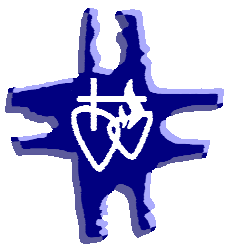


Com-Union

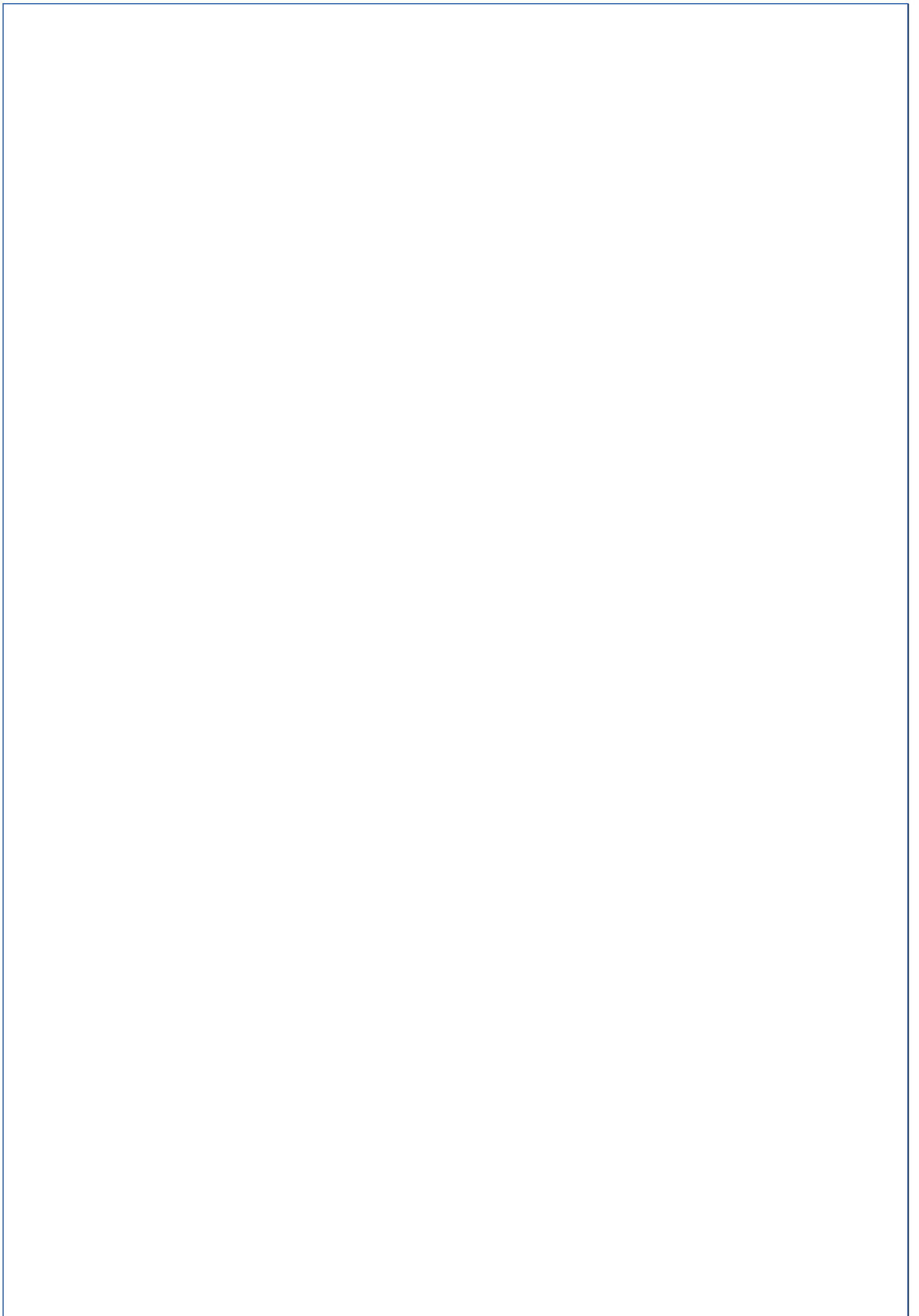


***The emblem
of our Congregation***

Cover: SS.CC. Emblem embroidered in red wool on the white scapular

Table of contents

INTRODUCTION	5
<i>November 2008</i>	
SYMBOLS IN CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALITY	6
<i>Fernando León ss.cc.</i>	
“DIFFERENT EMBLEMS OF OUR CONGREGATION”, THEIR EVOLUTION AND THE MEANING THEY HAVE HAD AND STILL HAVE FOR US TODAY	10
<i>Elisabeth Drolshagen ss.cc.</i>	
THE EMBLEM OF OUR CONGREGATION	17
<i>Consuelo Jaramillo ss.cc.</i>	
“THE PASTORAL DIMENSION OF THE EMBLEM OF THE SACRED HEARTS TODAY” “MAY CHRIST DWELL IN OUR HEARTS”	19
<i>Leopoldo Antolín ss.cc.</i>	
TOWARDS AN ICONOGRAPHIC READING OF THE EMBLEM OF THE SACRED HEARTS	23
<i>Galo Labanda ss.cc.</i>	



Introduction

November 2008

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

Recently the brothers' generalate was remodeled. Decorations were changed. In our dining room there is now a drawing from the fifties that graphically presents the charism and mission of the Congregation. One sees the two Hearts, aflame and wounded. There are drawings presenting each of four ages of the Lord and in the middle a covered ciborium recalling the Eucharist.

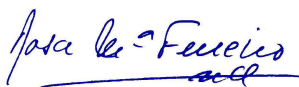
A while ago the brothers and sisters were together for a celebration. Some of us stopped before the drawing and asked ourselves if today we would still be able to make a graphic in which all the brothers and sisters would recognize our Congregation 's identity and mission. Clearly it would be difficult.

What we all agree upon is the emblem: the two hearts together. It appears on the scapular of our habit, on crosses, and pins that we wear. It is found as a heading on our documents and at the door of our houses. Of course there is diversity in the use of the emblem's elements (flames, crosses, thorns, swords, blood etc.) and the diversity of form (lines, colors, sizes) is enormous.

Is it important or not to have an emblem? What is its value as a way of identifying the Congregation and the person who wears it? Does it say something important about the charism that inspires us? Is it understandable in diverse societies and cultures?

This edition of Com-union tries to answer these and similar questions. It has been said that the human being is a "symbolic animal," that he expresses himself in signs coming from within himself. There are things that can only be expressed symbolically. We hope that you enjoy these reflections. May they help you go deeper into what makes us who we are.

Affectionately in the Sacred Hearts,



Rosa Mª Ferreiro ss.cc.
Superior General



Javier Álvarez-Ossorio ss.cc.
Superior General



Symbols in Christian Spirituality

Fernando León ss.cc.



In Christian spirituality symbolism is at the service of a Presence. In the incarnation God has pitched his tent among us, “*And the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us, and we saw his glory...*” (Jn. 1:14) The Glory of God, his essence, his manifestation, is revealed to us as near and palpable. The Sign par excellence stripped himself of his nobility and “*came in human likeness.*” (Phil. 2:7) This presence does not end with the historical Jesus. As he declares in the Gospel of Saint Matthew, “*And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age.*” (Mt. 28:20) Incarnation and resurrection are two stages of one movement of God; of his desire to be drawn close to us, and his Presence leaves open the possibility of encounter, of communion with God. This is the foundation of symbolism in our Christian spirituality: the “presence” of God that invites us to welcome his grace as a gift.

Christian symbols: the art of celebrating

Because of the law of the Incarnation, the symbols of our spirituality are visible and palpable. They also open us to a rich world of meaning. Without a doubt it is in celebration, not only the Eucharist and the other sacraments but in all prayer, where this symbolism is best displayed. Our symbols have to be “performed”: for it is then that they take on life and manifest their whole potential for encounter with God and with brothers/sisters. Our prayer is always a celebration of encounter with God.

For centuries Christian symbols have inspired artists. This is true also in our Congregation. The work of these artists, artisans of faith, awakens our senses and helps us get in tune with God, whose gracious presence is in our midst. This art must stimulate us to respond to him in the same way. Celebrating is an art, an everyday art that links us to the work of the Creator.

Can we apply the notion of art to our celebrations, when we are with many people or just in the simplicity of our communities? Certainly we can. At the origin of the word “art” is the idea of “putting in order,” arithmetic, rhythm, technique, rite. We do not only apply the word “art” to great masters of music, painting and architecture but to anything that has to do with a skill, a craft or a precise way of making something. When we speak of liturgy or prayer, we are considering an “art of making”, of making a home, of knowing how to live, of setting a table, of preparing a community so that it is welcoming. Celebration (the liturgy) is fundamentally an active art.

We could say that “the art of celebrating” consists in performing all the visible, audible, palpable and sensible symbols that are part of the celebration and doing that in a worthy and orderly manner. Those symbols allow the invisible of grace and faith to be fully manifest. This is the heart of the matter: the full manifestation of the grace of God.

This also involves the coordination of movement, behavior, song, people, attitudes and objects. All of that must be at the right moment, with the right rhythm, at the right place,

respecting spaces, with the right style of communication, in coherence with the moment before and the moment after etc. The purpose of all is to make visible and palpable the grace which springs from this encounter with the God of the Incarnation.

The Constitution on the Liturgy of the Second Vatican Council tells us in number 7: *“To accomplish so great a work Christ is always present in his Church, especially in her liturgical celebrations...It involves the presentation of man’s sanctification under the guise of signs perceptible by the senses and its accomplishment in ways appropriate to each of these signs, In it the full public worship is performed by the mystical body of Jesus Christ, that is, by the Head and his members. From this it follows that every liturgical celebration, because it is an action of Christ the Priest and of his Body, which is the Church, is a sacred action surpassing all others. No other action of the Church can equal its efficacy by the same title and to the same degree.”*

“The presentation of man’s sanctification under the guise of signs perceptible by the senses,” this is what the art of celebrating is all about. It is at the service of this encounter with God. It is at the service of the Work of God. It means providing all the means necessary for this encounter to take place. This is what we speak of when we use the term *“the art of celebrating.”* We are not speaking about esthetics, nor are we speaking of banality. It is the art of facilitating an encounter that is neither easy nor always obvious. To put in order all the media that the celebration calls for, is to make possible the encounter with God.

This art calls us to take an interest in the rites because they are capable of unfolding the rich symbolic world of the liturgy. The rite is a vehicle of this encounter with divinity, so we have to let it do everything it can. To organize the rite well is to clear the way for each person to meet God. We are aware that we celebrate the rite in community, as the body of Christ, and that the unfolding of the symbols is a way to build communion and identification with that body.

At times in developing rites we meet obstacles. We experience a sort of “tyranny of the intellect.” We are more comfortable in the realm of the mind than in that of the body. We let our brains be more active in the celebration than our senses. It is as if we have to know and understand everything in order to do the liturgy well. And we are well aware that in Christian symbolism much of the mystery comes to us through the senses: we listen, we sing, we eat, we smell, we touch, we move around and we see.

Another tyranny is that of “measurable results.” Everything has to turn out as planned and everyone has to experience things as planned. It is as if we could determine what God has to say to his people. The truth is we are not a marketing group but free beings who celebrate their faith, God acting with the same freedom he has given to us. We prepare the celebration so that believers can enter into something which is beyond them but they must feel freely involved.

We are invited to search for the clearest and most appropriate ways to show forth our spirituality and its symbolism. We are not talking about rules and regulations but about what is right and best. We need gestures and words that are authentic. For example, will they believe I am praying, if I am saying the Our Father with my mouth and with my hands flipping the pages of the breviary?

This supposes that we have full awareness that we act *“in presentia”*, first in God’s presence and then very importantly, in the presence of myself and the other. As the second

Eucharistic Prayer says, "We thank you for counting us worthy to stand in your presence and serve you." First I make the gesture myself, my body and soul present in each gesture. I make the gesture myself before thinking of those who receive the gesture; in the conviction that only in that way can others rightly receive the gesture.

Gestures, words and objects are not just instruments or mere pretexts for encountering the mystery of God revealed in Jesus Christ. It is in their inner consistence, in their flesh, in their materiality that God manifests himself and allows himself to be glimpsed and contemplated. Christian sacramentality takes the human importance of such mediations very seriously. It is in the specific assembly of brothers and sisters, in the Word proclaimed, in the gestures and the things, in the persons who read, preside and offer that the gift of God and the thanksgiving of the Church are manifested. That is why we are concerned about performing the ceremony, "staging it"; the elements of the celebration are not only esthetics but epiphany.

Christian symbols create a world of meaning

The German philosopher Martin Heidegger, in an article entitled "The Origin of the Work of Art," asks what makes a work of art to be a work of art? Is it the artist? The materials? The quality of the work? The impact it produces?

He points out that a work of art is one capable of creating a world around itself. This world of a work of art is also the world of the one who contemplates. He gives as an example a painting of Van Gogh, in which appear the shoes of a peasant woman. *"From the dark opening of the worn insides of the shoes the toilsome tread of the worker stares forth. In the stiffly rugged heaviness of the shoes there is the accumulated tenacity of her slow trudge through the far-spreading and ever-uniform furrows of the field swept by a raw wind. On the leather lie the dampness and richness of the soil. Under the soles stretches the loneliness of the field-path as evening falls. In the shoes vibrates the silent call of the earth, its quiet gift of the ripening grain and its unexplained self-refusal in the fallow desolation of the wintry field. This equipment is pervaded by uncomplaining worry as to the certainty of bread, the wordless joy of having once more withstood want, the trembling before the impending childbed and shivering at the surrounding menace of death. This equipment belongs to the earth, and it is protected in the world of the peasant woman."*

This beautiful phenomenological account invites us to use the same categories for symbolism in Christian spirituality and its "works of art," its objects. Could we not say the same of an old missal, of a worn and well used breviary, of the seats in old confessional, of a worn pair of rosary beads or an old crucifix? Liturgical objects and furniture have to be capable of creating a world around them, or we could say "a network of meaning" that allows the believer to encounter God and himself and his Christian vocation more profoundly.

Think of a sick person in bed, a table with medicine, a minister of the Church and in the midst of all that, an amphora with the oil of the sick. This fragrant oil, placed in an amphora that honors the meaning the oil has for the believing community, is capable of creating a world around itself. It is the world of God, it is the world of the community that is present in that substance that the whole diocese came together to bless in the Chrism Mass. The sick person is not alone, through that oil the whole presbyterate and the whole community are present. Through that oil the sick person discovers anew that he is part of the body of Christ,

consecrated and anointed to be with God. He discovers that he is priest, prophet and king. All the struggles that he has experienced on his sickbed find meaning in the generous gift of Jesus for his friends.

This is the potential for meaning that liturgical objects, spaces, vesture, furniture and persons can display if we put all our effort into giving each “actor” in the liturgy the place and the importance they merit and demand. Much of what a celebration is and much of what God wants to communicate depends on these means, forms, styles and relationships.

What is at stake is the relationship with God, communication with him, encounter with his grace. It is not just about esthetics, as we already said, nor a mere matter of “personal tastes”, no!

Romano Guardini in his classic work, *The Spirit of the Liturgy*, published in the first quarter of the last century, speaks of the three traditional categories of truth, goodness and beauty.

We are well aware that goodness and beauty are subordinated to the truth. They are correctly a reflection of the truth. In every celebration where there are true acts, done meaningfully and generously, each gesture and each action becomes the reflection of the true God in whom we believe. Our celebrations cry for the presence of the good and the beautiful in order to allow the full manifestation of the truth of salvation in our lives.

Presence-Encounter-World of meaning

These three categories define the role that Christian symbols play in our spirituality. God is present in our midst and seeks to encounter his people and each believer in particular. The imprint of God in creation, our body included, invites us to seek him and to desire encounter with the source of life. Christian symbols, in the context of celebration, create the conditions where *we can* quench our thirst for God. The Spirit makes use of this symbolism to do the “Work of God” (opus Dei). It was not in vain that our founder, the Good Father, used that term to speak of the Congregation. We do all we can but the final result of this *encounter with God is in his hands*.

**“Different emblems of our Congregation”,
their evolution and the meaning they have had and
still have for us today**

Elisabeth Drolshagen ss.cc.



A **symbol/emblem** is a tangible representation of something with features that have a certain meaning by reason of accepted social convention.

Derived from the Latin *symbolum* and the Latin from the Greek σύμβολον, the **symbol** is our way of externalizing a thought or idea, even an abstract one. It is a sign to which is attributed meaning by reason of convention and in which one encounters a likeness, real or imagined, with that meaning. At all stages of human communication symbols have been used along with verbal communication in order to facilitate understanding. Even today in our technologically developed society with its demand for immediate understanding, signs and symbols can be very effective in producing a quick answer. Because of its emphasis on the visual and its structural simplicity, the sign or symbol can facilitate perception and memory.

Many groups have **symbols** that represent them. There are symbols for different cultural, artistic, political, commercial and religious associations. And so we, brothers and sisters have a symbol that we take with us each day. It is engraved on the cross we receive on the day of our consecration as well as on the wedding ring we receive on the day of perpetual profession.

We find it in our houses, on documents we write, on t-shirts and caps, on key rings... It is said that when the heart is full, the heart finds a way to express and communicate what is within in words, gesture, music and symbol.



The Sacred Hearts

“The Heart of Jesus is the human heart of a divine person. The Heart of Mary is the heart of the most worthy of mere creatures. The Heart of Jesus symbolizes the infinite love that the Incarnate Word has for us. The Heart of Blessed Mary expresses only the finite perfections that she received from that Love.

In spite of being quite different, these two hearts are united spontaneously and closely. In the Heart of Jesus we adore the love of the person of the Word, who takes flesh and offers us

salvation. It is in the Heart of Mary that we can enter more deeply into the mysteries of Christ's love, as it is also in contemplating the riches of the Heart of Christ that we understand how much we owe to the Love of Mary most holy." ('Eis o coração' de Fr Francisco, SS.CC. p.92-93; 1949).

"From the moment our founders and the first brothers and sisters took the habit, we find "the white scapular on which the image of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary is embroidered in red wool." (C. XVIII, 13/1825 p.323ss).



The emblem of the Sacred Hearts accompanies us and identifies us. It is our way of expressing what is most fundamental to our religious family: *"our consecration to the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary. Through our symbol we also give expression to our mission: to contemplate, live and announce to the world the love of God incarnate in Jesus. "Mary has been associated in a singular way with the mystery of God made man and with his saving work: this is what we express in the union of the Heart of Jesus and the Heart of Mary."* (Const. 2).

We know that both Henriette and Pierre, as well as the first SS.CC. community, had a powerful experience of God's love which led them to a very personal relationship with Jesus Christ. They felt themselves especially loved by Jesus and that gave birth to an intimate and strong friendship with him. That caused them to read the Gospel as a manifestation of the depths of Jesus, as a word coming from his Heart. They saw him as "someone" living and working in the daily life of the community and of each individual. They so felt his presence that they considered him the "center" of the community and the Church. They saw him as opening his personal depths to welcome them, to be a shelter for spiritual refugees who were so small and weak and who felt so forgotten in the midst of the historical upheaval that was the revolution. The Heart of Christ unites them, consoles them, gives them courage and hope. From the perspective of faith, he gives them back a sense of security that seemed impossible. All of that came together for them in the symbol of the heart. However there is no documentation attesting to a cult of "the heart of flesh" as such

Nor was there danger of putting the Heart of Jesus and the Heart of Mary on the same level. As they tried to make their own "the sentiments of Christ Jesus", Mary came to be seen as the one who had preceded them on the journey. In her Heart was born the faith of the Church. We can repeat with Saint Elizabeth, "blessed is she who believed." Mary was the first to believe in the love God has for us 'in Christ.' The Eudist and Monfortian traditions underline that oneness of mind between Mary's heart and that of her Son, using the expression that they have "just one heart." In the Gospel, Mary is not simply "next to Jesus." Nor does she just give birth to him. Rather she has a mission, which in some way will then be extended to the Church. She says to the servants at Cana, "Do whatever he tells you" and she leads Jesus' disciples to believe in Him. She remains at the foot of the cross with Saint John. She is with the frightened apostles awaiting the coming of the Holy Spirit. After giving birth to Christ, she also gives birth to his mystical Body.

“Father Coudrin and his family know that you can only really encounter Jesus with Mary and through Mary. The only way to know the depths of Christ or have a “heart like his” is to go through Mary with the Heart of Mary.” (‘El Padre Coudrin la Madre Aymer y su Comunidad’, p 473-474 – J. V. González Carrera ss.cc.).

“For us brothers and sisters the emblem is a sign of our belonging and it reminds us of our consecration and mission every time we look at it. “Yes, we are the family of the Sacred Hearts...They communicated to us something of their life. So we have to reproduce the characteristics of the Sacred Hearts. Consequently we have to enter into their love which went as far as being a total gift for the salvation of the world.” (Our Vocation and Mission, p. 54) *“She helps us to understand the depths of the love of Christ and enter intimately into the mystery of her Son...In the company of Mary we are called to enter into a very profound relationship with Jesus, entering into the mystery of His love, penetrating it, living by it.”* (Our Vocation and Mission, pp. 41, 43) *“Finally, the emblem gives a sense of identity to each one of us as well as to our institute. It reminds us that we are a Congregation, called to make God’s love known, the love expressed in the Heart of Jesus joined to the Heart of Mary. It is also a call to respond in love to God, with them and as their disciples.”* (‘El Padre Coudrin la Madre Aymer y su Comunidad’, p 471 – J. V. González Carrera ss.cc.).

The Richness of the Symbol

Today we experience some resistance to the terminology of devotion to the Sacred Heart or Sacred Hearts and in particular to the iconography associated with the devotion. However we believe that there is something of permanent value in the symbolism of the heart as applied to Jesus and Mary. For example we recognize the important the human heart has for our physical life as well as our mental life.

The heart has an important place in world literature and the popular imagination. In the Bible it is the place where God accomplishes his will, as when it says he wants “to give man a new heart.” Saint John presents the piercing of the side of Christ as the high point of the pasch of the new lamb. It is also a symbol that belongs to the language of the Catholic tradition. It has been so evident over the course of the centuries that no one could say it is just a passing style.

People can also enrich a symbol with new spiritual meaning.

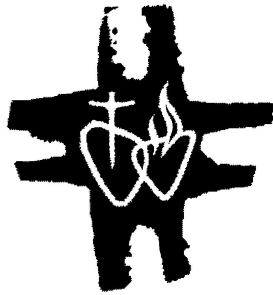
“What God asks for is not only the heart of flesh, nor only the emotions and feelings, but a love that loves Him above all things, a love worthy of God, motivated by his infinite kindness.” (‘Eis o Coração’ de Fr. Francisco, SS.CC. – p.28-29).



At the beginning of our institute, the hearts were drawn according to the style of the times. With the passage of time they were simplified, but the two hearts were always united and there was the cross and the flame. In the web page of our brothers in Andalucía, we find a collection of logos. Some are in color, others in black and white. They express imagination and creativity in seeking to respond to the sensibilities of our time and at the same time they attempt to express the dynamism that inspires our love for the Sacred Hearts.



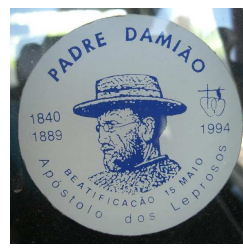
We do not only use our emblem for ourselves, we also use it in our pastoral work. Through our emblem we want to communicate something of ourselves to our people but in a form that is brief and also effective. We want to call attention to and share what is essential to our charism: the love of God manifest in the Hearts of Jesus and Mary.



In our schools and other apostolates we find the emblem on the front door, on sports uniforms, on the school calendar, on t-shirts and caps. It is an emblem that draws people together and makes them feel part of a group, identifying with us. When we are working with a group, we are always looking for ways to express our membership in the group. One way is an emblem on a pin, t-shirt, scarf...

In work with youth, we think of the different steps of a process and how insignias can be used to mark the beginning or end of a specific stage. Presenting the insignia is normally done in the context of a small celebration so as to mark the importance of the event. Symbols can encourage the person to continue moving forward in their commitment and at the same time they help them live what the commitment is all about.

Another symbol of our Congregation is the figure of our brother Damien. In 1989 when we celebrated the centenary of his death and in 1995 the beatification, material was developed. It was intended to make him known through symbols that captured some of his most distinctive traits: his hat, his round eye glasses, his embrace of a leper... We can see how the emblems from the beatification are perhaps more serious. The logo chosen for the canonization is more dynamic ...



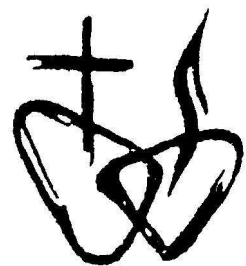
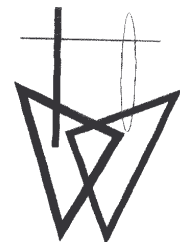
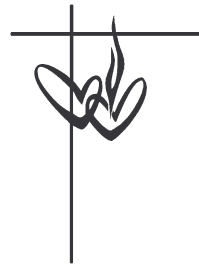
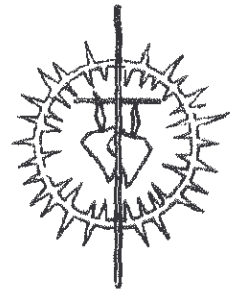
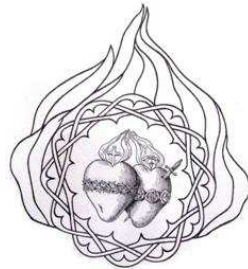
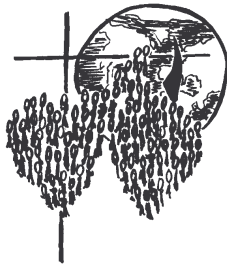
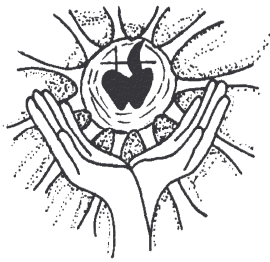
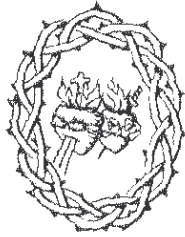
Looking at each of these, we see that in each one of them there is also the emblem of the Sacred Hearts or the abbreviation SS.CC., which relates our brother to our religious family.

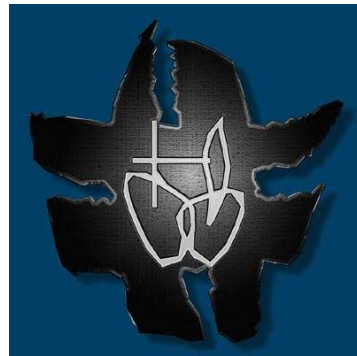
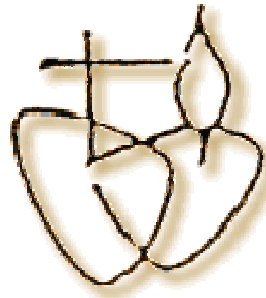


Another image that we like to present is that of Our Lady of Peace. In these three drawings, taken from the collection offered for the bicentenary, we see three different styles. The first is very realistic, the second is less detailed and the third is just a few lines that express the essential

What our emblems express “changes with the times.” To reach people and especially the young you have to speak their language. As images are a form of language they also have to be updated. They have to be adapted to the present day. I believe that has been done with our emblem over the course of its 208 years of history.

The call is to let these symbols continue to speak of the richness of our charism and of the challenge to each of us, brothers, sisters and laity to contemplate, live and announce the love of God in today’s world especially to the most neglected in our society.





The emblem of our Congregation

Consuelo Jaramillo ss.cc.



“Come to me all you who are tired from carrying heavy loads, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke and put it on you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble of heart; and you will find rest. For the yoke I will give you is easy, and the load I will put on you is light. (Mt. 11:29-29)

“Mary kept all these things in her heart” (Lk. 2:51)



Called to breathe and share the life of God in two entwined, dialoguing hearts, Jesus and Mary linked in communion make the saving project possible. God put his tent in the midst of us to let us know personally that he loves us without limit and freely.

The heart of Jesus and the heart of Mary are “family” and in this common space the human being enters and with total freedom, without fear, with the certainty that God always chooses the simple, the small, the fragile, what apparently is not. It wagers for life with all its expressions. God creatively surrenders everything, with the risk of losing everything, including his own son. Great is the audacity of God who confuses the learned and intelligent ones.

God respects the life of people, for this reason each heart has its milieu of growth, its uniqueness, its identity, its values, its attitudes, and its own expressions.

Mary the woman from Nazareth, the "loved and favoured one" who gave her being, making the incarnation possible through her yes, the secret presence of God in our world "being one of many" in daily living, Jesus experienced the greatness of being human, of extreme weakness even the meaning of the cross and death.

Mary's heart has a flame on top, light that illuminates, warms and guides the whole of humanity, a light that penetrates the darkness, the dark forces, the realities of death that our people experience; from within this heart of a woman who is simple and open to what is new, we learn contemplation, to listen in silence and discern of the deeds that God has revealed in history.

Jesus' heart pierced on the cross reveals the redeeming love of a God with personality, feelings, healing, words and expressions. When we refer to the heart, we speak of the center of Jesus' existence, of his deepest being, of the decisions and options that radicalized his life: fidelity to the Father's will and the passion for the liberation of his brothers and sisters, that made him a man totally for others and a man totally for God.

Jesus puts himself at the side of those who suffer, of those without a face, without the identity of the children of God; all those without power, the voiceless: the excluded, the sick, sinners, the possessed...

In these two dialoguing hearts that communicate human and divine life to each other, while preserving their uniqueness, emerges the gender dimension that marks the congregation from its origins, from the fusing encounter between Henrietta and Joseph Mary in which they experienced, were chosen and called to create a Congregation of men and women, based on the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, with one mission in the Church; to proclaim the REDEEMING LOVE OF GOD.

It will always be an urgent need to adhere to the SS.CC. of Jesus and Mary, to form within us their feelings, their options, their attitudes, their expressions, to prioritize all that helps us to believe in communion and to build fraternal relationships of quality.

“The Pastoral Dimension of the Emblem of the Sacred Hearts Today”

“May Christ dwell in our hearts”

Leopoldo Antolín ss.cc.



What is the relationship between our ss.cc. symbols and our ministry? Very simply and very freely I am going to point out three. I begin by showing how our symbols (which are an expression of a charism) can suggest a certain charismatic style of understanding ministry. The principal elements of our emblem should have an impact on ministry, not only with respect to content but more importantly in our way of doing ministry. Then we will see how our emblem, as any symbol, can impact the identity of those to whom we minister, so that they feel themselves represented by and attached to the Congregation. Lastly I will speak of the pastoral possibilities of our emblem, in other words how we can use it in our catechesis, classes etc. convinced that it can be a good way of sharing the charism.

1. Our emblem suggests a kind of ministry

In its most basic form the emblem shows two intertwined hearts, a cross and a flame. Let's just stay with that. In the midst of difficult pastoral work, so needful at times of a concept to orient activity, our emblem simplifies everything directing our eyes toward the heart. Like Jesus who responded to the question about the first and greatest commandment with the simple commandment of love of God and neighbor, we also respond with the hearts, symbols of love. We could say that the principal and first task of our ministry is to get to the heart. That is where we have to place our efforts, convinced that nothing fulfills, heals and transforms people more than the love of Christ. This is love received by the heart, the very center of the person. We could define our pastoral task as: bringing the love of Christ to human hearts. But how do we do that?

Look at the pedagogy that God used with the prophets when he said to Jeremiah, *“Rise up, be off to the potter's house; there I will give you my message.”* (Jeremiah 18:1) He did not sermonize nor did he give too many instructions, he simply told him to go to the workshop and there he would see. Shouldn't our ministry be something like that? Much more than the transmission of ideas or behaviors, ministry has to draw people to the workshop. In order to make that happen we have to help people to see and we have to speak to the heart. We do not have Christ's love at our disposal as something that we can just give. The experience of knowing the love of Christ, which is beyond all knowing, is more than anything a gift that He gives when he wants, to whom he wants and how he wants. It is up to us to do everything so that this encounter takes place, preparing people so that they really can seek and desire it and ask with Saint Paul kneeling before the Father that *“Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, rooted and grounded in love.”* (Eph. 3:14-19)

However when we pray that Christ dwell in peoples' hearts, we are asking that he dwell in the center of the person, the center in which everything about the person comes together. If we take the biblical sense of "heart" it is not only the seat of the emotions but also of decision, will and even awareness. The heart is the nucleus of the person. In a fragmented postmodern society faith can be understood as one of the areas of our life to the exclusion of others (for example, the economic or the emotional-sexual). That Christ dwell in our hearts means that Christ is the one who brings all aspects of our life together. He is not only the center but he is the center who harmonizes and unifies everything.

Hearts intertwined. This image suggests a ministry of relationships. Human contact and human love is the language that we have to transmit the love of God, "*Whoever is without love does not know God...*"(1John 4:8) The love of God is shown by loving. Our ministry must give attention to this human contact and relationship. Above all, those to whom we minister must feel loved by us in order to make the leap to the love of Christ. Before all else the pastoral minister must be a witness, one who transmits an experience that is contagious, one who awakens a desire to live with the enthusiasm, joy, strength and compassion that experience produces. Beyond just ministry, we must understand the internal dynamic of faith as a personal relationship, a union of hearts, a sharing of hearts, Christ's heart and ours. It leads us first to receive the love of God and then to return it by offering our own heart and that is nothing less than the offering of our whole self. It is a relationship that opens us outward, making ours the sentiments of the heart of Christ for humanity. A ministry that unites hearts will generate communion and create fraternity. "*The community of believers was of one heart and mind.*" (Acts 4:32)

The cross and the flame. These symbols suggest ministry that sets hearts on fire; a ministry that is ardent, passionate and "zealous." Because of that it will also be ministry centered in the cross, in the passion of Christ. When we speak of love, we not do so romantically but associating love with the cross, showing that the cross is, as the Pope likes to say, "love taken to the limit." It is a love that expects suffering and expresses the mercy of Christ's heart even to the point of suffering.

2. The identifying function of our emblem

Even though we could not say that we are great advocates of what is particularly our own, we cannot ignore the fact that in our world today there is a particular way for presenting everything. Everything has *an image*. It is even said that ours is a culture of the image, whether we like it or not. Publicists and marketing experts know that well. It's not a matter of participating in the culture or not with all its ambiguity but of appreciating the function that the image, the logo, the emblem has for individuals and groups. In this regard, it is good to realize the relationship that exists between the interior and the exterior. Sociologists tell us that an emblem has a great potential for identification. Think of how happy and special we feel when we discover an image of Father Damien at the entrance to someone's house! How at home we feel when visiting a community of brothers or sisters for the first time and entering the chapel we find our symbols and images! Without going to deeply right now, we realize how all that relates to our sense of identity and belonging.

Pastorally speaking when we use the Sacred Hearts as an identifying sign, our people accept this normally and readily. In general they like it and they value it. They even ask for it

when for some reason we execute some object that includes the Sacred Hearts. In some way they feel identified with our symbol. It is a letter of introduction that shows who we are. Of course we cannot resort to mere propaganda and we know how important it is that we live a life that is meaningful for our people. But we also have to be able to help them recognize this meaning making use of our signs and the relationship of our signs to our particular form of life.

At a deeper level we realize that as the faith penetrates people's hearts identification with the Sacred Hearts emerges almost naturally. Very frequently in our groups and parish communities we meet people who by living the faith with us feel closely identified with the Congregation. They feel blessed to live their faith and our way of understanding it. That has helped them grow spiritually. Often they have been living it almost connaturally. Even though they cannot put it into words at first, they know that the way they live the faith is truly ss.cc.

It is not unusual that these people express that by wearing our emblem. They want to wear it around the neck or pin it to their lapel or place it on letterhead or have it somewhere in their home... and thus they express a spiritual belonging that they find reflected in these and other ss.cc. symbols and images. I don't know if we know how to give such things their true value or if we have always welcomed everything they mean. I have the sensation that all too easily we lose ourselves in religious intellectualism that associates such expressions with a lack of formation and we forget that man is a symbolic animal. We erroneously associate such expressions with immature faith. We promote a sort of intellectualism that frequently includes a loss of the devotion so associated with the world of symbols. Perhaps it would be more to the point to recognize that we have forgotten this dimension, neglecting symbols, images, iconography and even liturgical expressions that are vehicles for the experience of which we have been speaking. This could be a great pastoral challenge for us.

3. Ministerial possibilities of our emblem

We could begin to give this greater importance by offering catechesis, classes and retreats that show how our ss.cc. symbolism is an expression of our spirituality. These could cover the whole gamut from the simple emblem to the iconography of the Sacred Hearts. I notice that recently such initiatives are beginning in different places.

Let's look at some things we could do concerning our emblem. Think of the pastoral possibilities it has. Recently on different web pages there have been an enormous amount of different types of medallions published. They can be resources in preparing prayers, catechesis, classes etc. It depends on what we are looking for. We can choose one that is more youth oriented, one that is more serious or formal, one better for children or one that is a bit unusual...

For example, in our catechesis with children we might choose four or five that they can color. Before choosing the colors we explain that colors too have a certain symbolism and that they are going to color hearts. As they color, we speak to them of the heart, we use different sentences that contain the word "heart" but with different meanings, helping them see the "magical" or special" character of the word "heart." We show them that Jesus, that Mary, that God has a heart and that we have to know how to put ours with theirs, perhaps where Mary's is, joined to the heart of Jesus.

With the older ones we can help them see the biblical roots of the emblem, looking for Gospel passages where Mary and Jesus appear together, helping them see the link of the hearts with the mystery of the incarnation and the mystery of the passion and resurrection, the two moments when Jesus and his mother were most one. We can also point out the transformation of Mary from mother to disciple thanks to her relationship of faith and not just her natural relationship with her Son. We can relate that transformation to our own, showing the connection of the emblem with the word “heart” in the Prophets, Saint Paul, the Gospels etc, and taking as example different quotes. The emblem can also serve in speaking of the elements of our charism: adoration and the tradition of adoring the pierced heart of Christ in the Eucharist; reparation, how we make it our own through solidarity, the sentiments and suffering of the heart of Christ, zeal etc.

Let us identify with, understand and appreciate our emblem. Let us associate it with our charism and make use of it in our ministry so that others can also live the spirituality that gives us life.

Towards an Iconographic Reading of the Emblem of the Sacred Hearts

Galo Labanda ss.cc.



At present I am writing a master's thesis. My topic is "The God of Jesus Christ: from the opened side to the hidden heart as seen in the symbol of the Sacred Hearts. An iconographic reading of the Heart."

In this article I want to speak of what I have discovered a sort of contemplation of our congregational inheritance, which at the same time is a body of teaching, written with the passage of time.

Introduction

To speak of the heart.... but why? And especially to speak of an iconography of the heart. According to the testimony of Saint John's Gospel it is the side of Christ that was opened, but also that at that very moment flowed forth blood and water. We begin with the biblical word and at a certain point we find ourselves with the image of the heart.

Meditating on this text, the Fathers of the Church recognized its ecclesial dimension. Beginning in the sixth century, the altar stone was consecrated with five marks, five crosses. These referred to the five wounds of the Crucified one, four crosses one in each corner and one in the center bigger than the others alluding to the pierced side. Another example from the Christian liturgy is the blessing of the Paschal candle¹ and setting five grains of incense in the candle in reference to the wounds of the Savior. The place that the wound in the side has is more important than the other wounds. The devotion to the wounds of Christ arises.

From the ninth century on, the side of the crucified becomes a real jet of blood. Angels with chalices are at the ready to receive the blood. In the sixteenth century there is the theme of the "mystical press or mill" in which Christ is pressed and his blood is collected for the celebration of the Eucharist. Christ becomes a fountain of blood. Around him there are pools of blood.

One of the first representations of the Heart of Jesus is a form for hosts² dating from the mid fourteenth century. In the fifteenth century in France the Heart of Jesus is represented in the commercial trademarks of the first printers, in England in coats of arms. Representing the heart in civil society was somehow to evoke the protection of Christ.

¹ There are formulas for blessing the paschal candle dating from the middle of the fourth century from Ennodias, Bishop of Pavia.

² Museo Episcopal de Vich (Cataluña) Spain, from the mid XVI century.

“Heart of stone” “heart of flesh”

We could classify the visible, in other words, the material emblem in the following manner:

First, there is exterior space: for example the emblem engraved on the facade of houses, churches and social centers as well as on gravestones. The hearts are carved in wood and placed on stained glass....

“As an exterior sign of this devotion...a carving of the Sacred Hearts in the midst of glory will be placed beneath the high altar of all chapels...”³

Second, there is liturgical space, as for example liturgical vessels: ciboria, chalices, monstrances, tabernacles, ambos, lecterns. It is used on vestments: chasubles, stoles, scapulars, ⁴ miters: also on palls, purificators, altar cloths, standards for processions etc. And we could add medals, rings, pins etc.

Thirdly there is the “space” of publication: Congregation seals and those of the different communities, seals of publications, especially *Annales*, episcopal shields, invitations, paintings, drawings, engravings etc.

Brief chronological analysis of the emblem

When we contemplate the emblem and try to describe it, we find ourselves with two hearts that are anatomically the same size. Both hearts are wounded. The Heart of Jesus is wounded and bloody and crowned by a cross, while the Heart of Mary has a sword going through it. Each heart is encircled, one by a crown of thorns and the other by a crown of roses. Flames mount from the top of each. Finally there is a crown of thorns around the whole image.

In Poitiers there is a drawing dating from 1793⁵ that was used by the Good Father. The hearts are of equal proportion. The heart of Mary, placed on the left of that of her Son, is leaning against his. From both hearts mount bright flames of fire. The flames are the same size as the hearts as is the cross. A large crown, braided of two branches of thorns, practically leaves no space between it and the hearts. However, it is a heart that is not closed in on itself, for from the top mounts forth the flames and the cross. The heart of Jesus is bleeding and the heart of Mary is pierced through by the sword. A painting that is worth taking time to analyze is presently found in the sacristy of the Generalate. It dates from the year 1794 and it shows two fleshy hearts suspended in the air shooting forth shining rays of light. Two angels kneel adoring them and there are six others forming an arc in the upper part. The heart of Jesus enveloped by a fine crown of thorns is bleeding and from the wound in his heart come forth rays of light.

One element to take into consideration is the Heart of Mary. In some seals,⁶ it is found to the right of the Heart of Jesus. It is that way on the founders’ scapulars that can be seen in Poitiers. In one of her “billets” the Good Mother tells the Good Father that the Heart of Mary

³ « Dispositions Réglementaires adoptées par le Chapitre Général de 1858 », Art. 17. No 5, en Paris.

⁴ General Chapter of the brothers meeting in Paris in 1819. In chapter 10, number 142, “*Until otherwise ordered the professed brothers will wear under their habit a large scapular of the Sacred Hearts.*” And also, Project of the Rule of the Brothers dated May 10, 1838, and approved by Pope Gregory XVI on March 24, 1840, Art. 335: “*The Sacred Hearts embroidered on the scapular, will be three inches high not including the cross and flames. They will be encircled by three intertwined branches of thorns forming a crown. The circumference of the crown will be fifteen inches.*”

⁵ Tinta sobre papel 4cm. x 3.2cm. (Museo de la comunidad de Poitiers)

⁶ General Chapter in Paris, 1819. Another example is the seal of the community of Laval from 1853 and the last of the seals is the one from the community in Cahors dated 1870.

must be placed first, i.e. to the right of Jesus' heart, as Mary preceded Jesus in her humanity.⁷ On the occasion of a General Chapter, the sisters presented to Pope Pius IX the habit with the insignia that they had been wearing since 1793. The heart of Mary was to the right and the heart of Jesus to the left. The Holy Father's observed that the Heart of Mary can touch the Heart of Jesus and be placed a bit below it, while the Heart of Jesus is slightly above. However, the possibility of changing it was left "so that the Heart of Jesus is placed to the right and that of Mary to the left."⁸

"Annales" of the Congregation

Until 1870 the outer large crown was formed of two branches of thorns intertwined. Beginning with the publication of *Annales* in 1872, the oval seal on the cover has a crown of three branches of thorns. The upper part of the hearts has the inscription "**V.C.**" and the lower part "**J.S.**" This novelty is the result of the General Chapter of 1858.⁹ However the seal of the 1819 General Chapter has the inscription "**V.S.**" above and "**C.J.**" below.

In this emblem the hearts are bigger than the flames and the cross. The Heart of Mary is to the left of that of her Son. Beneath the crown of thorns there are rays of light extending.

Another variation, the cover of *Annales* in 1931 has a drawing that shows the emblem of the Sacred Hearts in heaven within a shining star and around abundant vegetation. In the background there are mountains and the sea thus transporting the reader to mission lands. In 1932 the emblem is placed in the upper middle part of the cover and there is a globe like a shining star in the lower part. An angel is holding a crown just above the emblem, while another angel is kneeling to the side of the globe,

In 1956 the sword disappears, the flame and cross are miniscule in relation to the hearts and the crown of thorns is very subtle. In 1958 the whole figure is more proportional. One novelty is that the sword in the Heart of Mary is now vertical. In 1965 the emblem takes on a really new and different style. Lines are strong and clear and the composition is geometric. The two hearts are intertwined. The crown of thorns disappears as do the sword, the flames of fire and the wound in Jesus' heart. The flames on Mary's Heart become a single tongue of fire that rises as high as the cross. In 1977 the initials "SSCC" appear next to the emblem.

Entre-nous¹⁰

In parallel manner on the cover of the sisters' publication "Entre-nous" there appears the map of Europe and above France a medallion in which the thorns fuse with the rays of light coming from the hearts. In general, we can say that from 1975 on, among the sisters as well as among the brothers there is a "boom" in the production of emblems.

⁷ A billet written in the final months of 180. "At the moment that Our Lord was conceived in her womb, he gave her his heart which he places **as yours is embroidered**. That of the Blessed Virgin is first because she already existed and Our Lord did not yet exist humanly speaking."

⁸ Archive of the Sisters. Letter dated November 5, 1874.

⁹ Dispositions Réglementaires adoptées par le Chapitre Général de 1858. Paris. Art. 17. No 5. « That on all letters the initials of the prayer V.C.J.S. are placed as a heading and at the end is added one's family name, religious name and ss.cc."

¹⁰ Publication of the sisters beginning in 1947.

Representations in the provinces

In 1894 a seal is produced in Louvain that has in the central part of the emblem, inside a crown and over the hearts, a monstrance. Below the hearts there is **V.C.J.S.** In a publication of the Ecuadoran province of the sisters in 1912 the Heart of Mary is to the right of the Heart of her Son. The same is true in a publication coming from Paraguay in 1994.

At present there is great diversity in the bulletins coming from the different provinces. There is also diversity in the message they transmit. Let us take a quick look at three:

1. The support of the hearts. Africa, India and the secular branch in France has the emblem at the center of a map. Colombia has the heart colored with the colors of the national flag. In Chile the cross has the two small intertwined hearts in the center. The same is true in Ireland-England and for the General Government. The emblem used in the Philippines is something like a stained glass window. It shows the heart wounded, open and bleeding. Two tongues of fire mount from each heart. The Heart of Jesus is placed a bit higher than that of Mary.

2. Movement of the elements. French Polynesia keeps the crown of thorns. In Spain Mary's Heart is smaller than Jesus' and it comes forth from or penetrates Jesus' Heart. It's as if the Heart of Jesus was opened to receive that of Mary. Then there are the thick lines, long and sometimes cut off, surrounding the heart shapes.

Something of a theology: "Were not our hearts burning within"

In conclusion, let us first note the anatomy and morphology of the hearts. There are two human hearts, in fleshly form and naked. It's as if there had just been surgery. They are still bloody. These hearts express the humanity of both the Son and his Mother. The nudity reminds us of the birth of the Word incarnate, whose body will be exposed, nailed to the cross. The mystery of God is revealed, is stripped and is exposed to the entire world as a sign of redemption and salvation. He is the word who assumes our human nature and through his humanity, in solidarity, remains united to the humanity of Mary and with her to all human beings. Two hearts encounter one another at the same level. In the humanity of Christ the Savior, God not only "has visited his people"¹¹ but has redeemed them and has desired to remain with them as "Emmanuel."¹²

We can speak of pain. Of course there are the birth pangs when he is born. There is also the pain of the crucified one and pain at the foot of the cross. However this pain is taken up into the close solidarity existing between the incarnate God and humanity.

Secondly, from the two hearts shoot forth flames of fire, like a container burning without exhausting itself, something like the burning bush that attracts the attention of the one chosen to lead God's people out of slavery.¹³ This is a beautiful epiphany of the God who "has seen", "has heard" and who knows the suffering of his people. These are words of vocation and mission and also of the Covenant that God establishes with his servant, "I am with you."

Finally the image brings together elements that refer to the world that receives the proclamation of the Gospel and the mission. The cross and flames are placed at the same

¹¹ Luke 1:68

¹² Mathew 1:23

¹³ Exodus 3:2-12

level. The disciple is called to follow his Master¹⁴ and to be light for the world.¹⁵ In their present form, the flames of fire have become tongues of fire, sign of the Church gathered on the day of Pentecost.¹⁶ Once again we see the missionary element, this time entrusted to a “community” in which Mary is present. Formerly the hearts were of flesh, now they have become transparent. Light can come through. Anatomy disappears. The material takes on another aspect and another concept. The material fades away so that the “absent” one can be present. “He is not here, he is risen”¹⁷. It is a beginning, the start of a new day, the beginning of a new creation, a new mission and a new impetus for the community.

¹⁴ Mark 8:34-35

¹⁵ Mathew 5:14

¹⁶ Acts 2:1-11

¹⁷ Luke 24:34, John 20:1ff

N. 17, 2008

Published on the SS.CC. Website: www.sccpicpus.com

SS.CC. Brothers' General House

Via Rivarone, 85

00166 Rome, Italy

Tel. + 39 - 06 66 17 931

Fax + 39 - 06 66 17 9355

Email : secgen@sccpicpus.com

Email : comunicazione@sccpicpus.com

SS.CC. Sisters' General House

Via Aurelia, 145

00165 Rome, Italy

Tel. + 39 - 06 63 81 140

Fax + 39 - 06 63 81 013

Email : secgen.sccc@interbusiness.it

Email : secgen2.sccc@interbusiness.it