



## Letter of the Superior Generals

Rome, 27 March 2023  
Feast of the Good Father

# ESSENTIAL LUGGAGE

Dear brothers, sisters and Secular Branch members,

In gratitude, we join in the celebrations of the birth in Heaven of Fr. Marie-Joseph Coudrin. Along with the Good Mother, the Good Father knew how to nourish the living flame of the missionary zeal of our religious family. That is to say, he looked for ways to place at the service of the Church what is the most essential vow of the members of our religious family, namely, that we no longer live for ourselves, but work for the salvation of our brothers and sisters.

To fulfil this most essential vow the Good Father encouraged the brothers who had left their homeland, their families, to "bring the Gospel" to new mission lands: Oceania-Hawaii, the Gambier Islands, California, New Brunswick (Canada), and in Valparaiso, Chile.



Thus, in his little memos - a kind of *twitter* of the time - the Good Father expressed his closeness to the missionaries, his accompaniment of them in prayer. At the same time, he entrusted them with treasures of spiritual life. He gave advice that would become part of the essential luggage of these missionaries.

The Good Father in a note to Edmond Désmilliers, who was working with the Passaqommodis people in New Brunswick wrote: "*We always remember you in our holy sacrifices*". (LEBM 1954, 11 October 1834).

To Alexis Bachelot, the first apostolic prefect of the Hawaiian Islands, he wrote "*Let there be among you one heart and soul*" (LEBP 1955, 12 October 1834). Together with Fr. Patrick Short, Fr. Abraham Armand and many lay brothers, they were the founders of the Catholic mission in these islands. When he received this message from the Good Father, Alexis was in exile in California. How those words must have resonated in the hearts of these missionaries! There he worked with the Franciscans at the Los Angeles Mission for over 6 years before returning to Hawaii in 1837.

"*Arm yourself with renewed courage, my dear father, and may the bond of charity keep you ever closer together*", he wrote to Fr. Chrysostome Liausu (LEBP 1955, 12 October 1834). Fr.



Chrysostome had just arrived in Valparaiso in 1834 with Fathers Caret, Laval and Murphy. These three would continue their journey to the Gambier Islands while Father Chrysostome remained in Chile. He would become the founder of the congregation's presence in that country.

*"Continue, my dear father, to be blameless before God and man"* - he wrote to Fr. Honoré Laval (LEBP 1957, 12 October 1834) who was *en route* to the Gambier Islands. In fact he had just arrived, along with Brother Columban Murphy who were to be pioneers of the mission in those areas.

Letters were slow in arriving. In those days they could not count on the immediacy of our communications. It was necessary to think of something essential to remind the brothers of their vocation and to encourage them in the mission they were founding. The fundamental things of life could be said in a few words.

In the light of these words, we invite you in your personal or community adoration to converse with the Good Father. Let us share with him what we are living, our joys and our concerns for the SSCC mission, and let us ask him this: What is the essential word that he has for each one of us? May the fraternal intercession of the Good Father rekindle our missionary zeal.

Fraternally,

Patricia Villarroel ssc  
*Superior General*

Alberto Toutin ssc  
*Superior General*

# ADORATION

## "BID ME COME TO YOU ON THE WATER"

### ■ Introduction

The Lord calls us, the family of the Sacred Hearts, to celebrate the feast of the Good Father by making time for adoration, the origin of our charism. May this prayerful time allow us to contemplate Jesus Christ so that, having him at the centre of our lives, we may accompany him. We place ourselves in the presence of a God who transcends us, and yet meets each one of us and continues to speak to us in our present situations.

Let us be silent in order to open ourselves to his Word, discovering in the Lord the Good God. Let us truly live his presence among us, for only in this way will we be able to proclaim him from heart to heart. And let us ask him this: **What is the essential word that he has for each one of us?**

### ■ Exposition (song/music)

### ■ Biblical text

### ■ A reading from the Gospel according to Matthew

“Then he made the disciples get into the boat and go before him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up into the hills by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, but the boat by this time was many furlongs distant from the land,[a] beaten by the waves; for the wind was against them. And in the fourth watch of the night he came to them, walking on the sea. But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, saying, «It is a ghost!» And they cried out for fear. But immediately he spoke to them, saying, «Take heart, it is I; have no fear.» And Peter answered him, «Lord, if it is you, bid me come to you on the water.» He said, «Come.» So Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water and came to Jesus; but when he saw the wind,[b] he was afraid, and beginning to sink he cried out, «Lord, save me.» Jesus immediately reached out his hand and caught him, saying to him, «O man of

little faith, why did you doubt?» And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased. And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, «Truly you are the Son of God.»” (Mt 14:22-33).

- **Song**

- **Text for meditation (1<sup>st</sup> moment)**

“His cousins and those in the castle were the only people who knew his true identity. However, the situation was delicate and could not last. Pierre said goodbye to each of them and rode off on horseback with his cousin. Immediately they both disappeared into the forest. But in the middle of the night they returned to the farm. From then on, Pierre lived in seclusion: "In my granary, I was installed in such a way that I could not stand erect. Sometimes I went down through a trapdoor into the office of Maumin where I had about three feet to walk. The lack of exercise extremely exhausted me. What I ate was almost always cold because of the difficulty of bringing it to my hiding place. What disturbed me still more was my breathing. I had become so dehydrated, so thin, that my skin adhered to my bones and my body expelled such an odour that it almost poisoned me". For the twenty-four year old priest, this time of trial was an extraordinary spiritual experience. Suffering, loneliness and the uncertainty of tomorrow would be the desert in which he discovered the proximity of a God faithful to his tenderness, a God who speaks to the heart" (Bernard Couronne ssc, *Andatierra*).

- **Time of silence**

Peter was in the boat before the swell. Coudrin was in the granary while outside the storm of revolution raged: what is the sea upon which I am sailing at this moment that threatens to engulf me? What sufferings surround us? What thoughts come to me at this time? Let us offer it all to the Lord.

- **Song/Music**

- **Text for meditation (2<sup>nd</sup> moment)**

"Our young priest, full of ardour, bore badly being reduced to inactivity when there was so much to do. But what could he do? Perplexed, he prayed until a day in September when, as he recounts: "having returned to my granary after celebrating

the Mass, I knelt before the corporal on which I believed the Blessed Sacrament was always present. I saw what we are now. It seemed to me that we were many gathered together; forming a great group of missionaries called to spread the Gospel everywhere." In Pierre Coudrin there is something of a new Moses. The Eucharist celebrated is his burning bush. The weeks followed one after the other. On 20 October 1792, Pierre read in his breviary the account of the martyrdom of St Caprasius, Bishop of Agen. This shepherd of the fourth century, fleeing persecution, took refuge on the mountain overlooking the town. From there, he had a view of what was happening: he saw a young girl under 20 years of age, Saint Faith, endure martyrdom rather than renounce her faith. The old bishop felt like a coward. He immediately left his refuge and presented himself to the persecutor Dacian. I am a Christian, he told him; my name is Caprasius. Firm in his faith, he achieved martyrdom. It took no more than a reading of this account to persuade Pierre to leave his hiding place at once. The Maumins and the Viarts tried in vain to bring him to his senses: "When I finally left Maumin," he says, "I prostrated myself at the foot of an oak tree not far from the house and I offered my life to God. I had become a priest with the intention of suffering everything, of sacrificing myself to the Good Lord, and, if need be, of dying in his service. However, I always had the presentiment that I would escape ..." (Bernard Couronne ssc, *Andatierra*).

#### ■ Time of silence

Peter jumped out of the boat, Joseph-Marie Coudrin immediately left his hiding place inspired by Saint Caprasius: How are you living your zeal for the mission? What inspires you to take the leap?

#### ■ Song Music

#### ■ Sharing

#### ■ Our Father

#### ■ Final blessing

#### ■ Salve Regina