

## **"I HAVE COME TO BRING FIRE UPON THE EARTH"** ***Zeal for the interests of Jesus in today's world***

### **MOTIVATION FOR RETIREMENT**



In this month of June, the central moment of the celebration of the 150th anniversary of the founding of our Society, we gather as a family called together by the Spirit to enter into a time of grace. We open ourselves to the gift of silence, to the depth of prayer, to that interior climate that opens space to listen to what God whispers in the depths. For a few hours, we leave behind the rhythms that distract us and become silent within, to welcome a deeper, truer heartbeat, more capable of guiding us toward what is essential.

Listen prayerfully to the song: **Latidos** - Cristóbal Fones, SJ

This retreat is intended to be a leisurely entry into the school of the heart of Jesus. We fix our eyes on Him, on His way of thinking, feeling, loving, walking, and giving Himself. We come to allow ourselves to be drawn to His person, to allow His word to make us fall in love again, to allow His presence to transform our resistance and heal our wounds. We open our hearts so that He, who continues to call us, can send us forth renewed and ardent, like the Samaritan woman, like Teresa of Jesus, like Henry, like the first Teresas: Teresa Plá, Teresa Blanch, Teresa Guillamón, Josefa Teresa Audí, Cinta Talarn, Dolores Llorach, Agustina Alcoberro, Saturnina Jassá. We are part of this chain of "fools for love of the one who called us."

May this day be a time of return to the source, of trusting surrender and docile listening. May we, with our hearts filled with Jesus, go out afterwards "to shout to the world," proclaiming with our lives and with joy the love we have contemplated. May this retreat be a threshold: silent, fruitful, and filled with the Spirit.

### ***Prayer to prepare ourselves to pray from our sources*** ***"Zeal for the interests of Jesus"***

Prayer exercise: Imagine that you receive this chapter of the Documents of Perfection from Henry de Ossó in the form of a letter. He asks you to receive it as a Teresian of the 21st century and requests your help in "rewriting" it. You set about doing so by following these steps:

1. You read it, trying to empathize with Our Father, with his time, his language, his concerns, and his desires for the Company.
2. You give thankful remembrance from your experience as a Teresian and recognize how the Company has tried to live out Henry's vision of it. A grateful remembrance that includes both its lights and its shadows.
3. You rewrite this chapter from "the thirst that consumes Jesus" today and the call he makes to the Company.

Documents of Perfection, CHAPTER TWELVE

**"I have come to cast fire upon the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled!"**  
(Lk 12:49)

**"What good will it do a man to gain the whole world if he ruins his life?"** (Mt 16:26)

**"I value more a soul that we win through our industry or prayer than all the services we can render him"** (F 1, 7)

**"To free a single soul from such grave torments, I would gladly undergo many deaths"** (V 32, 6).

One of the most precious interests of the Heart of Jesus is the salvation of souls. This is the thirst that consumes Jesus, who cries out to you from heaven: Give me souls. "This is his delight, that in every way you can bring souls to him, so that they may be saved and always praise him."

To quench this thirst and give him this delicacy, you, the Daughters of the Company of Saint Teresa of Jesus, come and sacrifice your strength and your whole life in the exercise of prayer and teaching.

You must work with all your might to be souls on fire, consumed by zeal for the salvation of souls, so that each of you can say, like Jesus: "I have come to bring fire to the earth, and what do I want, if not that it burn?" This is your mission.

Since the aspirations of the Company must always be the highest, those that result in the greatest increase in the interests of Jesus, among the works of the apostolate it has chosen those that are directly ordered to the salvation of souls.

Since it is impossible, given your insufficiency and smallness, to devote yourselves to all the works of the apostolate, we will indicate those that should preferably occupy the activity of the Company and were mainly taken into account when it was founded:

1. The Company of Saint Teresa of Jesus was founded to pray and cooperate in a special way for the formation of holy and wise priests. Therefore, "you shall have at least one hour of prayer each day, and you shall use ejaculations very frequently in the presence of God within your soul."
2. Be convinced that in no other way can you promote the interests of Jesus as much as by working, according to your strength, to ensure that there are holy and wise priests. Love the decorum and cleanliness of the House of the Lord and ensure that, wherever you are, the Lord is served with dignity.

3. The Company has also been founded to restore all things in Christ Jesus by educating women according to the spirit and doctrine of Saint Teresa of Jesus. And to oppose modern errors that tear souls from the bosom of the Catholic Church and seek to de-Christianize society without hope of salvation.
4. You must strive to be apostles of the quarter hour of prayer among Christian girls and families. And through the Teresian Associations, catechism, preparation for the sacraments, Sunday schools, and spiritual exercises, promote the glory of God as widely as possible.
5. Strive with all your might to be apostles of the knowledge and love of Jesus Christ, and of devotion to the Virgin Mary, St. Joseph, St. Teresa of Jesus, and the Holy Angels.
6. You must work constantly to spread, sustain, and encourage Teresian works. Do not forget that they are a most fruitful source of vocations for the Company, which carries out the ideal of these works with the greatest perfection.

You will do all this through your Mother and Protector, Saint Teresa of Jesus. Instill and learn her maxims and chosen sayings. Strive to be the first when it comes to honoring your Holy Mother. In this way, you will carry the name of the Company of Saint Teresa of Jesus with honor and fulfill the desire of the Church, which wants and asks God that all her children be nourished with the doctrine of the mystical Doctor. Since the Company was founded for the purpose of promoting the interests of Jesus in every part of the world, and especially in those places where these divine interests are most endangered, all the Sisters will always be ready, at all times, to take the place that obedience indicates to you, even if only the salvation of a single soul is in danger, in any town, city, or part of the world, without resistance or delay.

Strive for the unity and harmony that are absolutely necessary to effectively promote the interests of Jesus to the greatest extent possible and to multiply the forces of the Company of Saint Teresa of Jesus.

### **Second proposal: Teresian Meditation on the Word – Jn 4:1-45**

"I came to bring fire to the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled!" says Jesus. Henry de Ossó, connected with that desire of Jesus, identifies that fire with the passionate love that mobilizes.

Teresa of Jesus expresses that same dynamism through the symbol of thirst. It is thirst that sets us on our way, guiding our steps toward the Source of Love, of Life.

We invite you to unite this double experience of thirst and the fire of love by contemplating Jesus in his encounter with the Samaritan woman.

- Read the text calmly. Let yourself be carried away by the rhythm of the scene.

Teresa identifies in this transformative encounter between Jesus and the Samaritan woman a whole mystagogical process that makes her an authentic apostle:

*"I remember now what I have often thought about that holy Samaritan woman, how wounded she must have been by this herb (the love of God), and how well the words of the Lord had taken root in her heart, for she allows the Lord himself to win over and benefit his people, which makes what I am saying very clear; and in return for this great charity, she deserved to be believed and to see the great good that our Lord did in that village.*

*It seems to me that it must be one of the greatest consolations on earth to see souls benefiting through one's own means. Then it seems to me that one eats the most delicious fruit of these flowers. Blessed are those to whom the Lord grants these favors; they are well obliged to serve him. This holy woman went with that divine intoxication, shouting through the streets. (CAD 7,6)*

### **Guidelines that may help:**

- It is a matter of letting everything that has impacted me before pass through my heart in a prayerful way.
- What aspects, people, situations from distant and nearby realities does this passage remind me of? How does it reflect the reality that surrounds me?
- Of all that has been prayed, what does it say to me personally? How does this text speak to me? In what way do I feel reflected in the Samaritan woman?
- What aspects of our Teresian charism are illuminated in this experience?

### **GUIDED MEDITATION**

1. *Quiet place.* If possible, find a secluded, quiet place where you can confidently enter into this meditation.
2. *Comfortable posture.* Adopt a comfortable posture, keeping your spine straight and relaxed. If you want and it helps, keep your eyes closed. Let your breathing return to normal. Continue breathing until you feel that you are truly breathing calmly and relatively deeply, as is normal.

3. *Desire to love.* Recognize God present within you. Notice that he, in various ways, seeks your friendship. Value this invitation from him. And, if you choose, express to him your greatest desire to welcome and love him as a friend. Tell him, with words that come from your heart, as Teresa recommends.

4. And now, from that "place" where you are now, let yourself be guided by these steps. Pause for a few minutes on each one:

### 1. **DESIRE**

Visualize, as in a movie of the future, what you desire. In this case, you might desire the fullness of life that Teresa of Jesus attained, "to be another Teresa of Jesus as much as possible." (*Name your desire*).

### 2. **TRUST**

The confidence that you can achieve the fullness of life attained by Teresa, according to Henry de Ossó, through meditation, is based on your talents, on life itself, on your own resources, however small or whatever they may be, on life itself and, above all, on God. (*Encourage your confidence*).

### 3. **ENJOY**

When you sense the achievement of something good, naturally, your heart beats with joy. Just imagining that you are fulfilling "thinking like Christ Jesus, feeling like Christ Jesus, conversing like Christ Jesus, speaking like Christ Jesus, conforming, in a word, our whole life to that of Christ, clothing ourselves with Christ Jesus, behold the only essential business and occupation," the brightness of joy lights up your spirit and your body. (*Express your joy*).

### 4. **ACT**

"This is what I want, sisters, that we strive to achieve; not for our own enjoyment, but to have the strength to serve" (7M 4:12). Prayer impels us to take steps toward the effective fulfillment of the desire cherished in our hearts. (*Plan your steps and your commitment with hope*).

**Time for community sharing: Spiritual conversation (guide)**

“Let us be silent.” – We invoke the Spirit

We take a brief moment to connect with our Source of Life and prepare ourselves for conversation. We spontaneously invoke the Spirit.

**2. SHARE what you DISCOVER**

Let's take a few moments of prayerful silence to reflect on what I want to share about our retreat day. These questions may help:

- What truth does Jesus reveal to me TODAY? What aspect of my life is illuminated in a new way? (I identify a LIGHT that reaches me today especially, because of its intensity, its newness, its...)
- On this day I hear the Promise of Life: what hope do I receive today? What fears can it free me from?
- Thinking about the Society, what do I feel God is calling us to today? What aspects of our charism have been enriched for me today?

Each of us shares the most significant part of our experience based on our personal prayer time. We give ourselves enough time to listen to one another. Once we have listened to everyone, we take a few minutes to process what we have heard.

What word from Jesus, Henry, or Teresa comes to me as an ECHO of what we have shared? (and we share it and leave a short time to receive that word.)

**3. WE PRAY TOGETHER**

Let's take a few final minutes to pray together. We can express our prayer in the form of a petition, thanksgiving...

Final prayer: **FIRE** (Christopher Fones, SJ)