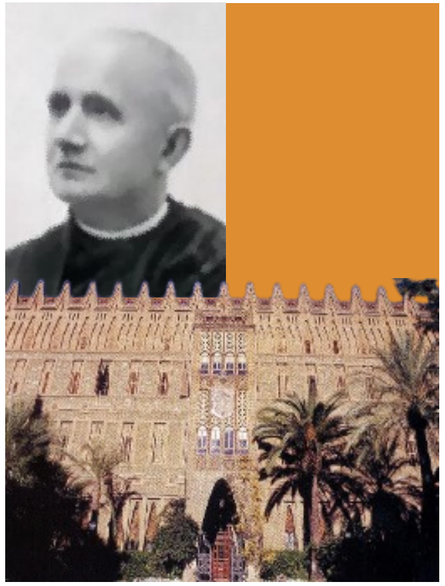
CHALLENGE Internacional

STAGE 7 – BARCELONA
The Mother House



Message from Juan Bautista Altés

Dear pilgrim:



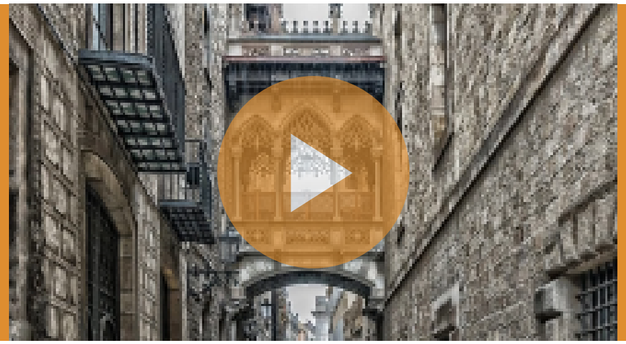
Today Barcelona awaits us, and I can't help but feel a little excited to walk its streets alongside you and this group of such lovely pilgrims from so many different countries. What's more, we've already passed the halfway point of this adventure, and I can't believe how quickly time has passed since we set out for Vinebre.
I confess, from what I was able to discuss with Henry, that Barcelona was a real turning point for him and for all those who dreamed of making the Teresian project a reality. Imagine the hustle and bustle of the late 19th century, the streets full of life, and in the midst of it all, a small group with hearts set on building something great and lasting: the Mother House of the Society of Saint Teresa.
I won't hide the fact that those were intense years. Henry and I shared sleepless nights, doubts, and also many laughs. I remember how, after exhausting days, we would sit down to review the small advances and dream aloud. Henry had a unique way of spreading hope, even when everything seemed to be an uphill battle . Sometimes, I would catch him looking out the window, seeking strength in the blue sky or the murmur of the city. I was impressed by his ability to start over every day, convinced that, with faith and hard work, any obstacle could be overcome.
The Mother House was not just bricks and blueprints: it was a home where the sisters felt welcome, where young women learned to trust themselves and discover that they could transform the world through simplicity and prayer. Henry knew how to accompany each one, listen to their concerns, and encourage them to fly high, even when fear reared its head.
Today, as you arrive in Barcelona, I invite you to look at your own life with that same mixture of realism and hope. What dreams do you hold? What worries you? Don't be afraid to share it, even your own doubts. If I learned anything from Henry, it is that trust and affection can turn any difficulty into an opportunity.
As always, your name goes with me in that silver heart. May this stage help you feel part of a family that continues to grow, dream, and walk together.

A sincere hug, in Teresa and Jesus.

J.B. Altés

TODAY WE ARRIVED AT...

BARCELONA



In the heart of Saint Henry

Pilar Rodríguez Briz is 85 years old. She was born in Camagüey, Cuba. She entered the novitiate in Tortosa in 1964, so she has been a Teresian for 61 years. She has lived in Barcelona, Madrid, and Las Palmas de Gran Canaria and has been very happy.

She has lived and worked at the Mother House of the Soiety in Barcelona for more than 30 years at different times and in different situations: as a university student of philosophy, a teacher and school principal, a collaborator and director of Editorial STJ, a coordinator... The most important thing in her life is JESUS. For her, he is "the only thing necessary."



Charismatic keys of yesterday... and today

Ileana Urroz is a Teresian sister from Nicaragua. She has lived out various missions, in school ministry, in the socio-educational field, in Teresian youth vocational ministry, in initial formation, in finance, among others.

What she is most passionate about is connecting with others in their search and human-spiritual growth. With her, we delve into one of the pillars of the Society, life in community, understood as a mission, as a space for personal and faith growth.



Prayerful proposal

STEP 1. PREPARATION

- Be silent for a few seconds and become aware of God's presence here and now. He does not appear suddenly, but He is always there, always remains, He always precedes us.

Prayerful proposal

STEP 2. WE VISUALIZE ONE OF THE FOLLOWING SCENES FROM FAMOUS FILMS:

Spend a few minutes with Mary, the mother of Jesus, in her role as mother and educator.







Prayerful proposal

STEP 3. TIME FOR REFLECTION.

We ask ourselves how relationships are going in our community, family, parish, among our coworkers...

Prayerful proposal

STEP 4. CLOSING PRAYER

Lord Jesus, make us an open, trusting, and peaceful community, filled with the joy of your Spirit.

An enthusiastic community that knows how to sing about life, vibrate with beauty, tremble before mystery, and proclaim the Kingdom of Love through contagion.

May we carry the celebration in our hearts even when we feel the weight of pain in our daily journey, because we know, Risen Christ, that You have conquered pain and death.

And may we not be frightened by tensions, nor let ourselves be overwhelmed by the conflicts that may arise among us. For in our weakness we rely on the creative and renewing power of your Spirit.

Grant, Lord, to this family of yours a great dose of humor so that we may defuse difficult situations and smile openly at life.
Make us experts at undoing knots and skilled at weaving bonds; energetic in breaking chains, creative in opening furrows, and constant in sowing even if we do not see the seeds grow.

Make us skilled at healing wounds and capable of keeping the flame of trust alive. And grant us the great gift of being, in a world overwhelmed by sadness, humble witnesses and prophets of true joy.



Enigma Challenge

Throughout this Teresian route, you will receive a series of clues that will lead you to the enigma of this Challenge.

To guess it, you must first look for a contemporary of Saint Henry de Ossó.

CLUE OF THE DAY

One of Enrique's passions was EDUCATION, and I helped him to share and make known the whole life and movement that was born with the Teresian Colleges in many different places, even beyond Spain: Africa, America.



Stamp for the next stage

Answer the following assessment questionnaire in order to obtain the stamp for your credential so that you can sleep in the hostel and continue on to the next place.

1. What stands out about Barcelona in the time of Saint Henry?

a) It was not easy to live there because it was a city closed to new ideas.
b) Urban chaos
c) The Teresian sisters were hardly known and, moreover, somewhat rejected..
d) Open-mindedness, and therefore Saint Henry was able to move freely.

2. The community has provided Ileana with:

a) A place where she could complain when there was something she didn't like
b) The ability to recognize her gifts and develop them
c) A good cooking school because her parents did not teach her.
d) An idyllic place because there are never any problems in the community. Problems are outside, in reality. The community is like living outside of reality.

3. The word of the sisters in the community is for Ileana...

a) A burden that must be borne
b) A nuisance to silence.
c) A way of speaking God's word, which can indicate God's will
d) A word of encouragement, affection, forgiveness. But especially on Sundays. On Mondays, those words are not so friendly.

4. What is the "mother house" of a congregation?

a) Where the founder was born.
b) Where the congregation was born.
c) Where the Superior General lives.
d) Where the first mission work outside the congregation's country of origin was born
e) Where there are more elderly sisters who need special health care

5. What is the "one thing necessary" for Pilar Rodríguez?

a) Sleeping at least 6 hours
b) Jesus
c) Saint Teresa
d) A stroll along Las Ramblas on Sundays
e) A good philosophy book on the nightstand



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We'll accompany you on this journey!

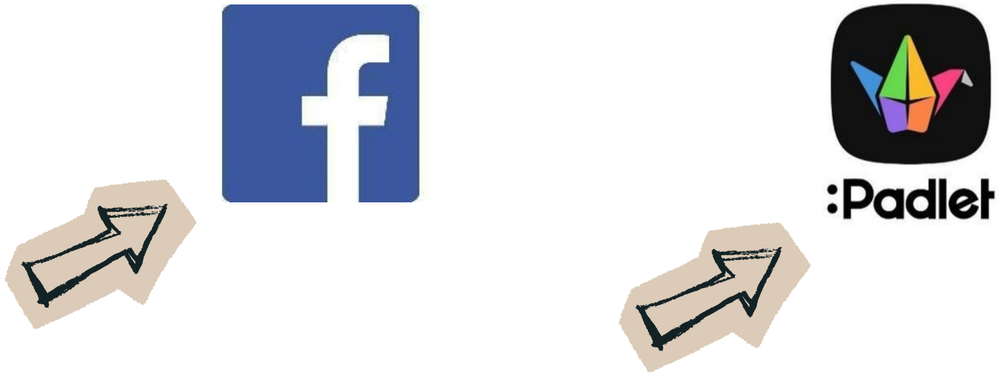
- Would you like a Teresian sister to accompany you on this journey through the places of Saint Enrique de Ossó in writing (email, Whatsó…) or through a conversation (telephone/online) to share what this itinerary is generating in you?

- Sharing life multiplies life and deepens the experience. Simply write here to request it:

osso.challenge@stjteresianas.org



Share with other pilgrims Challenge



Extra material for the highly motivated

TEST ON MY COMMUNITY SKILLS

1 = Never, 2 = Sometimes, 3 = Often, 4 = Almost always, 5 = Always

1. **I listen carefully when others express their ideas or feelings.**
2. **I try to discover the good in each person, even if they think differently than I do.**
3. **When conflicts arise, I seek dialogue and reconciliation rather than criticism.**
4. **I enjoy sharing my gifts and talents in service to the group.**
5. **I rejoice in the good fortune of others without comparing myself or competing.**
6. **I take on shared responsibilities with consistency and joy.**
7. **I pray or reflect on the people with whom I share my life or work.**
8. **I am patient with the rhythms and limitations of others.**
9. **I express gratitude and appreciation for what others do.**
10. **In community, I seek God in the midst of everyday life, as Teresa of Jesus taught.**

TOTAL SCORE: ADD UP YOUR ANSWERS (MINIMUM 10 – MAXIMUM 50)

Total score	Spiritual and community interpretation	Advice inspired by Teresa and Ossó
10 – 24	You tend to focus too much on yourself and find it difficult to live with an open heart.	*Ask the Lord to "broaden your soul." Spend time in silence and listening more; as Teresa said, "walk in truth, which is humility."*
25 – 34	You want to live in harmony with others, but sometimes differences or fatigue hold you back.	*Work on patience and shared joy. Henry de Ossó reminded us: "Charity never tires."*
35 – 44	You live fraternity with a sense of service and openness of spirit, although there is room for improvement in communication and consistency.	*Reinforce small daily gestures: listening, forgiveness, praying together. They are the "inner castle" of community life.*
45 – 50	You have an open heart, fraternal and full of joy in your dedication. You are a presence of communion and peace.	*Keep your interior life alive. Without prayer, the group fades away. Teresa of Jesus would say: "God alone suffices... but together we walk better."*

Extra material for the highly motivated

THE TERESIAN SCHOOL AND GAUDÍ



Extra material for the highly motivated

A LITTLE HISTORY: BARCELONA IN THE 19TH CENTURY



Extra material for the highly motivated

THE SAINT WHO WAS A FRIEND OF GAUDÍ AND RECEIVED A REBUKE: "YOU PREACH, AND I'LL BUILD HOUSES" (CÉSAR ALCALÁ; AUG. 27, 2025, EL DEBATE)

Saint Henry de Ossó Cervelló was born in Vinebre on October 16, 1840, and was ordained a priest in 1867. Deeply influenced by reading about the life of Saint Teresa, he always felt very close to her and even wanted one of her phrases—"son of the Church"—to appear on his tomb.

He devoted much of his life to catechesis and popular missions. Aware of the influence of the press on society, he carried out much of his apostolate through writings focused on strengthening the faith and defending the Church, which was greatly harmed in those years by the policies of liberal governments.

As a diocesan priest, he founded the Institute of Josephine Brothers and the Institute of Teresian Missionaries. In 1876, he created the Society of Saint Teresa, with a clear message : "the world will be what women are." Henry de Ossó died on January 27, 1896. He was beatified by John Paul II on October 14, 1979, and canonized on June 16, 1993.

In 1871, he took over the weekly newspaper El Amigo, which, according to Jaime de Burgo, was Carlist, to counteract another liberal and anti-Catholic newspaper called El Hombre. Joan Gabernet, Ossó's biographer, describes this journalistic battle as follows:
"In Tortosa, a weekly tavern newspaper appeared, El Hombre, which attacked the Christian beliefs of the people. Ossó called it infamous, and it seems he was right. Altés said that its real name should be 'El hombre bestia' (The Beast Man). Pen against pen, press against press. Ossó founded another magazine, modest but militant, called El Amigo del Pueblo (The Friend of the People). It came out every Sunday, written by a group of friends including Juan Bautista Altés, Domingo i Sol, and Jacinto Peñarroya. The articles were the work of Ossó, who signed them as 'El amigo' (The Friend)."

In July 1872, he wrote to the priest Manuel Domingo i Sol: "Yesterday I read El Hombre infame de Tortosa, which has reappeared. Its first article is 'War on the Divine Faith'. It is therefore urgent that El Amigo reappear. If possible, this week would be best. I will take care of the lead article, if you agree." In the end, the magazine was not published.

Regarding Henry de Ossó's relationship with Antonio Gaudí, Gabernet tells us:

"The school project was very ambitious. The July issue of the magazine published the first sketch on a full page, later retouched by Gaudí, who took it with the seriousness of a Christian artist. His relationship with the priest of Vinebre—who had worked in Reus when Gaudí was a child—helped him discover a beauty superior to that captured by poor flesh eyes. Two idealists came together at the San Gervasio school: Gaudí, who molded stars on tiles, and Ossó, who multiplied the tiles of stone and souls, placing everything in God's orbit.

The construction was a series of miracles, the founding father would later recall. No one knows how Ossó managed to raise the necessary funds. He suffered headaches, especially when the first payment deadline passed, which almost led him to court. He was given two more days to raise the eight thousand pesetas he owed. He succeeded, thanks to Saint Joseph, who tested him but did not overwhelm him. Begging, the work progressed for the glory of God. Ossó tried on occasion to cut back on Gaudí's flourishes, as he did not seem to have been born to count expenses, perched in his castle of art. Gaudí, however, did not mince his words and said to him: "Come on, come on, Father Enrique, you preach and I'll build houses."

The two understood each other and were well matched. I fear that Gaudí would only be rewarded in heaven for the work he did with his soul. He may have added his contribution to the work with which Henry de Ossó would beautify the future Barcelona. They were two great friends.

Although the work was not yet finished, the school already looked magnificent, because Gaudí wanted it to be the best in Barcelona. "It will be very beautiful and very comfortable," he assured as the work progressed.

Architecturally, that building preached. Travelers on the Sarriá train arriving in Barcelona turned their heads with joy from the left window. Dozens of curious onlookers admired the Teresian symbols that the highly original architect had captured on the red tile, full of spirit like the letter of Saint Teresa. Anagrams, coats of arms, insignia, and details of superhuman imagination: everything breathed and lived in the unique building, the glory of Barcelona, which Henry de Ossó began on land purchased without a single peseta (sorry, he had one), for 26,000 pesetas. Henry de Ossó, delighted and grateful for the series of miracles, sang—like the building—the glory of God. He understood, in the midst of it all, that Gaudí was right when he said to him: "You preach and I'll build houses, Father Henry."

FOUNTAIN

150

CHALLENGE
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PARTICIPATE

Ossó Challenge