

GAZING ON OUR WORLD
WITH THE EYES OF CLAUDINE,
AND RESPONDING TO ITS MISERIES



Seeing with New Eyes: Church/World Dimension

The dimension of our Church and world invites us to consider the second priority from the perspective of the HEART, a heart like the Good Samaritan's. Gazing upon the wounds of our church and societies, we hope to enter God's own heart and response as revealed in the Heart of Jesus, alive in our church/world.

GRACE OF THE PRAYER:

To ask for a share in Christ's own heart, for the heart of a Samaritan, free from self-centered concerns;
To become a more dynamic member of a Samaritan church for a wounded world.

SUGGESTED TEXTS:

A. SCRIPTURE:

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| Isaiah 29:13 | God hates false hearts |
| Isaiah 61:1 | The Servant "binds up broken hearts" |
| Ezek. 11:19; 36:26 | I will give you/them a new heart |
| Lk. 10: 25-37 | The parable of the Good Samaritan |
| Ephesians 4:32 | Be tender of heart and forgiving |

B. CONGREGATIONAL TEXTS:

GC36 Booklet – Priority 2: Motivation

“Our prophetic response to the urgent cries of a world marred by poverty, violence, corruption, religious extremism is inspired by the mission of Jesus [Lk.4] and by Claudine’s compelling desire to respond to the miseries of her time.”

The material and spiritual ravages of her church and world called forth from Claudine's heart a need to comfort and console, to heal and instruct those who had suffered most. She could not bear to let the cry of the poor go unheeded, for it found an echo in her own impoverishment. Indeed, her willingness to act out of that very weakness, in a situation where obstacles abounded, where difficulties loomed insurmountable, where literally everything had to be rebuilt from ruins, issued from the energy and power of Another (2 Cor. 13:4). Such was her "hunger and thirst for what is right" (Matt. 5:6) that she would not be satisfied with any response other than that which called for her whole self. Beneath the external squalor and misery that moved her to tears was the spiritual dereliction that deeply touched her heart: the inner destitution and deprivation of those who would live and die, perhaps, without ever knowing God.

*Her desire to alleviate this greatest of misfortunes prompted Claudine to summon all her abilities and resources to seek means of revealing the Lord's name and love, and to restore structures that would heal the wounds inflicted by religious ignorance above all. [Adapted excerpt from “Spiritual Profile,” Chap.1; and *Positio*, 540.]*

CONTEMPLATING CLAUDINE'S JOURNEY

Never did the good Mother cede to others the privilege of tending first to her dear children on their arrival. To wash and comb their hair, freeing it from a . . . swarm of lice, to give them fresh clothing, new shoes, and present them to their companions – she did consider this a privilege. What satisfaction it gave her heart. Her faith understood the truth of Our Savior's promise: "Whatever you do to the least of these little ones, you do to me."

[Adapted excerpt: "Histoire", in *Positio*, 574.]

C. SPIRITUAL EXERCISES: #102, Second Week – Day One

The leap of divine joy: God knows the time has come when the mystery of salvation, hidden from the beginning of the world, will shine into human darkness and confusion. . . It is as if I can hear the divine Persons saying, 'Let us work the redemption of the whole human race. . . respond to the groaning of all creation.' [Trans. David Fleming, SJ]

D. CONTEMPORARY TEXTS FOR REFLECTION:

The "good Samaritan" offers us a model of one who lives out the Father's compassion. . . who doesn't stop to ask whether the man lying by the side of the road is a neighbor or not. The Samaritan doesn't act out of a sense of moral or religious obligation. Compassion does not stem from obedience to the law or respect for human rights. Compassion is awakened through awareness of the suffering of others.

Such awareness liberates us from burdensome ideologies and religious frameworks that block compassion, allowing us to live with a quiet conscience, oblivious to victims of pain and suffering.

[Translated from an excerpt in *Fijos los ojos en Jesus*, Pagola, et.al., 2012, 165]

According to [Pope Francis], today's world considers this self-absorbed Church to be a relic of the past, irrelevant for today's issues. The Church may have had answers for humanity when it was a child, says the Pope, but not now that humanity has become an adult. Hence the urgency of the question: What to do?

The Pope responds: we need a Church that is not afraid to penetrate the darkness of the world, a Church capable of journeying and conversing with the men and women of today. . . . The Church must move out, focus her eyes on Jesus Christ and bring Him to the poor and needy. It is important, says the Pope, to breathe in the fresh air of the Holy Spirit who frees us from a self-centeredness disguised by religious facades, void of God.

[M. Gelabert, in *Vida Religiosa*, www.vidareligiosa.es/, April 2014].

Whenever our interior life becomes caught up in its own interests and concerns, there is no longer room for others, no place for the poor. God's voice is no longer heard; the quiet joy of God's love is no longer felt, the desire to do good fades. . .

Thanks solely to this encounter . . . with God's love, we are liberated from our narrowness and self-absorption.

[Pope Francis: *Joy of the Gospel*, #2,8]

Christian tradition has often identified this Samaritan as Jesus himself: the wounded healer, the one who recognizes even an enemy as neighbor. He is physical and “maternal” toward the half-dead man, in whom he generates new life by his actions: comforting, bandaging wounds, carrying him to shelter – “taking care of him,” as the Gospel has it. ‘Clearly, this Samaritan who ignores all the boundaries set up by society and religion. . . is an image of the One, who being divine, did not consider divinity something to be clung to, but emptied himself, becoming one of us, our equal’ --- literally, jumping into the ditch of our human byways to be the Compassion of God. Here is the New Testament icon of discipleship and justice, a justice that opens out to eternal life. Like the Samaritan woman, the Good Samaritan chooses life, not only for himself, but for all to whom he is neighbor. And the hearers of this parable are called to “go and do likewise.” [J.Farnham, RJM, “The Well and the Road,” 2006]

IMAGINATION EXERCISES/COLLOQUY:

- I come before Jesus and talk to him about what I feel when I pray about the Good Samaritan. I ask him to give the Church hearts like his, reflected in this parable. I pray that we may have open, unselfish hearts, able to move out of our comfort zones and indifference, and let God be present through us in the world.
- I share with Jesus what happens when I confront poverty and suffering in my world. What feelings do I have?
- What do I believe needs to change so we can be more authentic witnesses of Jesus in our world?
- How has Claudine’s experience given me insight into living with the heart of a Samaritan?

EXAMEN OF THE PRAYER:

- I think back on this time of prayer/reflection to consider what God has shared with me? Did I listen?
- What feelings have I had? Areas of resistance?
- If I meet the wounded one on the way, what do I need to respond to Jesus' invitation: "Go and do likewise"?

CLOSING PRAYER:

OPEN OUR EYES. . .

*God of love, give us a deep love for you,
so that we can see the world as you see it.
Open our eyes that we might see what the Good Samaritan saw.
Grant us the insight to see the need in others,
the wisdom to know what to do, and the will to do it.*

*We pray for all those, who in many and various ways,
have been stripped, beaten and left for dead.*

*We pray for children who grow up
in terrible circumstances, starved of love, food, shelter or security.
May they receive the future you have planned for them.*

*We pray for those whose need we would rather not face up to,
because it requires action of us: those marginalized by race, religion, poverty;
those who suffer atrocities because of war, unjust trade rules,
or oppressive governments.*

*Open our eyes, that we might not cross the road away from human need.
Give us a deep love for you,
that we might see your love at work in this world,
and that we might go and do likewise.*