



The Faith

MOTHER CLELIA

*“Our faith must be greater than that of all the others;
in us, it must radiate and shine.”*

(MOTHER CLELIA)

TESTIMONY FROM THE POSITIO

INTRODUCTION

The faith of Mother Clelia was a truly unique characteristic. Hers was a faith that was strong and biblical, one that gave rise to a multitude of other virtues. Mother Clelia treasured this faith in every moment of her life. Difficulty could not dissuade it, but in fact solidified it more, because she believed deeply that God would never abandon her.

FAITH AND LIFE

The faith of Mother Clelia, sustained by prayer, was strengthened by her great personal commitment to live it out, based on the Word of God and guided solely by Gospel criteria. She drew abundantly from the biblical font, to which she conformed her life and her very being.

Testimony of a witness:

“At a time in which no one read the Sacred Scriptures freely, she in full ecclesial spirit, fed her soul by reading Sacred Scripture, especially the New Testament. She not only read Scripture, but assimilated it, meditating on that which she read until it become her way of thinking and living.”

The faith of the Servant of God formed her soul in every thought and every action. Hers was a living faith, put into action in such a way that she did not stop at the understanding of the truth, but she lived it:

“I can say that the Servant of God lived a supernatural faith and manifested it with words, displaying it especially with deeds.”

Her faith was made clear by her acts of trust in Divine Providence, in personal and communal prayer, in the inculcation of the principles of the Faith first in her own heart and then in the hearts of others, in her filial attachment to God and her complete abandonment to His will.

FAITH AND PRAYER

Through community and personal prayer, Mother Clelia immersed herself in the mysteries of the Faith. Her prayer was nourished by this faith and, at the same time, her faith revealed itself through her prayer. When she prayed, she was focused and attentive.

A witness recalls:

“From what I am able to understand of the Faith and how it was taught to me in catechism class, I can affirm that Clelia Merloni professed a heroic faith. She firmly believed in God and prayed much: always, always, always. She also urged us to believe in God and to love him with all our strength.”

One of the more convincing demonstrations of how much Mother Clelia was inflamed with the spirit of faith was her practice of going to the chapel balcony, directly adjacent to her bedroom, to spend long hours with her Jesus. Though already deprived of strength and often sick in those final two years, she spent hour after hour in continuous prayer, during the silence of the night, in the shadow of the light from the tabernacle candle. The prayers that she recited in the presence of the Sisters were remembered by them as being spontaneous and vibrant with love and faith.

FAITH AND THE EUCHARIST:

Her faith was directed to the worship of the Holy Eucharist. In the Congregation’s Rule, she prescribed exposition of the Blessed Sacrament one day a week, as well as a fixed day each week for all-night adoration with the specific intention of the sanctification of priests.

“I remember Mother as a great woman of faith. It was only her faith in the Sacred Heart, present in the Eucharist, that sustained her in the long wait, certain that the Institute would emerge from its extreme trials.”

FAITH DURING THE GREAT TRIALS

Particular mention should be made of the vision of Mother Clelia's faith as a prayerful response to every adversity. Let us listen to a witness:

"Painful situations were not lacking for her, but Clelia always displayed a great spirit of faith: in each painful event she always saw the paternal hand of the Lord who permitted everything only for the true good of his chosen ones, and when the Sisters tried to comfort her by pointing out the malice and the uncharitable intentions of those who were the cause of her suffering, she never listened to such talk, but pushed herself always to see the permissive will of her heavenly Father and excused everyone."

Another witness confirmed:

"Considering above all the exhausting journey traveled by the Servant of God from Viareggio to Rome, I think that only the light of faith supported her steps. Humanly speaking, the difficulties she encountered would have been enough to stop anyone."

The offering of her entire self that she made to God was accepted by Him, who upheld her during the unspeakable trials which befell her: sicknesses, misunderstandings, slander and calumny. These exacerbated her heart, but did not bend her faith.

CONCLUSION

Faith sustained the entire life of Mother Clelia and was the life-blood that permeated each moment of her existence. She professed a heroic faith in the ordinary events of life, accepting all events as permitted by God.

The last two years spent at the Generalate in Rome became a most beautiful crowning of her entire earthly existence, demonstrating above all that, thanks to her indestructible faith, she was able to pass through the stormy seas of life without wavering.

To think about:

- 1. What does the faith of Mother Clelia say to you?**
- 2. What can Mother Clelia say to the people of today who struggle to believe?**
- 3. How is it possible for us today to live the faith that she lived?**