



MISSIONARI  
DEL  
SACRO CUORE

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Rome, February 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2008

Dear Sr. Mary Fyfe, fdnsc  
And all Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart:

The Centenary of the Death of Mo. Marie Louise Hartzler brings to us, Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, a certain feeling of joy that we are, indeed, family. The close collaboration between Fr. Jules Chevalier and Mo. Marie Louise is a character that history and Divine Providence have welded together. The person of this great woman also has something to do with it, and, perhaps, we can say that she personified it – she was a mother whose two sons joined the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, and upon becoming a widow and after her obligations to her mother (who eventually died) and a sick sister (who got better), she also joined religious life. Her death coming four months only after that of Fr. Jules Chevalier also tells of that certain closeness that they enjoyed.

That Fr. Chevalier had so much confidence in her is seen in his appointing her Superior General when she was still a postulant! Many of us still think that she was the Founder of the Congregation of the Daughters of Our Lady the Sacred Heart and that she was the First Superior General of the Congregation. If we think that way, we are not alone; many others thought in the same way. In the Analecta of our Congregation (No. 2, 1905-1910, p.346), announcing the death of Mo. Marie Louise and requesting prayers for her, she is described as: "... Institutricis et primae Superiorissae Generalis Congregationis Filiarum Dominae Nostrae a Sacro Corde Iesu." We know in fact that Fr. Chevalier is the Founder, and Mo. Marie Louise would always be the first one to acknowledge that, and that she is the Third Superior General of the Daughters, the first two being Mo. Marie Françoise and Mo. Félicité. However, it was with her that the Congregation that Fr. Jules Chevalier envisioned was finally taking shape, was stabilized, and grew. She was the needed organizer for the incipient congregation.

Organized as she was, she was nonetheless a woman who had great trust in Divine Providence. To follow God's will for her was primary, and this attitude or faith carried her through – her initial discouragement when she saw the rundown houses and the disorganization of the Congregation in Issoudun; her unwillingness to accept the responsibility of being Superior General when she was only a Postulant at that time; her collaboration with Fr. Chevalier in sending people to the missions. These are some examples of her total trust in God.

She shared Fr. Chevalier's dream for the missions and the urgency of sending people to the missions that even Sisters who were professed on a certain day had to leave for the missions that same day. She would cry for a Sister who would go to the missions because she knew the perils and difficulties that were awaiting her there. However, she was convinced, with Fr. Chevalier, that the love of God has to be preached everywhere.

As you celebrate the centenary of her death, let us thank God for the gift that she was to your Congregation and to ours, and to the whole Church. As you continue to grow worldwide in terms

of number of members and missions, let us thank the Master of the harvest, through Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, for the gift of vocation and continue to pray for more. Indeed, “celebrate” is an apt word for this occasion because her death, and death is appreciated only when life is well lived, has brought form, life, and vibrancy to your Congregation.

May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be everywhere loved forever! Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, pray for us!

In Corde Jesu,

Narciso V. Abellana, MSC

In Behalf of Fr. Mark McDonald, Superior General,

And of all Missionaries of the Sacred Heart of Jesus (MSC)