action of the Holy Spirit who enriched her with the gift of hospitality and surrender to the poor, together with enormous trust in God. All this forged her personality in view of the mission. Cannot one compare the charism of a Religious Institute to a strong wind that keeps inclining in the same direction the whole vegetation of the landscape? “To cooperate in the salvation of souls, practising the works of mercy” was the “sublime vocation” to which God was calling her. It was for this mission of charity that she became the spouse of Christ poor, in order to enrich the poor by her poverty. It was for the mission that, burning with love for Christ, she rejoiced in the deprivations, embraced work and sacrifice, serenely faced the calumnies and torments, solely seeking the glory of God and not her prestige or her wellbeing. For the mission, nobody or nothing was able to make her give up.

It was for it that she became the mother of a large religious family. All the Congregations come into existence as an outcome of shared mission, or rather, of the “need” that the Founders felt like doing to the others, what they are not able to do alone. Committed to a cause that surpasses time and space, they are bound to look for collaborators to help them to continue and to expand a dream that, by nature, is catholic, universal. It was to give better witness of Christian love in the service to the poor that the Sisters had to have only one heart and one soul. The Congregation of Sister Clara is the parable of the Good Samaritan related by Jesus. A man was coming down from Jerusalem to Jericho and he was attacked by assailants who left him between life and death by the road side. A priest passed by, but he looked from afar and walked ahead. The same was done by the Levite who was going to the Temple. Then a Samaritan passed by – a stranger, an enemy -, felt compassion for the unfortunate one and gave him first aid. Besides: he took him to an inn and gave orders to treat him carefully saying that he would pay for the expenses (Lk 10: 35). Icon and transparency of Jesus, the Samaritan was the model, the mirror of Sister Clara. She did not limit herself to invest her soul and all her forces in the benefit of the poor and the sick. She involved other persons in the practise of mercy. Impelled by the love of Christ, she sought partnership that would experience the same fire. With nine fingers Clara pointed out to the mission; with the rest, to everything else. She lived and un-lived for the poor. She carries out the mission not only by working, but “working, praying, hoping” – as she writes in one Letter to the Sisters; we could continue: and praying, suffering... Her life was really an ongoing mission.

Fr. Abílio Pina Ribeiro, cmf
Colégio Universitário Pio XII, Lisboa



In God and with the needy

Testimonies of favours received, through the intercession of Blessed Maria Clara:

M. F. S. - Vila Nova de Gaia – My daughter-in-law and my son had a great desire to have children. They had already faced a great setback, when they lost the first one, with just five months of gestation. Time was passing by and my daughter-in-law was not able to conceive. A friend of mine spoke to me of Sister Maria Clara, and gave me the bulletin. I began to pray, and pray much, every day, for years, and after six years, when we had almost lost hope, a beautiful baby boy was born. I always seek means to thank for this favour received.

L. D. - Mem Martins – My son was unemployed for a long time. I went to the tomb of Mother Clara and asked her to find work for him. I prayed much and I was heard: Mother Clara did not only grant me the job but in his special field. We are very happy and grateful to God and to Mother Clara who never forgets us. Thank you!

J. J. V. F. - Cruz de Pau, Amora – My husband was very sick in the Hospital of Luz in Lisbon and there was no improvement whatsoever. He came home without being able to walk, each time getting worse. I took him that way with swelling, to the Hospital of Setúbal. My sister spoke to me of Mother Maria Clara and made a novena for me and for him. Thanks to God, he is better: he still walks with a walking stick, but he is able to walk... I am very grateful to Mother Clara, for the “miracle” performed. I greatly indebted to her, for the favours obtained, through her intercession.

M. L. L. - Viana do Castelo – My husband was terminated from the firm, where he was working for several years. They refused to give him the amount due to him and there was misunderstanding between both the parties, without having recourse to the court. Fortunately, everything was solved in a peaceful manner, by compromising on both sides... I want to thank for the intercession of Mother Clara, also on other more difficult moments of the studies of my daughter. Thank you!

M. J. M. O. - Ermesinde – To you, Mother Clara who heard my prayers, I come to thank for the favours obtained: The return of my husband from abroad. Restored my marriage. The unity of my family: father, mother, children, daughters-in-law, grandchildren, grandparents. Thank you my God and Mother Clara, for always being with me.

I. A. O. F. - Fontiscos, Santo Tirso – A four year old boy drank the crockery washing machine liquid. He was totally burnt from within. He was lying in the hospital of S. João in Porto for a long time: he was operated several times to clean him up. The parents always with their heart in their hands, could find no improvement. When I learnt about the accident, I asked the prayers of the Sisters in my Community. Then we began our prayers, through the intercession of Mother Clara. The boy was unable to eat and, even through the tube, he was not able to retain what he took... It took time, but thanks to God and to our Mother Clara he is better. We are all very grateful to God and to Mother Clara!

M. A. B. P. M. C. - Paredes – It is a custom in my family to entrust each of its members to a saint in Heaven. Some time back, I entrusted my 16 year old grandson to Sister Maria Clara do Menino Jesus. I remembered to ask her for the healing of his body and soul. She was his advocate, his saint... At the beginning of the academic year, his mother, a teacher in the same School wanted the child to have a change of division, quite restless and problematic. And the

10th grade demands responsibilities... However much one argued with him, one could not stop him and certainly the marks did not support it. He was proposed to repeat the year. Did not accept. To go to a School. Nothing done... I motivated the mother to have faith in the “Advocate” of her son. The boy only accepted to go to a School and repeat the 10th grade on the last day of admission. Faith unto the last...

A.- Amadora – I sought the intercession of Mother Clara with God, for the purchase of a house for my daughter. For, it was already the seventh one that was being seen and, for various reasons, the purchase did not come through. I began a novena and, on the seventh day, they went to see one, which they liked and on the ninth day, the end of the novena, the purchase happened. Thank you, Mother Clara for this added grace, besides the other, through your intercession, especially for the job of my same daughter. I trust in God in his protection, that she may be rewarded justly for the work she does.

J. G. C. - Morreiras – Upon seeing the prayers on the last page of the Bulletin – The Sister to the Poor – I asked through her for the cure of a pain. Despite the treatment, the pain did not disappear. I do not know how many times I prayed the prayer to ask for the cure, but one thing is certain that the pain disappeared. I hope Sister Clara continues to listen to my prayers, whenever I ask for her intercession. Thank you, Mother Clara!

M. C. B. M. - Povoação, Azores – I fell very ill, with a terrible depression; I was even afraid to remain at home. My whole body trembled. I visited various doctors, because it seemed that I was becoming ever worse. I had recourse to Blessed Maria Clara and today I can feel a great difference and I have the joy of living.

M. P. C. G. - Lamas de Olo, Vila Real – During summer, my husband had a heart attack. He was very bad. He had three blocks. Daily, with great faith, together with him, I prayed the prayer to Mother Clara. Thanks to God, to Our Lady and Mother Clara, all is fine with him. Thank you Heavenly Father, thank you, Mother Clara!

M. H. A. Paço de Arcos – My daughter-in-law had a great desire to have a son. The two attempts resulted in abortions and, at last, she conceived, but always with fear. Every week that passed by was a great joy. I prayed much to Mother Clara and she gave us a beautiful, very perfect baby boy. In thanksgiving, I am sending a donation that is insignificant in comparison to the favour that has been granted to us.

J. C. - Vigo, Spain – I spent the night with a severe headache on the right side, which affected my eye and ear. I got up to go for Mass and I asked the Heart of Jesus and Mother to give me relief, but it increased further. The pain was very severe and I wanted to pay attention to the Mass. I asked Mother Clara to intercede for me; I took her picture and, without drawing the attention of anyone, I touched it to the face and head, where the pain was more severe. Thanks to God, it passed. I continued the Mass with all fervour and, till today, the pain did not come back. Mother Clara never fails me! Thank you Mother Clara!

A. E. C. - Mumemo, Marracuene, Moz. – I come to thank Mother Clara whose intercession I asked with God, so that we would be able to move into the new house without conflicts in the family. And it was done. Thank you Mother Clara, for your prayers.

Traits of holiness/mission of love

Libânia do Carmo Galvão Mexia de Moura Telles e Albuquerque, with the religious name of Sister Maria Clara do Menino Jesus, is mostly known as the foundress of CONFHIC, Congregation of the Franciscan Hospitaller Sisters of the Immaculate Conception. Our times, that measure the value of things by its effectiveness, appreciates the fact that it is, since 150 years one of the greatest and most influential works of support to the needy. The evolution of the number of Sisters and works of this Institute, is prodigious. It came into existence in 1871, at a time of hostility against the religious orders, very early the vocations began to multiply and, with them, the works of beneficence. At the time of the death of the Foundress, in 1899, the Congregation worked in 44 hospitals, 41 Primary and Secondary schools, 35 Homes for the invalid and the children and maintained also another 21 works, between creches, soup kitchens, hospices and boarding and had 5 convents. The impact of the action of these Sisters on the concrete life of the more needy was, and is, invaluable. An analysis at this level appears to be relevant, leading us to think on poverty which today, just as before, is in great need of our attention. But what really marks the sanctity of Mother Clara is, not as much the results, but the love that her action transmitted. Beatified in 2011, the process of canonization, still in progress, is based rather on her personal virtues. Two traits stand out with greater brightness, for our edification. First meekness, patience and serenity in face of enormous difficulties. Despite the visible success, the life of Mother Clara was a terrible succession of obstacles, contradictions and suffering. The encumbrances came, not only from anti-clerical forces, then in apotheosis, but also from within the Church and even in her own congregation. Nobody could deny the enormous benefits towards the poor, which are continued even today, but this did not prevent terrible trials, many of which were almost unexplainable. The second trait is the foundation of this attitude. Indeed, Mother Clara was not insensitive or a possessor of a peaceful nature, which would only benefit her. What she can teach us is deep trust in Divine Providence. In view of what appeared to be disasters without solution, she only saw "the Most Holy Will of Our Lord". The work was not hers, but His, of whom the Congregation is only a mere instrument, always immersed in trust. We can and should remain very grateful for the noteworthy work that CONFHIC carried out a century and a half ago. But the greatest gift that Mother Clara leaves us is the contemplation and imitation is her serene surrender to Divine Mercy.

Prof. João César das Neves, UCP, Lisboa



Your star Shines

Lord, I am dreaming a great dream,
but nobody understands it.
Nobody... they pass by and laugh, shrugging their shoulders.
He is mad!... they say.
Nobody. Nobody can refrain.

Naive idealist! – others mock at;
shaking their heads they go...
I remain alone. Alone with my dream,
in the ocean without the shore of ambition.

- The opinion of man? – Trifle,
changes like the wind. It is a caravel
left in the sea, without the helm, to find its luck...
...Forward, champion of venture.
Let the dwarfs speak of the plains...
Your star shines. Follow your North!

The shining morning star

It is important to contemplate young Jesus (...) and in Him recognize many traits of young hearts. We see him, for example, in the following characteristic: «Jesus had unconditional trust in the Father, took care of friendship with his disciples and, even in moments of crisis, he remained faithful to them. He manifested a deep compassion for the weaker ones, especially the poor, the sick, the sinners and the excluded. Had the courage to face religious and political authorities of his time; lived the experience of feeling misunderstood and despised; experienced fear of suffering and the fragility of the Passion; directed his gaze to the future, placing Himself in the safe hands of the Father and trusting in the power of the Spirit. In Jesus, all the youth can review themselves". On the other hand, Jesus rose and wants to participate in the novelty of his resurrection. He is the real youth of an aged world, and is also the youth of the universe that waits, amidst "the pangs of birth", to vest again with its light and with its life. Next to Him, we can drink from the true source that maintains alive our dreams, projects and great ideals, launching us in the announcement of life that it is worth living (...). The Lord calls us to light up the stars in the night of other youth; invites us to look as the real stars, or rather, those such varied signs that He gives us not to remain still, but to imitate the sower who observed the stars to be able to plough the field. God lights up the stars for us that we may be able to continue to journey: "Those stars that joyfully shine in their places, He calls them and they respond". But Christ himself is, for us, the great light of hope and guide in our night, for He is "the shining star of the morning".

Pope Francis, Ref. C.V.- 31-33



In Gratitude

One cannot withhold the word of gratitude to those who sent their contribution towards the Cause of Canonization, through bank transfer, time and again, from the following places: Afife, Alferrarede, Almada, Amadora, Amarante, Andrinos, Baiona-Esp., Bairros, Barcarena, Barros da Paz, Braga, Bemposta-Mog., Bragança, Chave-Arouca, Chaves, Camarate, Caminha, Canadá, Cartaxo, Carrazedo de Montenegro, Casal de Cambra, Casal de Revelhos, Cascais, Coimbra, Constantina, Creixomil, Ermesinde, Formariz, Fronteira, Gafanha do Carmo, Gontães, Horta-Faial, Igreja Nova, India, Lages-Aç., Lamas de Olo, Leiria, L.da a Pastora, Lisboa, Lobão, Madalena-Gaia, Marvão-Loureiro, Mendiga, Mira de Aire, Moita, Moura, Murça, Odivelas, Oeiras, Olhão, Paço de Arcos, Parada de Aguiar, Parede, Pta Delgada, Pte de Lima, Portela das Cruzes, Porto, Póvoa do Varzim, Queijadas, Ribeira d' Areia, Repeses, Sampaio de Antas, Sandim, Sta Bárbara-Aç., Sta M^a da Feira, Sto Tirso, Seixal, Sequeirô, Sertã, Sever-SMP, Serzedelo-PVL, Serzedo; Silgueiros, Suíça, Tabuadelo, Telheiras, Toronto; Usseira, Valbom, Venda Nova-Amadora, Viana do Castelo, Vila Cova-Campeã, Vila de Rei, V. do Conde, V. Maior, V. Nova-Aç., V. N. Gaia, V. P. de Âncora, Vila Real, Vilar do Paraíso, Vilarelho.

May your reward be great!

Missionary Echo

Catechesis was given in open air, at the shade of the cashew tree... the mass was well participated by the christians from near and far... the assistance to the sick, for the nurse and her helper, could do no more ... Everything was sought to give relief to the many needs of soul and body. There the poor, the sick and the children were received and anger was also appeased. There, prolongation of the mission of Jesus Christ happened.

M. I. S. S.

I am a mission

I am called to transmit faith, by contagion.
The witnessed faith
requires open hearts,
that will beat at the rhythm of the heart of God,
a passionate heart
that comes down and bends over the suffering humanity,
to whom he offer his own Son,
whose gestures reveal to the whole world,
who God is and that it is urgent to proclaim!
God to the whole world!
It is I who is calling you, I choose and send you!
In the school of Jesus, the Man of the way,
who travels cities and villages, unceasingly,
till the Good News reaches to all the peripheries,
let us learn the evangelical logic
of the gratuitous offering from us
to all the fallen by the way side of life.
From all the peripheries, the most desolate of humanity
is the indifference to faith, the indifference to God.
In the school of the saints, who open to us
the vast horizons of God,
let us learn the logic of being of God and being mission.
In this special Missionary Year,
we are called to be missionary disciples
in love and "stapled" to Jesus and his mission
till the ends of the Earth,
beginning by "next door".

«Never think, says Pope Francis, that you have nothing to give ... Many people need you. Each of you think that of it in your heart: many people need me!»

Who will not willingly work in the vineyard of the Lord?!

(Sister Maria Clara)

Prayer to Request Cures

Blessed Mother Clara, by the love you had for Jesus in the Eucharist and for the glory of His Most Holy name, with filial confidence in Mary, the Mother of Sorrows, and for the exaltation of her Immaculate Conception, I supplicate that you plead for the cure of... (name) and attend to the prayers of those who ask for your intercession with God.

Glory be to the Father, Son and Holy Spirit (3 times).

Crown of Praises to God

It consists of 56 "Glory be" in praise of the Most Blessed Trinity for the 56 years of the life of Mother Clara.

Using the Rosary beads, In place of the "Our Father" say;

To you, all honour and all glory, for ever and ever;

In place of the "Hail Mary" say: Glory be to the Father, and to the Son...;

- at the end of the last 6 "Glory be"

Conclude saying 3 times:

To you, all honour and all glory, for ever and ever.

(With ecclesiastical approval)

Communicate favours received to:

**The Provincial Secretariat
of Mother Clara**
Clara Sadan Provincialte
Carmelaram P.O.
Bangaluru 560 035

**The Provincial Secretariat
of Mother Clara**
Provincial House
Mary Hill, 2nd and 3rd Floor
60, Mount Mary Road -
Bandra West - Mumbai 400 050

Prayer to ask for favours and for the canonization of Blessed Maria Clara

Most Holy Trinity, most high,
omnipotent and good Lord!

You caused your holiness to shine in the simple and humble life
of Blessed Maria Clara do Menino Jesus, by calling her to be
an apostle of your tenderness and mercy.

Grant us the grace of her canonization and may the brightness of
your light shine upon us so that, by living in the spirit
of the beatitudes, we may practice the Works of Mercy,
in fidelity to the Holy Gospel.

Through the intercession of Blessed Maria Clara do Menino Jesus,
hear our prayers and Grant us the grace which we confidently
ask You (mention your petition).

To You all honour and glory, forever and ever. Amen!

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be...

Blessed Maria Clara, pray for us!

(With ecclesiastical approval)