



Un Carisma vivo, un Camino compartido
150 años de las Hijas de Jesús

May 2021
Mary

The Blessed Virgin Mary, Star on the path of our life

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May is a very beautiful month, the first flowers appear and vegetation takes on new life. For the Church, this month also has a special meaning, the beauty of nature tells us about Mary, her beauty and her virtue.

Pope Francis, in the letter he wrote to all the faithful for May 2020, told us: *The month of May is approaching, a time when the people of God express with particular intensity their love and devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary*¹.

We will celebrate the 150 years of foundation of the Congregation. For the family of Mother Candida, sisters and laity, it is a new opportunity to deepen, together with Mother Candida, our relationship with the Blessed Virgin Mary and our love for her. Mother Candida tells us: "May, is the month dedicated to our Most Pure Mother, the Blessed Virgin Mary, so that you may offer her bouquets of virtues, which is what she desires most"².

Let us dedicate the month of May to draw closer to the Blessed Virgin. Throughout the world, due to the pandemic, we live in pain, fear and concern for an uncertain future ... Let us turn to Mary as sons and daughters and trust in her protection. Let us put all our hope in our dearest Mother.

¹ PAPA FRANCISCO, *Carta a todos los fieles para el mes de mayo de 2020* (25 de abril de 2020).

² TERESA LUCÍA, FI, *Cándida María de Jesús. Cartas I*, 36.



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Mother Candida has Mary's constant presence. It can be said that it fills her entire life. The most significant events in her history are interwoven in the life moments of the Blessed Virgin: On May 31, 1845, the Visitation of Mary to Elizabeth, Juana Josefa (Mother Candida) was born; on December 8, 1871, Feast of the Immaculate Conception, the day she founded the Congregation of the Daughters of Jesus; On the same day, December 8, two years later, she professed her first vows; On September 24, 1903, feast of Our Lady of Mercy, she made her perpetual profession. On the other hand, her letters reveal to us her filial love, trust and desire to imitate the Virgin Mary, like a daughter to her mother.

The presence of Mary in Mother Candida had been forged since childhood. "The devotion to the Most Pure Virgin on Saturdays in particular, from about 4 years of age"³. Undoubtedly, the proclamation of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception in 1854 nourished popular devotion to the Immaculate Virgin in the second half of the 19th century, which surely influenced Mother Candida, attesting that She was the authentic Foundress.

Father Herranz, SJ, her spiritual guide, counselor, companion of Mo. Candida in the Foundation and in the first years of the Congregation, encouraged and guided her in her love for Our Lady. "The Blessed Virgin helps and strengthens you in all kinds of confusion. You must have faith, courage and great confidence"⁴. On December 8, 1871, Father Herranz, inspired by the Holy Spirit, addressed us these words: "Today the Congregation begins to rise up in the Church, under the protection and tutelage of the Immaculate Virgin ... always having Mary Immaculate as the star along your paths. The name Daughters of Jesus he has conferred on you and the protection of the Blessed Virgin are the guarantee of your hope ..."⁵. Mother Candida and the first Daughters of Jesus never forgot it, the message of Fr. Herranz resounded and continues to resonate strongly in the Congregation, we always consider the Immaculate Virgin as the star along path of our life.

In ancient times, the stars were the 'lamps' that shone in the darkness of the night. The 'morning star' is the last star visible before sunrise, it is the brightest star, it revolves around the sun and reflects its light. It is the star that announces the new day, it shines in the sky, waits for the sun and once it rises, it disappears. The Church invokes Mary as the "morning star."

³ MADRE CÁNDIDA, *Apuntes espirituales*, [29].

⁴ Carta del P. Herranz a la Madre Fundadora. (Vigo, 14-12-1874).

⁵ MARIA DEL CARMEN DE FRIAS TOMERO FI, *Dónde Dios te llame*, pág. 64.



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Mary, the 'morning star' announces to us the arrival of the Lord, the sun that comes and rises from above. In the encyclical *Redemptoris Mater*, Pope John Paul II told us: *it becomes fully comprehensible that in this present period we wish to turn in a special way to her, the one who in the "night" of the Advent expectation began to shine like a true "Morning Star". For just as this star, together with the "dawn," precedes the rising of the sun, so Mary from the time of her Immaculate Conception preceded the coming of the Savior, the rising of the "Sun of Justice" in the history of the human race.*⁶.

Thus, Mary, "the morning star", the brightest, illuminates our path to Jesus. Mother Candida deeply experienced the mediating action of the Blessed Virgin in her relationship with Jesus: "May you have that great trust in Mary Immaculate and may all your acts be presented by Her to Jesus"⁷. "Most Pure Virgin, Mother of God and my Mother, I beg you ..., grant me o grant me the grace of your divine Son so that I may fulfill as perfectly (as possible) what I propose to him, ... for that reason I distrust myself, and I put all my hope in you, my dearest Mother. And you ask your Most Holy Son Jesus to give me his love, his grace and his blessing ..." ⁸.

⁶ SAN JUAN PABLO II, Cf. Encíclica *Redemptoris Mater* 3, (25 de marzo de

⁷ TERESA LUCÍA, FI, *Cándida María de Jesús. Cartas* II, 418. 1987).

⁸ MADRE CÁNDIDA, *Apuntes espirituales*, [19].



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The Blessed Virgin is also the star that guides us towards identification with Jesus, helping us to be true Daughters of Jesus, as Mother Candida often expresses: “May she shelter us under her maternal mantle and give us a share in her virtues, through which we may become true Daughters of Jesus, and work hard for His glory and the good of souls, ...”⁹. May Mary enlighten us with her humility, obedience and trust in God and help us to become daughters and disciples of Jesus, so that, as members of the family of Mother Candida, we do not lose our way but rather to walk towards the true light: Jesus Christ.

We can ask ourselves how do we live the relationship with the Blessed Virgin Mary? When we are disoriented or in the 'dark night', which star do we follow? Do we seek, like Mother Candida, the light and protection of Mary to get out of trouble? Or do we look for “... dazzling stars, which arouse strong emotions, but which do not point the way? So, it is with success, money, career, honors and pleasures when these become our life. They are meteors: they blaze momentarily, but then quickly burn out and their brilliance fades.”¹⁰

Mother Cándida wishes that her daughters, in the face of difficulty, "have recourse immediately to Mary, our Most Pure Mother, and shelter under her maternal mantle, ..." ¹¹ and express love and trust to her, "be firm in your devotion to the most Blessed Virgin, and have recourse to her continually, for you will find help for all your needs in her powerful and motherly protection. As a good mother, she will never abandon you but will present your supplications to Jesus..." ¹².

⁹ TERESA LUCÍA, FI, *Cándida María de Jesús. Cartas II*, 471.

¹⁰ PAPA FRANCISCO, *Homilía en la Epifanía del Señor*. (6 de enero de 2018).

¹¹ TERESA LUCÍA, FI, *Cándida María de Jesús. Cartas II*, 459.

¹² TERESA LUCÍA, FI, *Cándida María de Jesús. Cartas II*, 419



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Pope Francis, taking up the evangelist John, in the passage of the wedding at Cana (Jn 2, 2-11), encourages us to seek Mary in every 'experience' of life. "When we are in difficult situations, when problems occur that we do not know how to solve, when we often feel anxious and anguished, when we feel the absence of joy, go to Our Lady and say: « We have no wine. The wine has run out: look at how I am, look at my heart, look at my soul ». Tell the mother. And she will go to Jesus to say: «Look at this one, look to this one: he has no wine. And then she will come back to us and tell us: "Do what He says"¹³. And we, where do we look for the solution in those moments? How do we overcome the emptiness inside? Many times we look at the 'stars that dazzle: recognition, professional success, consumption, leisure, internet etc. At this time when Covid-19 continues to plague the world, let's look for Mary and listen to her:' Do what Jesus tells you '.

The Virgin Mary, the 'morning star', does not always shine, but is always present, accompanying and protecting us in humility and silence. Today each of us, laity and Daughters of Jesus, follow the charism of Mother Candida. We are called to be a 'star' on the path of life according to the vocation of each one and the context in which we live: family, parish, community, work, etc. May we learn from Mary to bring the 'True Light' to others through a life in which joy, solidarity and peace bear witness to the Risen Christ.

Once again, Pope Francis invites us to pray:

O Mary, you shine continuously on our journey as a sign of salvation and hope. We entrust ourselves to you, Health of the Sick, who, at the foot of the cross were united with Jesus' suffering, and persevered in your faith.

Shelter us under your Maternal protection, Holy Mother of God ¹⁴.

¹³ PAPA FRANCISCO, *Homilía en la Epifanía del Señor* (6 de enero de 2018).

¹⁴ PAPA FRANCISCO, *Carta a todos los fieles para el mes de mayo de 2020* (25 de abril de 2020).