

# Reflection

---

*Offered by Sr. Margaret Gremпка  
June 3, 2016*

Readings: FC (selections from 2 and 52), 1 John 4: 7-16; John 13: 34-35

Good afternoon! Happy Feast Day!

Today, as has become our custom, we are celebrating the feasts of both the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary! Mother Clara joined these feasts together for us when she named her Congregation Franciscan Sisters, Daughters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary. Happy Title Day!

What does it mean for us to be daughters (and sons) of these Sacred Hearts? What is at **the heart of our charism**? In the second chapter of the Founding Constitution, Mother Clara wrote that as Sisters we "will bear a deep love for one another" – and quoted Jesus: "A new command I give you, that you love one another; just as I have loved you, so you must also love one another." Because we have been loved, we are called and empowered to love.

In John's first letter and in the Gospel, the same theme is sounded several times: God is love; God first loved us; love is from God; let us love one another since God loved us so much! This reminds me of Mother Clara's urging to "help one another in love". In our new Wisdom Statement we have committed ourselves to "**deepen our bonds with each other.**" It seems to me today's feast reminds us that we are immersed and drenched in God's love! God's love became incarnate, became flesh in Jesus – and in us.

We are daughters and sons of the Sacred Heart of Jesus! The heart is the natural sign of life and the embodiment of love. Love lives and thrives in the heart space. The heart of Jesus, the Sacred Heart, is a natural symbol of God's love incarnate. All the images of the Sacred Heart of Jesus have a heart with a brightly burning flame, the flame of divine love embodied in human form. Mother Clara wrote: "Love cannot be idle; it is a fire that does not rest; rather, it is constantly active." Love ... not idle ... constantly active ... flowing from the pierced heart of Jesus, bathing our world and all in it with transforming love and compassion – for nothing is outside the circle of God's love. This same love is poured forth into our hearts that we might be the visible expression of divine love here and now, a **blessing in the heart of the world.**

We are also daughters and sons of the Immaculate Heart of Mary! In the design which Jane created of the Sacred Hearts for our Chapter in 1992, the Immaculate Heart is presented with a rose in bloom symbolizing love fully expressed. Mary's love was faithful, nurturing, steadfast and responsive. In all the surprising events of her life, Mary's response was full of faith and grace. She treasured her experiences, held them in love and contemplation until they revealed their secrets to her. She can help us as we **"face the mystery of the not-yet-known"** – for she did that all her life, with love and courage and compassion.

During our Chapter, we asked **"what is ours to be, to do now?"** Mother Clara wrote: "The Sisters should seek to strengthen and to nourish their holy love by praying that they perform the works of charity for the greater honor and glory of God." This is very similar to her other words: the congregation "endeavors to integrate the contemplative and active life so that the active life is nourished and strengthened and supported through the contemplative and thus itself becomes rich in blessings."

Mother Clara went on to say that the Sisters should "practice the spiritual and corporal works of mercy with holy love ... using the talents and capabilities they have received from God." I didn't remember Mother Clara's reference to the corporal and spiritual works of mercy. Maybe these words strike me because we are in the Year of Mercy.

As a Province, we recognize that we are in a new time, wondering how we are called to be a blessing in the heart of the world. As we reflect on the talents and capabilities which are ours, I wonder if the corporal and spiritual works of mercy may serve as a guide and inspiration for us. For example: How can we feed the hungry and shelter the homeless now? How can we counsel the doubtful and comfort the afflicted now? or as we have said in previous Chapters: **How can we BE peace, transformation, hope and healing in the heart of the world?**

As we live into the answers to these questions, we also treasure Mother Clara's urging to nourish and strengthen our lives through contemplation. We are graced by God's love and live in God's spirit. With our hearts open and willing, we need to let the hard, significant questions of our world's suffering stir our love into action. What is our unique way of participating in God's love and healing for our world? As daughters and sons of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, how can we **"respond anew to the needs of our times – and be a blessing in the heart of the world?"**