

“A BOND UNITING MANY HEARTS”

“This Brotherhood will be the bond uniting so many hearts that seek a common ground to encourage one another and work with zeal. It will be the center of all the aspirations of those who long to do something for the good of their brothers and sisters.

Spain and the world will be renewed, for the saving influence and life-giving action of Teresa of Jesus will reach every corner.”

HTU, EEO I, 1326

The terms “synodality” and “synodal” derive from the ancient and constant ecclesial practice of gathering in synod... Thanks to the experience of recent years, the meaning of these terms has been better understood and lived out even more fully. They have increasingly been associated with the desire for a Church that is closer to people and more relational, one that is God’s home and family.... Synodality is the journey of Christians together with Christ and toward the Kingdom of God, in union with all humanity; mission-oriented, it involves gathering in assembly at the various levels of ecclesial life, mutual listening, dialogue, communal discernment, reaching a consensus as an expression of Christ’s presence in the Spirit, and decision-making in differentiated co-responsibility.

(Final Document of the Synod on Synodality, No. 28)

INTRODUCTION

This sixth theme invites us to delve deeper into the charismatic bond that unites all the Teresians of Henry,

- **TO RECALL** the origin of the Universal Teresian Brotherhood and Henry’s desire to create a charismatic family, a “bond of unity” among Teresians.
- **TO BETTER UNDERSTAND** the framework document of the Teresian Family of Henry de Ossó (2019).
- **RE-EXAMINE**, through the lens of synodality, Henry de Ossó’s intention to “unite hearts” around Teresa of Jesus to create ecclesial communion and social transformation. For today’s Teresians, these are the new paths of synodality along which we are invited to walk and forge a new ecclesiality that holds the promise of the future. (E 3)

WE PREPARE OUR HEARTS

We invite you to prepare your heart with these texts, which point us to the truly “synodal” meaning that Henry de Ossó—without intending to—envisioned from the very beginning as a “union of hearts” aimed at creating true communion, identity, and transformation. **What aspects of all this resonate with us today as the dream of a Church (and therefore of our Teresian charism) that seeks to walk alongside others—men and women alike—with the shared purpose of transforming social structures and bringing them closer to God’s plan for humanity?**

1.SHARED SPIRITUALITY, CHARISM, AND MISSION

In the conclusions of **Back to the Sources** (2001), there is mention of “shared spirituality,” and the term “Teresian Family” already appears:

“At the Society’s origins, we already find a spiritual and apostolic connection— along with those other apostolic fruits that historically preceded it—in what the Founder called ‘the Tree of Saint Teresa.’ In other words, the Society of Saint Teresa of Jesus has a lay foundation, since it was born as the apostolic vanguard of the Archconfraternity. It draws its spirituality from this Association of young Teresian women. Moreover, for many generations, candidates for the Society belonged to the Archconfraternity, where they were initiated into the Christ- centered, Pauline, and Teresian spirituality—which is eminently apostolic—of Henry de Ossó. On the other hand, the Founder immediately realized that the Society had to be “like its own place, the center [of influence]” [1] of “this Teresian movement of zeal for the interests of Jesus” [2].... Thus, a year after the birth of the Society, the idea of the Universal Teresian Brotherhood arose—a project that was perhaps too open-ended for the ecclesial climate of the time and which, at that point, failed to take root.” [3]

****Savia que circula**** (2003) is addressed “To the Entire Teresian Family” and deals with that very topic [4]. “It seeks to capture the essence of Teresian spirituality as it is being discovered in our time,” and it does so by using the symbol of the tree, so dear to Henry.

“The sap is the life-giving current that sustains and nourishes the tree; it is the dynamism that keeps us alive as the Teresian Family. Through various paths, we come to experience an encounter with the God of Jesus who shapes us as a family.

Some of us came to it through prayer; others, in search of meaning; still others, through a commitment to our brothers and sisters; and still others have been drawn by educational experiences, community relationships, or personal connections...We recognize that knowing and feeling that we are unconditionally loved by God leads us to gratefully offer the gift that has been freely given to us—a love that awakens us to love. This family vocation is like the sap that keeps the tree alive, and we can express it this way: “To live in a relationship of love, in friendship with the One whom we know loves us and awakens us to make Him known and loved.”

The Constitutions of the Society of Saint Teresa (2005) already define the Teresian Family, of which the Society is a part, and with which we share spirituality, charism, and mission. (Art. 3).

Article 3: “The Spirit continually renews within us and within the Teresian Family the spirituality we received from Saint Henry de Ossó.” Directory 3: “We—sisters, laypeople, and priests—form the Teresian Family, sharing the charism and apostolic spirituality of Saint Henry de Ossó: the Society of Saint Teresa of Jesus, the Teresian Movement of the Apostolate, the Teresian Missionaries, Associates, Brothers of the Society, and members with other forms of affiliation.”

2.THE UNIVERSAL TERESIAN BROTHERHOOD (1877–78) [5]

Henry de Ossó’s writings for the Universal Teresian Brotherhood did not form a separate collection. They are articles published in the RT between November 1877 and November 1881. It is worth noting that the HTU remained a project, despite Father Henry’s repeated attempts to launch this wonderful initiative. They can be read in full in EEO I, pp. 1322–1337. Here we offer a summary of the main points.

ORIGIN

“One of the most beautiful fruits produced by the first Teresian pilgrimage to Ávila and Alba was the formation of the Universal Teresian Brotherhood on August 27, 1877, at that gathering which we might call the First Teresian Synod of the World.”

PURPOSE

“The purpose of the Universal Teresian Brotherhood is to make the treasures of life contained in Saint Teresa of Jesus available for the good of souls, on the largest possible scale and by every possible means.

Teresa of Jesus is, so to speak, a mine waiting to be mined. In past centuries, our forebears worked to bring forth her treasures, and their efforts have come down to us imperfect or interrupted; it is up to us to continue and perfect them.”

WHO BELONGS

“All Catholics, without distinction of class or status, who wish to promote knowledge of and love for Saint Teresa of Jesus may belong to this Brotherhood.

The following belong ipso facto to the Brotherhood:

- **The Little Flock of the Child Jesus**—that is, the firstfruits and the most delicate and beautiful flowers of the Church’s garden, cared for and protected by the watchful care of Jesus and his Teresa.
- **The Teresian Archconfraternity**, welcoming into its fold all young Catholic women and offering them life, light, and courage through its practices of prayer and solid piety.
- **The Society of Saint Teresa of Jesus**, dedicated to infusing these works with life, vitality, and the Teresian spirit, and through them to renew the world by means of the apostolate of prayer, teaching, and sacrifice.
- **The Virgin’s new little dove**, with her prayers and penances, drawing down extraordinary graces upon all these works, and finally, the **Teresian Missionaries** [in the planning stages].”

WE MEET

“We share our charism and mission with the laity. Together with them, we deepen our lived experience of our charism and embrace the gift of our own vocation. Our connection with the MTA commits us in a special way to its life and development as a lay movement. We welcome and promote other forms of Teresian lay life” (Art. 34, STJ Constitutions)

As we begin our community gathering, we can place the image of the Tree of the Teresian Family somewhere in the room. We can also use the image of a seed sown in the ground, which alludes to the charism we have inherited from Erique de Ossó. We become aware of this sense of FAMILY that has been growing stronger within us in recent years. And we give thanks for the sown seed that has borne so much fruit...

SONG

This is a song of thanksgiving from the Teresian Family to Saint Henry, the Man of Faith who sowed the seed, watered it, and tended it. A tribute to the weathered hands of the farmer who, before sowing, tilled the field...

THE FARMER - Fabiola Torrero



**If the seed that falls to the earth could speak, it would give thanks
for being able to become a
flower.**

**For the water and the sun, for the earth that welcomed it, and for
the weathered hands of the farmer.**

**If the seed that falls to the earth could dream, it would see God, its
Creator, smiling.**

**For its shape and color, for the field and the One who worked it, for
those weathered hands of the farmer.**

**Thanks to the man who planted it,
thanks to the man who cared for it,
who saw it break through the earth
and be born,
day and night he watched it grow (repeat) WE**

SHARE OUR REFLECTIONS

In the “Preparing the Heart” section, we have recalled some texts that they have helped us become aware of our origins: Henry de Ossó envisioned a large family united by the Teresian charism. This “union of hearts” would have a profoundly renewing effect on the Church and would bring about effective social transformation. As we engage with the texts—especially the vision of the Universal Teresian Sisterhood as conceived by the founder—we ask ourselves (and share):

What aspects of all this resonate with us today as the dream of a Church (and therefore of our Teresian charism) that seeks to walk alongside others—men and women alike—with the shared purpose of transforming social structures and bringing them closer to God’s plan for humanity?

In what ways has the Church’s synodal journey in recent years—which expressly expresses the “desire for a Church that is closer to people and more relational, that is God’s home and family...”—moved us toward conversion and helped us take concrete steps to walk not only as the “Teresian Family,” but also alongside other charismatic and ecclesial families? How are we noticing this?

How can we “grow in a new awareness of our communal identity” by cultivating more open and welcoming relationships within our ecclesial community, while avoiding exclusion and judgment?

LET’S TAKE SOME TIME FOR A “CONVERSATION IN THE SPIRIT”

COULD WE DISCUSS SOME SPECIFIC WAYS IN WHICH, AS A COMMUNITY, WE SEE POSSIBILITIES FOR THIS JOURNEY WITH OTHERS?

In the local Church to which we belong...

In the mission we share with other members of the Teresian Family... In the spaces we share with other men and women religious...

Once we have shared some “concrete steps,” we feel called once again to “unite our hearts” as the Teresian Family within the great family of the Church. We pray for this synodal journey promoted by Pope Francis and which the Society wishes to make its own... We express aloud our prayer for the Church and for the realities within it that need conversion so that we may learn to walk together as humanity...

We sing:

- **WE ARE YOUR PEOPLE** (CD **It’s Not That Easy*. Fabiola*)

There is still much to experience, there is still a long way to go,
There is so, so much to be thankful for, for all that You give us (repeat)

**We are Your hands, Lord, we are Your hands. We
are Your story, Lord, we are Your story.
We are Your life, Lord, we are Your life: we are Your people.**

**We are Your hands, Lord, we are Your hands.
We are Your story, Lord, we are Your embrace
for this world that suffers and dies...
We are your people, Lord, we are your people, brother.**

We are the salt of the earth; we are a ray of light.
Strong friends who remain today, strong friends of God. We are a burning
fire, embers that hold warmth.
Strong friends in our own midst, strong friends of God.

TEXTS FOR FURTHER REFLECTION

Following the community gathering, we offer this excerpt from the 2019 framework document of the Teresian Family, the result of a multi-year process that led to the development of this “common framework.”

THE TERESIAN FAMILY OF HENRY DE OSSÓ: 2019 Framework Document

The Teresian Family was born from the spiritual encounter between Henry de Ossó and Teresa of Jesus as an expansive charismatic movement with a single mission: to know and love Jesus and to make him known and loved.

Laypeople and sisters share in the transformative power of the charism to respond with creativity and boldness to the new situations and challenges facing humanity. United by the same founding charism, our Christian identity is enriched by the unique perspectives and nuances we bring from our different vocations and states of life.

The Teresian Family is a community within this great ecclesial family, and we are urged to find, together, the responses we can offer in the new contexts of the world to which we are sent. We are united by the same passion: Jesus of Nazareth and his Kingdom, and the fire of wanting to inspire others.

We are invited to follow the Teresian journey, grounded in the experience of a human Jesus, in the Word of God, and in the teachings of our masters Henry and Teresa. This path integrates faith and life, a contemplative gaze upon reality, and transformative actions.

In our charismatic identity, we find a **dynamic force** rooted in the power of **relationships**, bonds, and the ability to build networks. Henry and Teresa are masters in the art of connecting, attuning to others, and generating synergies with them.

DIFFERENT WAYS OF FORMING CONNECTIONS

The Teresian Apostolic Movement and the Society of Saint Teresa of Jesus have, since their inception, been an essential part of the Teresian Family. They have lived out and spread Henry’s Teresian charism in many countries and circumstances, through both lay and religious vocations, making it accessible to many other people.

Today, we are a network of people united by the Teresian charism of Henry de Ossó, lived out in different contexts and through various tasks and services, with a vocation toward universality and inclusion. To this day, we continue to recognize within our family different ways of belonging:

TERESIANS ON MISSION

People who express a desire to belong to the Teresian Family of Henry de Ossó because of their connection to *Teresian spirituality and their commitment to it*. This involves a commitment to reality, to the mission, and to the community.

They are engaged in a formation process according to the Teresian path and feel, in some way, responsible for the growth and maturation of this family through their participation and leadership.

Although there may be different ways of living as *a Teresian on mission*, in any case, these individuals must demonstrate their free and voluntary commitment and their level of dedication to the Teresian charism.

TERESIANS COMMITTED TO PROJECTS

People who express their affinity, commitment, and dedication to some aspect, project, or purpose of Henry's Teresian charism:

- Teresian education in schools Alternative education projects Volunteer work
- Study and promotion of Teresa of Ávila Catechesis
- Teresian Pastoral Projects
- Other

TERESIANS IN HARMONY

People who are drawn to *Teresian spirituality* or to various *apostolic activities* carried out by groups within the family and who participate in them.

TERESIAN FRIENDS

People connected to this family through emotional bonds, which lead them to connect, celebrate, collaborate voluntarily, and participate in meaningful moments for the Teresian Family of Henry de Ossó.

CHALLENGES

This way of seeing ourselves as the Teresian Family commits us to:

- PROMOTE the different ways of being connected.
- RECOGNIZE these different ways of connection in specific individuals and help them recognize themselves as members of the family.
- CREATE FORMATION PROCESSES with the intention of deepening a sense of belonging and advancing in the ways we connect.

- JOIN US on the Teresian journey so that we may live out our identity with passion and respond to the challenges facing humanity and our common home.
- IDENTIFY new paradigms and allow them to challenge us and provide insights for establishing connections—through our charism—with young people who can relate to us.

Bibliography

1.From Solitude, RT March 1878, 162–164.

2.“Thank you, a thousand thanks...,” RT September 1878, 347.

3.The novelty of this insight—which went unheeded at the time—lay in the conviction that Teresa possessed a remarkable ability to draw people in, “*a mine ready to explode*.” That Teresian fraternity had room for everyone: the educated and the uneducated, intellectuals and ordinary people, spiritual seekers and theologians, writers and passionate readers. All those who, in one way or another, found in Teresa of Jesus an authentic woman, a mature person, a believer, a mystic, or a writer. From any of these facets—and from all of them—Teresa of Jesus brought good news to individuals and to the people. The *Universal Teresian Brotherhood* was founded as a large association to bring together and unite all Teresians throughout the world. It was, in a sense, the institutionalization of a great *movement of Teresian spirituality*.

4.*Savia que circula. A Reinterpretation of Teresian Spirituality. Mexico, 2003. Pages 10, 7, and 26.*

5.Henry de Ossó’s writings for the *Universal Teresian Brotherhood* did not form an independent body of work. They are articles published in the RT between November 1877 and November 1881. Let us recall that the HTU remained a project, despite Father Henry’s successive attempts to launch this beautiful project “right away.” They can be read in full in EEO I, pp. 1322–1337. Here we offer a summary of the main points.