



CASA GENERALIZIA DELLA CONGREGAZIONE  
DI GESÙ-MARIA

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## TO ALL THE RELIGIOUS, AFJM AND COMPANIONS IN MISSION

Dear Sisters, AFJM and Companions in mission,

Greetings from Rome for the Feast of our dear M. Foundress St. Claudine Thevenet.

I recently heard of the Japanese art called Kintsugi. It means golden joining or golden repair. It is a centuries-old art form that emphasizes the repair of broken pottery. Instead of hiding the fractures in a broken piece, Kintsugi magnifies them, filling the cracks with a lacquer resin mixed with powdered gold, silver, or platinum. This creates a striking golden seam that highlights, rather than hides, the object's past. These artists honour it, they celebrate it, turning the cracked piece into a masterpiece, even more beautiful and precious than it was before its breakage.

### Japanese Kintsugi Art work



Each of us has experienced moments of breakage — times when life didn't go as planned, times when our hearts were broken, and times when we felt our self-worth crumble under the weight of our mistakes or failures.

Yet, just as a piece of Kintsugi pottery is not less valuable because of its breaks or cracks, we too are not less valuable because of our struggles. Indeed, the Kintsugi approach encourages us to view these cracks or flaws not as failures, but as vital parts of our personal narrative. These experiences are our golden repairs, serving as reminders of our strength and ability to grow and evolve.

We offer some suggestions to apply this art of forgiveness and inner healing at the personal level.

- Recognize and accept: Much like a Kintsugi artist who would first examine a shattered piece of pottery to understand its breaks and cracks, have a close look at your regrets, your failures, and the moments of weakness you would rather forget, and take them before the master artist.
- Allow the galvanizing power of God to heal and restore you with greater lustre. Allow the master artist to put you in shape and connect the broken pieces with the molten gold of love and healing of the Lord. On your part, respond the action of grace with acceptance and gratitude. Instead of lamenting your broken self-image and imagined perfection and holiness.. Intentionally appreciate how the Lord leads you to be your own unique story of God's goodness and love in the world.

I believe this is what Claudine may have done for her inner transformation. She experienced brokenness and deep losses, at the personal, societal and ecclesial levels. Everything around her seemed to have crumbled, but with the grace of God, she turned them into works of 'art' which has stood the test of time.

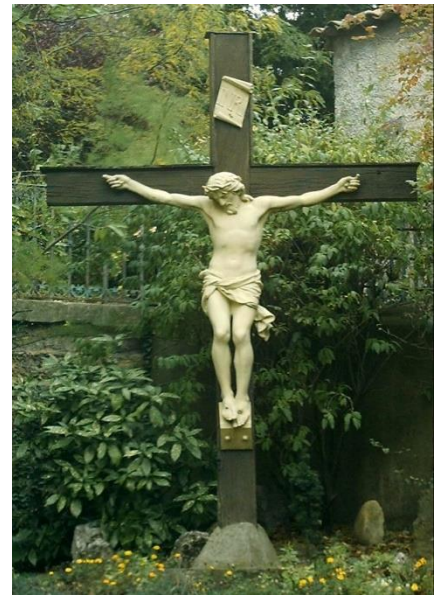
Claudine opened her heart to receive graces from God and she was gifted with a special charism of the active goodness of God, to rebuild not only her personal life, but also impact society and the life of the Church. Her foundation was based on faith, and on a good, merciful and compassionate God.

Forgiveness and inner healing for Claudine was a long process from 5<sup>th</sup> January 1794, when her brothers were condemned to death, to the time she was able to go out of herself to form an Association in 1816. She spent these years in quiet solitude, ruminating and integrating a desire expressed by her brothers... *“Glady forgive as we forgive”*.

*‘She felt her brothers request to ‘FORGIVE’ was an echo of the crucified Christs own words, and she constantly tried to understand this more deeply. To bring about forgiveness is not achieved by mere feelings. To bring about forgiveness means to find a new orientation based on the events of the past – to change one’s life so as to be open to the future’.* (pg. 20, 22 Book “Claudine Thévenet” - Jeanne Marie Horny RJM).

*‘It is not that it left her free and totally healed. In moments of difficulty, her head trembled and she would often gasp for breath. She called this ‘her terror’, a reminder of the horror of her past history’.* (pg. 16 ibid)

Not an easy proposition to forgive, but Claudine took it to heart, she prayed and contemplated Jesus on the Cross. No wonder the children presented her with a large Cross of the crucified Jesus, which is in our garden in Fourvière, as a reminder of the source and fount of forgiveness - Jesus on the Cross.



When we look beyond ourselves, at our world today, there is a yearning for peace, forgiveness and reconciliation. Can we respond to this call? Yes, we can, for we have this gift, this tool for healing and forgiveness. We are duty bound as daughters and sons of St. Claudine to share, to transmit, to live and to offer our charism to nurture peace and reconciliation. If one woman who lived 200 years ago, could do so, can we not join with persons who share our charism to transform our surroundings of brokenness and war, to works of art of far greater value. Alone it is difficult, but together we can respond to the call for peace and offer the gift of our charism of the merciful, forgiving and good God to those seeking it.

Let us ask Claudine to join us on this journey to bring about the healing that the world and our society yearns for.

A very happy Feast from all of us.

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