

Video 1: INTERVIEW WITH BERNARD COURONNE and ANA LUCIA GONZÁLEZ

Fr Bernard Couronne SS.CC.

1. What in the journey and personality of Pierre Coudrin touches you the most?

- First of all, Father Coudrin is a man of his times.
- He lived in a tumultuous era of French History: the French Revolution.
- He didn't stay on the sidelines as a spectator.
- But risked his life because of his faith in Christ and his attachment to the Church.
- Considering the turn of events, he decided that he could not accept the political decisions made in religious matters.
- This is something he would defy throughout his life.
- He decided to go against the current.
- He resisted this wave of dechristianization.
- What touches me about him is not so much what he did,
- because he did what many priests at that time were doing.
- His first concern was to be useful to the Church
- and he served it by teaching and forming seminarians;
- by preaching and administrating dioceses as Vicar general.
- In the end, nothing really extraordinary.
- but if we dig a little, for example, when we read.
- what he wrote in 1804 to Sister Gabrielle de la Barre, we discover what motivated him.
- "I live to cement, if need be at a great price, the work of the Heart of this admirable Master, who fills me with His favors.
- If I am ungrateful, he still loves me and I feel in my heart that he will always love me, yes always."
- Yes, this is the source of his dynamism:
- Faith in the merciful Love of the Savior for whom he is ready to give his entire life if need be.
- Remember that when he left the granary of the Motte d'Usseau, didn't he say.
- "I became a priest in order to suffer, to sacrifice myself for the Good God.
- And if necessary to die in serving him."
- This is the golden thread of his life:
- A burning passion for Christ and his gospel, what he names Zeal.
- Finally, the last thing that inspires me about the Good Father is his ardor to proclaim the gospel, no matter the cost.

- Like St. Paul, he could exclaim: Curse on me if I do not announce the Gospel.
- In him nothing is spoiled, he was a good man of good will.
- In the end, he left those who lived with him the memory of a Good Father.

Sr Ana Lucia Gonzalez SS.CC.

What moves me the most about the Good Father is his capacity to respond to God. His whole life is a courageous response. First of all, he entered the seminary and committed his life to a Church living through a time of conflict. Shortly after he asked to be ordained a priest in secret, in a library. In this situation, his response is audacious, marked by a profound trust in Providence. This is followed by the period in the Motte d'Usseau which for us is the definitive unfolding of his vocation, of his yes to God. We note that fear was never an obstacle. I believe the Good Father experienced great fear, but at the same time trusted in the work of the Good God.

1. What was the project of our Founders?

Bernard Couronne

This project wasn't theirs. When it came to the foundation, the Good Father preferred talking about it in terms of "the work of God". To understand this work that God had confided to him, it is important to know the religious situation of France after the Revolution. People were trying to get rid of God in society, isn't this what is happening in many places today? Henriette, Pierre and their first companions are going to react by trying to reintroduce God into society, to make him visible and active in this society born from the revolution. They are going to do this in following Jesus and retracing his 4 ages by education, adoration, missions, offering the sacrifice of their lives. From this we can see 4 characteristics of the Spirit in the project confided to their care. The first characteristic: it is a response of love like that of the Virgin Mary to the love of the Father revealed in the Heart of Christ, his beloved Son.

2nd characteristic—It called on, not the expertise of an elite group of people, but on the generosity of those called the remnant of God's people: women, men, priests, religious, lay people...brothers and sisters who constitute in their beautiful diversity a family!

3rd characteristic: This sample of the Church, if it wants to be a sign, must develop in each of its members: a missionary dimension (the essential vow) a contemplative dimension (adoration), a community dimension (family spirit).

4th characteristic: Reparation, the ultimate goal of the project—not an identical restoration, nor something better than what was before but a Breath of creative love which flows through and renews our relationship with God, with people and with creation. With the grace that springs from the Heart of Christ, it is about "repairing the living" through Love. A program for today—right?

Ana Lucia

From the moment of wanting to respond to God, in my opinion, the project of the Good Father was inspired and became concrete during his time in the Motte d'Usseau. In this context, he had a vision and became aware of the mission to form a missionary community of men and women.

From this moment, we can see elements of the project that the Good Father will call the Work of God which will be characterized by unity and the missionary spirit. The question is "What does this mean for us today?" We realize that we live in a divided, "fluid" society where interests are diverse, but we mustn't forget the original project. Unity does not mean uniformity and today, brothers and sisters, we need to make many choices and learn to journey together in diversity and the missionary characteristic which enriches us and makes us part of the people of God.

Video 2: BERNARD COURONNE and ANA LUCIA GONZÁLEZ

1. What conversions happened all along the Good Father's life?

Ana Lucia

We can find many instances in the Good Father's life that speak of his conversion, his letters give evidence of the movement of his spirit. Certainly we have to go back to his experience in the granary because it is there that alone he faced his vocation and his fear. Paradoxically he chooses life and leaves the granary.

Also for me it is very important the moment that he and Henriette pronounced together their perpetual vows witnessing to the unity and total gift of themselves to God.

Bernard Couronne:

- I prefer to speak about the calls the Good Father perceived in his life.
- Conversion, in effect, is a profound change that takes place in responding to a call.
- It is a way of responding to a call which sometimes involve a long period of maturation.
- Which leads to decisions, to sometimes crucifying choices.
- For me, two events are important: his leaving Poitiers for Mende in 1802.
- Then leaving Paris for Troyes in 1820...
- There could be others, but each of these brought about an upheaval in the interior landscape of Pierre Coudrin.
- Each of them involved stages, the leaving of their homeland like Abraham, a crucifying uprooting, an experience of leaving.
- The feeling of insecurity, lack of comfort, lack of tranquility...where is the Lord leading me?
- And the invitation "to widen the space of your tent" "to broadening your heart to new horizons, to new views".

- Missionary conversion, isn't it to leave oneself, to go "to the other", to be with them?
- It is the thrust of the Incarnation, the way of Christ in the Gospel, the way of those who want to follow Him.
- Characteristics that can serve our discernment, our own missionary conversions to be lived today.

2. Keys in the Good Father's spirituality in building community and intergenerational dialogue.

Ana Lucia

- First we have to say that the image of Pierre Coudrin that we discover in his correspondence with Henriette is that of a father, a Good Father.
- This is what leads me to say that some of the keys we discover in Pierre's life are:
- **Dialogue**, "Be good to one another", says the Good Father.
- I believe that goodness creates fraternal bonds between people and fraternity creates simple, human dialogue between brothers and sisters.
- And dialogue allows us to enter the sacred ground of the other, opening us to understand and welcome them.
- This is very important in our community life.
- where we encounter different generations, cultures, lifestyles.
- It also opens us to listen attentively so each person can be her/himself and all in the Heart of Jesus.
- As the Good Father expressed in his wish that "there be one heart in our family".
- **Respect**: we know that respect was a strong quality in the personality of the Good Father.
- We know there is a profoundly human side of him in which he wishes that others can live and be who they are.
- His ability to welcome each one as he/she is.
- Inviting us to recognize our lights and shadows and thus leading us to be more respectful of others.
- We are called to live together and respect enables us to share and to discern our ideas and projects together in the light of the Spirit.
- **Adoration**: is the source as the Good Father himself indicates:
- "I knelt down together with the corporal which I believed always had the Blessed Sacrament."
- This is the time of prayer where he opened his heart to God and responded to Him in choosing to live a life in community.
- The Good Mother too notes that when he fixed the hour of adoration for her, he fixed her destiny.
- Adoration is an act of trust, of unity, of openness to God's grace

Bernard Couronne

- **First, the key of Heart**
- Because spirituality is first of all a confession of faith, a word we give on God.
- We, SS.CC., say: God has a Heart; God is from the Heart. God loves us as the Good Father says:
- He reveals it to us in Jesus, whose pierced heart reminds us that this love is not recognized and is rejected.
- Despite our differences in origin, age, temperament.
- We believe that God is Love and that nothing can separate us from that Love.
- and this love makes in our hearts pardon, reconciliation and fraternal communion can do all things, repair all things.
- This faith in Love, inherited from our Founders, unites us in the depths of our being and this is the solid foundation of our community.
- **Second key, service**
- Spirituality is the way of the Gospel, following the path of Jesus with Mary...
- For us, SS.CC., it is the way of service of love: it is a way of loving...
- The day of our profession we affirmed that we wanted to live and die in the service of the SS.CC. of Jesus and Mary.
- For us, this service is something we hold in common no matter the work we do because it is an attitude of heart which marks the way we are with others.
- We try to live this in practicing what the Good Father calls the most essential vow
- That is, the inescapable demand, to take care of the other.
- I no longer count—the other counts—I will do everything so that he/she can grow in liberty and happiness.
- The community, the Church, society...is built up in this Love which is expressed in mutual, humble, hidden and persevering service.
- **Third key, zeal**
- Spirituality is a way of living the Beatitudes together and making it contagious!
- Our Founders wanted us to be Zelators, that is, people burning with passion.
- To live and announce the Gospel with ardor, joy and enthusiasm.
- Love if it is not a devouring fire quickly goes out.
- Eucharistic adoration is the necessary moment of our day when we stoke the flame of this Love, of this burst of zeal.
- Isn't this Love lived in service the source of evangelical joy?
- My prayer...would be this invocation of our Founders.

- Heart of Jesus, burning with love for us, enflame our hearts with love for you!
- Because our vocation is wholly of zeal, burning zeal!

Video 3: INTERVIEW WITH JEANNE CADIOU and SAGAYA SAMYNATHAN - part 1

1. What are the main characteristics that define the spirituality of the Good Mother?

Jeanne Cadiou

- This isn't exactly what one would say after reading 8 volumes of her correspondence.
- In her letters, she is preoccupied with the health of others, how to pay off debts, how the novices are going to travel, spiritual advice to young superiors.
- But it is in reading her life and scrutinizing what is written about her in the first and principal biographies of her life written by.
- Gabrielle de la Barre and Hilarion Lucas that it becomes evident that she was gifted with a strong and profound spirituality, with an uncommon intensity.
- The characteristics of this spirituality can be best seen in her daily life.
- Henriette always put others before herself.
- We see this in the delicate attention she had for her mother when they were both imprisoned in the Prison Hospitalieres for several months.
- Or her willingness to listen to the Sisters who wanted to speak with her sometimes even into the late night.
- when she visited the communities enduring great discomfort.
- sitting in small coaches as she travelled throughout the French countryside visiting the communities.
- A particular trait of the Good Mother's spirituality is the presence of the Cross.
- echoed in the words of the Good Father, "We will always be children of the Cross."
- How was her devotion to the Cross expressed?
- It was in her spirit of mortification, in the instruments of penance which she said were only for her and not for her "daughters".
- This devotion we find summed up in a very personal vow:
- "I vow to be crucified in everything, in heart, spirit, will, action. I will accept all the crosses, all the sufferings, all the contrarities that come and say: Still more Lord!
- In such a way that something indifferent in itself if it bothers me, I will accept it." Note to the Good Father, February, 1801.

- It was as though the mystery of the Cross, symbol of life, was revealed to her to become a sign of hope and to save her from her own weaknesses.
- Trust in and surrender to Providence is another trait of the Good Mother's spirituality.
- We could ask ourselves how without this absolute trust in God could she have made 18 foundations without any money to settle her sisters in new places.
- "All to God, all for God, all in God!"
- The spirituality of the Good Mother is expressed essentially through Adoration at the foot of the Blessed Sacrament.
- This is the privileged form of prayer marked by the reparative dimension.
- From this source sprung forth her tireless preoccupation of practicing and propagating the cult of the Heart of Jesus.
- Of entering into the interior sufferings of this Heart which retraces the 4 ages of his life.
- Henriette realized that this devotion to the Heart of Jesus must be united to the love of the Heart of Mary.
- Her notes to the Good Father are sprinkled with expressions of her trust in Mary.
- Her zeal in obtaining the statue of Our Lady of Peace is certainly along this line.

Sagaya Samynathan

There are so many elements of her life that clearly speak to the Good Mother's spirituality.

First, her personal conversion experienced while she was in prison led her to surrender herself totally to the Lord. She remained faithful to this inner conversion through prayer and communion with the Lord in Eucharistic Adoration.

Second, a woman rooted in prayer, the Good Mother's heart was moved towards the poor, especially women and children. She had a special capacity to love people and she expressed her care for others with absolute freedom of spirit. She was a very caring mother and her heart was filled with love, her hands were outstretched to help others. I believe, the sisters and brothers called her GOOD MOTHER because of her loving and caring nature. I think, perhaps, she is the only foundress who is called "Good Mother".

Third, the Good Mother was other centered, that's why she said that "The penance I do is only asked of me not my daughters." Another best example that I can give about the Good Mother's other centeredness is that when she joined the association and had an hour of adoration, she took the hours other associates were unable to spend before the Blessed Sacrament. Even in prison, she took care of the jailors daughter...always responding to the needs of others. Her heart always reached out to others.

Fourth, she totally abandoned herself to the divine Heart of Jesus. She opened many houses with confidence and deep trust in the Lord. She always received the necessary graces, blessings and helps that were very important for the mission and life of the sisters and brothers. The Good Mother's writings and life speaks loud and clear about why the Good Mother insistently urged the sisters to

abandon themselves to God's Providence. The Good Mother often encouraged her sisters to place their confidence in the divine Heart of Jesus, and to find their support, refuge, strength and consolation.

2. Who are the figures that marked Henriette--her family, her formation with the Benedictines of Saint Radegonde and the laity and priests that she encountered?

Jeanne Cadiou

- The family of Henriette was a small circle composed of her parents and her two brothers.
- Henriette's father died when she was 11 and shortly after, at the dawn of the Revolution, her 2 brothers had to leave France.
- Henriette remained alone with her mother whom she accompanied to St. Georges de Noisne and then to Poitiers until her mother's death on April 30, 1801.
- Later, Henriette was in touch with her brothers and sisters-in-law essentially for family financial matters.
- If the meeting with Abbe Soyer in the Hospitalieres Prison was decisive, the strongest influence we can say in her formation was her meeting with Fr. Coudrin of whom she said, "I pray the way this holy man preaches."
- Her time with the Benedictines of the Holy Cross (Congregation founded by the Queen of the Franks, St. Radegonde, who was obsessed by the need for peace in 550).
- Was very short, possibly, just time to prepare her for the celebration of her First Communion which took place in a climate of contemplation which marked her life.
- In this monastery since its origins, a relic of the true Cross of Christ was venerated.
- It is strongly possible that the young Henriette was very touched by the veneration of this relic.
- Monseigneur de Chabot, canon of the Cathedral of Poitiers, later Bishop of St. Cloud and her uncle in the manner of Brittany also played a role in her life.
- Or maybe it was the other way around.
- A Sister wrote that the uncle admired his niece and willingly sought her insights. He also greatly valued Pierre Coudrin.
- And showed the greatest interest in their enterprise.
- He was soon named to Mende.
- On God's order, the Good Mother let the prelate know that God wanted a house of Zelatrices in his diocese.
- And that he had been chosen to get this establishment.
- This was in 1802. The prelate thought that the project was premature, but the divine will was manifested so clearly that he could not refuse. (Booklet of Sr. Jeanne Micheline, p. 37)

- Perhaps it was during her time with the Society of the Sacred Heart that Henriette forged a spirituality.
- And cultivated it to the point that it became her way of life in a constant search for authenticity.
- This association initially was a kind of confraternity which had as a goal the cult of the Sacred Heart and different works of charity.
- Henriette was admitted to it in 1795 as an extern sister because she still lived with her mother on Haute Treilles Street.
- She herself chose “the better part” and had only one desire to be consumed like a candle.
- Within the Association 2 years later in August, 1797
- The group of the Solitaires developed and Henriette was chosen as the superior. 5 of them went to live at the Grand Maison.
- There is much to be said about the relationship between the Good Father and the Good Mother and pages and pages have been written on this theme.
- There is especially the correspondence exchanged between the two founders and with the brothers and sisters: there is nothing better than reading this correspondence where pearls can be found, such as,
- “Her heart is the boat where in the presence of the tempest all the belongings of the Congregation is stored.”
- The Good Father writes about the Good Mother to his niece Eudoxie while in Rome on April 8, 1829.
- “It is true that the little Peace bears the light and I only hold the candlestick” from a letter to Gabrielle de la Barre, October 20, 1803.
- How many times do we also read expressions of one or the other such as:
- “When are you coming?” “For the love of God, send me some news!”
- “Try to live.” “Grace, write to me” “Write then Good Mother.” (BP January 27, 1829)
- “Live always and believe that only you can carry such a heavy cross.” (BP March 19, 1824)
- “Always have pity on your poor daughter whose profound respect equals her tender attachment.” (BM No 251)
- In an unshakeable mutual trust, each one considered himself/herself the servant of the other:
- Two words that often accompanied their signatures such as, “with affection, humble, tender, respectful, obedient”.
- From its beginning, the Congregation has been profoundly marked by this relationship between the Good Father and the Good Mother.
- We can recognize the SSCC family spirit they cultivated so that the first communities helped and supported each other spiritually and materially.

- So, the Good Mother asked the communities to pray for the brothers who were leaving on mission far away or near at home.
- And the Brothers built quarters for the Sisters whose communities were being filled with new members.

Sagaya Samynathan

Speaking about the Good Mother's upbringing in her family is to highlight that by nature the Good Mother was a very kind, gentle and spontaneous person. She enjoyed good relationships with her family members. She had special trust in her brother who occasionally saved her from danger. She had a beautiful voice and was trained in music of which she had a broad knowledge.

She had a fine manner, sensitive to the needs and situation of others. She was very sincere in her life and mission and in her way of accompanying the sisters in the Congregation. She had a special charism and skill in judging fairly. She was transparent and had a charism for drawing others to her.

Video 4 : JEANNE CADIOU and SAGAYA SAMYNATHAN - part 2

1. What are the spiritual resources to which the Good Mother refers to animate the life of the sisters and the communities?

Sagaya Samynathan

The Good Mother encouraged the sisters, especially the young superiors of the different houses. For example, let us look at the community of Mirepoises, where Sr. Ludovine was overly nervous for a long time. The parents of Sr. Ludovine spoke to the Good Mother about their daughter whom they entrusted to her care. The Good Mother wrote to her: "My good little one, let your exterior speak of the peace and calm of your soul. Make haste slowly. Don't do anything important, not even a correction, without recollecting yourself a bit. May the spirit of the Good God work in you so that you only act as He would. May the loving wounds of the Heart of Jesus console you!"

Jeanne Cadiou

- If she didn't have the means to provide material resources to the sisters, the Good Mother didn't lack spiritual resources to provide for the animation of the life of the sisters and the communities.
- There was first of all her frequent and happy stays in the communities during which she listened profoundly to everyone.
- It is touching to read in her letters how well she knew in detail the behavior of each one.

- how she bore with the faults and the bad behavior of one or the other and, if it became necessary, how she delicately asked a novice to leave.
- The way she treated each sister easily led her to believe that she was the most beloved of all.
- When visiting the communities, she would go every day to see the sisters who were ill.
- And she would recommend not to spare anything to provide them relief.
- Most of the Good Mother's letters are addressed to the superiors of the communities and are filled with sober advice, each one more judicious than the other.
- The theme that comes most from her pen is that of union and peace.
- Others are more specific and take into account the temperament of the recipient of the letter, but she never gives spiritual conferences.
- There is no better way to sum up her realism, her sense of happiness and what is essential in her recommendations than to read a letter she wrote to a sister suffering from scruples.
- "I want to scold you but I don't have the courage: I feel the pain you afflict on yourself.
- You run away from consolation, you worry over nothing, and you don't care about going against the will of those you know know you better than yourself.
- Plunge yourself and for forever, in the sorrowful and loving wound of the Divine Heart of Jesus, there you will find shelter from all the storms.
- Love more and you will fear less!"

2. What are the milestones of the Good Mother's conversion? What touches me most about her life and personality?

Saqaya Samynathan

The conversion of the Good Mother: Her experience of God in prison brought about a total transformation in her life. She remained faithful to this God experience even after she left the prison, it was a lifelong God experience, not a momentary one.

She spent most of her time in adoration before the Blessed Sacrament which deepened in her the longing for God's presence and union with Him and in living a life of personal penance which she felt God asked of her.

The Good Mother did not reveal or speak clearly about her conversion or the Lord's intervention in her life except perhaps to the Good Father in confession.

She expressed her love for God by accepting suffering as part and parcel of her life of union with God. Her mystical life was illuminated by the Cross.

According to the Good Mother, adoration in a spirit of reparation was union with the redemptive Cross of Jesus. The Good God, who had chosen Henriette to become the foundress of a religious Order devoted to his Heart, had given her a soul gifted with such enormous sensitivity that all sufferings of the heart were intense for her.

Living my life in the Sacred Hearts family and participating in the life and mission of the Congregation, I have experienced how the attitudes or virtues of the Good Mother touched my life and have deepened by inner conviction to follow Jesus.

I have a special relationship with the Good Mother, I talk to her and ask certain favors from her at certain moments of my life especially when I am in difficulties. She has been helping and guiding me all through my life's journey. Let me share the aspect that inspired me: trusting in the Providence of God in every situation of my life, I learned to surrender my reality to the Lord. Trusting in the Lord Providence, I experienced the guiding hands of God accompanying me in a very tangible way. I can say that the past year of my life in France, I held on tightly to the Lord's hand!

Second, it was and is my personal prayer that keeps me moving on my journey. More and more, I have come to realize that I can live my consecration and vocation effectively only through total dependence on God and personal communion with the Lord.

Ministering to the poor and responding to the needs of the people have helped me to be available to the poor and the children of Kolkata. Serving the poor always led me to experience the suffering Christ in my life. My service to the people is like a drop of water, but it has made a great difference in the lives of the people.

I believe that I, as well as, each member of the Congregation is called to make a difference in the life of others as our founder and foundress lived and invite us to live.

Our world reality is bringing about a hunger for God's presence. Every heart and hand are raised in prayer to heal the world, sick and in profound need of liberation.

Moved with kindness and generosity for others, I share and experience the tangible presence of Christ in a simple manner and with simple gestures.

Jeanne Cadiou

- The major stages and revealing events in the Good Mother's journey of conversion are different in nature and breadth.
- Throughout her life her conversion to silence and the interior life never hindered her from speaking out when necessary and especially to act.
- Imprisonment with her mother in the Hospitaliere Prison and the way she acted with the other prisoners during the months of detention
- Enlarging the tent of the nascent Congregation which obliged her to move, to be in contact with all kinds of people and instances.
- Thus leaving for Mende in 1802 with half of the community and for the other 16 foundations.
- All of this shows her audacity in going out to spread devotion to the Heart of Jesus.
- Important is her fidelity to grace as a way of permanent conversion.
- What touches me most about her itinerary and personality of the Good Mother
- Is her great humanity and indulgent goodness towards all.
- The Good Mother had a heart as big as the world.

- She was particularly sensitive to the sufferings of her time and did not want to stay there without doing anything.
- Also her spirit of sacrifice. She shared the motto of Joan of Arc, “God first served!” which led to her intense life of prayer.
- She placed herself at the service of the Church shaken by the Revolution.
- She committed herself to the consecrated life, a school in the Lord’s service according to the Rule of St. Benedict.
- She lived this permanent service with great generosity together with the sisters and brothers.
- Her compassion, a eucharistic attitude, intensely lived by the Good Mother.
- And her ardent zeal which brought her close to the wounds and sufferings of others.

3. What are the traits of the Good Mother’s personality as a woman and foundress that are most relevant today?

Saqaya Samynathan

What is necessary and important for each member of the Congregation to live our consecration and vocation effectively and vibrantly is to be persons of prayer whose fruit is evident in our life and mission.

We need to be persons of “God consciousness” whose ministry is done for God and his people.

We are instruments in God’s hands, in need of healing for our own personal woundedness before we go out to our wounded world.

Personal conversion and healing of our own woundedness empower us to touch the lives of people.

We reach out to others in kindness, not seeking name or fame, but only that God be glorified in and through our mission, presence and service.

We can learn a lot from the Good Mother about trusting in God’s Providence and not in our own ability or capability, but relying on the merciful Savior’s guidance.

A person of humility, patience and obedience, the Good Father personally experienced the attitude of the Good Mother in his life and knew that the spirit of God led her on an extraordinary path.

Our foundress invites us to a profound way of life that at times may be difficult to live out.

Jeanne Cadiou

- To me certain traits of the personality of the Good Mother makes her a good model for women today.
- The Good Mother lived as a simple witness to the Christian life with great generosity of heart.

- She knew how to listen to the cry of the little ones and committed herself to lighten the great physical and moral miseries.
- Notably by the particular care she herself gave to families in need and by the education of little girls in opening free schools.
- Loyal and enthusiastic in everything she did, she can be considered an attractive example, able to touch the young and not so young who value authenticity, respect for life and integral human promotion in everyday life.
- Henriette was sensitive to the misfortunes of the Church in his time.
- “May the Heart of Jesus be your strength, your refuge, your support.”
- “I desire to consume myself like a candle.” Her zeal in developing the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts corresponds to her desire to raise up the Institution of the Church from the ruins.
- Brought about by the French Revolution in the places where she had set up communities of Sisters.

4. Prayer of the Good Mother for the Congregation Today

Saqaya Samynathan

Dear Lord, we thank you for the genuine and charismatic person of our foundress Henriette Aymer de la Chevalerie, a wonderful gift to the Church.

Thank you, Lord, for using her as an instrument. Through her the Congregation spread far and wide.

We thank you for the charism of the Congregation.

Give each member of the Congregation the courage to live our faith boldly and consistently.

It was your spirit and presence which moved our foundress. We also believe that it is the same spirit and your presence in our lives that moves us to be the people of God, whether we realize it or not.

Deepen in us the deep desire for you in our lives.

May everything we do lead us one step further towards you and the people around us.

Through our lives and mission, may we witness your love, goodness and compassion to others.

Heal our wounds, so that we in turn may be healers of the world’s wounds.

Watch over each member of the Congregation and give us courage to proclaim your redemptive love to the world.

Lead us always in your footsteps to live out the charism of the Congregation effectively and vibrantly.
Amen.

Jeanne Cadiou

As prayer of the Good Mother, I would like to cite a phrase, an expression that speaks of her devotion to Mary and her consecration to her Heart:

The Blessed Virgin is and will always be our Protectress; we will always have a part in the affections of her Heart; we need to have recourse to her in our pain and desolations, in our infidelities. She will pray for us if we invoke her rather than being desolate.

Like the Good Mother and with her, let us pray to Mary which will allow us to join the marathon of prayer to Mary during the month of May 2021 to obtain the eradication of the pandemic.

Video 5: DAMIEN – LEUVEN - TREMELO

Visit to the historical Places of the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary (SSCC) in Leuven and Tremelo (Belgium).

LEUVEN

- Saint Peter's Church
- The City Hall
- The library of KUL
- Saint Michael's Church
- Damien's Center
- Chapel of candles
- Damien's Center: children and youth want to know more about Father Damien

The first convent of the fathers of the Sacred Hearts in Europe outside France, was founded in the heart of the city of Leuven in 1840.

In the year 1840, the still young Congregation of the fathers of the Sacred Hearts settled in Leuven. They moved into a historic building along the Sint-Antoniusberg, the so called, Divaeuscollege and some adjacent houses.

Next to the monastery was a famous old chapel: Saint Anthony's Chapel, which, however, was neglected. It served for a storage space for anything and everything.

In September 1858, father Wenceslas Vincke was appointed fourth superior of the monastery. The chapel of the monastery had, meanwhile, become too small, and fr. Vincke conceived the plan to buy and restore this neglected Saint Anthony's Chapel.

But that would cost a lot of money. Out of his personal love for Saint Joseph, he then made a double promise: "If he could buy the chapel, he would erect a sanctuary in it in honor of Saint Joseph and show devotion to the "father of Nazareth" with great devotion.

One of the first members was Joseph De Veuster, later Father Damien, who asked in 1859 to enter the novitiate of the monastery. He chose the eighth day of the month to pay homage to his patron saint in a special way.

Fr. Vincke received the necessary funds and was able to purchase the chapel in 1860 and after 8 years of restoration work it was consecrated on July 22, 1869.

The celebration of the month of St. Joseph, March, gradually got underway and the number of the faithful grew.

Chapel of St. Anthony / Sanctuary of St. Joseph / Crypt of Father Damian.

"Already existed in 1329 as a "Clerics' Chapel", seat of fraternity of clerics. Later it was occupied by the Faculty of Arts and was dedicated to Saint Anthony, the hermit.

Since 1860 it was the chapel of the monastery of the Fathers of the H Hearts or Bernardines. Building of the 16th century, considerably changed in the 19th and 20th centuries.

A modern crypt was built under the historic chapel where in 1936 the mortal remains of Father Damien, apostle of the lepers on Molokai, were transferred. He was beatified in 1995."

The stained glass windows represent the four ages of Christ.

Fr. Vincke received the necessary funds and was able to buy the chapel in 1860 and after 8 years of restoration work it was consecrated on July 22, 1868.

The celebration of the month of St. Joseph, March, gradually got underway and the number of the faithful grew.

But Fr. Vincke was not given the opportunity to experience the blossoming of the devotion. He died on August 19, 1875.

This flourishing came thanks to the efforts of a dynamic figure: Fr. Maurits Raepsaet (+ 1905).

He reorganized the Society and built up a network of volunteers, male and female zealots, throughout the country. In 1901 there were 300,000 members registered in the "Society of St. Joseph".

Statue of St. Joseph (made in 1883, commissioned by Fr. Raepsaet). Made of lime wood.

Every March come to St. Joseph pilgrims from various regions of the country and even from neighboring countries.

Gradually more pilgrims came, at first individually, not only from Belgium, but also from neighboring countries.

But it was in 1901 that the pilgrimages organized by the zealots and the parish clergy really began. They came not only in the month of March, but also throughout the year. In 1902 there were 400 groups, of which 136 were during the month of March.

In the period between the two world wars (1920... 1934), in the midst of the crisis, St. Joseph's House of Charity was erected on Ramberg Street, where pilgrims could pray "the seven sorrows and seven joys of St. Joseph" in an atmosphere of peace, where several Masses could be celebrated in the open air when the church was very crowded.

Statue of Fr. Damien by F. Reyniers

However, this growing success was inevitably followed by a decline. Along with the zeitgeist, the image of the Church and the faith also changed. The devotional faded into the background. The recruitment of zealots, who had been a great help, stopped.

However, in 1960 (after the construction of the new monastery) it was still considered necessary to enlarge and modernize the chapel.

St. Joseph is still honored in Louvain. Pilgrims continue to come, although in smaller numbers.

In 2019 there were 2,500 (30 groups), plus many individually.

By the way, candles continue to burn daily in the candle chapel.

Candle Chapel, with the image of the Holy Family, by sculptor Willy D'Have.

The stained glass windows painted by J. Mortier representing Father Damien come from the old school of Suarlée, near Namur (Belgium).

"I find my greatest happiness in serving the Lord in his poor and sick children who are rejected by others" Fr. Damien De Veuster.

Celebration of Father Damien's canonization in 2009, in Leuven.

We are going to visit TREMELO, the hometown of Father Damien.

The distance between Leuven and Tremelo is approximately 12.5 kilometers.

TREMELO

This is the parish church of Tremelo, where Joseph De Veuster was baptized on January 3, 1840.

Joseph was born and baptized on the same day. He was born in the small village of Ninde, which is still today administratively part of Tremelo. In his birth house the SSCC Fathers built the Damien Museum. It has now been modernized with the help of several sponsors.

The first stone of the DAMIAN MUSEUM 2015

At the museum facility visitors can access more information related to the museum's collections.

This facility allows visitors to select postcards, write messages or open letters from Damien.

Damien Bridge, towards a new, more open and friendly world, inspired by Fr. Damien's spirit of life and service among the leprosy patients, the marginalized.

Damien Museum welcomes all those who want to learn more about the life of Fr. Damien and be inspired by the spirit of his ministry.

The Basilica of Our Lady of Scherpenheuvel is a famous place of pilgrimage in Belgium, dating back hundreds of years. Damien was one of those pilgrims. Before leaving for the Hawaiian Islands as a missionary he made his last pilgrimage to this place.

The distance between Leuven and Scherpenheuvel is about 24 kilometers.

The distance between Tremelo and Scherpenheuvel is about 19 km.

A Damien statue inside the basilica as a symbol of his pilgrimage before leaving for the mission land.

Thanks for watching!

The Damien Center Team. Leuven. Belgium.