



MARIA CLARA

A flower of the Celestial Garden

December 2023

125th death anniversary
Mother Maria Clara of
the Child Jesus

On this page,
we will remember the
life and vocation
of Mother Clara.

Her vocation to consecrated life
led her to establish the
Congregation of the Franciscan
Hospitaller Sisters
which continues to offer the
world the charism of
HOSPITALITY.

Does any aspect of Libania's
vocation mirror your own?
How did you feel when you first
heard about Libania's vocation?
What are the feelings in your
heart?

Launch out into the deep!
(LK 5:4)

It was 15 June 1843, in Portugal, when the world saw the birth of a tiny light, a promise of blessings for the world... Her name was Libania do Carmo; later, Maria Clara do Menino Jesus, a spark of hope in the lives of many destitute people and a vocational call to thousands of young people who adhered to her ideal of life.

With contemplative eyes, in an existence full of warmth and charm, kindness and gentleness, softness and firmness, but also woven of suffering, humiliation, deep pain stamped on the countenances of those she loved the most. Mysteries that life brings and that are harboured in the heart of every human being! Destinies that carry with them the mark of the Eternal, for the realisation of his designs of love and tenderness!... Threads of love and drama wove the finest linen of her existence, making her a sister and mother to the underprivileged. With a heart full of love for God and her brothers and sisters and a gaze lost in the infinite, Libânia plunged into dreams of bravery, enchanted by the God who divides himself in love and mercy, and took a leap to the other shore of life. At the age of 24, she closed a door from the past and fearlessly entered a new world that would be her consecration to God.

During this time, she happened to meet a man that everyone in Lisbon was talking about. He was Father Raimundo dos Anjos Beirão. It was an encounter chosen by the God who provides everything. His fluent and simple words, filled with the Spirit of God, touched the heart of Libania. Listening to him, she felt her heart burning, as if she were hearing the echo of her own thoughts, and the horizon of her soul expanded to infinity. One day, although we don't know when, Libania dared to confess her most secret desires to him. From then on, a communion of soul was established between the two of them that not even death could break. While she found in him a spiritual father, a mentor, a counsellor, a friend and a safe guide in God's ways, he discovered who could realise his ideals in favour of the poor and unprotected and, for Libania do Carmo, the horizon of her life was becoming clearer and closer.

Cf. MENDES DE MOURA, Rosa Helena. *Maria Clara do Menino Jesus sua gente e sua obra*, Coimbra, 2013, págs. 27-28; 48-50).