

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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Mother Clara among the fools of God

It is said that God became a fool. That He became flesh and bone and that a young village girl gave birth to him, nursed him and cradled him in her arms.

It is said that God became a fool. He left the heavens and his angels and without any luggage shifted to the Earth, ready to share our bread and our defeats.

It is said that God became a fool. He fell madly in love for each of us and, like a lover out of himself, to our disdain he remained vulnerable, until he ended up in being nailed to the wood.

It is said that God became a fool. That after having gone about doing good to all in this world, he was put to death and behold he rose, our companion who cannot spend a moment without being with us.

It is said that God became a fool. And that this fashion picked up, to the point of some of his followers also being considered fools. Francis, John of God, Clara do Menino Jesus appear in this gallery. They are indeed, offspring of a foolish God!

Having titles, properties and qualities, all that is necessary to lead a happy life, Clara only fills the heart to go to the aid of the needy and suffering neighbour.

Bombarded with bitterness, trials and setbacks, she always sees the sweetest glance of God watching over her. She is not afraid of the big problems and obstacles that arise ahead: her faith removes all the mountains. "Whoever trusts in the Lord, will never, never, never, be confounded". She trusts foolishly.

She opens over hundred houses, where children are educated, the sick are assisted, where thousands of meals are served daily in the Soup Kitchen. All this without much help,

without resources, advancing amidst woods of thorns and sacrifices. But what are our troubles as compared to those of the Divine Redeemer?

At a stage of life when she could legitimately think of soups and rest, she defines that working for the love of God is happiness!

It is necessary not to have the screws in place to be able to journey on the stormy waves, to take to the letter, every word of the Sacred Scripture, to love the neighbour gratuitously in a society where money and egoism reign. One needs to be totally foolish to walk on the opposite side, to oppose a system and face giants.

But wasn't Jesus considered to be a fool even by his relatives? Wasn't Paul preaching "the foolishness of the Gospel", the "stupidity" and the "scandal" of the Cross? Did not Theresa of Avila state that Jesus "says and does things that make us lose our good sense"?

The fools do not measure the consequences, they immerse themselves headlong, offer the other cheek to be beaten, speak of love, while they are betrayed and humiliated, they proclaim life in face of death.

If I still look to be very normal and do not do like Clara and such others, it is because God has not yet widened my whole being and doing totally. Where the world sees foolishness, not always do I see love and grace.

The Brazilian christian singer Vanilda Bordieri was right: those "classified as simple fools/unfortunately are just a few"...

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150 YEARS

BEING LIGHT AND WARMTH

2020 - JUBILEE - 2021

FRANCISCAN HOSPITALLER SISTERS
OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

In God and with the needy

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

M. C. R. O. - Torres Novas – What happened to my father, when he was seriously ill, led me to have recourse to the intercession of Sr. Maria Clara. Due to the diagnosis of a problem in the vertebral column, known as “narrowing of the canal”, he had to undergo a surgery in the Hospital of the Third Order of St. Francis in Lisbon. The recovery was quick and, in the first month, it appeared that the problem had been solved. Two months later, the complaints recurred and they kept increasing with the passing of time. Having consulted the surgeon, he sent us off laconically, saying that his work had been done well. My father was systematically getting worse and, some months after, he consulted various orthopedicians and neurologists. Nobody wanted to take up the case. He became bedridden, totally dependent and with great pain. By suggestion of friends, we went to Porto to consult another neurosurgeon and, after some suggestions given, he returned home. Five days later, went to Porto again, but this time to be admitted in C.S.B., remaining under the care of a team that, finally, studied the case. He was diagnosed to have a hospital bacteria which he had probably contracted during the surgery. When I visited my father in the clinic, I went to the chapel and my eyes fell on the statue of Sister Maria Clara do Menino Jesus, about whom I had already heard speaking and whose biography I had read. I then had recourse to her intercession for the recovery of my father.

The required treatment, the prolonged admission and the unaffordable expenses without insurance, urged a transfer to a public hospital of our residential zone. It was not an easy task. The efforts were many and once again, I reinforced my prayer, through the intercession of Sister Maria Clara. My father, finally received the order to come to the Hospital of Abrantes and, to our great help, a doctor friend of ours, received him, since she was in the emergency services. Having completed the formalities, medical accompaniment and visible improvement, some months later, my father left the hospital walking, with much strength and trust in God. In all this, I saw the divine hand and the intercession of Sister Maria Clara. Hence this letter is intended to be a testimony of faith in the intercession of Sister Maria Clara do Menino Jesus with God. It was considered to be a lost case, but thanks to her help, the miracle happened in the eyes of those who accompanied the situation.

M. L. C. S. - Almagreira—I had health problems in the uterus and the ovaries. I underwent surgery thrice. There was a fear of another sickness, but I insistently asked Mother Clara and prayed the novenas. By the grace of God, of our Queen, the Mother of Heaven and Mother Clara I was heard and there is nothing serious. Thank you, Mother Clara for your intercession!

M. F. A. C. T. - Argoncilhe— My husband underwent three surgeries of the intestines and during the fourth one, by mistake, they cut the urethra. We experienced days of anguish, but with the help of Blessed Mother Clara, our dear “Nurse”, and the great “Doctor” the Sacred Heart of Jesus, who gave us much strength and courage, everything was overcome. Thank you dear Mother Clara, thank you Jesus!

E. S. - Póvoa de Lanhoso—I come to thank Mother Maria Clara do Menino Jesus for the favours received. For years together I had some skin problem on the buttocks. The doctors were not able to solve the problem. I asked for the intercession of Blessed Maria Clara for my healing. With some ointments prescribed by the doctors, I was quickly healed and today I am keeping very well, thanks to the intercession of Blessed Maria Clara. I am very grateful to her and pray to God for her canonization

O. P. A. L. - StaComba, PTL— I thank Mother Clara for favours obtained. When I have faced any health problems, of my husband or of my grandchildren, thanks to God, I have been heard. Thank you, Mother Clara, for all your help.

M. F. S. M. - S. Mateus, Graciosa, Az.— I come to thank Mother Clara do Menino Jesus for her intercession in all the favours asked and for always being heard, in my difficulties, above all in this case. Everything led to believe that it was leptosporosis. In my affliction, I had recourse to Mother Clara, praying the novena. Thanks to her, the worst did not happen. Thank you, Mother Clara!

S. C. - Chaves— I am a teacher and for the second time, when the vacancies were advertised I received the grace of being appointed, asked for in front of the statue of Mother Clara in the Basilica of Mártires, in Lisbon. The grace was so miraculous that, I did not only get the appointment in September, but in April I was taken on in the Team of Pedagogical Zone, of my area of residence. There could be no greater miracle without the intercession of Mother Clara, to whom I pray a novena every month. This favour may not correspond to a miracle so to say, but for me it was a miracle awaited for 24 years, and that is why I give THANKS to God and to Mother Clara.

B. C. - Moura— I thank Mother Clara and Jesus for the favour received. For the second time I bled a lot from the intestines. I was very worried. Through the intercession of Mother Clara, after doing all the tests, everything was well. I only had anemia. Today, everything is fine, thanks to my Jesus and to Mother Clara.

P. S. B. B. V - Runa, T V D— Since I had known Mother Clara for a short time, I deeply thank for the great bonding and consequent love that I felt for Her. When I learnt that I was in a house of her Congregation, in Linda-a-Pastora, I did not give a second thought and I went to Her, considering myself a pilgrim. What took me to her was essentially to pray and thank for the wife and son that I have, however, I was suffering from a strong back pain, which I was bearing for almost a month, and a toothache which was going on for three months, without any possible solution of relief for each of the problems. By her tomb I conversed with Mother Clara, hoping that she would be listening to me. The pain continued, but during this conversation I did not even mention about them. I knelt down by her side, and in silence, I prayed in Thanksgiving.

I can say that when I left that house, I did not have either of the pain. At present I can look round on all sides without the slightest pain and, as for the teeth, whatever I may eat they do not pain. Thank you very much, Mother Clara.

With Clara, in mission

In all the Fraternities of the Franciscan Hospitallers, fervent, trusting and insistent prayer is raised to Heaven in favor of humanity, just like Mother Clara, who remained in deep intimacy with God, placing the undertaking of her mission under The Providential Glance. Today, just like yesterday, energy for the mission comes from the encounter with the Lord. Indeed, wherever the daughters of Mother Clara are present, her friends and collaborators in the Pro-canonization League carried out innumerable initiatives, during the course of the year, the flashes of which, conducted in India, are given below:



- Constant prayer and communion with the Lord benefited many, spiritually and materially.
- The knowledge of and reflection on the life and virtues of Mother Clara has motivated them to be better Christians, imitating her example.
- Her works that are sustained, with the work of her followers and the donations from their friends, have helped to decrease the needs, like those of: reconstruction of houses, that were damaged or those that had fallen into ruins due to rains and cyclones, providing school material to the needy children, education and care of the children, providing meals to the needy, formation of the laity, etc.



• In honour of Mother Clara, the Sisters, together with five doctors and two League Members who work in our Hospital, conducted a "medical camp", having done the check up of 250 prisoners from the Central Prison of Bellary and given them free treatment.

- Among the frequent favours obtained through the intercession of Mother Maria Clara, it was highlighted that permission was granted to build three Schools and Boardings in South India, after a long and difficult period of waiting.



A bundle of sharing

As was announced in the previous bulletin, we continue with the echoes of praises to God, experienced, lived and manifested on the occasion of the 120th anniversary of the eternal pasch of Sister Maria Clara do Menino Jesus, which took place last December and which came to us from different parts of the world.

Here are some flowers from the bouquet, the fragrance of which exhales aroma of admiration, which becomes an incentive, commitment and gratitude for the favours that are showered through her in our lives. From the convergence of sharing that came, we highlight:

- The celebration challenged us to revitalize some of her virtues: total trust in God, total openness and docility to the Spirit, fidelity to the Lord at all cost.
- The experience of this celebration left lasting impressions and deep marks in the life of each one.
- It bought to mind her face, a mirror of divine tenderness and mercy.
- The contemplation of her statue, with the symbols that it bears, challenges us to be light and gift for all.
- The active faith that made her exclaim: faith works wonders, invites us not to be afraid, however tough the path may appear to be.
- Her life exuberant with joy and enthusiasm instills hope in those who have lost the taste for life.
- The contaminating testimony of closeness to the poor, her people, made her an icon of compassion and mercy that attracts us and impels us to do likewise.
- To celebrate, this spiritual Mother encourages us to be living memory of the traits of the Lord Jesus, whose eloquent image she was: love without distinction, selflessness and sacrifices to help everyone, the proclamation of the Good News, the commitment with education and integral development of each person, unconditional forgiveness and resilience in suffering, total oblation even to die for love, as proved by the doctors, by the condition of her irremediable heart, because it was inflamed with love for Christ poor and crucified.

Chain of Prayer

«The prayer of one just man can do much in its effects», says St. James [ref 5:16].

The number of appeals to join this Chain of Prayer that reached to heaven, keep increasing, through ever greater adherence of those who feel, a brother/sister in favour of those who need. Join in communion and let us pray for those who trust and hope in our payer and in the mediation of Mother Clara. We share the requests of: F.F. - Tracy, USA; M.M.D. - St. Martin de Crau; M.I.L.A.S., M.C.S.R.A. - V.P. Ancora; M.M - Nanaimo, USA; M.R.P.G- Guimarães; M.O.T. - Lapas, T.N.; M.R.F. - Aveiro; M.J.O.A.V. - Fundão; L.C.S. - Chaves; B.L.F - Almada; M.A.G. - Braga; A. P. C.- Sta Maria da Feira.

**TO NOTE, FACING THE SOCIAL DIFICULTIES RESULTING FROM THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC,
THE PRINTED EDITION OF THIS BULLETIN WILL BE LIMITED,
IF YOU WISH TO RECEIVE IT IN DIGITAL FORMAT, PLEASE SEND YOUR EMAIL TO**

maeclara@confhic.com
THANK YOU!

He opened the Scriptures

With the Apostolic Letter he Opened to them, Pope Francis instituted *the Sunday of the Word of God*, the III of the Ordinary Time. This institution is due, says the Pope, to the need and desire of the faithful to understand the inexhaustible richness of God's constant dialogue with his people who reveals Himself in His Word.

Thus, *a Sunday dedicated totally to the Word of God*, will remind each year, its vital importance to our Christian life of each day (ref. n.8). Hence it is necessary to nurture our spiritual life with the Word of God, *like the thirsty person who drinks from the spring, (knowing that) much more is lost than what we drink. (Indeed, in his Word) the Lord hid all the treasures, so that, each of us may enrich ourselves in any of the points that is meditated upon*".

Therefore, says the Pope, it is necessary, to have special dedication to *the Word of God (that) permits before all else, to make the Church revive the gesture of the Risen who opens, also for us, (like to the Disciples of Emaus) the treasure of His Word to be able to be in the world, heralds of this inexhaustible wealth* (ref. n.2) Therefore, it will never be too much the time that is dedicated to drink from this spring, since we are able to extract, each time, only a little.

Those who nourish themselves daily on the Word of God, become like Jesus, contemporaries of the persons who meet; does not feel tempted to fall in the sterile nostalgia of the past, nor in the disincarnated utopias of the future (ref. n.12) That is how the Saints live, fools for Jesus, whom they found in His Word the wisdom to love with the depths of mercy of the father, without sparing themselves, after the example of the Master (ref. n.13)

Based on Papa Francisco, Apostolic Letter Aperuitillis.

Cheer up. Have courage!

[B. Maria Clara]

**In the world you will have afflictions,
but have trust! I have overcome the world.**

[J. Cristo]

Prayer of Pope Francis against the Covid-19

O Mary, you shine continuously on our journey as a sign of salvation and hope.
We entrust ourselves to you, Health of the Sick,
At the foot of the Cross you participated in Jesus- pain,
With steadfast faith.
You, Mistress and Mother,
know what we need
and we are certain that you will provide so that,
as you did in Cana of Galilee,
joy and feasting might return.
Help us, Mother of Divine Love,
to conform ourselves to the Father's will
and to do what Jesus tells us:
He who took our suffering upon Himself,
and bore our sorrows to bring us,
through the Cross, to the joy of the
Resurrection. Amen.
We seek refuge under your protection, O Holy Mother of God-
despise not our pleas – we who are put to the test –
and deliver us from every danger,
O glorious and blessed Virgin.

Who will return Hope to the world?

We need to learn to live together as brothers and sisters or else we will all die like fools. (Martin Luther King)

There are fools and fools... Perhaps, we know one and the other. Those who are so, due to lack of love, and those who are so, for excess of it.

Most of the saints are a clear example of this foolishness for God and for humanity, preferentially the poor, for the fragile and the more needy.

What moved Fr. Raimundo Beirão, the unstoppable missionary, who travelled the whole country, passionately proclaiming, the Gospel?

What moved Blessed Maria Clara who, before the crowds sore and fallen by the side of the roads in Lisbon, she desired to have "a big house" to receive all?

Only the foolishness of Love!

Could it be that the fools, for love, will return Hope to the world.

Foolishness can be a key to the reading of the time in which we are living amidst uncertainty and perplexity of such insecure days in which we live, we can lose this vision of foolishness and become "blind", to the point of not seeing the fringe of the Sun, through the clouds.

An easy daily scenario seems to prevent us from overcoming a life of routines, without passion and without the foolishness that only love permits. Who is not capable of bouncing over persons who awaken admiration and make one ask:

How is this gale of the Spirit possible that hovers over the little ones and makes them great?

The foolish, for love, make miracles of **Goodness** happen. The dreams that are germinating are of people who express the strength of the little ones, the prophecy of the **right gesture**, Foolishly continuing... and repeating... We think that the foolish live in the clouds...

The foolish, for love, have firm steps and set goals.

It is they who awaken Hope!

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:

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