

XAVERIAN MISSIONARIES

# Penitential Celebration

God our Father “knows how we are formed,  
he remembers that we are dust”.  
God, whose love “is from everlasting to everlasting  
on those who fear Him”  
(Psalm 103:14.17).

Xaverian Jubilee Year 2020 – 2021

## Introduction

*"What I do, I do not understand. For I do not do what I want, but I do what I hate." (Rom. 7:15)*

*"But, where sin increased, grace overflowed all the more" (Rom. 5:20)*

We are concluding this year of grace, a Jubilee Year, which the Lord has given us. We lived it as Xaverian Family. We thank God, first of all, for the gift received from the Spirit in the heart of the Church. In this gift, *"we discovered the identity that the Lord had reserved for each of us. In the Xaverian charism, we see and taste the ideal of our life. We recognize ourselves in the words written by our Founding Father: "Every one of us should be intimately persuaded that the vocation to which we have been called could not be greater or more noble; it draws us close to Christ, the author, and consummator of our faith, and to the Apostles who, leaving everything behind, pledged themselves entirely and without reserve to following Christ. They are the best models for our life" (LT 1). And he, with a heart full of joy and gratitude, concludes with this exclamation full of faith: "The Lord could not have been more benevolent towards us!" (LT 1) "(Letter GD 2020, 7). For all this, we say, in a simple way and from the bottom of our heart: thank you because you love us, because you care for us, thank you for walking with us!*

**Why a day/penitential celebration on the eve of the closing of the jubilee year?** Because in our life, in our Xaverian history, together with the grace of God, there is also the reality of evil. It is the personal experience spoken of by Saint Paul: "*What I do, I do not understand. For I do not do what I want, but I do what I hate... For I do not do the good I want, but I do the evil I do not want*" (Rom 7: 14-25). Yes, grace and sin, good and evil, walk together in our concrete daily life. And this from the very beginning, from that December 3, 1895. In our Xaverian Family, we find both holiness and sin. Today we want to present to the Lord, in a particular way, this reality of sin, of human misery, of rejection of God's action, of being enemies of the Lord... This reality, we repeat, is part of our life and, therefore, of our history. We present it to the Lord with a deep desire: to become aware of our active participation in everything that goes against God's plan, in view of neutralizing his/our Enemy's action and thus enable the Spirit of the Lord to lead us towards full evangelical maturity.

We enter this celebration recognizing the presence of God in our midst. God the Father who "*knows how we are formed, remembers that we are dust*"; God, whose love "*is from age to age, toward those who fear him*" (Ps 103: 14.17).

## **PENITENTIAL SONG**

## **GREETING**

### **PRESIDER:**

- In the name of the Father...
- Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ be with all of you.

**ALL:** Blessed be God, now and forever.

*A (simple) thought to underline the significance of a penance journey.*

### **OPENING PRAYER** (inspired by the prayer for the Jubilee Year)

God our Father, in the praise we render you for our Founder Saint Guido Maria Conforti, and for the gift of the missionary vocation, we present to you our unfaithfulness to the Charism received from you. So that listening to your voice, we may renew our desire and our zeal for the mission *ad Gentes*. May we walk the streets of the world with your Son Jesus Christ, and bear witness through the power of the Spirit, to the Hope that gives meaning and life to all humanity. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever.

## **CELEBRATION OF THE WORD OF GOD**

*Brief introduction to the readings (if necessary).*

- **FIRST READING: Rom 7:14-25**

- **SONG: Psalm 104:1-5.11-18.22:** *Bless the LORD, my soul! LORD, my God, you are great indeed!*
- **GOSPEL: John 21:15-19**

*Silence*

### **Reflection - Meditation**

Highlight the central elements of the Word of God we just heard:

- Paul becomes aware of the contradiction that is within him. It is Jesus Christ who frees him from evil and allows him to do good. He experiences this.
- The believer discovers that God loves him despite his unfaithfulness to His Word. God manifests himself in him full of goodness and tenderness. His love is everlasting.
- Simon Peter can truly follow the Lord as he realizes that the Lord loves him with his history of infidelity and denial. The challenge is now at Peter's feet: is he capable of believing in this unconditional love of God? His yes, lays bare also the pain and bitterness present in his heart. Yet, it is the door that leads to a renewed *discipleship* to the point of martyrdom.

### **Why a day/penitential celebration on the eve of the closing of the jubilee year?**

- Because throughout these 100 years, evil has unfortunately been and continues to be present in our Family's life. We have also collaborated with evil rather than with good.

- Various are the ways we have collaborated with evil:
  - cases of abuse (of power, economic, sexual);
  - failure to keep the word given in the religious-missionary profession, and therefore to the vows of poverty, obedience, and chastity;
  - those more subtle forms that the enemy uses to neutralize the power of the Spirit and which affect us, such as egocentrism, mediocrity, lukewarmness, bourgeois life
  - live the Xaverian vocation *à la carte*, in a perverted way and betraying the authentic Spirit of our Charism, unafraid of causing scandal, without scruples either toward oneself or toward others...
- Reflecting and praying on the reality of evil present in us is not only needed, but it is a necessary condition not to stifle, or even kill, the flow of divine life in us.

**Request for forgiveness** (inspired by the "Intentions" of Saint Guido M. Conforti)

*Being an adult, an adult Christian, an adult Xaverian is both the fruit of a journey that requires determination and the result of a demanding and disciplined daily work. Merely possessing the titles of person or Christian or Xaverian does not ensure an upright life, nor secure the full grace of God. [...] Hence, there is the need for daily training, for commitment, for choices that head in the right direction, namely, that of being "compassionate just as*

*God, our Father, is compassionate". (Lk. 6: 36) (Message  
GD - Lent 2021)*

Let us prepare ourselves to present to the Lord this reality of evil  
that is present in us.

**For sins against God**

*Lord, have mercy!*

- For neglecting the Spirit of living faith
- For the shallowness and lack of attention to the spiritual life
- For underestimating the radical nature of religious vows
- ... ..

**For sins against oneself**

*Christ, have  
mercy!*

- For losing the desire to improve our conduct
- For the lack of moral dignity
- For the lukewarmness of our behavior that causes sadness and monotony
- For the lack of purity in the looks and the gestures
- ... ..

**For sins against the neighbor**

*Lord, have mercy!*

- For having lost the joy and desire of mission

- For using the community rather than serving it
- For the contempt towards the people who welcome us in their country
- For having fallen into the spirit of nationalism and tribalism
- For the unwillingness to learn from the poor
- ... ..

### **Spontaneous request for forgiveness**

*"I confess to almighty God ..."*  
 Renewal of Baptismal Promises.  
 (Sprinkling with holy water)

### **Invocations**

**PRESIDER:** Let us pray to our God: He seeks what was lost, brings back the lost, heals the wounded, strengthens the weak.

**ALL:** *God of tenderness, remember us*

**PRESIDER:** Lord, purify and renew the Xaverian Family; enable us to be missionaries, faithful witnesses of Christ in joy or hardships

**ALL:** *God of tenderness, remember us*

**PRESIDER:** Draw back those who have left you because of sins and scandals; may they return to you and persevere in your love.

**ALL:** *God of tenderness, remember us*



**PRESIDER:** Look at our broken heart and humiliated Spirit; welcome us, Lord, in our poverty, for there is no shame for those who place their trust in you.

**ALL:** *God of tenderness, remember us*

(After the invocations, remain seated and listen to Saint Paul's hymn to love)

### **1 Cor 12:31-13:13**

*(Those who love know God. Love is the definitive word in our life).*

## **Our Father**

### **Thanksgiving prayer and Canticle**

Blessed are you, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ!  
In Him, you have chosen and called us through the Xaverian Family  
to witness you in mission.  
We give you thanks for the example of our Founder Saint Guido Maria Conforti,  
for the gratuitous gift of our Charism, and each of our brothers.  
Keep us faithful, you who gave us, in Jesus,  
your Spirit who accompanies us every day.  
Let us walk in the newness of the Risen Christ himself,  
until the full realization of that project of love  
which makes the world one family in Christ.

We ask this through the same Jesus Christ our Lord who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever.

**Blessing**

**Magnificat**





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