



July 5: OPEN LETTER TO FR. HERRANZ

By Teresa Zugazabeitia FI

July 5, 2016. Fr. Herranz' Day

Dear Fr. Herranz:

I am a little confused. Today is July 5th.

For a long time we have not celebrated your birthday ... and I forgot to greet you on your day.

sure Mother Candida would give me a scolding; like the one which Isabel Anton received when they put electricity in Salamanca.

And with good reason: forget you and your birthday!!!

How Mother Candida used to celebrate it and what loving verses sprang from her big heart, so grateful, *Oh "ené" my dearest Father...!*

We ought to have something overflow in us from that grateful heart of our Mother. It is only just.

I want to join Macarro Beatriz, who captured his decisive influence in our Congregation in the book she published in 2004.

Because, dear Fr. Herranz, your germinal charismatic presence in the Congregation, witnessed by many sources, is recognized by the Church in the papal decree approving the Holy Rules on August 6, 1901: *"... Candida Maria de Jesus, with the advice and direction of Rev. Fr. Miguel Herranz of the Society of Jesus, founded in Salamanca..."*

M. Candida herself, in expressing her joy at the endorsement of the Church, feels nostalgia for your absence: *"... it is true that Fr. Herranz was not able to witness the approval in his lifetime; but from heaven he would pray and enjoy this as well. They also put his name in the Decree "*, she wrote.

Thus she repeatedly assured her first companions about the origin of the charismatic intuition: "not mine, not his alone, but of the two, and at the same time".

How can I forget that shared experience of the "Nazareth of the Institute" in Rosarillo, as you called it? It was on April 2, 1869. It coincided with Good Friday.

Human prudence was left aside. You trusted God who acted with power and grace in Juana Josefa.

You, seasoned in religious life and man of law, also served to channel the charism; and you started to work. You were already 49 years old and could combine youthful dream and utopia, on solid ground.

And you began giving classes to this young 24 year old Basque who could barely read with comprehension. But the two were strongly convinced that the Spanish society in those *"revolutionary times"*, when the catechism was banned in schools, needed Christian education to promote women in the social scale. They opted for women, so culturally undervalued, to announce the good news of the Kingdom. **The Catholic education of Peoples.** It became the passion of their lives from then on.

It took more than two long years of accompanying Juana Josefa closely, directing her to listen to the Spirit. Discerning together the will of God.

Until December 6 when a stagecoach brought them to Salamanca with three other young women from Valladolid.

Why Salamanca? Maybe because you had already established contacts. You were a friend of Fr. Bombardó, who in turn was a friend of Bishop Lluch y Garriga who had entrusted him with the formation of seminarians. The two were Catalans. You thought that the bishop would be favorable to you through Bombardó, in the vicissitudes of a new foundation; and in those tough times. And you



were not mistaken. There human prudence and the crooked lines of God met once more. Because to found a congregation of teaching in learned Salamanca with so few human resources, viewed from logic, can cause perplexity.

We are now at Gibraltar Street; it is December 8. Two other young women, guided by Fr. Bombardó, join the group of Valladolid. We preserved your words, thanks to eyewitness G. Alcalde, then a young seminarian. They introduce us into the feelings and foundations of the young congregation.

To me, Fr. Herranz, your words sound like the allocution of the Eternal King in the Exercises of Ignatius:

"... It is I who chose you... called not to rest but to work... the enemies many and powerful... no matter, the work is not yours, it is God's... fear not... you are few in number... no matter... always keep these thoughts and desires... you will become a Congregation of unity... in your ways Mary Immaculate... the name of Daughters of Jesus... they are the guarantee of your hopes, comfort of your work, the crown of your triumphs..."

And everyday life begins. And goals have to be envisioned and ways charted. This grace, this charism must be channeled in the Church. Wellspring of new evangelical sap.

It is a time of intense formation. You are so present in the being and doing of the fledgling Congregation that you even outline the various activities in the daily schedule of community life: meditation, examination of conscience; study and work to fulfil the mission. You attend to them daily, and sometimes "morning and afternoon". You instruct them in the principles and attitudes of religious life, in the spirit of the Constitutions.

Those rules explained and discussed with our Mother, at the old walnut table. How they would have resounded in the heart of Mother Candida, guiding and concretizing what the Spirit made her feel inside!

Because they were the channel of that shared experience, back at the side altar of Rosarillo.

These primitive rules drawn, almost furtively, from the Jesuit "Sumario". Because as I understand, the Jesuits did not allow the texts to be disseminated.... You recopied them in order to be able to lend them. I do not know if it's true.

In fact, our very first rules are written in your own handwriting. This is what our sources say.

And what a difficult handwriting, Fr. Herranz. How much we owe to Juana Reguero, who lost her eyesight reading your **Escritos y Cartas** [writings and letters] which we kept like a golden treasure in the archive of Salamanca!

Thanks to her we were able to receive your entire experience of religious life in photocopies. We were able to discuss it in our community meetings, along with the letters of Mother Candida. It was a good exercise that helped congregational discernment to consolidate the post-conciliar Constitutions.

I still have those photocopies of your Escritos y Cartas. What closeness, what prudence and wisdom. What a man of God emerges from your efforts and advice to M. Candida and so many Daughters of Jesus!

I love reading them again. Beyond time and space they make me go deeper into the initial charism.

It is true that those comings and goings from the Clerecía to Gibraltar street to encourage and guard closely the work begun, lasted only 8 months: "*Father Lobo [Wolf] swallowed us up ...*" said Mother Candida upon learning of the decision of your Fr. Provincial to send to you to Vigo.



It was because St. Ignatius did not intend for the Jesuits to be involved in foundations by women.

But considering it carefully, don't you think, Fr. Herranz, that it was "the finger of God", that phrase encrypted between you and M. Candida, which "indicated" the way forward?

Everything is grace. With your departure to Vigo, the true measure of Mother Candida was revealed, towering, in trust and theological availability. Her vigor and courage as a strong woman withstood hardship, illness, persecution here and there ... and the Congregation did not melt like salt in water, as the doomsayers had predicted.

Yes, Fr. Herranz, Fr. Lobo's decision was providential for our future. The physical distance did not hinder your closeness and concern for the small congregation. Your spirit was expressed, and remained in those "letters".

We keep your Cartas [Letters], 443; of which 327 were written to M. Candida, to other Daughters of Jesus or communities. In the early years they reached an average of 22 letters a year. Religious life, mission, the way of governing in our Lord, formation, new vocations ... but also the smallest details of everyday life of the Daughters of Jesus are very present.

With what impetus you defended Mother's management, given the serious difficulties she faced with the pressures from the bishopric: "It is very necessary to note that the foundation started with 700 reals and you were six, almost 100 reals each; you lived from alms for two years ... "

(N.B. those 100 reals were equivalent to 25 pesetas, 0.15 €).

Escritos y Cartas [Writings and letters] that have become part of our spiritual heritage.

If today we take our Constitutions, we see some cursive letters that refer to marginal abbreviations: H, Escritos. And PH, Cartas. Along with the primitive Rules, Mother Foundress, Ignatian Constitutions, Canon Law ... there it is, blessed by the Church, your spirit, Ignatian beat renewed, in the "Jesuitinas" [Daughters of Jesus].

I do not want to run on further, dearest Fr. Herranz. From Loyola, your final resting place, you followed us closely. Magdalena Inibarren succeeded in having your remains moved to the pantheon of Mostenses, along with those of Mother Candida on May 3, 1950. The funerary inscription read: "IHS. En la traslación de sus restos mortales al esclarecido P. Miguel San José Herranz. S.I. Cofundador y primer Director de nuestro Instituto, Consejero de nuestra Rvma. Madre Fundadora..." ["IHS. In the transfer of the remains of the illustrious Fr. Miguel San José Herranz. S.J. Co-founder and first Director of our Institute, Adviser of our Most Rev. Mother Foundress..."] And in the second transfer, on May 12, 1998, to the chapel of Mostenses, at the rear, to the left, the description says: "... Orientador y Consejero de la M. Cándida..." ["... Guide and Adviser of Mother Candida ..."]

Dear Fr. Herranz; I am sure that in that other dimension of the risen life, things look differently. From here I want to interpret them from that enigmatic "finger of God": the paschal mystery involves kenosis.

Thanks, Fr. Herranz. It is only right and proper to be grateful. And mere justice to recognize it. AND... CONGRATULATIONS.