



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

July 2021  
Universalismo

## Universalism in Mother Candida

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**"I am a human being, nothing human is alien to me."** The one who uttered this phrase was an old African slave, in the year 165 BC: Publius Terentius Afer, Latin writer. And with him others repeated it later: St. Augustine, Larra, Unamuno at the beginning of the "Tragic Sense of Life", the Brazilian Hugo W Aróstegui... etc.

M. Cándida: When you exclaimed **"The world is too small for my desires"**, **"I would go to the ends of the earth in search of souls"**; when you exclaimed: **"But how come the fathers of the Society [the Jesuits] don't call us to Mexico, Cuba or anywhere else ...?"**; When you wept with emotion upon crossing seas and borders and touching, in your daughters, Brazilian land in 1911, weren't you also saying: **"Nothing human is alien to me"**; **"My home is the world"** ...? And we sing it with pride in your hymn: **"Para una tierra sin fronteras son tus hijas misioneras, son las Hijas de Jesús"** [For a land without borders are your missionary daughters, they are the Daughters of Jesus.]

### 1. How did M. Candida experience universalism?

*"In the rush to write, I forgot the best: that the ones here are to teach interns and externs, rich and poor, here and there, where the greater glory of God is, for that is their motto."* This is how Father Herranz expressed himself in a letter to his friend, Father José M<sup>a</sup> Garciarena, on December 22, 1871, a few days after the founding of the Congregation. It is the most express and precise formulation of our geographical universalism. Father Herranz himself, in a letter to Mother Candida, says: *"It fills me with consolation to see you with some feature of Saint Ignatius: "The world is too small for my desires", because the novitiate asks for that, many, for the whole world..."* (l. n<sup>o</sup> 85, 1894).

In the **Formula of the Institute**, M. Cándida speaks of an availability for sending and an apostolic mobility for which no borders or preferences are marked, "they have universalist dimensions: all parts of the earth fit there, all social classes, any concrete way of carrying out the educational task... And in the **Experiential and Updated Reading of the Formula (2007)**: *"Our mission is for all without distinction as to gender, ethnicity, religion, nation or social class... To reach out to the different cultures, using the language and forms of expression more suited to them"* (Nos 18, 38 et seq.).



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**Geographical universalism** was present in all the actions of the government of Mother Foundress. A dream she had long cherished was to open the doors of Spain for the Congregation to be present in countries overseas. And God granted her, before her death, the fulfillment of that dream with the arrival in Brazil of two missionary expeditions, one in 1911 with the foundation of Pyrenópolis, and another in 1912: with the foundation of Mogi-Mirim. The first 2 "Immaculate" schools. These would be followed by many other presences throughout Brazil to this day.

**Social universalism** was a constant from the beginning of the Institute: in Rule 27 of the Constitutions of 1872 it is stated: "Since there should be schools for the poor and rich that pay board and lodging, day pupils and boarders ...". In the Bulletin of the bishopric of Salamanca, presenting the Institute, we read: "*Classes will be opened for boarders, for day pupils, for non-paying poor girls and a Sunday school for female adults*".<sup>1</sup> When the schools had 4 grades, it was when M. Cándida judged that her educational center had reached maturity, says Inés Laso in "From Juana Josefa Cipitria to Cándida M<sup>a</sup> de Jesús". And at some point, she even urges a school because it was not opening the class for non-paying poor girls.

In **Part VII of the 1985 Constitutions**, universalism is expressed in several articles: "*Our vocation is to go to any part of the world where there is hope of greater service of God and help of souls*" (nº 189). "*Students from all social classes will study in our schools. Hence, we should attend to the education of the poor and of the rich with the same care*" (nº 206). And in 126 of the **Complementary Norms and Directives** we find this affirmation: "*From this call to go throughout the world and to live in any part whatsoever,,, emanate...social and geographical universality,...singling out the proclamation of Christ to unevangelized peoples.*"

There are many **Letters** written to different people in which M. Candida expresses the universalism of the Congregation: "*May the congregation spread throughout the world doing much good to souls, to the greater glory of God*"; that all schools should have the 4 types of classes etc. (L. 49, 129, 370 etc.).

When Mother Candida died, universalism lived on in her daughters because, as Father Ignacio Iglesias S.J. said: "*To become universal is to open the heart and the whole person to everyone, as did Mother Candida, a woman of desires who took the risk of seeking the glory of God and winning souls for Him by sea and by land.*" She continued to breathe, stitching the fabric of the life of the Congregation already spread over different continents, different countries, of believers and non-believers, and accompanies her "heiresses" breathing universal airs into them.

The universalist charism expands the desires of the Congregation according to the gaze and heart of its Foundress. In our schools, this charism means openness to all social classes... "*Our educational service, open to geographic and social universalism and to all levels of education, today faces the challenge of peculiarities in a world in which educative forces and otherwise are mixed ... and admits a diversity of degrees and forms*".<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Estudio de la Fórmula de nuestra Congregación". Comisión especial sobre espiritualidad de la Congregación. XI capítulo general 1977.

<sup>2</sup> "Documentos capitulares". Capítulo General especial 1971



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### 2. How can each person live it today, according to the world context in which we live and according to the vocation to which he/she has been called?

**Universalism** today has the face and name of a pandemic: mask, unemployment, vaccine, confinement, pain, hunger, solidarity, care, incoherence, death, selfishness, north, south, east, west ...: the world has entered our habitat ... What does this universal situation provoke in you? Where do you stand? ...

If we are all brothers and sisters (Mt 23,8), **open your heart to the whole world**: there are challenges that disorient us: - the limit of borders - caring for others, of the common home - coming out stronger from the pandemic, capable of assuming vulnerability - more linked - recovering what is human as a task. Against the trend towards consumer individualism, the community is the place where 3 right words spoken at the right time protect and nurture love day after day: permission, thanks, sorry. (GE) What is left for you in “the pantry of your heart”?

What measures can help us to pursue **universal brotherhood**?

- Welcome, protect, promote and integrate migrants and refugees.
- Develop the awareness that either we are all saved together or no one is saved
- Make gratuity the golden rule of life.
- Convince ourselves that man is the frontier being who has no borders: every person is valuable and has the right to live with dignity.

### **Prayer to the Creator\_ Fratelli tutti. Pope Francis**

**Lord, Father of our human family,  
you created all human beings equal in dignity:  
pour forth into our hearts a fraternal spirit  
and inspire in us a dream of renewed encounter,  
dialogue, justice and peace.  
Move us to create healthier societies  
and a more dignified world,  
a world without hunger, poverty, violence and war.**

**May our hearts be open  
to all the peoples and nations of the earth.  
May we recognize the goodness and beauty  
that you have sown in each of us,  
and thus forge bonds of unity, common projects,  
and shared dreams. Amen.**



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