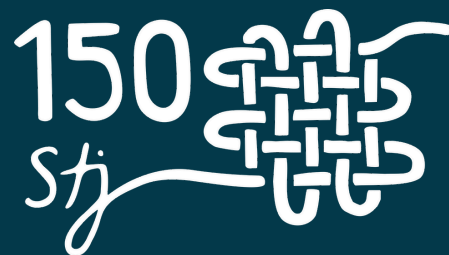


OUR HISTORY

150 years of the Society of Saint Teresa of Jesus



This material presents a selection of the central milestones of the 150 years of the Society of Saint Teresa of Jesus, in a visual and synthetic format that offers an overview of its history.

These pages have been compiled from a source document prepared by IDEO. This resource does not aim to exhaust the richness of the historical journey, but rather to highlight key moments.

For further information, you are invited to visit the website and consult the available supplementary documents.

19TH CENTURY CONTEXT

150 YEARS

SOCIETY OF SAINT TERESA OF JESUS

KEY EVENTS

HISTORY OF LATIN AMERICA (1876-2024)

KEY EVENTS

HISTORY OF AFRICA (1945-2024)

KEY EVENTS

HISTORY OF THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH

19TH CENTURY CONTEXT

19th Century: The Century of Revolutions

The 19th century was a time of profound and rapid change that laid the foundations for the contemporary world. Marked by the echoes of the French Revolution and the Industrial Revolution, the European political landscape, and by extension the world, was immersed in constant tension between the forces of the Old Regime and the new ideologies that sought to redefine society. This turbulent scenario had a direct and often conflictive impact on religion and culture, which were forced to adapt, resist, or transform themselves in the face of new paradigms.

The new political order: Liberalism, Nationalism, and Socialism

The driving force behind political change in the 19th century was undoubtedly liberalism. Heir to the Enlightenment, it defended national sovereignty, the separation of powers, individual freedoms (expression, press, assembly) and private property. Its main instrument was the enactment of constitutions that limited the absolute power of monarchs and established the rules of the political game. However, liberalism was not a homogeneous movement. It was divided into two main currents:

- **Doctrinal or moderate liberalism:** Defended by the upper bourgeoisie, it sought a balance between order and freedom. It advocated census suffrage, which limited the right to vote to the wealthiest and most educated, and preferred constitutional monarchy as a form of government.
- **Democratic or progressive liberalism:** Supported by the middle and working classes, it aspired to greater democratization. It defended universal male suffrage, the republic as the most suitable form of government, and greater state intervention to reduce social inequalities.

At the same time, nationalism emerged as a major political force. Driven by romantic ideas that exalted the "spirit of the people" (Volksgeist), nationalism held that every nation, understood as a community with a common language, history, and culture, had the right to form its own state. This principle had two aspects;

- **Unifying nationalism:** Movements that sought to unite populations of the same nation that were scattered across different political entities into a single state. The clearest examples were the unification of Italy (1861) and the unification of Germany (1871).

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- **Unifying nationalism:** Movements that sought to unite populations of the same nation, dispersed across different political entities, into a single state. The clearest examples were the unification of Italy (1861) and the unification of Germany (1871).
- **Disintegrative nationalism:** Movements that sought the independence of nations that were part of large multinational empires, such as the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the Russian Empire, or the Ottoman Empire.

The third major ideology to burst onto the political scene was socialism. Born in the heat of the Industrial Revolution and the harsh living conditions of the proletariat, socialism denounced the inequalities generated by capitalism and proposed a new social organization based on collective ownership of the means of production. Within socialism, utopian socialism (with thinkers such as Saint-Simon, Fourier, and Owen) and, above all, scientific socialism or Marxism, formulated by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, stood out. Marxism called for class struggle as the engine of history to achieve a classless communist society.

These ideological movements manifested themselves in a series of revolutionary waves that shook Europe (1820, 1830, and especially the "Spring of Nations" of 1848), as well as in the consolidation of nation-states and the imperialist expansion of European powers in Africa and Asia in the last third of the century.

The impact on religion: secularization and conflict

The new liberal and nationalist order clashed head-on with the hegemonic role that the Church had played during the Ancien Régime. The 19th century was therefore a period of intense conflict between the state and the Church and of a progressive process of secularization of society.

Liberalism promoted freedom of conscience and freedom of worship, which meant the end of religious monopoly and the recognition of plurality of beliefs. The new liberal states sought to assert their sovereignty over the Church through various measures:

- **Confiscations:** Expropriation and sale of the Church's vast land holdings to restore the public finances and create a new class of landowners sympathetic to the liberal regime.
- **Suppression of religious orders:** Especially those considered contemplative and not dedicated to teaching or charity.
- **Establishment of civil marriage and civil cemeteries:** The state assumed functions that had previously been the exclusive competence of the Church, such as the regulation of marriage and burial.
- **State control of education:** Secular public education systems were created to educate citizens in the values of the new state, competing directly with traditional religious education.

The Catholic Church reacted with condemnation and entrenchment. Pope Pius IX, in his encyclical *Quanta Cura* and in the *Syllabus Errorum* (1864), condemned liberalism, rationalism, socialism, and the separation of Church and State. The culmination of this stance was the proclamation of the dogma of papal infallibility at the First Vatican Council (1870), which reinforced the authority of the pontiff vis-à-vis the states.

Despite this official resistance, the process of secularization advanced unstoppably. Science, with theories such as Darwin's evolutionism, offered an explanation of the world that challenged the biblical account of Creation, generating a profound crisis of faith in many sectors of society. Urban and industrial life, more anonymous and subject to new rhythms, also contributed to the weakening of traditional religious practices linked to the rural world.

The impact on culture: from Romanticism to Realism

Nineteenth-century culture reflected the political and social tensions of the era. Two major artistic and literary movements dominated the scene: Romanticism and Realism.

Romanticism, which flourished in the first half of the century, was the cultural expression of the age of revolutions. It rebelled against the rationalism of the Enlightenment and exalted feelings, imagination, subjectivity, and individual freedom. Romantic artists were fascinated by national history, popular traditions, exotic landscapes, and the supernatural. In literature, figures such as Lord Byron, Victor Hugo, and Goethe embodied the ideal of the Romantic hero, a passionate individual in conflict with a society that does not understand him. In painting, artists such as Delacroix and Géricault captured the political turmoil and drama of existence on their canvases.

From the middle of the century onwards, the failure of the revolutions of 1848 and the consolidation of bourgeois and industrial society gave way to Realism. This movement, in clear contrast to Romanticism, sought to represent reality objectively and faithfully, paying special attention to the social problems of its time. Realist writers such as Balzac, Flaubert, Dickens, and Galdós became chroniclers of bourgeois society, meticulously portraying class tensions, social hypocrisy, and the harsh living conditions of the proletariat. In painting, artists such as Courbet and Millet abandoned historical and exotic themes to focus on scenes of everyday life and work.

In addition, nationalism strongly permeated culture. Medieval literature was recovered and edited, folk tales and legends were compiled (as the Grimm brothers did), nationally inspired operas and music were composed (Verdi in Italy, Wagner in Germany), and a historiography was developed that sought to legitimize the existence of the nation through an idealized past. Culture became a fundamental tool for the construction of new national identities.

The 19th Century in Catalonia: Industrialization, Renaixença and Conflict

Catalonia experienced the 19th century in a particular and accelerated way, becoming the engine of the Industrial Revolution in Spain and, at the same time, a scene of profound political, social, and cultural tensions. While much of Spain remained anchored in an agrarian economy, the Principality experienced rapid industrial development, especially in the textile sector, which transformed its social structure and turned it into a hotbed of new ideologies.

A tense political and social mosaic

The Catalan political landscape was particularly turbulent and polarized. On the one hand, a thriving industrial bourgeoisie, concentrated in Barcelona and other manufacturing cities, embraced liberalism as the necessary framework for its economic development. However, this bourgeoisie was often protectionist, demanding that the Spanish state impose tariffs to protect its fledgling industry from foreign competition.

At the opposite end of the spectrum was Carlism, which had one of its main strongholds in rural and inland Catalonia. Defender of absolutism, fueros (special privileges) and the preeminence of the Catholic Church, Carlism channeled the discontent of the peasantry against liberal reforms and the new centralist order. Catalonia was, therefore, one of the main theaters of the three Carlist Wars that ravaged Spain throughout the century.

Industrialization gave rise to a new social class: the proletariat. Crowded into working-class neighborhoods in unsanitary conditions and working exhausting hours, Catalan workers soon developed a strong class consciousness. This made Catalonia the cradle of the Spanish labor movement, which in its early days was strongly influenced by anarchism and socialism. Strikes, riots, and social unrest were a constant feature, notably the popular uprisings known as "bullangues" (particularly virulent between 1835 and 1843), which often had a strong anti-clerical component.

Secularization by fire and the "war of the two bell towers"

The conflict between the new liberal, urban world and traditional Catholic rural values was particularly intense in Catalonia. Secularization was not a peaceful process, but often manifested itself with extreme violence. The anticlericalism of the urban working classes, who saw the Church as a pillar of the Old Regime and an ally of employers, exploded in episodes such as the burning of convents in Barcelona in 1835, a traumatic event that marked a turning point.

This gave rise to a duality that has been described as the "war of the two bell towers": that of the secular and liberal modernity of Barcelona versus that of the Catholic and Carlist tradition of inland Catalonia. The confiscations of Mendizábal (1836) and Madoz (1855) had a devastating impact on the heritage of the Catalan Church, which lost vast properties and economic power. This, in turn, changed the urban and rural landscape, with the

conversion of convents and monasteries into barracks, factories, or public spaces. Faced with this advance of secularization, the Church and conservative sectors reacted with a movement of ideological and social rearmament. Figures such as the Bishop of Vic, Josep Torras i Bages, attempted to formulate a Catholic and conservative Catalanism at the end of the century, with their slogan "Catalonia will be Christian or it will not be," seeking to reconcile Catalan identity with religious tradition in the face of secularism and revolutionary labor movements.

The cultural awakening: the Renaixença

In this context of economic and social transformation, the most important cultural movement of 19th-century Catalonia emerged: the Renaixença. It was a movement to recover and dignify the Catalan language and culture, which had been relegated to domestic and popular use since the 18th century.

The Renaixença had a dual character. On the one hand, it was a literary and scholarly movement, whose symbolic starting point was the publication of Bonaventura Carles Aribau's "Oda a la Pàtria" (Ode to the Fatherland) in 1833. Its main platform was the restoration of the Jocs Florals (Floral Games) in 1859, a poetry competition that brought prestige to the literary use of Catalan.

Figures such as the poet Jacint Verdaguer, author of great epic poems such as *L'Atlàntida* and *Canigó*, took the language to its highest levels of expression.

On the other hand, the *Renaixença* had a more popular side, with the rise of theater, the press, and publications in Catalan that reached a wider audience. This cultural renaissance was largely driven by the industrial bourgeoisie, who saw the patronage of Catalan culture as a way to assert their identity and power.

Although in its early days the *Renaixença* was mainly a cultural and apolitical movement, it laid the foundations for the birth of political Catalanism at the end of the century. By recovering their own language, history, and traditions, a sense of distinct identity was created that would eventually be articulated in political projects such as the *Bases de Manresa* (1892), the founding document of conservative Catalanism.

The impact on Tortosa: a stronghold between two worlds

Due to its strategic position as the capital of the lower Ebro region and seat of an influential bishopric, Tortosa experienced the 19th century as a microcosm of the tensions that were tearing Catalonia and Spain apart. The city became a crossroads, both geographically and ideologically, and a coveted military target.

During the Carlist Wars, Tortosa was a liberal stronghold surrounded by a predominantly Carlist territory (the *Maestrazgo* and the mountainous areas of the interior). The city suffered constant sieges and clashes, which militarized its daily life and reinforced its role as a bastion of liberal order against the traditionalist insurrection. The Carlist general Ramón Cabrera, the "Tiger of the *Maestrazgo*," had Tortosa as one of his main objectives, although he never managed to conquer it.

In the religious sphere, the presence of the Bishopric of Tortosa made it a center of ecclesiastical and conservative power. The seminary was a hotbed of traditionalist thought, in clear opposition to the secular trends that were gaining ground elsewhere. However, the city was not immune to the secularization process. The confiscation of church property affected its numerous convents, transforming the urban landscape, and the city's liberal and republican circles also staged episodes of anticlericalism, although these were less intense than in Barcelona.

Culturally, the Renaixença arrived in Tortosa later and with less force than in the large urban centers. However, throughout the second half of the century, local figures emerged, such as the historian and writer Teodor Gonzàlez i Sanchis, who began to write in Catalan and research local history and traditions. The local press also began to flourish.

The construction of key infrastructure, such as the railway bridge over the Ebro River (1868), symbolized the difficult and slow arrival of industrial modernity in a city deeply marked by its agricultural past and its identity as a frontier town. Tortosa went through the 19th century maintaining a strong traditional character, where the power of the Church and agricultural cycles continued to set the pace of life, but increasingly feeling the winds of political, economic, and cultural change that were transforming the country.

19th Century Art in Spain: Between Goya, History, and the Light of the Mediterranean

The 19th century in Spanish art is a story of contrasts, beginning with the colossal and solitary figure of Francisco de Goya and ending with the explosion of light and color of Sorolla and Modernism. While Europe experienced a rapid succession of "isms," Spain digested these movements at its own pace, marked by profound political instability, the weight of academic tradition, and constant tension between traditionalism and openness to modernity.

The Shadow of Goya and Academicism

The century begins with a genius who is, in himself, a summary and a prophecy of the art to come. Francisco de Goya transitions from being a refined Rococo court painter to becoming the first modern artist. His series of engravings such as *Los Caprichos* (The Caprices) and *Los desastres de la guerra* (The Disasters of War) are a social critique and a brutal chronicle of human cruelty. His *Pinturas Negras* (Black Paintings), created in the solitude of the Quinta del Sordo, are an unprecedented immersion into the dark and irrational, anticipating 20th-century Expressionism.

After Goya, Spanish art plunged into a more conservative academicism. Neoclassicism and Romanticism arrived late and in a restrained manner.

The most representative painter of this transition is Federico de Madrazo, an exceptional portraitist of Elizabethan society, who combines the Neoclassical technique with Romantic elegance and intimacy.

History painting and preciousness

In the middle of the century, the dominant genre, promoted by the state to forge a national identity, was history painting. These were gigantic canvases depicting glorious episodes from Spain's past. Works such as *Doña Juana la Loca* by Francisco Pradilla Ortiz and *El último día de Numancia* (The Last Day of Numancia) by Alejo Vera are examples of this grandiloquent style, with impeccable drawing and great drama, which triumphed at the National Fine Arts Exhibitions.

At the same time, the figure of Mariano Fortuny emerged, a technical virtuoso who achieved international fame. His style, known as *preciosismo* or "pintura de casacón" (painting of the upper classes), revelled in period scenes with meticulous detail and brilliant, vibrant brushstrokes. Although he was often criticized for his evasive subject matter, his mastery of color and light in his Orientalist scenes and watercolors had an enormous influence on later painting.

Realism, Impressionism, and the turn-of-the-century explosion

Realism in Spain had a more social and traditional character, reflecting the traditions and harsh living conditions of the people, although without the political denunciation of French realism.

True modernization came at the end of the century. Although French Impressionism did not have a cohesive group in Spain, its influence was decisive. The key figure is Joaquín Sorolla, leader of the Valencian luminist school. Sorolla did not strictly adopt Impressionist theory, but he shared its passion for outdoor painting and capturing light. His scenes of children playing on the beach, fishermen, and women strolling along the seashore are a celebration of Mediterranean light, captured with energetic, loose brushstrokes and dazzling colors.

At the same time, in Catalonia, *Modernisme* emerged, a movement of cultural and artistic renewal linked to the industrial bourgeoisie and Catalan nationalism. Artists such as Ramón Casas and Santiago Rusiñol, who trained in bohemian Paris, imported the new trends and promoted a total art that ranged from painting and architecture to poster art and design.

Their paintings reflected modern life in Barcelona, its cafés, its crowds, and its cultural elite, with a very characteristic elegance and melancholy that connected with European Symbolism.

Nineteenth-century philosophy in Spain: The struggle between tradition and Krausism

Nineteenth-century Spanish philosophy is the story of a late and turbulent awakening. Caught between the weight of Catholic tradition and the spasms of unstable liberalism, Spain did not participate directly in the great debates of European idealism or materialism. Instead, thought became polarized into two major fronts: the defense of a traditional order and an original attempt at intellectual and moral regeneration through a current imported from Germany: Krausism.

The conservative reaction and traditionalism

In response to the ideas of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution, a powerful current of Catholic and reactionary thought emerged that sought to restore the traditional order. Its two most important figures were:

- **Jaime Balmes:** A Catalan priest and philosopher, he was the leading figure of moderation and liberal Catholicism. In his work *El Criterio*, he attempted to reconcile faith and reason through common sense, seeking a middle ground between absolutism and revolution. His thinking, which was highly influential in conservative Spain, was a synthesis of Thomistic scholasticism and modern philosophy.
- **Juan Donoso Cortés:** More radical and pessimistic, he was the great theorist of counterrevolutionary traditionalism. He argued that human nature is corrupted by original sin and that only a strong authority, embodied in the monarchy and the Church, can prevent social chaos. His *Essay on Catholicism, Liberalism, and Socialism* is a frontal condemnation of modernity.

Krausism: A philosophy to regenerate Spain

The most influential and original philosophical movement in 19th-century Spain was undoubtedly Krausism. It was introduced by Julián Sanz del Río in the middle of the century, after studying the ideas of Karl Krause, a minor disciple of Kant, in Germany. Krausism was more than a philosophy; it was a life project and a program of national regeneration.

His key ideas were:

- **Harmonic rationalism:** They believed in a reason capable of harmonizing all aspects of life: science and faith, the individual and society, humanity and God.
- **Panentheism:** They maintained that God is not the world (pantheism) nor is He outside it (theism), but that the world is in God. God contains the universe, but transcends it.
- **Rigorous ethics:** They proposed a secular and austere morality based on a sense of duty, personal integrity, and the perfection of the individual as a way to improve society.

The impact of Krausism was not so much due to its complex metaphysical ideas as to its practical application to education. The Krausists, convinced that Spain's problem was ignorance and the lack of an educated elite, founded the Free Institution of Education (ILE) in 1876.

Led by figures such as Francisco Giner de los Ríos, the ILE was a pedagogical revolution. It promoted a secular, active education without rote memorization exams, encouraging contact with nature, travel, and critical thinking. Its goal was to train an honest and modern ruling minority that could bring the country out of its backwardness. The influence of the ILE was immense, shaping much of the Spanish intellectual and political elite of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, including many members of the Generation of '98 and the Generation of '27. Krausism thus became the main driving force behind Spain's intellectual modernization before the Civil War.

The Teresian contribution to education (19th and 20th centuries)

The Society of Saint Teresa of Jesus, founded in the 19th century by Saint Enrique de Ossó, represented an important renewal and a fundamental impetus for women's education from a Christian perspective.

She was born into a social context in which women's education was limited or viewed as secondary. Saint Enrique de Ossó, inspired by the figure of Saint Teresa of Jesus, conceived an innovative educational project that sought to "form Christ in the minds and hearts of young people" and empower women to be influential in their families and in society. His main contribution was to create a structured educational system that sought to educate women holistically, not only academically, but also morally and spiritually, so that they could become agents of change in society.

Consolidation and expansion in the 20th century

The 20th century witnessed the great expansion of the Society, not only in Spain but also in Latin America, Africa, and other parts of Europe. Its model was consolidated and adapted to the new times.

- 1. Adapting to social changes:** Throughout the 20th century, the Society was able to adapt its project to new social realities. Although its schools were initially aimed at the middle and upper classes, they gradually opened their doors to more working-class and rural environments, founding schools in disadvantaged areas and missions.
- 2. Promoting women in new fields:** As women gained access to university and the professional world, Teresian schools evolved to prepare their students for these new roles. They promoted a cutting-edge education that empowered women to become leaders in various fields, without losing their Christian identity. They became a network of prestigious centers that trained thousands of influential women.
- 3. International Educational Network:** Geographical expansion turned the Society in a global educational network. This allowed for a rich exchange of pedagogical experiences and a universal vision of education. Its presence in very diverse cultural contexts demonstrated the flexibility and universality of its educational charism.

In short, the Society of Saint Teresa of Jesus was a pioneer in offering women a comprehensive, high-quality education at a time when this was not a social priority. Its great legacy was to create a solid educational network, with a distinctive humanistic-Christian pedagogy, which has trained generations of women as leaders and agents of change in the family and society for more than a century.

The 19th Century in Europe: The Age of Revolution and Empire

The 19th century was a period of such radical and rapid transformation that it completely redefined the face of Europe and, by extension, the world. Marked by the dual impetus of the French Revolution and the Industrial Revolution, the continent was immersed in a maelstrom of political, economic, and social changes that laid the foundations of modernity. It was a century of constant tensions: between the old aristocratic order and the new bourgeoisie, between faith and reason, between the countryside and the city, and between nations struggling to define themselves and expand.

Politics: the struggle for power and the nation

The European political map was redrawn several times throughout the century. The starting point was the attempt by the absolutist powers (Austria, Prussia, Russia) to restore the Old Regime after Napoleon's defeat in 1815. However, the ideas of liberalism, nationalism, and later socialism had already taken root and proved unstoppable.

- **Liberalism:** The bourgeoisie, a social class on the rise thanks to industry and commerce, was the main driving force behind liberalism. It demanded constitutions to limit the power of monarchs, parliaments to represent the nation (although often through a census suffrage that only included them), and the recognition of individual rights and freedoms such as freedom of the press and of enterprise. This ideal manifested itself in the revolutionary waves of 1820, 1830, and 1848, the latter known as the "Spring of Nations," which shook the foundations of the old empires.
- **Nationalism:** The feeling of belonging to a community with a common language, history, and culture became an overwhelming political force. This nationalist fervor had two major effects: the unification of divided territories, as occurred in Italy (1861) and Germany (1871), which drastically altered the balance of power; and the disintegration of large multinational empires (Austro-Hungarian, Russian, and Ottoman), which saw their peoples (Hungarians, Czechs, Poles, etc.) demand independence.
- **Imperialism:** In the last third of the century, this nationalist fervor, combined with the need for raw materials and new markets for their booming industry, led the major European powers (Great Britain, France, Germany, Belgium) to embark on a frantic race to conquer and colonize Africa and Asia. The partition of Africa, formalized at the Berlin Conference (1884-1885), is the greatest example of this imperialism, which exported European power and culture to the rest of the planet.

Economy and society: the rise of the factory and the city

The Industrial Revolution, which began in Great Britain, spread across the continent, irreversibly transforming the economy and society. The steam engine, the railroad, and the telegraph revolutionized production and communications.

This change led to a massive rural exodus. Millions of peasants left the countryside to work in factories, leading to the disorderly growth of industrial cities (Manchester, Lyon, the Ruhr basin). Society, previously divided into estates, became structured into social classes defined by wealth.

- The **industrial and financial bourgeoisie** consolidated its position as the new elite, accumulating capital and power.
- The **proletariat**, the new working class, lived in miserable conditions, with grueling working hours, subsistence wages, and no rights.

This brutal social inequality was the breeding ground for the labor movement. Workers began to organize themselves into unions and political parties to fight for their rights. Ideologies such as socialism (especially the Marxism of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels) and anarchism gained enormous influence, denouncing capitalist exploitation and advocating for social revolution.

Culture and thought: between feeling and reality

The art and thought of the 19th century reflected the upheavals of the time.

- **Romanticism:** In the first half of the century, it was a reaction to Enlightenment rationalism. It exalted passion, imagination, individual freedom, and national sentiment. Artists such as Delacroix in painting, Beethoven in music, and Lord Byron or Victor Hugo in literature embodied this rebellious and passionate spirit.
- **Realism:** From 1848 onwards, the failure of the revolutions and the harshness of industrial society gave way to a more objective view. Realism sought to portray social reality without idealization, focusing on the daily life of the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. Émile Zola, Charles Dickens, and Fyodor Dostoevsky are its greatest exponents in the novel.

The century also witnessed a veritable scientific revolution. Charles Darwin's theory of evolution (1859) marked a turning point in biology and in the conception of the human being. Louis Pasteur's advances in microbiology and discoveries in the field of electricity and electromagnetism laid the foundations for the second technological revolution that would come at the end of the century, a period known as the Belle Époque, an optimistic swan song before the catastrophes of the 20th century.

150 Years of the Society of Saint Teresa of Jesus

1873 — Foundation of the Archconfraternity of Daughters of Mary Immaculate and Saint Teresa of Jesus. Enrique de Ossó makes his "Call to Young Catholic Women" in the Church of Saint Anthony of Padua in Tortosa, before a group of young people; his movement spreads throughout the parishes and villages of Catalonia and will be the seedbed for the future sisters of the Society of Saint Teresa, already trained in reading his writings and practicing the Quarter Hour of Prayer.

1876 — Foundation of the Society of Saint Teresa of Jesus. Enrique de Ossó, reading the "signs of the times" of the Restoration of Alfonso XIII and the new Constitution of 1876 (opening up to Catholic associations), brings together a small group of teachers and founds the Society on June 23 (Sacred Heart), in the Church of La Enseñanza (Tortosa–Tarragona). It is born with a clear intuition: to evangelize through education, especially of women, with Teresian spirituality and modern methods.

1876 — “Let us organize ourselves” The first internal structures From the beginning, the work was organized: schedules, fraternal life, educational mission, and ecclesial obedience. The practical objective was to give speed and unity to a nascent work that, by charism, was called to grow. This organizational impulse explains the surprising expansion of the early years.

1877 — Teresian Pilgrimage to Ávila and Alba de Tormes. The Carmelite convent that Ossó so desired is inaugurated: a sign of a Teresian spiritual ecosystem that nourishes the new Society. At the same time, ecclesial networks and friendships are activated that will sustain future foundations.

1877 — Discalced Carmelites in Jesús-Tortosa The Carmelite convent that Ossó so desired is inaugurated: a sign of a Teresian spiritual ecosystem that nourishes the new Society. At the same time, ecclesial networks and friendships are activated that will support future foundations.

1877 — Pilgrimage to Manresa and Montserrat The visit to Manresa and Montserrat links Teresian mysticism with the Ignatian and Marian soil of Catalonia: prayer, discernment, and mission. This "mixed style" (Teresa + Ignatius) will mark Teresian pedagogy (prayer, reason, love).

1878 — Leo XIII blesses the Teresian works. The papal blessing confirms and encourages a young but fruitful work, giving ecclesiastical prestige to its educational mission. This support encourages the opening of new houses and consideration of expansion beyond Catalonia.

1878 — First school in Villalonga, Tarragona. This first foundation took place on September 1, 1878; the founders were Teresa Guillamón, Dolores Llorach, and Josefa Teresa Audí.

1878 — The Society's Flag. A flag is adopted as a sign of shared identity among scattered communities: charismatic unity, visibility, and a sense of apostolic body. In pedagogical terms, it helps to "build family" and nurture the spirit.

1880–1881 — First deaths and fifth anniversary. The death of the first sister and the 5th anniversary bring maturity to the Society: awareness of fragility and lasting mission. Community memory and gratitude, the glue of the nascent identity, are strengthened.

1881 — First curriculum A curriculum is established: It professionalizes teaching, evaluates, incorporates science and method, making visible a serious proposal for girls and young women in a Spain that needed to modernize its female education.

1882 — Third Centenary of Saint Teresa and Printing of the First Constitutions. The centenary acts as a catalyst: Constitutions and other texts on life and government are printed to unify criteria and train all the sisters. Printing reduces ambiguities and accelerates orderly expansion.

1882 — Election of the first superior general. The general government is consolidated with the election of a Superior and Council: stability, co-responsibility, and shared mission, keys to an incarnate spirituality.

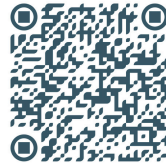
1884 — Diocesan Approval (Tortosa) After presenting the Constitutions to the bishop of Tortosa, the decree of approval arrives (January 26, 1884).

1885 — The Society in Africa civil and ecclesiastical authorities On February 1, 1885, six sisters and the Superior General left the port of Barcelona on the steamship Montserrat, bound for Oran, Algeria.

1887 — The First General Chapter of Affairs, held in San Gervasio (Barcelona, Calle San Elías), it strengthens communion, reviews norms, and sets priorities. The chapters will generate a pattern of discernment and adaptation that will be vital in the following decades.

1888 — Decree of Praise (Rome) The Holy See grants the "decree of praise": preliminary pontifical recognition that opens doors, facilitates foundations, and encourages the revision of the Constitutions according to Roman observations. A decisive step towards full approval.

1888 — First presence in America: Puebla (Mexico). The Society crosses the Atlantic, responding to a reality of religious persecution and educational need; its simple style allows it to work in hostile contexts. The "outgoing" character of the charism is inaugurated. Enter [IDEO](#) and discover more about the first foundations in America during the lifetime of Enrique de Ossó.



1889–1891 — Barcelona-Ganduxer and the cultural impetus. The large boarding school at Ganduxer, 41 (1890) — a landmark in modern Barcelona — is inaugurated, and the general government moves there. An emblematic space from which new missions will depart.

1891 — Uruguay and expansion in Mexico With Montevideo and new works in Mexico (Morelia), the Society strengthens its American presence, making visible the Teresian educational power in societies in modernization and with strong inequality.

1894 — Blessing of the Teresian Review by Leo XIII. The Pope blessed the review and its editor, recognizing it as a key instrument for shaping opinions and building cultural and ecclesial networks. The press became an open classroom for the Teresian project.

1896 — Death of the Founder (January 27) After difficult months, Enrique de Ossó dies in Sancti Spiritu. The Society transforms mourning into creative fidelity: biographies, funerals, and grateful remembrance nourish an identity that no longer depends solely on the founder.

1901 — Papal Approval of the Institute (June 16) Rome approves the Institute and requests that the Constitutions be revised with legal and formal corrections. Civil recognition of the schools is also authorized: a major leap forward in legitimacy and institutional stability.

1903 — Constitutions approved on a trial basis and the establishment of Provinces. The Constitutions are approved on a trial basis and the Provinces are canonically established: Saint Teresa (eastern Iberian Peninsula and Algeria), Sacred Heart (northern Iberian Peninsula and Portugal), Saint Francis de Sales (North America), Saint Joseph (South America). Closer governance and more agile missionary work.

1905–1921 — Directories and institutional Culture The Directory (1905) and its reissue (1921) are published, along with the Directory of superiors: formative and governance tools that consolidate style, language and good educational and spiritual practices.

1908 — Final Approval of the Constitutions. Rome definitively approves the Constitutions. The Society enters the 20th century with a clear legal identity and a pedagogy that integrates science, the humanities, and spiritual life to transform society.

1912 — Jesus the Teacher Magazine In March 2012 the first issue came out; monthly, like the old Teresian Magazine, continuing its ecclesial, Teresian and formative spirit, under the new title “Jesus the Teacher”.

1936–1939 — Civil War: Trial by Fire and Martyrdom. Religious persecution strikes homes and works; charity and service are maintained discreetly. Among the martyrs, M. Mercedes Prat (†1936), beatified in 1990, stands out: a witness of serene faith and an educator until the very end.

1945 and 1957 — Revision of Constitutions. Following the post-war period and with new regulations, modifications (1945) and chapter amendments (1957) were introduced. The aim: to update governance and fraternal life, maintaining identity and educational mission in changing contexts.

1949 — New Foundations in Africa. The first foundation in Angola was established. It was in 1945, when, responding to the Church's proposal to undertake missionary work outside of Europe, the Society agreed to a missionary project at the Seventh General Chapter without specifying a time or place. Four years later, in 1949, five sisters arrived in Huambo, Angola.

1962–1965 — Vatican II: A Call to Renewal. Vatican II encouraged a “return to the sources” and the adaptation of charisms to the times. For the Teresian Sisters, this meant rereading Teresa and Ossó with contemporary eyes and opening the mission further to young people and lay people.

1967 — General Assembly of renewal. Changes in common prayer, community, governance and mission are tested, preparing for the great Chapter of 1969, in response to the spirit of the Second Vatican Council. More participatory languages and structures, rooted in the Teresian tradition, are tried out.

1969 — Ninth General Chapter. Foundational document for the new Constitutions: centrality of Jesus Christ, preferential option for young people, faith-based interpretation of reality, and shared mission with the laity. Formation is strengthened and the entire work is aligned with the spirit of the Council.

1977 — Recognition of the Teresian Apostolic Movement (MTA) Officially recognized by the Church, the MTA, in continuity with the Archconfraternity, articulates the Teresian lay vocation and expands the charism to families, young people, and educators. The founder's work is explicitly "of all and for all."

1980s — Internationalization and a holistic educational approach University presence, residences, youth ministry, and social outreach programs grow. A commitment is made to critical and spiritual education, with female leadership and networking with the local Church and society.

1993 — Canonization of Saint Enrique de Ossó Saint John Paul II canonized Enrique de Ossó on June 16, 1993 (Madrid, Plaza de Colón). The Church confirmed the founder's sanctity and encouraged the Society of Jesus to renew its educational and missionary charism.

1990–2000 — Memory, identity and shared mission With the canonization and successive chapters, the charismatic identity, participation of the laity, option for the vulnerable and own curricular work are deepened: evangelizing by educating, with quality and spirituality.

1996 — The Society in Asia With the approach of the new millennium, the Church calls on Religious Life to become missionary in Asia and in response to this call and as a tribute to Enrique de Ossó, on the Centenary of his death, the Society sends 8 sisters to Manila, Philippines.

2005 — Teresian Educational Proposal The Society, beginning the new millennium and "assuming the uncertainty inherent in the change of paradigms, put itself in a position of search and contemplating the educational mission asked for a reformulation of its IDEALS, the updating of TERESIAN PEDAGOGY".

2009 — Teresian School Foundation (Spain) It is established for the ownership and management of educational centers in Spain, professionalizing the structure, guaranteeing charisma and ensuring sustainability in a demanding demographic and legal context.

2010–2020 — Global Networks and Culture of Care Internationalization of teams, service-learning, global citizenship, child protection, and process-oriented pastoral care. ICTs, critical thinking, and guided prayer are integrated into school projects.

2020–2025 — Charism in a synodal key Listening, co-responsibility, and shared mission (religious sisters, lay people, and young people). Formation in interiority, a culture of encounter, and socio-environmental commitment is strengthened by integrating “integral ecology” into the life of schools and works.

2025 — Presence in 22 countries The Society and the Teresian family are currently present in 22 countries across the Americas, Europe, and Africa, with schools, residences, social centers, and retreat houses. Cultural diversity enriches the charism and expands the mission. Discover where we are.



KEY EVENTS

HISTORY OF LATIN AMERICA (1876-2024)

1879–1884 – War of the Pacific: A conflict between Chile, Peru, and Bolivia that redefined borders in the Andean region and left profound economic and political consequences, especially for Bolivia, which lost its access to the sea.

1884–1892: Consolidation of the Porfiriato in Mexico. Porfirio Díaz returns to the presidency after a brief interim period (1880–1884) under Manuel González. This marks the beginning of the longest phase of his regime, characterized by railway expansion, the attraction of foreign capital, and the strengthening of the state, along with increasing authoritarianism. Economic liberalism flourished, and power became centralized.

1910–1920 – Mexican Revolution The first major social and armed movement of the 20th century in Latin America; it influenced peasant and worker struggles in the region, and gave rise to a new constitution (1917) with pioneering social rights.

1959 – Triumph of the Cuban Revolution. The movement led by Fidel Castro and Ernesto “Che” Guevara overthrew the Batista dictatorship. It transformed the island into a beacon of socialism in the Americas and redefined Latin America's relationship with the United States.

1964–1976 – Wave of military coups in South America. Brazil (1964–1985), Argentina (1976–1983), Chile (1973–1990), and other countries fell under military dictatorships, supported in part by the U.S. in the context of the Cold War. They marked decades of repression and human rights violations.

1979 – Sandinista Revolution in Nicaragua The Sandinista Front overthrew the Somoza dictatorship (1967-1979), which revived debates about democracy, social justice and armed struggles in Central America.

1982 – Latin American Debt Crisis Mexico declared it could not pay its external debt, triggering a continental financial crisis that led to structural adjustment policies and marked the decade as the “lost decade”.

1994 – EZLN uprising in Chiapas, Mexico The Zapatista Army of National Liberation brought visibility to the situation of indigenous peoples and questioned the social consequences of neoliberalism after the entry into force of NAFTA.

2000–2015 – “Left turn” in Latin America. Several progressive governments came to power (Chávez in Venezuela, Lula in Brazil, Evo Morales in Bolivia, Kirchner in Argentina, Correa in Ecuador). Social policies aimed at poverty reduction, regional integration (ALBA, UNASUR), and the nationalization of resources were implemented.

2016 – Signing of the Peace Agreement in Colombia The Colombian government and the FARC signed a historic agreement to end more than 50 years of armed conflict, although with implementation challenges.

2019–2024 – New waves of protests and political reconfiguration. Social uprisings in Chile (2019), Colombia (2021), and Ecuador (2019, 2022), along with the return of progressive governments in Mexico, Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and Colombia, mark a new cycle of demands for social justice, equality, and sustainability. This coincides with the strengthening of drug cartels and human trafficking, as well as migration flows.

MIGRATION FLOWS IN AMERICA

1960s–1970s

- Growing migration to the United States and Canada, especially from Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean, due to the demand for agricultural, industrial, and service labor.
- Programs such as the Bracero Program (1942–1964) marked the beginning of systematic migration.

1980s

- Civil wars in Central America (El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua) and dictatorships in the Southern Cone (Chile, Argentina, Uruguay) generated waves of refugees.
- The United States and Mexico became the main recipients.

1990s–2000s

- Intensification of economic migration following financial crises (such as those in Mexico in 1994 and Argentina in 2001).
- Migration to Spain, Italy, and other European countries increases.

2015 onwards

- Venezuelan exodus: more than 7 million people migrate to countries in South America, the Caribbean, and North America.
- Central American migrant caravans (since 2018) highlight forced displacement due to violence, poverty, and climate change.

KEY EVENTS

HISTORY OF AFRICA (1945-2024)

1945 – African participation in the Bandung Conference and Pan-African movements. African leaders who participated in World War II return with new ideas of independence. Pan-Africanism and the right to self-determination gain strength on the continent.

1957 – Ghana Independence Ghana becomes the first sub-Saharan country to achieve independence from British colonial rule, led by Kwame Nkrumah, inspiring other African liberation movements.

1960 – “The Year of Africa” Seventeen African countries gained their independence, mainly in West and Central Africa. This year marks a turning point in the end of European colonialism on the continent.

1963 – Founding of the Organization of African Unity (OAU). Established in Addis Ababa, the OAU sought to coordinate efforts toward African independence, sovereignty, and integration. It was the precursor to the current African Union.

1994 – End of Apartheid in South Africa Nelson Mandela is elected president in the first multiracial elections, closing a long period of institutionalized racial segregation.

1994 – Rwandan Genocide In approximately 100 days, more than 800,000 people, mostly Tutsis, were killed. It is one of the most dramatic episodes of ethnic violence of the 20th century.

2002 – Founding of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) It replaced the OAU, with the aim of promoting political and economic integration, peace and sustainable development across the continent.

2011 – Arab Spring and the fall of Gaddafi in Libya. Social movements in Tunisia and Egypt toppled authoritarian regimes. In Libya, international intervention and civil war led to the fall and death of Muammar Gaddafi, with lasting consequences for the region.

2014–2016 – Ebola Crisis in West Africa The outbreak primarily affected Guinea, Sierra Leone, and Liberia, resulting in thousands of deaths. It exposed weaknesses in health systems but also spurred international cooperation in health.

2020–2024 – Instability and new leadership in Africa

- Coups in Mali, Guinea, Niger, Gabon and Burkina Faso.
- Growing prominence of foreign powers (China, Russia, Türkiye) in military investments and cooperation.
- Progress in economic integration with the **African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)**.
- Expansion of youth and social movements demanding democracy, employment and climate justice.

ANGOLA

1961 – Start of the Angolan War of Independence. Armed uprisings erupted against Portuguese colonial rule, led by movements such as the MPLA, the FNLA, and later UNITA. It was part of the cycle of African liberation struggles.

1975 – Angolan Independence On November 11, 1975, following the Carnation Revolution in Portugal, Angola declared its independence. However, the Portuguese withdrawal precipitated a civil war between the MPLA (supported by the USSR and Cuba), UNITA (backed by the US and South Africa), and the FNLA.

1975–2002 – Angolan Civil War One of Africa's longest and most devastating conflicts, with hundreds of thousands of deaths and millions displaced. It ended in 2002 with the death of Jonas Savimbi, leader of UNITA, and the signing of peace agreements.

2002–2017 – Reconstruction and oil boom under José Eduardo dos Santos After peace, Angola experienced an economic boom thanks to oil and diamonds, but also strong inequalities, corruption and dependence on natural resources.

2017–2024 – Political Transition and Current Challenges João Lourenço assumed the presidency in 2017, ending almost 40 years of rule by dos Santos. He has promoted anti-corruption and economic diversification reforms, but faces social tensions, persistent inequality, and governance challenges to this day.

MAJOR MIGRATION FLOWS FROM AFRICA

1950s–1970s (Decolonization)

- Movements towards former European metropolises (France, United Kingdom, Belgium, Portugal) for job opportunities and colonial ties.

1980s–1990s

- Increased forced migration due to civil wars, dictatorships and famines (Ethiopia, Somalia, Sudan, Rwanda, Liberia).
- Europe consolidates its position as a destination, but so are relatively stable African countries (Ivory Coast, South Africa).

2000–2010 decade

- Expansion of migration towards the European Union, with routes through the Mediterranean and the Sahara desert.
- Italy and Spain receive large flows from North Africa and sub-Saharan Africa.

2015 onwards

- **Migration crisis in the Mediterranean:** thousands of Africans seek to reach Europe fleeing conflicts (Libya, Mali, Sudan) and structural poverty.
- At the same time, intra-African migration is growing (millions of people are moving within the continent, mainly towards South Africa, Nigeria and countries in the Gulf of Guinea).

KEY EVENTS

HISTORY OF THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH

1875 - Vatican Council I Although it began before 1875 (1869–1870), its effects were consolidated afterwards: the definition of papal infallibility and the strengthening of the primacy of the Pope marked the Church of the late 19th century.

1891 – The encyclical Rerum Novarum Leo XIII inaugurates the Social Doctrine of the Church, addressing the labor question, social justice and workers' rights.

1920–1930 – Lay Movements - Catholic Action Expansion of the role of the laity in the evangelizing mission and in public life, especially in Europe and Latin America.

1955 – First General Conference of the Latin American Episcopate At the initiative of Pope Pius XII, to coordinate the pastoral and social actions of the Church of the continent, during which CELAM was created.

1962–1965 – Second Vatican Council Convened by John XXIII and continued by Paul VI. It reformed the liturgy, promoted ecumenism, episcopal collegiality, and dialogue with the modern world.

1975 – Evangelii Nuntiandi Paul VI's apostolic exhortation on evangelization in the contemporary world. It has been considered the Magna Carta of the post-conciliar mission.

1978–2005 Pontificate of John Paul II His global leadership contributed to the fall of communism in Eastern Europe, consolidated the global dimension of the Church and promoted the New Evangelization.

2007 – Aparecida Episcopal Conference The Latin American Episcopal Conference that reinforced the continental mission and the idea of a Church that goes forth, with a strong influence on the pontificate of Francis.

2013 – Resignation of Benedict XVI An unprecedented historical event in centuries, which paved the way for a new style of exercising the papacy.

2013–2025 – Pontificate of Pope Francis The first Latin American and Jesuit Pope, he called for the renewal of ecclesial structures, promoting a pastoral style centered on mercy, synodality, integral ecology and universal fraternity.

2015 – Encyclical Laudato si A call by Pope Francis to action for the Catholic Church and for all people of good will to unite and respond to the cry of the Earth and the poor, alerting about the environmental crisis, climate change and sustainability.

2021–2024/2025 – Synod of Synodality A worldwide process of consultation and discernment on the way of living the Church, which seeks a profound renewal in participation, co-responsibility and mission.

KEY EVENTS IN WESTERN HISTORY AND SPAIN

1871-1914 – The Belle Époque A period of economic growth, scientific and cultural advances in Europe and the USA.

1874–1931 - Bourbon Restoration in Spain With Alfonso XII and then Alfonso XIII, the restored constitutional monarchy is established.

1914–1918 – World War I A global conflict that transformed the world order, with millions of victims.

1923–1930 - Dictatorship of Primo de Rivera Military regime that attempted to modernize Spain without lasting success.

1929 – The Great Depression and the Great Crisis A global economic collapse that led to interventionist policies and social tensions.

1931–1936 - Second Spanish Republic A period of social, political, and cultural reforms, but with great instability.

1936–1939 - Spanish Civil War Fratricidal conflict that led to Franco's dictatorship.

1939–1945 – World War II Global devastation, genocide, and the rise of the U.S. and the USSR as superpowers.

1939–1975 - Francoist dictatorship Authoritarian regime marked by repression, autarky and then economic opening.

1947–1991 – Cold War Capitalist bloc vs. communist bloc, with indirect conflicts, space race and nuclear war.

1957 – European Economic Community (EEC) The European Common Market formally establishes the EEC, with six founding countries to foster economic integration, eliminate trade barriers and promote economic growth.

1975–1978 - Death of Franco and Democratic Transition Beginning of democracy with Juan Carlos I and approval of the 1978 Constitution.

1986 - Entry into the European Economic Community (EU) It meant the modernization and integration of Spain into Europe.

1989 – Fall of the Berlin Wall End of communism in Eastern Europe and opening towards European reunification.

1993–2002– European Union and euro Maastricht Treaty and the birth of a new economic and political integration.

2001 – September 11 attacks (USA) Beginning of the “war on terror” and global geopolitical transformation.

2008 – Global financial crisis. Impact on the West with deep recession and lasting social consequences.

2020–2022 – COVID-19 Pandemic An unprecedented global health, economic and social crisis in the 21st century.

OUR HISTORY

150 years of the Society of Saint Teresa of Jesus

