

MY PERSONAL HISTORY MAKES SOCIETY HISTORY

TOPIC 1

**God and Father,
You consecrated me from the moment of my baptism in the Church,
and your love drew me to follow your Son Jesus
in total surrender.
Led by your Spirit,
I feel called to live in union with Jesus
and to participate in community in His evangelizing Mission[...] Art. 15**

INTRODUCTION

In this **first theme**, each of us is invited to:

- **REMEMBER** our own spiritual history, recognizing the Lord's presence in it.
- **BE AWARE** that "my history of salvation" is part of the "History of the Society."
- **SHARE** "something" of our personal histories with the community.

*This involves a **twofold exercise**: personal prayer and spiritual conversation in community. Because this is such a vital topic, we recommend setting aside some personal time for the "preparing the heart" part prior to the community meeting.*

PREPARING THE HEART

PERSONAL TIME to REMEMBER your story of salvation and BECOME AWARE that your story is part of the history of the Society. This exercise requires a long time (or several times).

Become AWARE of the PRESENCE of the Lord, with whom you are going to remember (take to heart) your history of relationship with Him in the Society.

Some suggestions for "remembering":

- ➔ **VISUALIZE** your history, from your early years in your family... RECOGNIZE different stages in your relationship with God and/or following Jesus in the Society. The beginning of the formula of vows may help you:
 - *"You consecrated me from baptism in the Church"... What does this baptismal consecration mean to me?*
 - *"Your love drew me to follow your Son Jesus"... What was that "attraction" to Jesus like? How did I live then and how do I live now this desire to follow Him "in total surrender"?*
- ➔ **REMEMBER** places, people, "missions," circumstances, words or phrases... that are especially meaningful. "Something" that helped you feel "in the Society"...
- ➔ **FORMULATE**, in a short sentence, the experience you remember from some of the stages or from a very significant moment.
- ➔ When you finish... **THANK** the Lord for the story He has been weaving with you.

WE MEET

We can begin the community meeting by RECITING TOGETHER the beginning of the Profession Formula.

**"God and Father,
You consecrated me from baptism in the Church,
and your love drew me to follow your Son Jesus
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In silence, we DELVE a little deeper into the meaning of what we have recited.

- **"Led by your Spirit"**... Have I allowed the Spirit to guide my life?
- **"Living in union with Jesus"**... What does this mean for me today?
- **"Participating in the community of your Evangelizing Mission"**... What do these words mean to me today, at this time, in this context where I find myself, and in these 150 years of the anniversary of the mission of the Society of Saint Teresa?



CAUNADAS No. 962

The song EXPRESSES and MOTIVATES what we are going to SHARE: The LIFE of each one of us, our personal richness, our peculiarities... Different steps, different significant moments... But we have ALL been called by the same Lord. We agree on following Jesus in the Society, and we all form the HISTORY OF THE Society in recent decades.

Each one has her own calling,
each with her own perspective,
with her way of being
and her way of loving,
each with her own caunadas.

A different past,
a future to share...
And despite our differences,
what has brought us here weighs more heavily.

GOD HAS GIVEN ME SISTERS,
A GIFT FOR MY WEAKNESS,
BECAUSE THE KINGDOM IS NOT LIVED ALONE,
IT IS BUILT IN COMMUNITY (repeat)

WE SHARE OUR STORIES

"We share who we are and what we live. We welcome with gratitude and value the gift that each sister is" (Art. 23).

At this point, we share what we have prayed, given thanks for, and remembered personally in the first part of this worksheet: "We prepare our hearts." Before beginning, it is a good idea to set a **"maximum time"** (2, 3, 4 minutes) for each sister's contribution. It is very important to create an **atmosphere of ATTENTIVE LISTENING to each sister.**

CONCLUSION

At the end ...

- A second circle can be formed (if there is time and we wish to do so), sharing reflections on what has been heard.
- Or simply end with A MEANINGFUL SONG for the community. For example:

Led by your Spirit (Carmen Cañada) **Keep the Memory of Jesus Alive** (Isabel Toyos) **Love is all we have** (Carmen Cañada) **We give you thanks** (Cristóbal Fones) **Today, Lord, I will give you thanks for my life** (Brotos de Olivo)

TEXTS FOR FURTHER REFLECTION

The book *The Life of Saint Teresa* is an exercise in MEMORY and GRATITUDE to the God of Jesus, whose Presence has accompanied her since childhood, although Teresa discovers this later. Saint Henry also left us the *Notes on the Mercies of the Lord*, a faithful re-reading of his life, inspired by Saint Teresa. But perhaps the most inspiring exercise in grateful memory by Henry is found in the Prologue to the *Three Little Flowers to the Virgin of Montserrat*. In dialogue with Mary, Henry recalls, that is, passing through his heart, the most transcendental moments of his life, lived precisely there, in Montserrat.



FROM THE BOOK *THE LIFE OF TERESA OF JESUS*

"Many times I have thought with awe of God's great goodness and my soul has been filled with joy at seeing his great magnificence and mercy [...]. However base and imperfect my works may have been, my Lord improved and perfected them and gave them value" (V 4,10b).

"If I had to speak often of the way the Lord has treated me in these early days, I would not know how to express what I owe him [...]. May he who has suffered so much for me be blessed forever. Amen" (V 4,11).

Trust in God's goodness, which is greater than all the evil we can do, and He does not remember our ingratitude when we, knowing ourselves, want to return to His friendship [...].

Remember his words and look at what he has done for me, who first tired of offending him so much that His Majesty stopped forgiving me. He never tires of giving, nor can his mercies be exhausted. Let us not tire of receiving" (V 19,17 end).

"When my soul reached the point where God granted me this great mercy, my troubles ceased, and the Lord gave me the strength to overcome them [...]. Everything was a means for me to know God better and to love him and see what I owed him and regret what I had been. I understood well that this did not come from me, nor had I earned it through my diligence. His Majesty had given me strength for it by His goodness alone" (V 21,12 final).

"May it please you, my Good, that a time may come when I can repay something of what I owe you [...]. Strengthen my soul and dispose it first, Good of all goods and my Jesus, and then order ways for me to do something for you, for there is no one who suffers so much and pays nothing" (V 21,5).



FROM THE PROLOGUE TO TRES FLORECILLAS: "TO MARY OF MONTSERRAT," BY ENRIQUE DE OSSÓ

"...Alone, and by difficult paths, I came to your feet. How tired of the world! At your feet I found the peace I had lost... Next to the throne of your mercies, I awoke as if from a deep sleep... I found my vocation. You guided me, though I do not remember how. Star of the seas, Morning Star, Star of Catalonia! You shone in my eyes, I followed your light, and when you showed me Jesus, the blessed fruit of your womb, when I saw him so graceful and beautiful, I said: I will always belong to Jesus, his minister, his apostle, his missionary of peace and love [...]. On your altar I celebrated my first Mass, on the day of the Rosary, thirteen years later [...] Five years passed and I did not come alone: other daughters raised in the shadow of Teresa of Jesus climbed this mountain..." (EEO III, 194-7).