Good Afternoon.

We gather today in this Eucharistic Liturgy
to remember in word and ritual,
in symbols and presence,
the wisdom of M. Clara Pfaender in naming us
Franciscan Sisters, Daughters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary.

And I,
in, and through this reflection,
hope to ponder with you some inquiries, some possibilities,
about how it is that each of us, individually,
and all of us, communally,
can embody this title and be
a living and loving presence in the heart of our world
through word and as a sacrament of perpetual loving.

Imagine with me.........................

Mother Clara,
having heard the call of the Spirit
to leave the Sisters of Christian Charity,
and having courageously and secretly
obtained a bishop’s permission to found a new community,
is then faced with choosing a name, a title,
for the new community’s mission and ministry.
This title has to be large enough
to enfold all the diversity of the God’s ways,
while being a personal guiding light
for the community’s members
as they breathe into an unknown future.

This name has to invite her and her companions to
BE A PERPETUAL PRESECE OF LOVE
for all persons and for all creation.
The title has to BE A SENDING FORTH OF COMPASSION
through her and her companions to the heart of the world.

This naming of her Community as Franciscans
has to imbue each one of them
to accept the nearness of God to them at all times.
She was well aware that it would be easy
to hold such nearness, such love,
in the tabernacle or in a monstrance.

But her heart desires
that the name for the congregation
will also embrace
the love of the person or persons
before herself or her sisters
in each now encounter.

Naming or calling her companions the Franciscan Sisters;
Daughters of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary
would have to mark each of them
as one who would contemplate the mystery
of being loved personally
by the Holy Hearts of Jesus and Mary and each other.

And, accepting that they are so loved,
the title will mark them as a relational community:
kindred with each other and all others,
as servants
that see with the heart and love unconditionally.
Mother Clara must have known, perhaps through her contemplation of the ways of Jesus and Mary and St. Francis and St. Clare, that “heart” is a verb.

Blessing the Community with the name HEART; inviting all to BE LIKE THE HEARTS OF JESUS AND MARY, would charge the community to be an energy of exchanging mystery and ministry.

She hopes that the name of the community will call herself and each of the sisters’ hearts to turn perception into communion ...
...a common union ...
...a One-ing of heaven and earth.

And so our inquiring, our pondering with M. Clara brings us to know NOW, as her prayer revealed to her THEN, that we are

Franciscan Sisters (Brothers),
Daughters (Sons) of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary.

This title that we celebrate today, OUR NAME AND OUR WAY, Symbolizes and commissions us to be the unconditional love and compassion of our Infinite God living in the finiteness of each of us.

Our name embodies our call to be perpetually the Christ Present in each now of our living forth a blessing into the heart of the world.

I invite all of us to continue pondering how we are our living title!

Be It So. Amen.