

With Love and Pain

By

Juan Antonio Vives Aquilella TC

*Juan Antonio Vives, a devoted Capuchin Tertiary, is a profound student of Luis Amigo and his writings. Juan has his licentiate and doctorate in Spiritual Theology and has authored many publications. In addition to having prepared as a collaborator of the first edition of the Complete Works of Father Luis Amigo, Juan has published a total of twenty books among which are “**Un hombre que se fio de Dio**”s- **A Man Who Trusted God** – (about the life and works of Father Luis Amigo), and *Testigos del amor de Cristo- Witnesses to the love of Christ-* (his doctoral thesis regarding amigonian spirituality).*

Within his writings, including numerous articles published in magazines and various conferences, Juan has cultivated the theological theme, especially that which centers on spirituality, as well as the historic theme which is particularly relevant in his biographical section. It is this historic theme to which he dedicates this specific book.

(Back cover)

“WITH LOVE AND PAIN” *is a new and different way of treating the life of Luis Amigo, especially as the FOUNDER of the Capuchin Tertiary Sisters of the Holy Family as well as of the Capuchin Tertiary Brothers of Our Lady of Sorrows.*

An easy book to read, it is profound and at the same time simple without being just a biographical document. This Capuchin Tertiary with a greater motivation would come together in the presence of God and of their Father and Founder who so deeply loved them.

Furthermore, this project that I have started upon has been maturing inside me for some time now. In 1984, when I found myself in the midst of investigating *Testigos del Amor de Cristo* (*Witnesses of the Love of Christ*) I came upon a variety of historic materials which were partially unedited about the person, human and apostolic, of Father Luis. It was here that I conceived the idea to write some kind of biography about him. Afterwards, I thought - and rightly so- that the appropriate time had not come for such an undertaking. It was then that I limited myself to save all this material which I had accumulated and present it at a more appropriate time. I decided almost with a sweep of my pen,

but with intense love and feelings for Luis Amigo, to write about it in my small book titled "*Un hombre que se fio de Dios*" - *A man who trusted God*.

Today, when it seems we are close to receiving official recognition from the Church regarding his work and his life, as well as declaring him Holy Father, that I have considered that now is the time to take on once again that project and bring life to my long-awaited dream as a heartfelt homage to my Father and Founder.

(**Bibliography** -Not included as there are no works in English)
book can be read in a number of ways: You can break it up into thematic blocks or read it all the way through seeking the global message to which the author relates. It can also be read as a meditation or reflexive writing by extending the basic text using the scientific support material found in the footnotes within the text.

We can truly state that by using authentic historical documents, Father Juan Antonio Vives, Capuchin Tertiary, has accomplished a harmonious hymn of recognition and gratitude and praise to Luis Amigo, the Apostle of the Wayward Youth revealing him as the father and founder of two religious families. He also reveals him as the prudent inspiration for the now century-old, meritorious and universal work of reeducating boys and girls and youth who have strayed from the Way of Truth and Goodness.

Father Jose Oltra TC
 Provincial Superior

Dedication

To the "Amigonian Collaborators and Amigonian laity, in recognition of the fact that the two congregations founded by Luis Amigo have arisen from the spiritual laymen of the Church. This is an appeal and a commitment to the fact that they are the true witnesses and multipliers of the charism of this providential man, of this "Apostle of the Wayward Youth", within today's society.

Presentation

Just as birthing a child comes *-with love and pain -* I have also titled these simple "notes about the life of Father Luis Amigo".

You cannot really call this a *biography* since I have deliberately avoided following his life in a detailed manner

nor followed chronologically this providential man, this *Apostle of the Wayward Youth*.

Instead, I have concentrated on his most characteristic and fulfilling years as *founder*. This period of time covers the years from his return to Valencia as a Capuchin Friar, August 2, 1881 to his leaving the Orihuela Convent, April 12, 1907 in order to be ordained as Bishop. These are the years which embrace precisely the period of his life when he so lovingly and tenderly conceived *in his mind and in his heart* his two religious orders and with great joy and satisfaction - at the same time with intense pain and suffering- he birthed them.

However, this idea is not mine. Father Luis himself offered them to me in the writings which we are calling his *Autobiography*, when he - not without specific intention - limited classifying them as *Notes...*. The structure of these notes concentrates on transmitting his *experience as a religious person and founder*. I did it this way because he himself wrote in his presentation that one of the purposes that had driven him to "review some of the facts about his life"- which to my understanding was the establishment of the structure of his writing - was to make public a great amount of material in order "*that his religious men and women of the*

With Love and Pain

Prologue

Signs of Predilection

Jose Maria Amigo y Ferrer was born in Masamagrell (Valencia, Spain) on October 17, 1854 and on this very same day he received the waters of baptism.

During this same year of his birth, the dogmatic declaration of the Immaculate Conception took place, and Valencia suffered a severe cholera epidemic which decimated mostly pregnant women. The people of Masamagrell looked with affection and concern upon Mrs. Genoveva Ferrer y Doset, the wife of Mr Gaspar Amigo y Chulvi who was secretary of the municipal government where they had been residents for more or less one year. Her state of good hope forbode the worst.

But at last her anxieties were gone and the Amigo y Ferrer house was filled with happiness over the birth of a son, the fourth of seven children from this marriage.

The years passed and father Amigo remembered vividly the circumstances surrounding the birth of this son and he was grateful to the Lord for allowing him to be born in a Marian year and who saved him and his mother from premature death. These were the first signs of God's predilection in his life.

His father, Gaspar was a lawyer by profession who used slang expressions and was a happy man with a big heart. His mother, Genoveva, was a delicate and tender woman who was also prudent and longsuffering. Both parents were Luis' first and principal religious teachers. They made certain that he received his Confirmation when he was three years and his First Communion when he was eleven years old.

The childhood of Jose Maria was happy and peaceful at home surrounded by the love of his parents who showered him with much affection and surrounded him with toys appropriate for children. Even as a child he felt a certain inclination towards those things spiritual. He enjoyed making altars and imitating a priest celebrating mass. Something out of the ordinary must have been felt by his playmates towards him because when he participated in a comedy called "The Vocation of Saint Luis", he played the part of Saint Luis and his partners affectionately called him by that Saint's name.

By the time he was six years old, Jose Maria began to attend a Catholic school directed by Sebastian Piedra and located in the Portal de Valldigna of the Capital. It was here that he learned his first reading lessons. One day while going to class he was accompanied by the person in charge of gathering the children together when something happened that remained seared in his memory which pointed once again to the predilection that the Lord felt for this special child. The event happened in one of the small plazas located on the route he took to school. A milk cow had become enraged because some of the children were playing with it like a bullfighter and the milk cow attacked the group where it lunged directly at Jose Maria who was the smallest and the most frightened of the group. The animal was on the brink of killing him, but thanks to divine protection and - as he precisely said - to the protection of his patron Saint Jose and the Virgin - the incident only ended as a big scare and several skin wounds

Beginning the school year of 1864, he left the Portal de Valldigna Academy and continued his studies en la *Escuelas Pias de Valencia* - the Valencian Pious Schools. Two years later - a little after his First Communion and given his desires to become a priest - his parents enrolled him in the Valencia Seminary as a day student. It was here that he began frequenting different associations where he learned that *it is not possible to love God without also loving mankind, God's favorite work, neither is it possible to sincerely love mankind without the presence of the love of God*. The more he was united with God, the more he felt the needs of his fellowman. Accompanied by other teenager- friends of his, he dedicated his free time to the social outcasts. He would go to hospitals in order to share with the sick his own health and joy. He would frequent the huts and farmhouses on the Valencian farming areas in order to share with these people - and particularly with the children and youth - his knowledge and his faith. And above all, he would go to the prisons in order to console and instruct the inmates, *having a special interest in those who were condemned for life*. These were the beginnings of the man who would later be the apostle to the needy and the social outcasts.

In 1867 - when he was attending the seminary as a day student in his second year of liberal arts - Jose Maria Amigo had the pleasure - *inexpressible* was how he put it - of participating in the 100-year celebrations for the Virgin of the Needy which brought about an awakening in the townspeople of *a delirious enthusiasm*.

However, the following year – in 1868 – two incidents brought pain into his life. One – the first – was the death of his maternal grandmother Rosa Daset y Dagues on June 24th. He had loved her very much and had received much love from her in return. The other was a sociopolitical incident which was provoked by the Revolution popularly known as “*the Glorious*” which broke out on September 28th on the night of Saint Michael and which removed Queen Isabel II from her throne. One of the most violent manifestations resulting from this Revolution took place in the capital and in front of his own father’s home. It made such an impression that he did not remember afterwards that *he had ever cried so hard in all his life as he did that sad night*.

Also, as a result of the social and political instability prior to the Spanish Republic and specifically because of the street fights that took place between the army and military groups which ultimately ended up in October 1869 in the Republican Revolt – Cantonal de Valencia – the Amigó family was forced to find refuge in the neighboring town of Godella where they remained until the beginning of January 1870.

God is giving the orders

Jose Maria Amigo’s youth – just as he himself describes it in *Apuntes sobre mi vida – Notes regarding my life* – spontaneously evokes the attitude that – a saying of Celano – distinguished the life-calling vocation of Francis of Assisi. Francis was an untiring seeker of God’s will in his own life – *not laying aside because of negligence any visitation of the Spirit*. And at the same time that this Spirit was shown to him, he felt the strength to await further appearances. This same thing happened in all the life of Jose Maria Amigo which was quite obvious during the years of his vocational discernment which were marked by an increasing desire of *much more perfection*. It was this desire that took him to first enroll in the Congregation of San Felipe Neri and then afterwards to enroll in the School of Christ. It was also this desire that little by little was leading him into a life of religious vocation. The more that the Lord figured in his life, the more he was attracted to Him and the more he was open to the calling of God. It was truly God who was giving the orders in his life. The only merit from Jose Maria was *to let himself be seduced*, each time more irresistibly by Him. It was during this period that he became *a constant pilgrim in search of God*.

This series of events during these years also helped him immeasurably to progressively discern the will of God over his existence. When he was sixteen years old he was orphaned by his father and nine months later by his mother’s death.

To the pain from the loss of his most beloved parents was added also the pain from the beating he felt coming from his horrible feeling of loneliness, which was added to the feeling of the support he so needed from his family, coupled with the upsetting social and political upheaval that the country was going through.

Because of such critical circumstances, the desire he had been harboring to enter into the religious life was now increasing. But he still did not know what path to follow. For some time he had had the idea of becoming a Carthusian monk. He was attracted to the silence and solitude of those monks whom he knew about from reading a book, but most of all he was attracted to the idea of totally dedicating himself to divine contemplation and worship. But this was not the path that God wanted for Jose Maria to serve Him. God had other plans that He had designed for him. He

revealed His plans to Jose Maria through his spiritual leader who was the one who put him on the path to a Spanish Capuchin Convent situated in the south of France in Bayonne.

The words of his priest quieted his soul. He now knew where he had to go, but he still hadn't found the solution to all of his problems. His mother – whom he had personally taken care of during her last illness and had done it alone for fear of infecting his younger brothers – had asked him on her death bed to be sure to take care of his younger siblings. She felt she couldn't die without turning over these young children into safe care. This was not an easy task. Nobody seemed willing to come and help him. He then went to ask for intercession from Saint Francis and visited him at his Third Secular Order with the hope that the saint would help him out. And that help was not long in coming. Before the end of the year, everything had been resolved. One of the elder priests volunteered to care for his siblings. Now was the moment to leave his country and his home, as Abraham had done, and follow the road into a strange and unknown land, *totally trusting God*.

Getting the necessary permits and visas took place much faster than he had thought possible and on the March 28, 1874, Passion Saturday, he found himself in Valencia aboard a boat with only one stop in Cetté, which would take him to Bayonne.

It wasn't a long trip. However, three days on the high seas left him with much to think about. And inside himself he was experiencing a great many different feelings. He felt naturally the joy of experiencing each event that brought him closer to the fulfillment of his dream. But he could not forget his siblings to whom he had said goodbye telling them that he was only going away for a few days to a retreat near Valencia so that he would not hurt their feelings.

And thus it was between dreams and pain, between joy and sorrow that Jose Maria crossed the Mediterranean waters on a steamer. Once at the French port, he found an expert traveler whom he and his friend Thomas had met at the beginning of their journey and who had promised to accompany them to the Convent in Bayonne. This seemed to them both *like and angel sent from God*.

At the door of the Convent where they arrived March 31st, Jose Maria was tempted once again not to enter and to turn back. One of the most humble and poorly dressed monks greeted them at the door, and for a moment Jose Maria thought he had come to the wrong place. He also thought that this was not really the life he wanted to enter. In spite of everything, he gathered up the courage to enter and very shortly thereafter he was convinced that this was precisely what he had dreamed so many times of doing.

However, Jose Maria was not exactly what the Superior of the Convent had expected. Only a short time ago he had been smitten with and had overcome intermittent fevers. His physical aspect most certainly was not that of a robust young man. The good Father thought that the austerity they lived in this Convent was not the most desirable for Jose Maria's health. He had just about decided to ask him to leave and return to his home, when the seminarian master of the novitiates changed the Superior's mind interceding for Jose Maria saying: *It is best that he persuades himself of the impossibility of embracing this life style and he leaves of his own accord*.

Friar and pilgrim

Two weeks hadn't passed since his arrival to the Convent in Bayonne, when on April 12, 1874, he had put on the Capuchin habit and changed his given name to that of Friar Luis of Masamagrell. His novitiate had begun.

That year passed quickly and happily as his vocation was fully maturing. At first he still felt strongly called into the Carthusian monastery, but this feeling became watered down the more he discovered about the spiritual personality of Francis of Assisi.

Francis, the poet of creation, the man who found God when he kissed a leper, fascinated Jose Maria. He found in him a compassionate person who cried over the afflictions of his fellow beings and shared with joy their moments of happiness. He discovered a merciful apostle who preferred being with the poorest and most needy in order to lead them tenderly to God. He discovered this tireless missionary who knew how to leave his own land so as to carry the message of Christ to all men.

After his religious profession –which took place April 18, 1875- the seminarian master of the novitiates, who had a great affection for Jose Maria’s display of integrity in his everyday life as well as his religious spirit, wanted to keep him by his side as his aide, but the Superiors took him and put him with the rest of his companions in the choir setting him to dedicate full time to completing the theological studies that he had begun in Valencia. Though this decision taken by his Superiors was painful, he took hold of it fully and with joy considering it another reflection of the *will of God* which was the main axis over which his entire religious life revolved.

He was now joyfully immersed and deeply involved in his studies and in the fraternity life he now lived when one day he received an unexpected visit from Father Ambrosio from Benguacil, an old time acquaintance and family friend, who had been living since 1835 as an ex-monk. This ex-Capuchin monk, a courageous fighter with “*Carlist*” ideas and feelings, had gathered together in the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Montiel – located in his hometown – a group of pious women whose principal occupation was to attend the religious activities of that Marian center, and though they were not exactly a religious order, they lived a monastic-type of life.

Thanks to the favorable intervention of Friar Luis, Father Ambrosio was admitted once again into the Capuchin Order. This Father was so deeply grateful and liked Friar Luis so much that one day he emotionally told Friar Luis: *Young man, you will be the one who takes over the care of my nuns.* These words, half testamentary and half prophecy became a reality – as you will see further on – with the founding of the Congregation of Capuchin Tertiary Sisters of the Holy Family. These pious women who lived in the Sanctuary-without official Church recognition – came together joyfully in the birthing of the “*amigonian*” adventure.

But life in Bayonne was not to continue along as blissfully as it had been for much time longer. Francis of Assisi had always wanted his friars to live the life of *pilgrims and foreigners*. He converted *itinerancy* into one of the fundamental characteristics of a new way of life which openly broke with the firmly established molds of monastic life. And the Capuchin Convent of Bayonne – *the pearl of the Order* – and the most faithful observers of the Franciscan spirit was no longer to remain unmovable as the last player of the typical ideal missionary of the Saint of Assisi.

When Friar Luis of Masamagrell had received the Tonsure and the Lesser Orders from the hands of Monsignor Francisco Lacroix on June 10, 1876, and when he found himself in the third year of his theological studies, a rumor ran through the Convent that a Capuchin expedition to Spain was to depart soon.

This rumor, even though it came from a good source, did not seem very credible. Forty years before the Capuchins had been thrown out from there because of the “Mendizabal Law” and the Spanish government did not seem willing to change overnight this political mandate.

Notwithstanding, in the plans of God, the influence of a humble Friar – the beggar of the Convent – brought about a change and the dream became a reality. After much pushing and shoving the Spanish government authorized through orders from the crown by giving the Capuchins the power to reopen their ancient Convent of Antequera (Malaga).

Without losing any more time, they drew up plans for a trip and chose from the community a group who would leave for their Spanish homeland. Among this group was Friar Luis from Masamagrell who began his journey homeward around the middle of 1877. His life as a *pilgrim* had just begun.

The trip back to Antequera was not what you could call a pleasant one. In addition to having to cross all of Spain in third class trains, these poor Friars had to face insults and misunderstandings from the public – people who hadn't seen religious monks in many years – and who seeing them dressed in their typical habits, confused them with Moorish and Jewish men as well as with a long list of all kinds of strange people.

At last, in spite of many difficulties, they arrived safe and sound to Antequera. But to their dismay their troubles were not over with here, as another kind of trouble awaited them. The townspeople were looking upon them with suspicion and fear. However, they were not daunted and with great ability the monks began winning over their new neighbors one at a time until at one point one of their most vehement and contrary troublemakers finished a short time later confessing: *When you called me I came with trepidation, because we had been told that you were like the inquisitionist and murderers. But since then I have seen in you all friendliness and charity shown to all people, and I can now say that I no longer fear you nor anyone else because my block is willing to defend you all even with our lives.*

Having captured the sympathy of the townspeople little by little, these good religious monks were able to go about their apostleship resulting in true fruits by bringing the message of the Word of God as well as Christ's example into their lives.

At the same time, Friar Luis from Masamagrell found time, together with his companions, not only to continue their theological studies, but also time to spread the Word and study in the outlying areas. This brought them in contact with the famous "Torcal" cave of Antequera and possibly some of the other archeological dolmens of Viera, from Romeral and from Menga which were preserved in nearby areas. The year after he had arrived – on April 21, 1878 – he took his Perpetual Vows and a few months later, actually on June 15th, he was ordained Sub deacon in Malaga. Sometime later on November 2, 1878, he took a *vow to the Holy Mother* at which time he renounced all his "favors" to be given over to the needy. This vow was eloquent proof of the apostolic devotion he now felt for his poorest and most outcast members of society.

However, Antequera was only the beginning of a long march that Friar Luis had just started to tread. Now that his theological studies had come to an end, the Lord leads him to gather together his few belongings and start on a new trek. This time he was to go to northern Spain to the old Convent of Alcantarinos located in Montehano.

Just before this trip to Montehano, some people say he had gone to the township of Sanlucar of Barrameda which had a Capuchin convent that had been opened November 20, 1877. However, history clearly points out that he never belonged to this community.

Interpreting the signs

On January 19, 1879 after a long and tiring journey, Friar Luis arrived together with his traveling companions to Montehano where Vicente Calvo y Valero – Bishop of Santander- who personally was in charge of the restoration work, received them as their own father would.

Rather quickly Friar Luis took a liking to this simple yet venerable Bishop who offered to ordain him as soon as he decided to do it.

On March 8, 1879 he became a Deacon receiving his priestly ordination in Santoña together with other seminarians from that Diocese. However, the Senior Bishop wanted him to be ordained in a more intimate and family type of ceremony and the Bishop set the date for March 29, 1879 to be held in the Recollect Church of the Convent.

A few days later on April 4, 1879, Friar Luis celebrated his first mass in the convent temple. This also was a simple and intimate celebration of mass where there wasn't even any music. But it resulted in a very solemn occasion because of the devotion with which the new priest officiated the Sacred Mysteries under the attentive and caring eye of Vicente Calvo y Valero who wished to

accompany him on this deeply moving occasion. Friar Luis was truly very happy. The Lord had allowed him to celebrate his first Eucharist act on the festive day of the Virgin of Sorrows, the big Marian love of his life. He was also filled with joy that his brother Julio was with him.

Now that he was recently ordained, he offered to all of the others his ministerial gifts he had received from God and he began preaching in the surrounding mountain villages. On April 10, 1879, the day of Holy Thursday, he preached in "*Isla*" and on the 14th of this same month – Easter Monday – he preached in Soano on the day of that village's principal feast day which was dedicated to the Virgin. It was at this occasion that the Lord filled his mind and mouth with such spiritual words that when he finished, a simple woman who had just heard him, emotionally exclaimed: *Blessed be the womb that conceived you.*

But from here on he really preferred attending the world of the youth and the social outcasts. Innately being a patient teacher, God was showing him the path that he had to follow and the Lord lighted that path with new *signs that he at the same time was interpreting.*

With the purpose of collaborating with the Christian education of the youth of Escalante, he founded in the parish of this village a Congregation of "*Luisas*" and another of *the Daughters of Mary*. One day, while he was working on spiritual exercises with these young people, the local authorities suddenly appeared at the place where they were gathered. The night before someone had left at the door of the Convent a newborn baby unattended. Both the priest and the village mayor wanted this baby's baptism to be Friar Luis' first baptism. The baptism was held and the child was named *Jesus, Maria y Jose*. This incident didn't seem outstanding at that time, but later on it became significant with another announcement of the founding of the Capuchin Tertiary Sisters who were committed from the beginning to the education of orphaned girls or those girls who were disoriented in their life style.

Another ministry to which he dedicated himself with great enthusiasm after his recent priestly ordination was visiting and helping the local prisoners of the "*Dueso*" prison in Santoña. The impact he received when he first entered that prison was totally negative. A spiritual coldness reigned there inside. This new priest offered mass there while he was very heavily protected behind bars and the few who attended seemed as if they weren't present.

Using the Francis of Assisi style of teaching which was interwoven with loving asylum and kindly and unadorned treatment filled with great compassion and mercy, he began winning the hearts of these poor prisoners and he was able to carry out for them a true apostleship. As time went on even the ambient of the prison completely changed and for him it became a pleasure to enter there. But something still kept spinning around in his head. He asked himself what would happen if he were unable to continue to serve and multiply this ministry. So it was then, being moved with this concern, that the idea of the founding of his Congregation for men (which had been his first project) took form and meaning to care for the prisoners even though later on he followed his original plan of educating the socially outcast young people. Once more the sign that God was sending him was visible later on in the life of this Founder.

An excessive apostolic work load weakened him physically and the recently named Spanish Capuchin Apostolic Commissioner, Father Joaquin de Llevaneras, transferred him to the Fuenterrabia Convent in June 1881, having first sent him for one month on a vacation in Escalada at the home of one of the faithful members of the Montehano Convent.

The Burgos climate and air were just what Father Luis needed. When he had finally recuperated and was ready to carry out the plan of going on to Fuenterrabia, a counter order from his Superior arrived obliging him to change his plans. There had been a change in the office personnel and this changed his destiny now to be located at the Magdalena Convent located in his own hometown.

August 1, 1881, he began his journey to his hometown. The next day – August 2nd - he saw once again the orange groves of his beloved Valencia. Before he arrived to the capital, he boarded a

train in order to revisit his inseparable companion of his youth when they both worked in the areas of poverty in huts, prisons and hospitals. They were waiting for him at the old station. There were family and many friends and among them, was his brother Julio and the Priest, Francisco Perez Montejano. However, the most emotional part of his return happened on the street of Saint Bartholomew, 5 which was his former home. Now inside his home he was able to embrace once again all of his siblings whom he had said goodbye to telling them it would only be eight days, but actually turned into an absence of eight years.

The day after his arrival he celebrated Mass surrounded by his family inside the dressing room of the Virgin of the Needy. This was the first time he had celebrated Mass in Valencia in the presence of all of his loved ones.

After three days of resting at home with his family, he incorporated himself into the Holy Mary Magdalene Convent of Masamagrell. It was August 6, 1881. Now would begin the fulfillment of his life as a religious person as a Founder.

PART I

FOLLOWING GOD'S WILL

INTRODUCTION

Living totally dependent upon God's will – to take refuge quickly and with love into this desire and live it out without delay fully decided and courageously – was not the only identifying feature of the vocational itinerary of Luis Amigo during his youth. It was also the central axis over which his entire life turned. It was the foundation upon which he established his human and spiritual growth.

His entire personality can be read and interpreted from this key point. This same *life by hanging on to God and trusting in His Providence* are expressions of this attitude which led him to always be conformed to the fact that the Lord –*never abandons His own, providing for even the birds of the skies* and surely *will never forget mankind*, on the contrary *He can anticipate man's very needs*.

There also arose – from this same attitude of conformity to the will of God – the *serenity and courage* with which to confront the adversities he would face in life knowing that God had permitted these to come and He never abandoned those who suffer.

His scholastic magisterial – abundant and rich in this respect – acquired, as he talked about *conforming to the will of God* a tonality that was both mystical and radiant with a lyricism which was clearly autobiographical which can be appreciated in the following quotes-

Thy will be done. Here is a prayer so short yet at the same time that is so sublime and the most effective and gratifying to God Our Lord.

Conforming to the will of God is the greatest act that a man can do, and within it he is able to exercise all the virtues.

Like sons of God, it is our main, and I would say, our only duty which is that of fulfilling in everything God's holy will. And this is what He taught us to ask of our Divine Redeemer and what we continuously pray for in the Lord's Prayer saying, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." And it is true that there is nothing more perfect, nor more holy, nor more gratifying to the Divine eyes that we can do in this world than that all-embracing conformity of our will to the Divine will.

And this scholarly teaching – fruit of his own experience – was turned into a special reality in him through his work as Founder. Through it he experienced, in a particularly intense manner, the feelings that each day he expressed in the prayer which he made as an offering of his work:

- *Use, Lord, my soul –he would say – in such a manner that it is a delightful dwelling place for You and a place where I continually worship You with veneration and love, where I am perfectly united all the rest of my life with your holy will, without letting anything I do be of my own accord, only Yours, so that until, with Thy help, this conformity and union has a happy and holy death. Amen.*

Chapter 1

THROUGH GARDEN PATHWAYS

On August 6, 1881, Father Luis of Masamagrell arrived at The Magdalena Convent, located in his own hometown, and he became a part of its Community. That same day, the General Commissary of the Spanish Capuchins, Father Joaquin de Llevaneras, gave Father Luis the orders to take over the position of Vicemaster of the novices of the only Novitiate that had been formed by this Order in Spain and that was working inside this same Convent.

Taking everything into consideration, this new job turned out to be a turning point for the next few years. Father Luis took over the position on October 20, 1881. On that date the Superior of the Convent, Father Estanislao de Reus, gave him the job of organizing himself as the Commisary of the Third Secular Franciscan Order of that region.

This job that had been given to him – as even Father Joaquin de Llevaneras realized – was a titanic project. In Masamagrell and the surrounding region, this Third Order was unknown. The other areas that surrounded the Convent lived a quiet and languid existence. For the rest of the countryside, this Third Order had never been heard of because of the abuses that had taken place during the secularization of the monks as well as the fact that they were contrary to the very Order itself.

However, Father Luis was able to count on the inestimable support of the Mastership of Pope Leo XIII, who being a good Tertiary was determined to expand the Franciscan Third Order. He was totally convinced that in so doing this would be an extraordinary method in order to counterattack other ideological activities which were opposed to Christianity as well as bringing about social reform.

On the other hand, these were times when secular laical apostleship had begun to awaken with great force coming out from a long and secular lethargy. Nineteenth Century Europe had produced a true social revolution as a result of principles set down in the intellectual, moral and political world of the French Revolution. It was also the result of the abject condition which the labor world found itself during Industrial Revolution of the Seventeenth Century. In the midst of this social confusion – also known as *social questioning* – the official Church found itself unprepared. It was precisely the laity represented particularly by Federico Ozanam, Mauricio Maignen and the German's Kolping and Ketteler, which came forward to offer an effective reply from within the Catholic camp. It was in Spain that the laity leadership took on a special significance. Since 1835, all religious Orders had been closed down, but one of the most outstanding national figures was Father Antonio Vincent

who was a great promoter of the *Catholic Circles*. And inside this same Valencian region we cannot forget the figure of D. Gregorio Gea. We must not forget that the formation of young Jose Maria Amigo had taken place in the typical climate of secular laical apostleship. And it was this initial formation which had definitely prepared him for an apostleship among the laity whose leadership inside the evangelizing activity of the Church would underline Her Teachings:

-During these times, the laity cannot and we must not remain inactive. It is necessary that all become leaders because today... the laity attended better to the people than do the official priests.

Do not believe, you laity men and women, that you have less obligations to work than do the official priests. Each group must work his own sphere of action in the propagation of the faith. Secular apostolate is of utmost importance, above all in the Catholic countries, because having mitigated the faith of the faithful, people focus more on the example of the secular laity and pay more attention to their exhortations than to that of the official priests.

Animated now on the one hand by the Teachings of Pope Leo XIII whose teachings Father Luis took as his own, and having been capacitated through the cultural baggage he had taken from his own secular laical formation which was a social commitment through faith, Father Luis set his hands to the work that he had been assigned.

Hands on labor

Letting himself be lead by this special impulsive force that so distinguishes Valencian men who want to see immediate results from their plans, and also being pushed ahead by his submissive obedience to what he considered the desire of God, Father Luis hurriedly began – as was his own style – the necessary preparations in order to fulfill the mandate he had received from his Superiors.

On October 30, 1881 –actually only ten days after being assigned his work- Father Luis presided over the inauguration of the Third Order of Masamagrell, wearing the habit of their first candidates.

Very soon – as Father Luis himself made note of – this growing Congregation of Masamagrell was extended like a leafy tree into the outlying territories of the Convent. There was such a multitude of Tertiaries gathered together in the 4th months Sundays at the Magdalena Convent to participate in the exercises of the Third Order, that they appeared to be a true pilgrimage.

There were so many who came in as adherents – and especially the intensity and enthusiasm of those that a news reporter compared them *with that which had been lived in the times of the primitive early Church*. They had come to have the hope that this Tertiary Congregation which they had established beside to the Magdalena Convent would in a very short period of time become *one of the most important ones in Spain*.

Having seen such good results in Masamagrell, and having responded to the will of Father Joaquin de Llevaneras who wanted to see the development of their own Mission in their own surrounding areas to be spread out into other towns of the Third Order, Father Luis headed a religious group from his own Magdalena Convent and began a frenetic activity which took him to the towns of *Ador, Godella, Rafelbuñol, Alcira, Castellon, Manises, Vinalesa, Albalat dels Sorells, Masarrochos and Museros* where he planted the Third Order during the year of 1883. In Masamagrell, that 1883 Mission took place between the 19th and 27th of October. And as immediate results, 60 new members joined the Order. There was also news that during that same year of 1883, Father Luis preached at a Mission in Torrent even though here he did not take over and restore the Third Order of that place.

The following years he restored the former Tertiary Congregations of *Alboraya, Valencia-Santa Monica, Benaguacil and Olleria* and he founded new ones in *Meliana, Valencia, La Punta Ruzafa, Foyos and Alfara del Patriarca*.

His apostolate was so intense and effective that in only nine years inside the outlying areas which had hardly heard of the Franciscan Secular Third Order he had established 16 Congregations who were dependent upon the Capuchins. In all there were more than 6,140 Tertiaries counting both men and women.

Unmeasured efforts

It was Father Luis' enthusiasm and apostolic zeal that were the basis of the rapid expansion of the Third Order. A news item from that period shows him on Holy Thursday washing feet in *one of the tenderest and edifying acts that he could participate in his life*. Other witnesses affirm: *that he had a great ability and a clinical eye for knowing who really desired to become a member of the Third Order; that he had an ascending and unequaled ability, and that the person that he was, was becoming like a magnet, and he communicated to the groups an extraordinary intensity from which they lived*.

However, this overwhelming amount of work that Father Luis imposed upon himself in his enthusiasm to increase more and more the Third Order, resulted in 1886 that his health was seriously affected. His family and friends were so concerned that they forced him to see a doctor. The doctor, Jose Llistar who has visited him in Alboraya found that Father Luis' heart was weak and his breathing was hoarse and whistling. Father Luis' appearance was emaciated and jaundiced and he had lost his appetite. His health presented a picture of such weakness, that Father Luis himself said that it had been going on for a year and it was not foreboding anything good.

With medications and good home care – potions made up of chopped raw meat –along with reducing a bit his fastings and penitences, his health after a few days of rest right there in Alboraya, he got better and he became sufficiently well enough to pick up from where he had started with his former rhythm of work which he had imposed again upon himself.

Messenger of peace

Wound up completely in his job as organizer and promoter of the Third Order, Father Luis was the main participant in an event that reminds us with spontaneity an unforgettable happening in the life of Francis of Assisi.

It is told in the old biographies of that Saint, that when his was sick and nigh unto death, Francis wanted to be the go-between in a legal issue that had divided the City of Assisi because of the growing enmity between the Bishop and the "Podesta"¹. He was extremely embarrassed that these two sides were so filled with mutual hate and nobody even tried to make peace between them.

With this in mind it occurred to him to add to the *Songs of brother Sun or hymns of praise to the Creatures* a new verse dedicated to *those who pardon each other because of their love for the Lord*. He requested that the brothers sing this hymn before the Bishop and the "Podestá" who had been gathered together beforehand. It is said, that when the brothers had finished singing this song, the two authorities, repenting and remorseful, *pardoned each other from the bottom of their hearts and finished embracing each other and kissing each other with great tenderness and affection*.

Well, something very similar happened to Father Luis during those days that he ran to and fro in an untiring march those fields of the Valencian countryside in order to minister to towns and cities spreading among the secular the Franciscan spirit.

In Alboraya – which he himself tells about and has also noted in other writings – an old and each day more heated enmity separated the Priest and the Mayor. And in one of the frequent occasions

¹ In Middle Age in Assisi the name of Mayor was PODESTA

that Father Luis came into contact with that town *he felt as he was praying before the Holy Father, a very strong impulse to preach on the next day a sermon about pardoning enemies.* He felt he was once again moved by what he considered the will of the Lord. So he devised a plan and begged both authorities that they come next day to the church, which they did. Afterwards, this is what happened in Father Luis' own words:

The Lord put, without a doubt, such words in my mouth and infused my audience with such grace that that the Priest and the Mayor were compelled as if moved by an inner impulse to get up from their chairs and going outside meeting each other, they strongly embraced in the presence of the Sacrificed Jesus. The scene that unfolded there inside this church cannot be described. Many other people followed the example of these two authorities; and such was the clamor that went up and so strong were the weeping that it was necessary to suspend for sometime this preaching. That night there were many people who went in search of their enemies in order to become reconciled. You could say that in truth that day was a day of general pardon. Glory be to God from whom all good things come!

Giving way to feelings

There was an activity that was intimately related with Father Luis' apostleship with the Tertiaries. He took advantage of the zeal and enthusiasm that these men and women breathed who were following as laity the star of Francis de Assisi. He thought about organizing a pilgrimage to Our Lady of Puig Sanctuary for the purpose of building up devotion to that Holy Virgin who notwithstanding that she was the Patron Saint of the Kingdom, she had been forgotten by the Valencian people. At the same time it was a form of public testimony of faith and a giving yourself away to feelings of those faithful believers living in a society and a time that had a propensity for parades and pilgrimages.

From the beginning he thought about having this pilgrimage on May 22, 1884 – Ascension Day – but torrential rains accompanied by hurricane strength winds caused him to stop these original plans. However, he set another date for Sunday, May 25th, and the pilgrimage took place at that time.

“At dawn on the 25th – so goes a news report telling about this event - there began gathering in the Church of Masamagrell courtyards, Tertiaries from Manises, Godella, Vinalesa, Rafelbuñol, Masarrochos y Museros and numerous other groups from the same Third Order in Sagunto Street. The religious men and priest had been amply notified about the gathering of the people from the surrounding villages and they sat down to hear confessions from the faithful up until time for the solemn Mass celebrating general communion where the Eucharistic bread was passed out to approximately one thousand eight hundred faithful. Just before this, a zealous Capuchin Father took over the pulpit in order to prepare the people for the communion act and to remind the pilgrims that only the spirit of faith could lead them to Puig to pay homage to the Queen of the Angeles.

“After a short rest –continues this article – about an hour away from Masamagrell, the pilgrimage to Puig was reorganized. It was an amazing sight to see that very long line of devoted pilgrims with their standards bearing banners from their different localities headed up by each group's Priest or Vicar dressed in their cottas and stoles and closing up behind these pious troops was a religious commission carrying the magnificent blue and white flag of the pilgrims. While the pilgrims advanced singing hymns of faith and love, some who were watching this procession became very emotional and others – children and adolescents – emotionally climbed trees along the way to pull leaves and spread them along the road they were walking upon.

During the pilgrimage procession, Father Luis carried the flag that he had given the Virgin in remembrance of this act.

When the procession entered into the Puig area – the writer continues telling - the bells of the Sanctuary seemed to be sending to the Franciscan Tertiaries with their joyful echoes, a loving greeting in name of that brown-skinned Virgin where they were to deposit their many petitions. The Priest from Puig, dressed in Holy heavily ornamented robes and his cross raised up high, came out to greet this pilgrimage. At the same time the townspeople and a large crowd from Valencia, Puzol, Sagunto and other villages which had arrived by train stayed by the animated pilgrims who broke forth in jubilee, with blessings and tender tears.

Once they arrived to the Sanctuary, Father Luis held a solemn Mass- in harmony with a composition created by Choir Master, Mercadante – in which German Mata y Sanchis, who was a beneficiary of the Santa Catalina of Valencia Parish, preached. That afternoon, during the course of a solemn Mariana function, Father Luis took over the pulpit, and after thanking the crowd for congratulating the effort that the organizers had done to make this event such a success, he exhorted all those in attendance to make a formal promise to observe the Rules of the Third Order. It was then, when an energetic “yes” broke forth from the throats of the crowd drowning out the voice of the preacher and forcing him to terminate this sermon “because it would have been impossible to continue in front of such an electrified multitude.”

Two years later – October 13, 1886 – Father Luis organized and accompanied a second pilgrimage of the Franciscan Third Order to the Puig Sanctuary.

-The Congregations of the Third Order had been previously invited. They had been founded or reformed by the virtuous ability of Father Luis and they arrived with their respective flag bearers in the numbers of thirteen completing a total of five thousand Tertiaries and numerous priests. Five of the priests handed out the Eucharistic Bread of the Strong during almost one hour for this Franciscan family. Almost seventy especially chosen professors came from Valencia, and directed by the inspired and pious master Salvador Giner, they sang a solemn Rosary while walking through the streets of this city.

-God bless Father Luis who has lead us on this new triumph; blessed be the Tertiaries who untiringly and enthusiastically formed part of this Franciscan militia; blessed be all those who participated in this pilgrimage which is worthy of being remembered in the annals of the great Spanish pilgrimages and may the Almighty see very soon that we have fulfilled the desire of the Tertiaries when they were leaving saying with great emotion, “Until the next one!”

A third pilgrimage of the Tertiaries to Puig – organized and accompanied by Father Luis – took place September 29, 1889 on the festive day of Saint Michael Archangel.

-To this pilgrimage, initiated by Father Luis of Masasmagrell, as Superior of the Magdalena Convent and inspector for all of the Franciscan Capuchin Tertiaries from the reign of Valencia – so narrates a chronicler of this event – only the Tertiary brothers from Our Father San Francisco were admitted. In spite of this limitation there were more than seven thousand Tertiaries, many of them dressed in the full habit of the Order and the rest were wearing openly their scapular and Franciscan ropes.

On Saint Michael’s day in the morning, after having taken mass in the Masamagrell church parish the Committee parted. It was there that the invited congregations had gathered together, some deserving special mention such as Alcira which had come walking for fourteen to fifteen hours to join with their other brothers in prayer. At nine o’clock in the morning the procession was organized and the Congregations began their parade.

It was in this manner that they entered in unpopulated areas singing hymns which had been substituted for the recitation of the Holy Rosary. It was a sight to behold. It was very moving and worthy of watching how these two long lines of the sons of Saint Francis followed the winding road... Upon arriving to Puig they sang hymns and once inside the Sanctuary, Mass was begun by Father Luis from Masamagrell who was the director of this pilgrimage. Following Mass, Father Ambrosio from Valencia took to the pulpit.

When the Mass was ended around three in the afternoon, the pilgrims took a frugal look and before four o'clock they were marching back singing the Rosary and hymns just as they had arrived. By eight o'clock that evening these pilgrims had reached the Masamagrell Church.

Next day, before daylight, the Rosary of Dawn was recited in the streets of Masamagrell and a Requiem Mass for the Tertiary dead was sung. Later on, another very solemn Mass was sung and Carlos Ferris preached. Once this Mass ended, the pilgrims said their last goodbyes asking that Father Luis tell them one more time: "Tertiaries, onward to Puig!"

It is important to point out that in this third pilgrimage to Puig, together with the Magdalena Capuchins, they were joined by members from the Congregation of the Capuchin Tertiaries which had been founded on April 12, 1889, who were still living in the Carthusian monastery there in Puig.

Quite a few years later – October 1915 – Father Luis was now Bishop of Segorbe. Once again he lead the fourth pilgrimage of the Tertiaries to finish at the feet of the Virgin of Puig, but on this occasion, the organization was done by others and it was done as a type of recognition to the organizer and promoter of the previous pilgrimages to the Sanctuary of the Patron Queen of Valencia.

Life goes on

During the time that he was developing his intense apostleship inside the Third Secular Order – from which we will see he founded his religious groups – Father Luis lived another very long series of events which were marking and maturing his human and his religious personality.

In 1885 – just a bit before he founded the Congregation of the Capuchin Tertiary Sisters of the Holy Family – he had a great joy in seeing his dream come true which many Spanish Capuchins had sighed about: It was the suppression of the Spanish Apostolic Commissary (policing delegate) along with the full uniting of the subdivisions with the rest of the Order. This Declaration of Union which took place on February 4th was solemnly published in the Magdalena Convent on the 6th of March 1885. Father Luis together with his Community told what they had lived as a result of this event:

-It is true that the first moments of this great surprise were delightful. The days passed in which we celebrated the fortunate event, but what will not easily be forgotten were the sweet emotions that flooded our heart...

We see in this Decree of the Magna Charter the declaration of our liberties because in our sacred religion obedience reigns...

In order to solemnize such a fortuitous event, about eighty Capuchins religious gathered together as if charmed to be inside one joy and inside one beating of each ones' heart together. It was something so great to see how happy we were and how we blessed our Father General, praising God who had so abundantly poured over this newborn Spanish Capuchin Order His heavenly blessings...

May the Sacred Heart of Jesus give a prize to and bless the Father General and the Provincial Father! Also bless the sweet Pastor of the souls in his charge the care of the Capuchin flock!.

Five thousand Tertiaries united in this Community accompanied the Image and cheered Our Patriarch and with the solemn Consecration of the Godly Heart of this New Province as the religious part of these festivities ended. Inside the Convent Refectory this event was also greatly celebrated. Three days of reading and extraordinary daily fare were dispensed with...

As a result of this Declaration of Union, having been converted, the Spanish Capuchin Commissary from the Province of the Sacred Heart, (that same February 4th when the Declaration of Union had

been made), Father Luis was named *fourth provincial counselor*. And a few days later on March 10th the Provincial Council, named Father Luis Superior of the Magdalena Convent which now had over eight hundred religious members. This last nomination gave to his spirit *a reason of suffering and confusion by finding himself so young and in charge of such a large and respectable Community*.

A few months after his appointment as Superior there was a terrible outbreak of cholera in Valencia from which the Lord made him taste - *the Cup of Anguish* - over the death of four members of his Community as well the death of four nuns from the recently founded Congregation of the Capuchin Tertiary Sisters who had given their lives over to the care of the ill in Masamagrell and Benaguacil. Father Luis himself suffered an attack of cholera and was bedridden. This cholera attack brought him to realize that God wanted him to found another new religious Order and it also caused him to realize one of the most tender and most profound human and spiritual feelings.

On October 30, 1886, having been sent by the Provincial Superior, Father Joaquin of Llevaneras he went to Olleria for the job of making the necessary negotiations and labor necessary to restore the Capuchin convent of that town. He did not return to Masamagrell until the beginning of the next year in 1887. This provisional transfer was in part, as will be seen, the first intent to separate him from the women's foundation. Once he returned to Masamagrell, he returned to his intense apostolic activity inside the Third Secular Order of that area and he was named Superior of that Convent in April, 1888.

The last trimester of the year 1889, the Superior General of the Capuchins, Father Bernardo de Andermatt, accompanied by Father Jose Calasanz de Llevaneras, turned their Canonic Visit to the Communities of the Spanish Order and arriving to the Magdalena Convent they had the sensitivity to visit the Capuchin Tertiary Sisters in their own house in Masamagrell. They also visited the Capuchins Tertiary Brothers in the Carthusian Monastery of Puig where they were still living. This visit of Father Bernardo to the Capuchin Communities had as its principal motive to investigate the problems that the Spanish Capuchin Order was living. During his trip he heard from one group of the members who were opposed to the authority and the leadership of the Fathers Bernabe de Astorga, Lorenzo de Molina and Gaetano de Igualada. They also listened to strong criticism about other religious members who had been given positions of responsibility. Some of this criticism was pointed directly to Father Luis. But the majority of this criticism was centered on the Provincial Superior, Father Joaquin de Llevaneras. He was being accused of considering the Province his own private feudal system where "he did and undid anything according to his own liking." He was also accused of "not consulting with any of the members of the Provincial Council, and not tolerating from anyone opinions contrary to his own." Once this visit was completed, the Superior General, in conjunction with his Council, judged that in order to bring relief to that conflict, that it would be best to subdivide the Province of the Sacred Heart into those of Aragon, Castilla and Toledo. There were other reasons that had piled up onto this conflict that had to do with the fact that the Spanish Order has grown so much in such a short period of time that their governing structure wasn't big enough to handle their needs.

December 18, 1889, the General Council of the Capuchin Order made an official decree of these new subdivisions. Father Luis was nominated as *First Provincial Counselor* of the Province of Toledo where he remained registered as a member. At the same time the General Council decided that Friar Fermin de Velilla should go over to the Convent of Orihuela which was the residence of the Provincial Father. And Friar Luis was to take over the job of Vicesuperior and Teacher of Moral Theology. This transfer took place only eight months after Father Luis had founded the Congregation of the Capuchin Tertiary Religious of Our Lady of Sorrows. Also it was shortly after he had been nominated by the Bishop to be a Council Consultant of Valencia and to be a Synod Examiner of Segorbe. This transfer apart from causing him the pain and commotion related to separating him from his very foundations and particularly that relating to his masculinity in the fact that he was recently reborn, he was also unsettled about being appointed to the job of Teacher of Moral Theology for which he felt he was unprepared. Father Luis expressed his concern almost immediately in a letter written to the General Superior on January 9, 1890:

- On the 5th we arrived to this Convent in Orihuela, where we found sick from the illness the majority of the religious and especially those who were students. They were, sick from the epidemic over the region, but, thanks be to God, the most of them are already healed.

My only grave concern about this new appointment is the job of Teacher of Moral Theology which Your Reverence has confided to me is that I feel my own ineptitude and incapacity will keep me from carrying out this assignment because I have never myself coursed my middle studies. I feel confused and terrified, and for fear of causing you to be disgusted with me I would have resigned immediately.

Nevertheless, in case you have formed another opinion about me, I feel it is my duty to inform you that I am the most useless and insufficient person that you could have chosen for this job, because I barely know enough to carry out my priestly ministry. Having declared this, I also want you know that I will conform with whatever you decide.

Father Luis was relieved of the job of Teacher of Moral Theology on August 22, 1890, but he remained at Orihuela in charge of the Franciscan Secular Tertiary Order of that place and beginning August 12, 1891 he was also appointed Spiritual Director of the students of Theology in that Convent. Here in Orihuela in addition to many other activities, he wrote two Novenas to the Virgin of the Faith who was the patroness of that area. He also composed for her prayers that were synthesized with the Marian spirituality which were so characteristic as follows:

-Holy Virgin Mary, standing at the foot of the Cross, you were constituted by our son to be the Vigilant Pastor of our souls; within your ministry you are co-adjunct by the priests who have been given the job of spiritually instructing with his doctrine and example; show us how to illustrate and be filled with holy zeal these Ministers of the Lord, so that in the carrying out of his most high ministry, not looking out for themselves, that they may possess the virtue of bringing and conquering those hearts for Jesus Christ who is Our Way, Truth and Life.

- Holy Virgin Mary who follows that path that straightens out the steps of those who have lost their way and who like the Faithful Shepherd will leave the ninety nine faithful sheep in the fold and run after the one who has left the fair fields of the Church to jump from precipice to precipice eating poisonous herbs that are bad doctrines; make that the spirits which form the heavenly of the angels and those who help us in this ministry not to stop in their work to show him who has strayed and admonish him until, he acknowledges his mistake and he confesses his guilt and through you who are the refuge for sinners, he can be taken to the sheepfold of the Good Shepherd.

On December 18, 1892, the General Government appointed him the Provincial Counselor of Toledo. And several days later, on December 29th, the government of the Province presided over by the General Visitor, Father Jose Calansanz of Llevaneras, appointed him Superior of the Olleria Convent. These appointments were made during especially difficult times for all the Capuchins in the Province of Toledo. The malaise that affected the place had been detected by the General Superior personally in 1889 and instead of lessening with the restructuring by the subdivision done that year, it had gotten worse. Some of the religious who had been grouped together with the leaders from the previous three years were alarmed at the *lack of obedience, showing that they were behaving despotically with their inferiors and behaving anarchically with their superiors.*

All of this added up to an *alarming lack of availability* which was especially felt in the disposition of these religious to participate in the overseas missions assigned to that Province. This was the panorama where much of this was caused by those long years of secularization of the Spanish Capuchin religious from the rest of the Order and which obligated the General Provincial Council to appoint on November 7, 1892, Father Jose Calansanz of Llevaneras as a General Visitor for the Province of Spain. When he finished this mission on January 23, 1893, the situation became worse

until the point of questioning the validity of the assignments that were made outside of the Order's legal position. In the middle of this entire controversy, the Provincial Minister who had been assigned to the Province of Toledo, Father Francisco de Benameji, who had solidified himself with the malcontents, submitted his resignation and since May 9 1893 remained in front of the demarcation the provincial Vicar, Father Jose of Monovar, an old and decrepit priest.

During Father Luis' time in Olleria which had gone on until 1898 because he had been elected 4th Provincial Counselor for the Provincial Chapter of Toledo in 1895 and was appointed once again the Guardian of the Olleria Convent, he continued to attend the Secular Franciscan Third Order for the entire subdivision in the position of Provincial Visitor. And on one of his trips to the capital and as a new manifestation of his spirit of redeeming from captivity and consequently a reformer of the customs, he founded in Valencia in 1894 the *Association of Our Lady of the Good Books*.

On December 16, 1898 Father Luis was appointed Provincial Minister of this recently restored Capuchin Province of the *Most Precious Blood of Christ* of Valencia., to whose founding he had so actively contributed. Before this appointment he had been working for one month with a commission that was charged with updating those transactions needed to finish the subdivision of the Province of Toledo into those of Andalucia and Valencia.

At his presentation before all his brothers of that demarcation that he had just been named to, he wrote on January 3, 1899 a circular in which he expressed the following feelings:

- *Directing ourselves for the first time to you, we want above all to excite more and more your gratefulness to God, the Giver of all good things, from whom we have received an enormous benefit from his liberal hand towards what we all desired, the restoration of our Province....*

-

The differences of temperament, character and customs...that can be seen in the individuals from different provinces as well as the innate love in man for his country and the land where he was born, can nevertheless produce certain differences, even though we don't intend to nor do we want to, which come to convey no trifling prejudices against the good regime and government of the communities.

All of you are aware of our insufficiencies, but we believe that we have not hidden how animated we are with good desires and a burning will to promote however possible the most we can for God's glory and the growth of our beloved Valencian Province.

Let us never forget that the same way that the firmness and solidity upon which a building depends, is in its foundations. So do also our virtue and good example depend upon the strength and stability of our moral building's structure of the Valencian Province.

One of the problems to which he gave special attention during his mandate was that of the Missions. In that sense, at the same time that he proposed the return of those provincial missionaries who were not happy overseas in Manila and in the Carolinas Islands or in Chile, he also gave great encouragement to the Colombian Guajira Missions, *dissipating the abyss which existed between the Missionaries and the Superiors of the Province and he narrowed in more upon the mutual bond of charity and fraternal love.*

He worked in the same manner for the extension of the Province founding the Convents of Monforte and Totana. He tried to found another convent in Alcoy but it was not successful and he negotiated in exchange that the territory of the Balears Islands be annexed to the civil province of Castellon which had belonged until then to the Cataluña Province.

It was his job to confront certain very difficult problems such as the one planted regarding *obligatory military service for religious or the danger of expulsion* that the Religious suffered based on the "Law of Associations".

He watched over the good spirit of the religious touring on three occasions the Canonical Visit throughout the whole subdivision. He also acted with paternal kindness towards all the religious, and when circumstances required he would show the necessary firmness which can be seen in the following text:

In order to cut such bad things –he wrote in 1901 – we have used all valid means that prudence suggests to us, leaning more towards mercifulness, according to the advice of the Seraphic Patriarch, as well as which conforms more to our character. But seeing that this sometimes is counterproductive for some people and it is argued that the evil will grow stronger the more lenient we are, we make it known the following in conformity to the desires of our Provincial Council, we hold on to the system of justice, even while remembering that we are Fathers.

We need to point out that during the time of Father Luis' was Provincial Minister, he founded the monthly magazine called *The Little Flowers of San Francisco*. The object of this magazine was to *promote and increase the Franciscan spirit among the members of the Third Order*. He also edited in a very reduced size the book *Rules and Testament* of San Francisco with the purpose that the religious could always carry it around with themselves. He published the *General Statistics of the Seraphic Province of the Minor Capuchins of Valencia called the Most Precious Blood*. Upon the occasion of the International Congress of Tertiaries that was organized in Rome during the Holy Year of 1900, he visited for the first time the Eternal City where he was received by Pope Leo XIII together with a commission of 100 pilgrims on September 25, 1900.

As the last act of his mandate, Father Luis convoked on January 10, 1902 the CXXXIII Provincial Chapter of the Valencian Province to be held in the Convent of Holy Mary Magdalene of Valencia. Here he presented the Superior General a Report of the State of the Province including his own activities during his three-year period there.

Father Luis was elected to be the Second General Custodian during this Provincial Chapter which he himself had convoked. He remained inside the Community of the Masamagrell Convent free of all duties, just as the Order's Constitution called for. The next year, however, during the reunion celebrated by the Provincial Council on January 14, 1903, he was named Vicar of the Magdalena Convent, a job he held until he finished his three-year period there. He was still at Masamagrell when "Doña" Josefa Gimenez Sien, whom he had been spiritually director as Superior of Ollería since he had arrived there, suddenly died January 5, 1904.

At the Provincial Chapter celebrated December 15, 1904, he was elected *Third Provincial Counselor*. This was now his third time to occupy this position inside the provincial government body. Two days later the Provincial Ministry appointed him to be the Superior of the Orihuela Convent.

From Orihuela he went, in 1906 to do Spiritual Exercises at the Holy Cave but he didn't feel quieted by them so he repeated these Exercises in Montiel, where he went up to console and to accompany Father Jose de Sedavi. While he was still in Orihuela he was presented to take the position as Apostolic Vicar of the Guajira Mission. Father Luis was the favorite candidate of Father Atanasio de Manises for this service but finally Father Atanasio was appointed. The following was written by Father Atanasio de Manises:

-Since the Capuchin Tertiary Sisters who arrived to La Guajira in 1905) have come saying who they think are the Fathers who have the probabilities of winning, I have not been able to keep this secret which I am normally accustomed to do....

All of us who are Missionaries would be delighted if Father Luis would be our Vicar.

When I was asked whom I would vote for, I answered Father Antonio (from Valencia) because I believed that they were only taking into consideration those Fathers who were in residence there in the Mision. Had it been any other way I would have recommended with my eyes closed Father Luis because we recognize in him admirable gifts for governing us and beside I see eye-to-eye perfectly with Father Luis whom I love so much and have always loved.

Father Luis was still in Orihuela when on March 21, 1907 when he received the notification of his Episcopal nomination. This appointment, however, belongs to the Epilogue of this book.

Chapter 2

THE LAITY PEOPLE ARE PUSHING AHEAD

“The continuous progress and growth of the Third Secular Order and the desire for greater perfection of those who wanted to consecrate themselves to God” writes Father Luis remembering some of the events that happened around 1884 – “impelled me to establish the Religious Congregation of the Capuchin Tertiary Sisters. Deeming this idea to be God’s will I started to rite the Constitutions according to the particular objectives of the new congregation, imploring Divine guidance for this purpose.”²

In a state of such affliction, I considered how pleased the Lord ought to be with the growth and progress of the Third Order and with the foundation of the congregation of Tertiary Capuchin Sisters, Father Luis continued saying referring to the year 1885- and it occurred to me how I might offer myself to him to appease his wrath and entreat him to stop the cholera epidemic. I offered to double efforts to help the Venerable Third Order of Penance to expand its good works.

Immediately another idea entered my mind, perhaps through Divine inspiration. It was to complete the work necessary for the foundation and establishment of a congregation of Tertiary Brothers who would devote themselves to the care and moralization of convicts during their imprisonment. I considered this to be God’s will and at once I began drafting the Constitutions that would accomplish this purpose

I must finish the work of founding the Congregation of the Capuchin Brothers who would dedicate themselves to the prisons and to the care and moral uplifting of its prisoners. I considered this to be the will of God, and, of course, began to work towards writing the necessary Constitutive acts needed to accomplish this end.³

These two texts written by Father Luis which contain his most genuine experiences as a Founder, constitute, without a doubt, the best introduction to this Chapter. Within them is clearly seen the

² Cf. OCLA 68

³ Cf. OCLA, 83

roots of this Founder's vocation within the climate of his *fulfilling the will of God* which distinguishes his entire life. And within these texts remains a certainty that from the founding of these two religious Orders that they were a direct and spontaneous result of the *apostleship which was developing out of the Franciscan Secular Third Order*. It was this laity people who on the one hand helped him to discern at this time the will of God, and they were the ones who in turn *pushed him*, or as he would say, *impulsed him to go on with his adventure as a Founder*.

The suit made to order fits

It has been insinuated that Father Luis wrote the Constitutions of his Congregations outside of the approval of the actual concrete group of the foundation as if *waiting someone who could better do it*.

Such an insinuating has no basis historically. The following was written by Father Luis himself referring to this incident: *I started to write for this purpose*.- he writes regarding the Capuchin Tertiary Sisters and in clear reference to those women of the Third Secular Order who *"desirous of more perfection wanted to consecrate themselves to God the Constitutions"...*⁴

Immediately another idea entered my mind, the foundation and establishment of a congregation of Tertiary Brothers who would devote themselves to the care and moralization of convicts during their imprisonment. Father Luis wrote regarding the Capuchin Tertiary Brothers- *I began drafting the Constitutions that would accomplish this purpose*.

From this perspective, it is evident that this primary *project of the life* of his Congregations, far from being a project done *"blindly"* was more properly a kind of *suit made to order* that was then adapted to the perfection of the actual concrete group of people for whom this suit had been made.

It had become evident – as has been pointed out previously – that the actual concrete group for whom Father Luis had written these Constitutions – built to the exact fit – were actually those Tertiary Sisters and Tertiary Brothers of the Secular Franciscan Order among whom Father Luis was doing his apostolate.

And most certainly, these initial projects of life – fruit of Father Luis' own reflection and prayers- were adapted perfectly to these secular groups as perfectly as a "ring on a finger."

These projects gathered together the most genuine Franciscan Tertiary spirit such as *penitence* –understood fundamentally as the emptying of the "me" and the growth of the inner man through love

- as the *practice of works of mercy* – as an expression of personal growth in the love and progressive sensitivity to the world of the socially outcast, and as *the helpful disposition*, poor and humble, simple and uncomplicated, generous and sacrificial of the *minor brother*.

These projects also harmonized – as is typical of all Tertiary spirituality with – *a life of contemplation and of apostolate*.

Within these projects also stood out as of capital primary importance – as is within whatever lifelong Franciscan project – *a fraternity*- born out of a strong and tender love which grows each day in prayer and mutual acceptance and service and is expressed in the family life style which they live joyfully and without class distinction.

And these projects finally were shown to be personal apostolic fields, the same as those without a doubt which had been influenced by Father Luis himself – for those who felt particularly sensitized

⁴ Cf. IRIARTE, Lázaro OFM Cap. *"Historia de la Congregación de las Hermanas Terciarias Capuchinas de la Sagrada Familia"*. Pag. 26

as were the women and men of the Third Secular Order which Father Luis himself directed and spiritually and apostolically oriented.

Seeking greater perfection

This same desire for *greater perfection* that marked the vocational itinerary of Luis Amigo in his youth, also distinguished the vocation of those women of the Third Order which impelled Father Luis to start the congregation of the Capuchin Tertiary Sisters.

This *perfection* at no time inside the teachings of Luis Amigo had any connotations to perfectionism which is because of its own nature one way of going around in circles with oneself. This is a *perfection* that enters into synthyony with the most genuine Christian spirituality inside the ambient of *love*. And the *perfection of love* is in essence and ideal – and as such unattainable in everything – yet is the permanent impulse of a person to live in an attitude of continual growth always conscience that he or she could *love more and love better*.

The page on which Luis Amigo expresses, perhaps with better clarity, his intimate conviction about the *ideal love in constant superation* is found precisely at the beginning of the Constitutions for his sons, the Capuchin Tertiaries, where without a doubt and with total intention – he wanted to begin with the word *charism*:

The charity – he writes there going back to the hymn of Saint Paul – is the fulfillment of the Law, and is the soul of all of the other virtues without which no perfection is possible, as the Apostol Paul himself indicates when he says (I Corinthians 13 : 2,3): “ And though I have the gift of prophecy and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned and have not charity, it profit me nothing.” It is for this reason that the different Religious Institutes that beautify the Church of God, as schools that are dedicated to perfection, they are consecrated in a very special way to the practice of this virtue, even though not everybody practices them in the same way. This is because God in His unscrutable designs and His highest providence has wanted through each and everyone to provide all kinds of different evils of society The religious of these Congregations will work with all diligence towards forming their spirit and inflaming their will inside the love of God through the power of prayer. It is through this means they are able to communicate to their fellow beings the flame of Divine love, and are able to be more disposed to serve them through the ministries to which they have consecrated themselves inside this same Congregation. Occupy yourselves, yes, in the service of your brothers, but not forgetting that truly loving your neighbor cannot exist without first loving and being loved by God and the best manner to do good unto others is to be filled with the Spirit of God, which is charity.

The matter began in the street

The Congregation of the Capuchin Tertiary Sisters – the same thing that with the Capuchin Tertiary Brothers – *was born in the street*. It was born, as has been told over and over again in the words of Father Luis, out of the “ desire for greater perfection “ which some of the women were experiencing whom he himself was spiritually leading inside the Third Secular Order. It was precisely this “desire” that pushed him on to found the Order and it was this group of women who were the primary basis and principal base of the new Institute. Trying to place the beginnings of this congregation – its original beginning – in Montiel; confusing the founding of the Congregation with the Sanctuary and confusing the founder of that Sanctuary is like trying to confuse the clarity of the actual facts.

The Sanctuary of Montiel joints to the feast

Father Luis himself tells of his encounter with the pious women who lived in the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Montiel in Benaguacil in this manner:

- *I had almost finished writing the Constitutions, when one day while visiting my sisters in Valencia, Mother Maria of Montiel of Benaguacil, Sister Carmen of Alboraya and Sister Angela of Pego accompanied by the Reverend Ignacio Guillen, Curate of the "Santos Juanes" Parish came to me, knelt at my feet and said: " We know that you are writing the Constitutions for the foundation of a Congregation of Tertiary Capuchin Sisters. We were founded by Fr. Ambrosio of Benaguacil at the Convent of Montiel but we have neither rule, nor Constitutions to follow, nor do we have legal status. So we come to ask Your Reverence to take us under your protection and to let us be the basis of the congregation you intend to found"*

Notwithstanding that I was in charge of the Third Order, I had barely heard of them before they came pleading at this time to me..

Sister Isabel from Benisa – witness to the very first hour of this event – locates this encounter with these pious women with Father Luis in a different scene:

-Sister Angela of Pego and Sister Francisca de las Llagas coming out from alms, arrived to the Magdalena Convent and came into the church. A religious was in the Choir and in seeing these Sisters, came out to greet them. It was Father Luis who had conceived of the idea of founding a Congregation⁵.

It could be that these two different versions can be arranged in proper order chronologically. It might be that first came the casual encounter of these pious women in Masamagrell and later on they met again in Valencia having previously set a date for this meeting with the Montiel community. What does remain clear in both stories is that the foundational initiative of Father Luis was prior to the encounter he had with these pious women who lived in Benaguacil.

It is true that Father Luis, having finished the Constitutions – which he has promised to have them on hand and to be able to count on them when the time came – he had the deference not only to personally take them to Montiel in order to have them studied, he also wanted to present them for approval to the Archbishop of Valencia in the name of the Mother Superior of that Sanctuary. It is also true- having made the opportune consults – Father Luis had the sensitivity to perpetually profess three of these Sisters before the day of canonic foundation of the new congregation and to give the first profession to another eight nuns, at the founding ceremonies. But none of this could be an obstacle, based upon the real facts, to affirming once more, that the beginning and main founding of the Congregation of the Capuchin Tertiary Sisters was that group made up of Franciscan Secular Tertiaries who had come along maturing their faith at the side of Father Luis.

Moved to compassion

On May 11, 1885 during a simple but emotional ceremony which took place in the Montiel Sanctuary, Father Luis founded the Congregation of the Capuchin Tertiary Sisters of the Holy Family.

Not once did he suspect that soon he would give his daughters the opportunity to accept in all its radicalism the struggle and challenge of loving as he had written in the Constitutions when he invited them to - *transfer into other neighbors the flames of Divine love, dedicating themselves with all diligence and vigilance to succoring their needs.*

⁵ Cf. BENISA Sr. Isabel. *" Datos de los principios de la Congregacion de las Religiosas Terciarias Capuchinas de la Sagrada Familia (Archivo General, Roma)*

Having passed only a few days from such a joyful celebration, pain clouded Spain's society and particularly the inhabitants of the Valencian region. *The Asiatic cholera* – as the cholera epidemic of '85 had been baptized – began to ravage the population, feeding itself upon the most humble and unprotected sectors of the population.

This terrible disease raced through the populations and panic took hold of many, who even though they were healthy at the moment, fled terrified from their towns abandoning to their fate their most beloved ones who had been contaminated with this disease.

The Capuchin Tertiary Sisters heard from the mountain top, cries of pain and the anguished calls for help that came from the valleys and they left their quiet places of retreat and went down into Benaguacil to attend to and help this very ill people whom no one wanted to succor. One of the leaders of this heroic act of charity that was taking place in Benaguacil was told by one of the original Sisters who related the story many years after it had happened:

- *In June 1885, when this terrible epidemic of deadly cholera appeared, our Sisters, burning with sacrificial love, offered themselves spontaneously to help the overflowing sick in Benaguacil. Before beginning such a hard job, they went on a three-day retreat, asking the Lord to accept themselves as victims if it was His will, after they had attending to all of the sick people.*
- *Finished the retreat a young man arrived asking for helping to his elder parents, victims of the disease who were alone because the family abandoned them for fear to the danger.*
- *Immediately Sister Isabel of Benisa and Sister Maria Luisa of Valencia (still a novitiate) came forward to take care of the first case of cholera which lived only a matter of a few hours. By midnight, after having turned over the dead to be buried and after having straightened up the house, she left to go to the Hospital to gather together with the Sisters were there for the week.*
- *Since the pestilence spread rapidly it was necessary to empty the Hospital of patients who had not been attacked by the epidemic in order to gather up the victims of cholera. As the amount of patients increased, so did the amount of nursing Sisters. Among these were four novitiates: Sister Patrocinio of Benisa, Sister Desamparados of Sueras, Sister Maria Luisa of Valencia and Sister Juana of Cullera.*
- *On June 29th this pestilence attacked Sister Desamparados and after a rough fight against the sickness, she died in the Lord on July 16th. She was the first martyr of the charism.*

The newspapers "Las Provincias" dated June 4, 1885, echo the labor of these Sisters in the same town where the founding of the Congregations had taken place:

Worthy of praise is the behavior of the Tertiary Sisters that we are observing during these unfortunate times with the attention that they are giving to the cholera patients no matter where they are called to go. It is to be desired that these heroic women from the altar of charity run to the most dangerous areas in order to care for those struck with cholera trying to prevail as much as possible against this epidemic.

Shortly after having begun their work in Benaguacil, it the town of Masamagrell that came asking for help. The efforts that the Third Secular Order had been doing with Father Luis at their head taking care of the victims of this epidemic was not sufficient. The municipal government requested from the Founder the help of this newly born congregation. Father Luis tells the story:

The municipal government of Masamagrell asked me very insistently that I send him the Sisters to attend those who were sick from this disease. Since such attention is truly an act of heroism, I felt very limited in allowing the Sisters to go out to do this dangerous work. I told them if one of them

felt moved to take on the charitable act that she let me know in writing. They all were very moved with such a great spirit that not one of them declined to offer herself for the sacrifice. Thus, four Sisters were named to go to Masamagrell for that purpose.

Shortly after arriving, these Sisters had gained by their acts of sacrificial love the hearts of the townspeople and once again the newspaper echoed this:

A simple invitation that was given from the neighbors of Masamagrell to the Capuchin Tertiary Sisters of the Montiel Sanctuary – so wrote “Las Provincias” on June 21 – was enough for the entire Community to come to the aid of the cholera victims, however being precise that the Mother Superior had contained her fervor and only sent a few of the Sisters to the task.

So strongly had they defied the dangers, so strongly had they “undervalued” their love for their own lives that four Sisters – three from Masamagrell and one from Benaguacil – died having become ill from this highly contagious disease.

Taking everything into consideration – *which the ordinary providence of God tends to do* – which Father Luis himself said – *mixing those favors and thanks that are given to men with trials and tribulations, in the end none of this made them vain nor conceited nor were they beaten down nor unnerved* – to such vexating troubles and to such wretchedness there had to come better times. And so it was that God willed that those first *four martyrs of charity* – became *the precious and corner stones* – upon which afterwards was built a working basis for the future of this Congregation. And at the same time that Father Luis himself experienced within this tragic scene the need to found a new religious Order – one of most authentic trials that a man had ever gone through who puts his trust in God, and at the same time one of the most beautiful experiences he had lived filled together with mysticism and profound human emotions.

Father Luis himself tells what it was like to live *–once the epidemic had passed and seeing that so many children were left behind without any kind of support now that their parents had died*

I was moved with compassion – he said taking upon himself the same emotions that the Good Samaritan felt finding the wounded man on the side of the highway – and *I felt we could gather them up together; and as such I asked Mother Angela, who was still found to be in a weakened state, if she had the desire to care for these children should we gather them together under one roof, and she who was filled with such zeal and charism offered herself joyfully to this task.*

These good intentions carried with them, however, a tremendous challenge. The Good Samaritan of the Gospel parable already had money with him and he found a lodging house nearby where his victim could receive care and attention. In Father Luis’ case, as we will see in the story that follows, not only did not have the money, he had no lodging house where to take these children. So to speak he had to “start from scratch” and he needed to begin by opening a new *lodging of the Good Samaritan*:

I consulted others about this matter –Father Luis goes on saying regarding this event – *inside the Third Order Conference Meetings. They quite happily approved and without losing a moment’s time we rented in Masamagrell a home called the Castle for the purpose of converting it into an Asylum for these children. We went out into the town to pick up piece of furniture that the townsfolk gave us and with some alms money given me, we purchased some straw beds, sheets, coverlets, and other types of utensils. And without relying upon any other resources but trusting in the Divine Providence who takes care of the tiniest birds in the sky, we opened up the Asylum August 9, 1885.*

It was also on this occasion that the newspaper wrote up an article about this event saying with these words:

Owing to the initiative of the Superior of the Capuchin Convent of Magdalena, Friar Luis from Masamagrell – so was written in the “Las Provincias” newspaper on October 7, 1885 – *there has*

been founded in this same Masamagrell an Asylum and a School for very small children for the purpose of gathering together and educating those children of both sexes who have been left orphans as a result of the epidemic that has so devastated this region, and turn these orphans over to the care and guidance of the Tertiary Sister of the Montiel Monastery which has been founded by the above named Father Superior.

Not being left without support

Shortly after having finished with the founding ceremonies, the figure of Father Luis – as you will see further on in detail – began being questioned and answered among the Capuchin Tertiary Sisters, prolonging this most uncomfortable situation until he was named Provincial Minister of the Valencian Capuchins at the end of 1898.

With everything, he – being the Father that he was and he felt himself to be of the Congregation – never once thought of abandoning his creature to its own luck. What is more, precisely in these moments where the attitude of the Mother Superiors of the Congregations had become most tense, he exerted himself to his utmost lovingly, saying:

-Not even for this will tumble down in the least my interest for the Congregation that the Lord founded for my ministry, and I will continue giving to these nuns all of my support and giving them that counsel when they request it.

And this support he made effective, for example, the year of 1889, when on July 15th he accompanied the Sisters to the founding of Olleria, inspite of the fact that this had been the result of the personal labor of Father Joaquin from Llevaneras and inspite of the fact that he knew that he would be the “guest of stone” at this celebration. The support he also made effective in the founding of Paterna – done in 1896 – and another in Segorbe which took place in 1898. This support , however, was particularly effective in his participation – strong and delicate at the same time – in the first general Chapter meeting of the Congregation in 1890.

Aside from all of this, and also on more ordinary occasions during his presence among his daughters, Father Luis, during these most difficult times, tried his best to leave always with them a testimony of his love and affection that he felt for all of them. The anecdote that follows will show this love and affection, clothed in goodness, comprehension and mercy:

One year Father Luis presented to us the spiritual Exercises in Montiel – one of the sisters tells – and we didn't really like very much the softness with which he spoke during his speeches and meditations. We were accustomed to other Fathers and Priests, and to Father Jose from Sedavi, who spoke to use very seriously and very strongly. On one occasion, one of the Priests put us into Hell and he left us there; but Father Luis on the other hand lifted us up to Heaven.

Offering and victim

If what moved and motivated the heart of Luis Amigo with the founding of the Congregation of the Capuchin Tertiary Sisters was his eagerness to open a trench for those desires for a greater perfection of some of the nuns that he directed in the Third Order, what was his most immediate motivation for the founding of the Capuchin Tertiary Brothers of Our Lady of Sorrows was his anxiety of offer himself as victim to the Lord during the time they were suffering the ravishing that the cholera epidemic caused in 1885.

During such a distressing situation – he himself narrates – and taking into consideration how much the increasing progress of the Third Order had accomplished which must have pleased the Lord very much including the adding on of the founding of the Congregation of the Capuchin Tertiary Sisters, I offered to the Lord, in order to placate His justice and in order for Him to put a stop to the cholera epidemic, to double up on my efforts and workload in order to step up more and more the venerable Third Order of Penitence, and at that moment it passed through my mind and it stuck

there (it could have been from Divine inspiration) to finish the work for the founding of the Congregation of the Tertiary Brothers so that they could dedicate themselves in the prisons to the care and moral uplifting of the prisoners. I considered this to be the will of God and, of course, I began to occupy my time in redacting some of the Constitutions that would accomplish that goal.

In this offering of himself to God, Father Luis now clearly appears to have become a *mystical restorer within the merciful acts*. Ever since his days of youth he had felt this desire to embrace a contemplative life in order to *dedicate himself exclusively to the worship and service of God; entreating this way His mercy in favor of these Brothers and placating God's Divine Justice*. Many years later, just a bit after accepting the Sub deaconate, Father Luis showed renewed signs of his deep longing to offer himself to God as a victim, renouncing all his "merited favors" through his Vow to the Holy Virgin to turn them over to those souls who most needed them. However, the offering he was making now in 1885 had a very special significance. By this time, Father Luis had arrived now, it seems, into a spiritual and human synthesis which would now mark the rest of his life and his later work and in particular his foundations. By this time, he had understood – with the profound understanding that a mystic experience produces – the authentic *glory of God* – which desires *to see all men saved and brought to the knowledge of the Truth – being the living man*, and as a consequence the best way to *restore Divine Justice* – the *original project* of the Creator over man and all of creation which is that of *collaborating towards an integral recuperation* – human and spiritual - of those human beings who are most in need of being searched for and found. *By this time he had discovered the harmony that is enclosed in this type of a tryptic which conforms to the glory of God, ones own sanctification and the salvation of all others*. He had clearly perceived that these were not three separate and distinct things, but they were the same reality contemplated since the complementary perspectives.

Initial Enthusiasm

Beginning in 1887, Father Luis - *freed up from other activities* – was able to dedicate with more assiduity to finishing the redactions of the Constitutions and take on different activities directed towards the happy fulfillment of a promise he had made two years earlier

To found a new religious Congregations. Some of these activities, concentrated upon religious consultations, found a good interlocutor in Father Jose Calasanz from Llevaneras. Other activities, though also of a consultive nature but this time about social of prison themes were directed as *much to persons in authority and with prestige – who thought it was a great idea* – as well as to people who were directly involved with the Valencia Prison Board who *greatly applauded this type of thinking*.

All of these good results from these previous activities Father Luis interpreted to be *clear evidence that it was God's will to continue with the project of founding and this was for him the motive of great encouragement*.

The first candidates to enroll in this new congregations were almost all young men and mostly members of the Third Secular Franciscan Order which Father Luis directed. They came forth –*as soon as the news had spread around about the next founding even before any publicity about the project had been made public. They were attracted without a doubt to the goal of occupying themselves in the education and moral training of the prisoners. And every time that I would go from our Convent to Valencia, the came to look for me at our Residence, avid with news regarding this foundation and so desirous to work in affairs that could activate this goal*. Father Luis – in a letter directed on January 11, 1889 to the Superior General of the Capuchin Order – requested his blessing on the up and coming founding. Father Luis presented them thus:

-Various young men from this Province, filled with great zeal and charity towards their fellow beings, want to united themselves together and form a religious Congregation – one of simple vows and in which with the profession of the Rules of the Third Order written by Leo X and with Constitutions accommodated to the goals of the Institute, be allowed to consecrate themselves to the teaching of

the Sciences, Art and Trade Occupations, and to the government and direction of the Prisons and Penitentiaries and to the attention and care of the Infirm, especially those who were shut-ins.

Once the necessary approvals were obtained and in particular that relative to the text of the Constitutions, and after ten days of spiritual Exercises which took place in the Capuchin Convent of Masamagrell, the canonic founding ceremony of the congregation took place in that same Convent of Magdalene which resulted particularly emotional:

At last this long awaited day arrived – Father Luis himself tells – on April 12, 1889, on the festive day of Our Holy Mother of Sorrows, on which we were to inaugurate canonically the Congregation In the morning we held High Mass with a sermon and to which came all the new postulantes In the afternoon, with His Divine Majesty on display, the choir sang a solemn Trisagium and sermon, reserved for the Lord, and they proceeded to dress these new religious, who numbered fourteen, in their holy habits.

Different mediums of communication gave the news giving special mention to the Valencian newspapers “Las Provincias” and “El Mercantil”, and the Italian newspaper “Il Cittadino di Brescia” who echoed this event only fifteen days after it had taken place under the headline *The Friars of the Prisons.*

-Our dear friend D. Pedro Fuster – wrote “Las Provincias” newsmen along with other details – has done some studies and made different negotiations towards redeeming this penitentiary. By happy coincidence, this same thought covered the virtuous Superior of the Convent of the Magdalene, Fr. Luis from Masamagrell with whom he had the occasion to communicate the antecedents which he possessed, thus helping him as much as possible with his job. With monastic perseverance, and with a reserve appropriate to the monastery, this above mentioned Superior entreated the support and approval of the high hierarchy and he gather around himself excited young men inclined to sacrifice their whole lives for those who had been condemned by the human justice system. They were willing to do this in order to facilitate their redemption through the most sublime charity.

The Authorities – writes with acrimony the “El Mercantil” newspaper – officiated as Acolytes en a monastic ceremony, for the purpose of inducting a group of young men to put on the religious frocks. Some of the men were from noble lineage and others were from the aristocratic class.

Father Luis, Superior of the Capuchins from the Convent of Holy Mary The Magdalene from Valencia – writes the newspaper “Il Cittadino di Brescia” – who frequents the city prisons in his pious ministry, being convinced that these prisoners in large part are victims of prejudices and very often they are found on the path of crime for this very same reason.

The good friar, who has the heart of an apostle, obtained from the government the power to take into the jail with himself some of these young men in order to confront the condemned men in order to put their minds on the path towards good and – when they leave prison – help them with their needs and jobs.

This holy work of this Capuchin friar is greatly appreciated by the authorities and didn't waste any time producing results. This, Father Luis thought of extending the benefits of this kind of work into other prisons through the founding of a religious Order regulated with special Rules and having as their objective the moral redemption of imprisoned men.

Two days after the founding ceremony – April 14, 1889, Palm Sunday – another event took place that was charged with emotion, with the processional accompaniment of the members of the new congregation – which was still staying in the Convent of the Magdalene – going over to their residence in the Carthusian monastery of Ara Christi of the Puig. Secular Tertiaries from the surround regions were charged with feeding these marching men who were waving their palm branches and carrying on their shoulders the image of Our Lady of Sorrows from the Capuchin Convent. It was the same image that father Luis have put into their hands on February 2nd before

the constitutions had been recently finished for this new Congregation. Arriving to the Carthusian monastery, they were received from the pulpit by Mr. Fogues who *pronounced a very opportune speech, weaving in moral goal reserved for these new friars and encouraging them in their most difficult but useful mission.* However, the most special reception these new friars received took place a bit later, when they were now alone, *going up and down the cloistered and silent halls, they discovered hanging on one of their walls and looking at them very maternally, a lithographic image of the Mother of Sorrows with her heart stabbed with seven swords and carrying in her hands the crown of thorns and the three nails from her Son.* They were filled with joy and interpreted this finding as a Providential sign and since that time they adopted that image as their official advocacy of Our Lady of Sorrows within the Congregation. Several months later when the first amigonian friars left the old Carthusian monastery on route to Torrent, one of the few things they took with them from there was this lithograph. And when – in 1890 – they began the adventure of their apostolic mission, the only “outstanding thing” that was permitted in their poor Franciscan baggage with which they were transferred to the Santa Rita School in Madrid, was precisely that same image of “their” Mother.

First setbacks

Previously, however, on the big day of the foundation of the Congregation of the Capuchin Tertiaries – and perhaps in anticipation of the pain that this would follow him in the near future, Father Luis was compelled to confront two important set backs which could have very well “ruin” what he had been planning and working to finish.

One of these – the first – had as its main protagonist one of the two priests who had requested to be enrolled in the Congregation. Faustino Roda – nephew of Father Ambrosio from Benaguacil – came up to him suddenly question him about the material means that he had at his disposal for the maintenance of these new monks. When Father Luis told him the he - *only counted on* – the same that San Francisco counted on when he began his Order – *the Divine Providence* , he began to accuse him of foolhardiness by not preventing such risks and expose – together with his followers – himself to failure and ridicule.

This first setback – which almost caused him to faint from the great consternation that this caused him- he was able to overcome. Father Luis remembering the words with which the Lord had comforted San Francisco when he found himself in a similar situation by telling him:

My little man, do you believe that you are such a father to your sons that I have forgotten about them? Look, if at some time there is not more than two pieces of bread in all the world, one of them would be for your sons, and if there were only one piece of bread, half of that piece would be for them.”

The other setback came about provoked by Jose Valenciano, a young influential man in the Valencian social circles, in which he had put great expectations and whose collaboration had been crucial in the preparations of the foundation which attracted sufficient donations to cover imperative payments such as the necessary purchase of cloth to confection their robes.

This young man, on April 5th on the third day of being gathered together in the Convent of the Magdalene those fifteen candidates who wanted to form part of the Congregation and who were doing their spiritual Exercises – collapsed in an anemic faint and not even the opportune reflections that Father Luis gave him kept the young man from abandoning that place in the middle of the night.

At first, Father Luis came to think that the notice of this fainting spell would discourage the other fourteen candidates, but realizing that in reality it had not made any impression upon them, he was once again convinced that *this foundation was a work of God and he was convinced that the Lord himself had planned that human support would not be forthcoming, upon which many had based the success of the foundation, so that with greater clarity they would all appreciate that it was His work.*

A change in direction

A few days after the founding of the Congregation – towards the end of that same month of April 1889 – Father Luis accompanied by the only Priest that was in the place, Father Francisco Maria from Sueras- and also accompanied by a young student of theology – Friar Luis Maria from Valencia – travelled to Madrid.

The object of the trip – as the newspaper *las Provincias* recorded – was to be interviewed by an Association that had been organized in Madrid and that wanted to dedicate themselves to gather “graduates from the penal system” who had no means of support , in order to become their patrons and conduct them and strengthen them on the road of virtue and honor.

The actual truth was that this was not the real goal of this Association made up of eminent politicians and other personalities of the society of that time. What they had really been pursuing, since 1875 when they had been organized, was to be able to take over the care of young ungovernable and undisciplined me for the purpose of educating them in such a manner as to avoid a later possible incarceration. With that in mind, this Association had promoted the construction of a special Center, officially named *Santa Rita Reform School* which even when it had been inaugurated in 1886 had begun the function pedagogically. Two directors had filed in and out disillusioned who had given up when faced with difficulties these young delinquents presented and at that moment – April 1889 – was still closed down.

The idea of directing this Center was not disagreeable either to Father Luis or to the young men who accompanied him. The connections that this institution held with the goal to uplifting morally prisoners were what they wanted to dedicate themselves to, but at this particular time they were unable to commit themselves totally to it – given that the members of the Congregation had just barely initiated only a few days earliest the canonic year of the novitiate – and they waived off until the following year a possible formal commitment with that Madrid Association which had so quickly solicited their services.

In May 1890, when the religious profession was coming near for the first Capuchin Tertiary Brothers, Father Luis went again to Madrid, but this time accompanied by Father Jose from Sedavi and they signed their first contract or Agreement between the Congregation and the Association or Board of Patrons of the Santa Rita Reform School.

After that, there was nothing to do but wait for definite date for them to take possession of that Center which came about on October 29, 1890, five days after the exit of the first Community from the House of Torrent.

The work that was developed in that Reform School, at the time when the birth of the *amigonian pedagogic* was taking place, was propitiating a change in the apostolic direction inside this newly born Institute. For this – and not without a reason – Father Luis himself came to consider the Santa Rita Reform House to be *the most important foundation of the Congregation*.

As a result of this progressive goal change, in 1893 the *King's Order* which had authorized the establishment in Spain of this Congregation, stated that this Congregation dedicate itself primarily to *the education and moral instruction not only for the prisoners, but also for those detained in the Reform School or Reform Houses*.

However, by then, Father Luis still held alive the illusion the purpose for which his monks had dedicated themselves to the prisoners, which clearly came out from this Ordenation which had been left in his Canonical Visit to the Community in Torrent in 1892 :

In order that the monks become instructed practically in the manner of work they had to do with the poor prisoners, most disgraced human beings, and to learn from experience the science of the human heart which such knowledge would be for them not only useful, but also necessary when Providence put them in charge of the Prisons. This is our will and desire, taking advantage of the occasion to have at this place a prison, that they may go every day to instruct them, to console them and even to attend to their possible needs, asking if that be necessary, for alms with the goal in mind to capture their wills and win them more easily for God.

Notwithstanding, as time went on, this initial apostolic illusion began disappearing as they began to perceive, the founder and with him the first monks – thanks to the apostolate developed in Santa Rita – that it was the *Christian education of the wayward children and wayward youth who had strayed from the pathway of the truth and of goodness* - the pathway for which God required of him in his service. This is what one of the protagonists of the first congregational story told in this text:

-Being most difficult- for not saying almost impossible, to take over the charge of governing and directing the prisons and penitentiaries which was the first goal proposed by the Founding Father, and having opened up a very wide field with abundant harvest that needed to be harvested for our Institute when they took over the charge of the Santa Rita Reform School which had as its principal objective, correctional education, moralization and teaching of sciences and arts to those gathered inside, we are now convinced that in this ministry we would better serve the Lord and serve His Holy Church, and without a doubt with better advantage and results than those multiple goals that we first tried to do.

Thus being convinced, when in 1900 the direction of the Model Prison of Valencia was offered to them, the Superiors answered:

-Seeing the actual necessities and the personnel with which we can count upon, it is our feeling to declare that it is not possible that our Congregation take charge of such a regime nor of the care of this prison nor any other prison that would be offered.

And finally in 1902 when the corresponding files were presented to the Holy Headquarters for Pontifical Approval of the Congregation, the Superiors indicated as their only apostolic goal for themselves: *the teaching and moralization of those interns in the Reform Schools and Correctional Institutions.*

Taking care of his creature

When he founded the Congregation of the Capuchin Tertiaries, Father Luis had experienced in his own flesh some of the bitter events that he had to overcome regarding the women's foundation. He also knew from experiences that one of the most important things to face in the happy development of a creature is the affective and effective closeness of its parents. So for this he proposed, from this first moment, to not let any opportunity to escape to keep himself near to his own sons.

He left them in the Carthusian monastery in Puig, to the care of some of their own Capuchin Brothers, but he longed so much to be with them. He suffered in his own flesh the distress and hardships which his first monks went through. He was always present for any of the significant events taking place in the newborn Congregation. And thus, upon many other occasions that, to enter into the quotidian, have not been reflected in the newspapers, it is known that he was in the Carthusian monastery presiding three robe dressings that took place there in a little more than five months.

It is also known that he personally took over the negotiations necessary for the transfer of the first Community from the Carthusian monastery of Puig to Torrent. And on October 31, 1889, he accompanied his sons in taking over the possession of the Convent of Our Lady of Mount Zion, heading the retinue and promising from the pulpit to the group who were congregated there *his eternal gratefulness of the congregation to the public*, to which he added:

-We have not come for your gold nor for your silver. We are poor and will always remain poor. We have come for something far more valuable than all that; we have come for your souls.

Afterwards – with his unexpected transfer to Orihuela – came years of distress in which he *did not have the necessary liberty inside his own Order or well, the Superiors who ruled the Congregation shunned him.* But even then – and while this torment went on – he was always present among his monks whenever it was possible, visiting them canonically at least on four occasions in Mount Zion and on other two occasions in the Santa Rita School in Madrid. He presided over the profession of the first monks of the congregation, June 24, 1890, and afterwards also he presided over the emission of their perpetual vows. He also presided over the provincial Chapter celebrated in the Institute during this period. He accompanied his sons in the opening of the Santa Rita School in Madrid. He was present, April 5, 1892 at the first High Mass for the first Capuchin Tertiary Priests. And he always tried- whenever it was possible- to be in the dressing ceremonies and professions which were being celebrated.

FALTA POR TRADUCIR LA PARTE II QUE TIENE 3 CAPITULOS (PAGINA 107 - 153)

PART III

The Sun Shines Once Again

Inside this grand song that harmonizes the entire life of Luis Amigo in his quest to fulfill the Will of God which evolves into a symphony of love – a complete gift of piety – to God and to the brotherhood even to the point of being ready to give, if necessary his life - an essential stanza together with that other pain—which is happiness and joy.

Fully aware that following the Will of God – a supreme act of love – carries with it suffering, Luis Amigo also experienced that this same fountain of pain was converted unfailingly into a wellspring of peace and serenity, as is emphasized in his solemn writing:

The testimony of a good conscience – he writes -, conforming oneself to the Will of God, even in the midst of trials and tribulations, deprivations and poverty, the routing out of vices, the extricating oneself out from worldly things, and to sum up, the practice of virtue is the only means to obtain true peace because it is the fruit of the Holy Spirit.

Interior Peace for the soul is only obtained from having a union of comprehension of the mind together with the Will of God which is the harmonic center of the creation as the beginning and the end that is of all things.

Starting from his experience of profound interior peace , or if you prefer, of true joy, that – equally that of the other pain - becoming particularly evident in his role as founder, Luis Amigo began making as his own the same feelings of the *Resurrected Christ* with which he completed perfectly with the other feelings of the *Incarnated and Crucified Christ* which profoundly marked his human and spiritual life.

The portrait of Luis Amigo made by his friend Lauzurica constitute, without a doubt, the best synthesis of a life in which pain – elevated from love and with love – was transfigured into joy:

His life was the gentle flowing of a river, without noticeable ups and downs nor loss of self control which would overflow the river bed. He possessed, as few people do, the rare gift of an inalterably serene life, without ups or downs, without overpowering luster, quiet on the pure surface of a profound spiritual river bed. The kindness of his beautiful soul radiated in his smile which would light up his face, a smile that not even death could erase.

Chapter I

Home Again

My Tertiary monks and nuns were no less elated with joy when I was nominated Provincial. They had seen the poor people become separated from me and they themselves were lacking my immediate administration and command during several years (thus allowing the Lord Himself to test their perseverance and to help them to see that all of them were a part of the founding which was theirs as well). When they found that they could, even with more room for freedom of action, attend them, they desired to visit the Santa Rita Reform School in Madrid so they could see for themselves and appreciate the huge progress that had been accomplished and had been publicly recognized and was renown far and wide.

When it was possible for me to accommodate them, I went to Madrid to the reception that was held enthusiastically by all for me. Even though I arrived in the morning they did not want me to go to Santa Rita until the afternoon and they detained me in the residence in Madrid where I was presented with commissions from different sections of the inmates of the reformatory who were accompanied by their wardens. That afternoon, at the appointed hour in a magnificent carriage they carried me to Santa Rita; they overwhelmed me by surprising me with a beautiful cavalcade made up of reformatory inmates mounted on sparkling and beautifully harnessed horses and they themselves were dressed in old-fashioned, luxurious Spanish suits seen from times of yore. So it was that the carriage arrived with them marching in a parade by orderly files until we entered into the bridle path of the garden patio of Santa Rita. Dismounting from the carriage I was received by the monks and reformatory inmate students with great enthusiasm between cheers and applause surrounded by children who threw flowers at my feet, I went in to the chapel. All of these demonstrations of veneration and love caused me to become greatly confused having present inside me my many infidelities and miseries with God. However, I preferred to think that all these honors were not directed to me personally, but to God (who I represented for them) and I received them gratefully. I was also very aware at this time how my Father San Francisco (a model of humility) no matter how hard he tried to shun applause from the world, at times he accepted with signs of pleasure the cheers and applause with which he was received upon coming to a city. And to the priest who accompanied him who admirably commented on the conduct of his father on that occasion told him so: "My son, not even yet do these people do what they should do, because these honors are not for Francisco who is hearing them, but to God."

These ideas and feelings were those that I put to my monks and reformatory inmates when I gave them thanks for their demonstrations of veneration and love. Bless ye the Lord, all His creatures!

Without a doubt these words from Father Luis – every and all of these expressions of profound emotions – constitute the best entry into this next chapter of his life which will introduce somehow his *paschal experience* after a long *dark night of pain and suffering*.

After his being elected – in December, 1898 – the Provincial of the Capuchin Province of Valencia, a new phase of the life of Father Luis began with a definite closeness to his congregations; Now began for him a recognition of his sons and daughters and little by little he was accepted, without internal discussions, as their father not only by the nuns but also by the Capuchin Tertiary monks.

It is true – and has been seen – that within his monks he had to live *difficult times*, but these were different; well, for one, nobody could provide for him – as had been done before – on the fringe of his foundation, and for another, all the time the number of monks who recognized him as their only founder and as the first and principal person related to the divine gift and to the Will of God about the Congregation – they accepted him and loved him without any reserves whatsoever.

Backed by Rome

In the year 1902 – as Father Luis himself writes – I had the satisfaction which was very large for me to see the Institutions and Constitutions of my two Congregations of monks and nuns of the Capuchin Tertiary Order by His Holiness Pope Leo XIII.

It is necessary to add to this news – even though on this occasion Father Luis did not – that this papal approval had been accomplished in record time considering the usual pace of procedures inside the pontifical court, *taking note of the abnormal circumstances that were taking place during that period of time concerning the legality of the Spanish Religious Institutions, to be able at last to legalize his situation facing the danger of expulsion of those who were not legalized nor properly approved of by the Holy See.*

Nuns were First

As was naturally expected – since they had been founded four years earlier – the Congregation of the Capuchin Tertiary Sisters of the Holy Family were approved first. The day chosen for this event by Rome was Wednesday, March 25, 1902 which corresponded to the Annunciation of Gabriel to Maria as well as the Incarnation of the Son of God which is a festival holiday intimately related with the Nazarene Family who was the patron saint of the Institute.

The *Decree of Approval*, among other things, said:

In the year of Our Lord 1885, while the horrible Asiatic cholera morbid disease plagued Spain, The Reverend Pastor Luis de Masamagrell, Capuchin Minorite ...founded a Congregation named Capuchin Tertiary Sisters of the Holy Family “....

The main purpose ...besides attending to their own sanctification....is to dedicate themselves to piously and painstakingly teach young orphaned girls and to carry out the undertaking of the aged and the sick the most assiduous care of the most delicate charity....

Four of these nuns, consecrated with heroic abnegation to these putrid people contacted in themselves this plague and they died in the Lord. Beginning at this date, the Institution prospered....

With great fervor, enthusiasm and perseverance they worked faithfully carrying out the obligations that they had voluntarily assumed which in all areas brought a copious and healthful harvest, earning the goodwill of the countryside and the paternal benevolence of the Prelates...

The Pontifical Approval news was received with great jubilee in the entire Congregation. The Mother Superior, the Sister Patron of Benisa, filled with happiness related this event to all the nuns:

“The joy I have cannot be told in words as I come before you today to officially announce to you the benefaction that our Institute has been approved...Few Congregations are able to boast to have received approval so quickly....and this is because the Lord is always pleased to lift up the little ones and the humble ones.

Our Congregation was founded in the most extreme poverty and humility, yet it has always kept, by God's Grace, His Spirit not flinching nor failing in the midst of great tribulation and difficult testings which we have gone through throughout all of the years of our existence; and the Lord, as a reward and prize for the virtue of our ancestors were are consoled today with this unique fervor.

In all the Houses there were festive celebrations filled with the feeling of gratitude and in Montiel a special solemn Triduum was held.

It was said that Father Luis, overflowing with happiness, limited his speech to:

“This is a work of God, and God has done it all. Now, my daughters, be faithful, be holy and be thankful to the Lord to have made us worthy of these great benefits.”

In September, the Monks

Almost six months later than the Congregation of the nuns had been approved, the Capuchin Tertiary Order of Our Lady of Sorrows monks received their Pontifical Approval. It was on a Friday, the 19th of September, 1902. It was on the eve of the Third Sabbath of September when the church celebrates the feast of the Virgin of Sorrows which shortly thereafter Pope Pious X established on the 15th of September. Thus the process that had begun May 25, 1902 was finalized with the receipt of the final document sent August 7th.

The Decree of Pontifical Approval stated solemnly:

“In the year of the Lord, 1889 there originated in the Archdiocese of Valencia in Spain, and with the blessing of the Archbishop, the Capuchin Tertiary Monks of Our Lady of Sorrows and having as their founder the Reverend P. Luis de Masamagrell of the Cahpuchin Order of the Menorite Friars, was approved.

The purpose or special reason that these monks exist is: to attend first of all to their own sanctification – through their vows of obedience, poverty and chastity and according to the standard of life established in their Constitutions – and as a result express with all clarity the urgent gift of charity of Christ Jesus especially to the misguided young men so that they may be pulled up out of their vices so that they may be piously instructed and taught with the most opportune resources.

All of the monks have the same standard of life...Wherever they are, they have given off the perfume of Christ and they have harvested, with the grace of God, such an abundance of healthy fruit to the point that they have quickly earned the benevolence, the favor and the admiration not only of the Bishops, but also of the civil authorities...

Having just received the notification of the good news, the Provincial Superior, Father Bernardino de Alacuas went straight to the Congregation with this:

On the occasion of the recent and fortunate event of the final approval of our Institute and Constitutions...we come to you today our hearts filled with joy to charge you to fervently raise your voices in gratitude to God Almighty from whose generous and bountiful hand we have received such an extraordinary gift.

To this effect we propose to celebrate in all the Houses of the Congregation a solemn act of gratitude to His Divine Majesty...In the Main House, it will last for three days which will also serve to prepare our Chapter dedicating the first on day one to Our Father San Francisco; To Our Mother of Sorrows the second, and on the third we dedicate to the Blessed Trinity.

Some of the news media echoed these statements and the magazine *Floreillas de San Francisco* wrote for their readers:

It is with enormous satisfaction that we notify you of the great news of the Pontifical Approval of the Capuchin Tertiary Religious Order...

This Congregation is being congratulated along with the entire Capuchin Religious Order, inasmuch as from their bosom has arisen a luxuriant branch from their always fruitful angelic tree...A Capuchin Priest, Father Luis de Masamagrell...who was their founder. They well deserve

to congratulate themselves, because to hear from the life of the Pope such words of comfort and joy coming out of the approval decree to the students of the new Institute such as were previously heard for the Capuchin Tertiary Sisters founded also by him...

Several days later- between the 7th and 9th of November of 1902 – A special and solemn Triduum of gratitude took place in the Convent of Mount Zion of Torrent, under the presidency of Father Luis which had been announced and within whose select sermons it is worthwhile to underline those proclaimed on the morning and afternoon of the first day. They centered on the most specific and personal gift of the Congregation and taking into consideration the Biblical passage of *These Dry Bones* from the prophet Ezekiel and *Young man to thee I say, arise* told by Jesus to the dead son of the widow of Nain- making manifest that the mission of the Capuchin Tertiary monks was that of *regeneration of communication of the new life possible for the dry bones of the misguided youth* as well as to *put into action in the youth a true spiritual resurrection.*

The Work is Completed

Even though in the Approval of the Institute – wrote Father Luis – mention was also made of the Approval of the Constitutions having us understand that these needed special approval which we needed to request and that this would take time.

These words referred directly to the case of the monks were totally applicable – as Father Luis himself recognized – to those for the nuns.

It was that the two Amigonian Congregations – separated in their founding by only four years – lived the same political, social and canonical circumstances when they were founded.

Both were approved “urgently” otherwise they would have suffered being expelled as was happening in Spain in the Institutes that were not under Pontifical Law. Both also had previously begun their corresponding processes to face the need for the approval of the Holy See, and they needed to face up to the first constitutional reform in order to adopt, at least minimally, the legislation appropriate to the dictated *Standard Laws* – June 28, 1901- by the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Priests for all those religious Institutes who wanted to receive Rome’s recognition. In the case of the nuns this previous accommodation was approved by the Archbishop of Valencia, Monseigneur Sebastian Herrero y Espinosa on December 12, 1901. Regarding the monks, even though there is no written evidence of this diocesan accommodation, there are clear indications that it was ultimately given to them.

Beginning in 1902 the process followed by both Congregations for final approval of the Constitutional text followed parallel paths. In the corresponding general Chapters celebrated in 1902 the two Amigonian Institutes studied once again their constitutional text in order to accommodate even more Standard Laws. Later on the two made a handwritten edition of the Constitutions so that each House could own a copy. Six years later the two Congregations took up once again this project of lifestyle in order to proceed this needed accommodation during the celebration of the general Chapters of 1908. Finally – and having been convinced that they had completed all that had been prescribed – the two Congregations, optimistic especially about all the processes personally carried out in Tome by Father Luis himself, they waited at the beginning of 1910 the impending final approval of their Constitutions by the Holy See.

The Monks Move Ahead

Against the “logic” of seniority that the Amigonian Congregations had followed in their processing for Pontifical Approval in 1902, on this occasion the process followed the Biblical reference to: “the last shall be first”, and the monks moved ahead of the nuns towards their “final” Approval of the Constitutions.

July 5, 1910, Pope Pious X, through Cardinal Vives y Tuto, Prefecture of the Sacred Congregation of the Bishops and Priests, approved the Constitutions of the Capuchin Tertiary Order of Monks of Our Lady of Sorrows.

The process, however, did not completely finish on that day. One of the consultants to whom had been given a copy of the constitutional text to study pointed out – with very good reason – that it would be convenient to add on to the text a special chapter where they would specify the object and apostolic purpose of the Congregations and the method they would follow in order to regenerate problematic youth. Father Luis himself and the General Council promised to do this work which would be finished in less than one month and constituted the first and well earned synthesis of the Amigonian Pedagogy after almost twenty years of experimentation.

With the approval of the above mentioned chapter – on August 25, 1910 – the entire process for the monks that they needed to follow for approval had been completed for their Constitutions.

The Arduous Itinerary of the Nuns

The nuns- with Father Luis leading them – had a big hope that they would receive the approval of their Constitutions in time for the celebration of the Twenty Fifth Anniversary of their Congregations that was coming up of May 11, 1910. With this end in mind, Father Luis himself went to Father Pedro Maria de Titaguas, Superior General of the monks would add on to the file of the Tertiaries, when the file was sent to Rome with a letter of presentation, the following postscript:

The Ill. Founding Father has asked me to remind Your Eminence that in the same case of our nuns, the Capuchin Tertiaries whose Constitutions of more than four years ago were presented to Rome and corrections which had been requested there have been made and to date have not received approval. In the coming month of May they celebrate their Twenty Fifth Founding Anniversary, it would please our Ill. Bishop that for this Anniversary these attached Constitutions would be approved.

But circumstances made real the saying that “man proposes and God disposes,” became a reality and the desire of their hearts and their dreams was not to be. The Anniversary came and went in spite of having postponed it more than one month hoping for the good news. The year 1910 was about to come to a close when Father Luis having decided to do whatever was in his hands to do in order to receive this final approval wrote a letter underlining the common and most characteristic elements his two Congregations held regarding the education of the wayward youth – saying:

“Friar Luis Amigo y Ferrer ...humbly prostrated before you Holiness lays bare the following: That intimately persuaded of the urgent and great necessity to return to the straight path, through Christian education of those youth who have been imbued with false doctrines and bad examples leading them to stray from the path of Truth and of Virtue, I , putting all of my determination and helped by Divine Grace, founded two Institutes of the Third Order of the Capuchins – one masculine and one feminine- for the purpose that the monks and nuns of these two Institutes, filled with devotion and zeal would be able to reform in the natural aspect as well as the supernatural those youth who had strayed from the good path and could be regenerated in Christ through all the means.

Both Institutes, with the help of God, completely fulfill this purpose, for which they have been greatly esteemed by our Bishops and by all kinds of people and they merit the approval decreed by Pope Leo XIII, in whose happy memory was our predecessor.

I wrote and edited their Constitutions establishing right government and discipline in these Institutes following the Standard Laws of the Holy Congregation of the Bishops and Priests; however, his Holiness only granted the approval of the Constitutions of the monks.

I now cover myself with the desire that Your Holiness would vouchsafe the giving of the supreme approval of the Constitutions that belong to the nuns and I reverently solicit this approval out of the magnanimity of Your Holiness.

With such a good intermediary, the reply from the Holy See could not be held up. Actually, Father Luis, convinced of the efficiency of his letter, two days after having signed the above letter to the Pope, confided to one of the nuns that the *Constitutions were on the verge of being approved by his Holiness.*

At last, June 13, 1911, Cardinal Vives y Tuto signed in Rome the corresponding Approval Decree for the Constitutions of the Capuchin Tertiary Nuns of the Holy Family on behalf of the Holy See. With this, the founding work of Father Luis was completed regarding his religious Congregations.

A Faithful and Diligent Companion

With his election to be the head of the Provincial of the Capuchins, Father Luis – as has been said over and over again – was able to again accompany closely and with freedom his Congregations. And even though with some of his sons there were serious differences during various years, these not only did not impede his having a closeness and a presence, they also gave him power, as Father Luis himself wrote.

Later on – in 1911 – prompted by a fatherly love that time, far from decreasing he was increasing and he requested his transfer from the Solsona See to the Segorbe “for the purpose of being in a situations where he could direct more closely his Tertiary Congregations without neglecting his Episcopal duties.

This loving and growing closeness – besides being seen more and more in his faithful attending of the session of the general Councils not only with the monks but with the nuns and at time sporadically – had some milestones that in his presence together with his sons and daughters took on a particular relevance.

Particularly outstanding moments for example, which came to pass since his election to head of the Capuchin Provincial were those that follow:

October 24, 1899 he presided in Torrent over the second Provincial Chapter of the Capuchin Tertiaries. Three years later in 1902 he emotionally attended the Triduums of Gratitude that his Congregations had organized respectively in the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Montiel in Beneguacil and in the Convent of Our Lady of Mount Zion in Torrent to celebrate the Pontifical Approval that they had just received. That same year he went to the Third General Chapter of the nuns and to the First General Chapter of the monks.

In February 1905 – actually on day 5 – he sent on their way in Masamagrell the first missionaries of the Capuchin Tertiaries who were destined for the Colombian Guajira. Also in 1905, he blessed the chapel of the nuns in the Casa de Altura on November 14.

During 1908 he lived together with his sons and daughters three outstanding events: On April 24 he presided in Montiel the Fourth General Chapter of the Tertiaries; May 9th he blessed and set up in Godella the first building block of the Seminary House of San Jose; and November 21st he participated in the Second General Chapter of the Tertiary Capuchins where for the first time he made use of the Pontifical Mandate which gave to him both the “presidency and active voice.”

June 25, 1910, the Twenty Fifth Anniversary of the nuns was celebrated simply but at the same with great solemnity and emotion, and once again the founder was in the midst of his daughters as a loving and caring father and they in turn surrounding him with love, as is witnessed in these words pronounced in Montiel where the celebration took place:

“The Virgin Mary has illuminated your mind, founding father, so that with admirable wisdom and prudence you wrote out in our holy Constitutions the path they were must follow...This sustained you in the battles that you had to hurdle in order to defend out beloved Constitution...Now, beloved father, you have in the missionaries your most devoted daughters who work unceasingly for the glory of God and of his mother, the Congregation.....

One day in the eternal Jerusalem thousands of souls - that without your zeal and help would have been deprived of the eternal adventure – will rise up radiant with joy and they will call you their father...

In these solemn moments, my heart, full of joy and enthusiasm because I can also give you the sweet name of father which I say with all the energy that I can: Venerated father, beloved father find joy and happiness in this day because heaven has given you the privilege to be present in the Twenty Fifth Anniversary of the Congregation that such anxiety has cost you...

The celebration of the general Chapters of the two congregations in 1914, gave again to Father Luis the opportunity of share with his sons and daughters some very special events. One of the events with the Tertiary monks took place in the ranch of San Saturnino in Madrid between the 17th and 19th of April, and with the Tertiary nuns took place in Altura on the 25th of April. However, before joining the Chapter celebrations, Father Luis had celebrated joyfully the Twenty Fifth Anniversary of his nuns between the 12th and 15th of April since that year the first three days of Easter Resurrection coincided.

Two years after these events, Father Luis lived together with his daughters another very special moment. While accompanying them, December 13, 1916, in the solemn entrance into Carcagente, he assumed the responsibility of the Hospital of that village. Afterwards – in 1919- the founder and his Congregations enjoyed other particularly happy days upon the occasion of the Consecration of the Church of the House of the nuns in Masamagrell which took place on the 18th and 19th of January, and on the occasion of the inauguration of the new House of the Tertiaries of Godella which took place the 19th of March.

Having concluded once again the period of six years of the governing of his two Congregations, he again directed the corresponding general Chapters which had to take on under the watchful eye of the Father the chore of adapting legislation which was part of the Canonical Code of Law published in 1917. First of all he took on that of the monks that was celebrated in the House of Santa Rita in Madrid on July 14th and afterwards that of the nuns that took place in Altura, the 30th of November. During the mandate of the Superiors who had been elected inside these Chapters, Father Luis attended the inauguration of the House of the Good Shepherd of Zaragoza on September 26, 1921 and then attended that of the Prince of Asturias Reform School in Madrid on April 9, 1926. Both institutions, dependent upon the Children’s Guardianship of the Courts, had been turned over to the care of his Tertiaries. At the same time he consecrated the Church of the House Seminary of San Jose de Godella.

On May 3, 1926 – on the eve of the Seventh General Chapter of the nuns and of the Fifth General Chapter of the monks- he directed this to his sons and daughters *as a pledge of his fatherly love* a precious Circular Letter for them both *to carve into their memories*. This Circular, a true *spiritual testament* from their founder constituted without a doubt the best attained synthesis of the spirituality befitting his Congregations covering all that they held in common.

After the celebrations of the above mentioned Chapters – in which the monks as well as the nuns put the final touches on the Constitutional text now adapted to the Code, Father Luis suffered a series of health issues which they feared could all be fatal in September 1926 precisely while at the House of Masamagrell when he was saying good bye to the nuns who had come from Colombia to the Chapter.

His health was restored and he was able to attend on July 26, 1927 the founding of his daughters from Sodupe and a month later he was able to consecrate the Church of the Two Sisters of the Tertiaries. He was also able to send off from Masamagrell the expedition of the Capuchin Tertiary Missionaries who were leaving for Venezuela. He also presided on December 29, 1927 the Sixth General Chapter of his sons that took place in Godella as an extraordinary event upon the death of the Superior General who had been re-elected the year before. He was able to celebrate very emotionally among his sons and daughters in 1929 the Golden Anniversary of priesthood.

By next year – he wrote during Christmas of 1928 – I have the great opportunity to display my gratefulness for the Divine Kindness so that I beg you, beloved sons, that you join in helping me give thanks to the Lord. This is because the Fiftieth Anniversary of my Priestly Ordination as well as my First Mass is coming up. I am overwhelmed, beloved sons, as I reflect on my many times of unfaithfulness towards God during my long life as well as when I reflect upon the glory that I could have and should have given in the carrying out of the ministries and offices with which I have been honored. Because of these I earnestly beg you as good sons that you help me to implore first of all that the Lord forgive me for my ungratefulness and then to give Him thanks for his mercies and benefits. I also request that you ask Him that during the short life I have left He use me in such a way in His service that I might be able to restore the glory that my unfaithfulness took away and that I might still attain a step of perfection that His Divine Kindness demands.

That same year of 1929 he still blessed in Pamplona on August 15th the Chapel of the Menorite Seminary of San Antonio de Padua that his sons had opened up in the Navarra capital and he also sent on their way on November 3rd the first missionary expedition of the Tertiaries to China.

Finally in July of 1932, after having celebrated - surrounded by the love of his monks and nuns- the Twenty Fifth Episcopal Anniversary , presided for the last time the General Chapters of his two Congregations. Those of the monks, he celebrated in Godella from the 10th to the 17th and those of the nuns was in Masamagrell on the 25th.

In addition to all these memorable moments there are many more details that clearly show the love of a father that he felt for his Congregations *that God had wanted to found as part of his ministry.* Among all these details some stand out particularly such as his numerous trips taken in order to be present in the Houses of his sons and daughters located beyond the region of Valencia and also to be able to join in on the most far away points of happiness, sadness, hopes and disillusionments. Some of these trip were taken during the period he was Provincial or immediately afterwards. However, the most of them were taken after his Episcopal election. Worthy of mention are three that were taken in 1927, in 1929, and in 1932.

Notwithstanding, his companionship, always faithful and helpful, he was exempt from paternalisms. He knew how to be father and accompany along as such but letting his sons and daughters grow up and respecting at all times their boundary lines of autonomy and liberty.

-My daughters are able to walk on their own two feet alone he would say should someone suggest his intervention in the Congregation that he did not consider appropriate.

I would go when I was invited and when I could to their final reunions – he would say defending himself as we have already seen before those who accused him of not providing sufficient freedom to the Superiors of his mens' foundation – but I do not believe that I have shortened anyone's freedom nor the will of nobody, even though I told them what I thought about what they were asking of me.

Chapter 2

Undertaking New Routes

Following the example of Christ – who, as soon as he rounded up the group of twelve men around Him, began *sending them out in two by two* to different places in order to *proclaim the gospel to all creation* – the founders of the religious Institutes have had as one of their most common ideals that of giving to all the gift with which they themselves had felt had adorned their lives, prompting their most intimate followers to go out into all parts of the world.

Francisco de Asis – follower in everything “to the letter of the gospel” –was also radical on this point:

Having become eight in number the monks – relates Celano – Francisco called them all unto himself and began speaking about many things: the Kingdom of God, despising the world, denial of ones own will and control over ones own body; he divided them into four groups of two each and said to them: “March forth beloved two by two unto all the different parts of the earth...”

Father Luis also took this evangelical ideal of universal missions for himself which is clearly reflected in his accompanying the first pilgrimage of his Congregations.

In the case of the nuns it was he who promoted the Masamagrell Asylum thus favoring the first expansion of the gift even in face of the opposition of some of the nuns who *desired to limit the life of the Congregation to the Montiel Convent*. And he did something similar with the monks when he presided the commission that that a few days after the founding he marched to Madrid for an interview with the Council of Patrons which offered to the newly born Institute the management of the Santa Rita Reform School. He also accompanied the first community group a year later filled with joy and hope to take over the administration of that institution.

Afterwards during the time of great difficulties and he could not be nearby walking with his creatures, things changed profoundly and he felt the repercussions including inside the concrete ambience of the expansion of the gift. In fact, one of the most bitter complaints that pierced his heart during the years that he saw himself “shunned” by the Superiors of his mens’ Congregation was precisely that *he did not only favor but inclusive he made it difficult for the creation of new Houses and he would have lost the opportunity of making new foundations*.

Leaving behind those harsh moments, Father Luis had time to contemplate joyously many long years as his Congregations began extending throughout Spain and what of course must have been the reason for his greatest joy was to see them expanded into the world.

Encountering New Cultures

The first Amigonian Congregation that passed beyond the borders of the nation in which he had been born was that of the Capuchin Tertiary nuns. Father Luis – faithful to the missionary spirit so characteristic of the Fransiscan family – had written in the first Constitutions for his daughters:

- If at any time...they were asked to enter Missions among the unbelievers they would go with all meekness.

Better having too much than too little, he had listed the qualities that he considered imperative for this above- mentioned undertaking were under these conditions:

The Mother Superior could not send to these Mission one single nun who did not ask to go. And even if she did request to go she was to take a very good look if the nun fulfilled the necessary qualities. . . These qualities are . . . the following: That the nun be healthy and with a robust body; constant and strong in her faith; proved to be virtuous and in Religious matter she had always lead an irreproachable life.

However, this ideal type of missionary did not happen until 1905 even though as always this event in actuality had its previous history.

Already in 1891 Capuchin missionaries had requested the collaboration of the nuns in their work of evangelization in the Colombian Guajira. However, it wasn't possible to take on this work. The congregation – recently emerging from the grave crisis it had passed originating because of *conflicts about authority* – did not find itself in its best condition for undertaking a such a wide-spread project as founding a foreign based mission. Later on when the situation of the Congregation had become more favorable, Colombia – in the years 1895 to 1900 – had been overtaken with a politically unstable government based on social violence that made founding a mission there undesirable.

However, this situation changed radically at the beginning of the Century. Peace reigned again in the mission territories and Father Francisco de Oriheula (a great friend of Father Luis) was named Custodian of the Guajira Missions, and contact was reinitiated.

In January of 1903, Gregoria Armenta Calvo, a young Colombian novitiate, and daughter of a wealthy family from Barranquilla came to Masamagrell. Having just become twenty-eight years old, *Goyita* – as she was called by those near to her – had undertaken (in order to follow her vocation) an adventure that reminds one because of its spiritual freshness the same itinerary of that of Clara of Asis. Facing the opposition of her family to travel to Spain in order to enter in a newly founded Congregation without any contact in her country of origin, she opted to conceal her plans to travel. She falsified her passport using the name “Carmen Tallens,” a professional from the “concert group on board” the ship. She began her trip in the hold of the ship to avoid being recognized. She continued her journey alternating her prayers with her piano recitals. After several more incidents which she overcame with the strength and joy which is part of that person who feels called by God, she arrived happily to her destination. Behind the scenes of this adventure of hers was her Confessor, Father Eugenio de Carcagente, another acquaintance and friend of Father Luis.

It is not known for sure whether her arrival to Masamagrell (she began her novitiate July 18, 1903 under the name Sister Elena de Barranquilla) influenced the decision to undertake without delay the foundation of the Colombian mission. However, taking into consideration the providential manner with which Father Luis took on his projects – that he possessed a special talent for interpreting the signs of God – it is logical to imagine that such was the case.

Among the Guajiros

On July 14, 1903 – having finished with a series of previous negotiations – Father Francisco de Orihuela signed the required authorization for the building (in the Colombian Guajira which was under his jurisdiction) of a religious House for the nuns. After another carrying about between Spain and Rome, permits and more permits, finishing of details and the Sister General requesting volunteers for the first mission adventure for the Congregation these words were spoken:

The General Council . . . has agreed to establishing the foundation of a Novitiate House and Orphanage in Riohacha (Colombia). Therefore we wish that each and everyone of you indicate by raising your own hand if you sincerely feel that the Lord has called you to this Mission or at least if you are not certain but willing to submit to holy obedience in what He wills.

At last, with those who were willing the big day arrived for departing. Father Luis himself told it like this:

Having come to an agreement, the Superiors of the Religious Order and the Mother Superiors of the Congregations have decided to send five religious nuns who are Mother Isabel de Benisa, the Manises Visitation Mother Sister Clara de Beniarjo, Sister Purification of Navarres and Sister Elena de Barranquilla. They all left the Principal House for America on February 5, 1905.

By then Father Luis' name had been included in the three names presented as candidates for the election of an apostolic Vicar for this Mission.

April 4, 1905 following a long and tiring journey the missionaries arrived to their destination in Riohacha. On January 15 1906 the doors of that village were opened to *the College of the Holy Family*, the first House in America of the Capuchin Tertiary nuns.

From that time on, slowly at the beginning but in full force by 1914, the prophecy of Father Luis that *the nuns will prosper more in Colombia than in Spain* became a joyful reality.

As a matter of fact, upon the death of the founder, the Congregation counted with 18 Houses in Colombian territory and the native nuns came to 186.

It goes without saying the great dream that Father Luis had as he followed this growth in Colombia. It shows itself, among other things, in these writings of his:

I received your much appreciated letter – he wrote in 1912 – as is with all those from received from all my nuns, though it seems that that the news coming from those in faraway countries is more pleasant. I am very satisfied to hear of your good state of health. . . and truthfully inside the Mission everything is necessary because there is much you have to suffer with , though also there must be a great consolation to see the fruits of the work done in souls. . .

Tell the novitiates from me that I am very grateful for having been remembered by them, and above all for their prayers . . . Tell them that I also do not forget them and I ask God that He make them as well as me very holy in order to give Him great glory, and if here on earth I do not get a chance to know them personally that we will all be together seeing each other in heaven.

I don't want to waste such a great opportunity – he said in 1916 – to send you all a loving greeting . . . Continue on this path every day with more zeal , willing to suffer with resignation whatever misfortune and tribulation you encounter that is inherent in the work that is done by those who work for God . . .

Pray to the Lord for me not only for the Spanish nuns but also for the American Nuns because they are all my dear daughters who I have charge over protecting them in my prayers.

I am happy – he adds in 1917 – to hear of how well the Houses of America are being run, and how eager you all are to work each day more for the glory of God though you must make sacrifices to do so. . .

To all my daughters of the religious Capuchin Tertiary Mission who are there -

He writes in 1932 to Father Eugenio de Carcagente with great affection - *tell them that this father has not forgotten them in his prayers and that they rejoice in the Lord with the knowledge of the good that they are doing . . .*

I am able to appreciate – he write this same year of 1932 to the Chapter Commissary of Colombia – the good spirit that inspires all the religious nuns of that Region. . .

I would love to be able to answer each and every one of the nuns personally who have written letters to me so reverently and lovingly. . .I hope that you will fill my lacking by telling all the nuns from each and every House of our Congregation in America how grateful and satisfied I am to be their father.

And that I have them all present in my prayers and that I love them all in Christ without distinction even though I do not have the privilege to know each of them personally as I do the nuns who are closer here in the Houses in Spain . . .

Your letter –he writes again to the Chapter Commissary of Colombia in 1933 –

Was gratefully received as have been all of your letters as well as those from my religious nuns from that land and from all of the Houses that I frequently receive

.If the nuns give kind displays of love to this their poor father, you can imagine what will be mine for each and every one of them. . . .

You can well imagine how great a feeling of satisfaction it gives me to see the expansion of the Congregation with its new foundations which are giving much glory to God. I would love to personally know each of my beloved daughters, but that will have to wait until heaven . . .

It is not unusual that knowing all these feelings towards his daughters in Colombia that when in 1926 he greeted the groups of Colombian sisters who had come to the General Chapter that he exclaimed full of emotion:

Thank you Lord that you have given me the gift to know them before I die.

The Mission of Caroní

The second country where the Capuchin Teritary had established - outside of their national territory where the Congregation had been born - was in Venezuela.

Also on this occasion the missionary expansion was done by the Capuchins. Also in these there were signs that had been announced and in some way they had been prepared.

Thus in 1904 – a year after the young Colombian Gregoria Armenta had arrived to Spain – a young Venezuelan postulate, Maria Angelica Perez Marmol who had taken the habit October 8, 1904 under the name Ana Josefa de Dabajuro, entered the postulates of Masamagrell.

Three years later – upon the opening on December 8, 1906 the novitiate of Riohacha – the first two novitiates who had entered therein were also Venezuelan.

These constituted some sign that were indicators – nor matter how you interpret them – and Father Luis was an expert in detection – that Venezuela was another nation that God was pointing to occupy at once a place of the particular map of the Congregation of Capuchin Tertiaries. But for one reason or another the decision to found there was delayed.

It wasn't until 1926 when God clock marked the hour on His clock to begin the job there and God Himself began the preparations with His characteristic and subtle providence.

In that year of 1926 when Sister Genevieve de Valencia (General Commissary from Colombia) along with other nuns came to Spain to participate in the General Chapter of the Congregation, she ran into on the same boat Monseigneur Diego Alonso Nistal, Apostolic Vicar from Caroni. They began talking immediately and they had plenty of time to share their mutual dreams and missionary adventures. As soon as the Monseigneur knew about the prodigious and successful work that the nuns were doing in the missions in the Colombian Guajira, he became enthused about the idea of collaborating. Shortly thereafter when the Sister Genevieve was elected Superior General inside that same Chapter that she directed, it was not difficult to see dream fulfilled to the Apostolic Vicar of Caroni.

Preparations were quickly made for the new foundation and towards the end of 1927 the group had been determined that was to go from Spain. It consisted of the Sisters Genevieve de Almoines, Inocencia de Arazuri and Gloria de Pamplona.

In the solemn mass for their departure – celebrated in Masamagrell on the last days of 1927 - Father Gumersindo de Estella preached having been expressly picked by Father Luis to do so. In his sermon using the names of the three chosen Sisters, he said among other things:

Into the new mission march no less that the "Innocence" from Navarra, the "Gloria" from Pamplona and the "Generosity" from Almoines.

Father Luis –who no doubt had been present at this send off – wanted to go ahead to greet the missionaries on the other side and with end in mind on January 23, 1928 he sent them a card with this prayer and greeting:

May the Holy Virgin, Our Mother of Sorrows, accompany and guide the steps of the Religious Nuns that march forth to the Caroni Mission in order to bring a multitude of souls to Jesus Christ, our life.

On April 13th having made a stopover in Caracas and Tucupita, the three missionaries to which now in Venezuela had been added the Sisters Micaela de Paiporta and Francisca de Villanueva arrived to the Divine Pastor Mission in Araguaimujo which had been founded in 1925 by an old acquaintance and collaborator of Father Luis.

Very shortly thereafter, having been encouraged by the early fruits harvested by these Sisters, Bishop Diego Alonso desired to see their presence extended into other areas.

With the arrival of the second expedition of missionaries, January 15, 1932, it was possible to see as a fact this new dream of Monseigneur when in 1932 their presence was made in Amacuro y Tucupita. It was now with these three Houses in Venezuela that the Congregation counted upon when Father Luis then died.

Behind the Great Wall

China, the largest and most fascinating nation on the continent of Asia was the third country to where the Capuchin Tertiary Nuns extended their work.

Once again, a calling came from these lands – actually from the Philippines. It was in one way the announcement of the new destination to which God was calling the Congregation. And once again the Capuchins responded – and this time it was from the Province of Navarra who were the immediate promoters of this undertaking. Since 1926 they had under their protection the Northeast part of the great Mission of Kansu – “the poorest of all the missions of China” – that had been founded four years earlier by the German Capuchins. And between the Basque-Navarran missionaries they had since 1927 Father Rafael de Gulina, who was an old acquaintance of the Sisters, to which novitiate had begun with thirty vocational callings. This father answering a letter from the Superior General said to him one day, perhaps with the idea of giving him a pick-me-up:

Tonight I dreamed that the Capuchin Tertiary nuns are coming to work with us in China.

Sister Genoveva de Valencia – aged in mission work and not easily frightened when faced with challenges and difficulties – answered him gracefully:

If it is from God, no matter where God calls us including China.

And God called and on to China they marched shortly thereafter without becoming fearful of the special circumstances that follow this expedition which are typical of a true adventure. They did not know of that mysterious nation’s idiosyncrasy, nor its culture nor its very difficult language. They did know that the nation was plunged into deep poverty, gangs of bandits and social chaos. There was open war between guerrillas inside the State and those newly formed Communist groups. But none of this frightened them. On March 1929 the official request arrived as Masamagrell asking for the collaboration of the Sisters and in September of this same year there had been six gracious Sisters among many other who had offered to go. Their names were: Guadalupe de Meliana – an expert missionary from the Colombian Guajira who was going as Mother Superior – and Maria Pilar de Altura, Catalina de Sesma, Pacifica de Anna, Leontina de Pamplona and Amelia de Oroz Betelu: this made three Valencians and three Navarrians.

November 3, 1929 was the sendoff from Masamagrell which was presided over by Father Luis and to which once again Father Gumersindo de Estella came – being another big promoter of mission

callings for the Congregation – who promoted the cross to the missionaries. Father Luis, now very old, could not hold back his tears while saying farewell to one of his daughters who he knew he would never see again.

A week later – November 10th- they set sail from Barcelona on board a steamship “Saarbrucken” and on Christmas day they went ashore in Shanghai even though they could not get to the Pingliang Mission because the roads there were infested with guerrillas, highway robbers, and thieves. They couldn’t get there until April 19, 1930.

As soon as it was possible they opened a small school for young boys and they began the admirable work of attending to the sick people surrounding them. They not only made home visits, but also had a clinic where they could treat the infirm to which daily came every kind of sick people mostly the poor filled with misery.

Practically without medications and without the possibility of getting some, the Sisters moved by the *requests and the privation of sleep* that is so characteristic of the apostolic Zeal of the congregation, developed using their maximum creativity a way to make ointments. They became true experts in making a large series of homemade remedies that produced excellent results.

They also entered into intense work with newborn baby girls who were being easily sold to outsiders and under the pain of great sacrifice they gathered those baby girls – even sometimes paying from their own pockets the sale price – and they raised them in the Mission. No less worth of admiration was their evangelistic work in displacements in order to care for the sick. They would use this opportunity to speak about God with warm words accompanied by tender acts that captivated the hearts of these people. And should the need arise they helped them to die comfortably or they administered baptism. Sister Amelia de Oroz Betelu became famous in this respect when there appeared in the Catholic and Missionary Times a picture of her baptizing a Chinese child.

They widened their boundary of vocational field work by attending whenever possible the Seminary of the Apostolic Prefecture where more than 40 seminarians were studying and they cultivated some women’s vocational activities.

Thus it was that while the Pingliang Mission was being settled and was progressing most promisingly a new expedition of missionary sisters arrived in February 1932. This made it possible that in June 1932 they were able to open a second place for the Congregation in Sifengchen.

But their joy – that was constant in that missionary way of life marked with austerity and indigence – came under a shadow on February 21, 1934 when Sister Pacifica de Anna died. Hers was the first missionary body that stayed there as a planting for a new life in Chinese territories.

Father Luis – it was said – followed with special love and indulgence the news from “his little Chinese women” and tears filled his eyes when he received word from them and from the boys and girls from the mission who wrote to him on more than one occasion.

On the other hand, the Sisters were most happy when they received good news of the Congregations and above all from “their father”. All the missionaries there in China were extremely joyful the day that a letter arrived from Father Luis in reply to their letter advising him that they had given his name to a recent child who had been baptized.

Problems of Growing

Developing Congregations in different cultures – and especially in Colombia where in a very short period of time the numbers Sisters had multiplied extraordinarily – brought some problems, that though at the moment as will be seen had become very difficult, they never had the aspect of those

conflicts suffered by the same Congregation – and especially those suffered by the founder – from the beginning.

The problems that arose with the development and expansion of the Congregation were *growth problems*. And these problems, even though they cause suffering, always have in their roots *the sweet taste of life* which by their own nature tend to expand. These problems basically that are like the pains felt by a woman who after having given birth is sad, but soon forgets because of the joy she experiences at the new life she has brought to this world.

Up until 1914 the development of the Colombian Congregation had been slow, but since then by moving the novitiate from the coast to the interior of the country, it had shot forth in such a way that only in one period of six years the number of Colombia Sisters had duplicated. This agreeable process brought with it – as so often happens which Father Luis knew so well – quite a few differences between the Spanish Sisters and the native Sisters.

It seems that the Spanish Sisters – who perhaps hadn't discovered all the richness and values of their new national culture – *tended to prolong their studies under the belief that the Colombians hadn't reached sufficient maturity and they resisted to pass them on to positions of more responsibility*.

To that was added the increasing dissatisfaction that was taking over the souls of some of the nuns when it appeared that the system of government followed in America was not the most efficient for the reality that they were facing.

Thus these things, the climate of disunity continued to increase to the point that Father Luis himself – who had as his standard not to become involved in the internal problems of his Congregations unless he deemed it absolutely necessary – felt as a father he needed to send a directive to his daughters exhorting them to communal harmony and obedience:

Try to see –he told them in 1920 –with deep respect and veneration your Superiors that the Lord has put their to rule and to guide you . . . Do not look for the creature in them, but look for God whom you obey...Do not give ear and much less follow perverse doctrines against the virtue of obedience that are popular in these times. . .

Do not make more burdensome . . . the heavy responsibility they carry on their shoulders; better yet, try to act like assistants helping them to carrying on with their load. . .

I do not scold you beloved daughters with this exhortation from your father, but unfortunately I consider it necessary in light of the facts that your Mother General presented to me after her visit there.

Take into account that there is strength in union. . . Love one another, beloved daughters. . .; and put up with and forgive the defects which we all have in order to keep beautiful harmony that is what should be reigning in your communities. .

The solution to one of the principal causes of conflict on the American soil – related to the system of government in that area and their representation in the General Chapters of the Congregation – could have been attended to during the 1920 Chapter meeting , but as one of the Colombian Sisters said who had lived the conflict in person – *in spite of the hope that all held that everything would be resolved, everything remained the same, but added to that was the fact that the Congregation in America continued to increase and with this the problems increased*.

CHAPTER III (pg. 250)

A NEW PEDAGOGY IS BORN

Father Luis – upon founding his two Congregations in order to give an impulse to his desire for “greater perfection” that the men and women of the Third Franciscan Order of Laymen wanted which he personally was following in his itinerary for their human and spiritual growth – determined for his daughters and sons – as we have seen – the same apostolic areas which in some way they had been performing as laypeople. These apostolic areas – tripled originally in the two Congregations – continued , however, different destinies in each of them. Therefore, while the sisters not only maintained them they also enlarged them early on with the *paternal correction* and the *first evangelization* , the brothers from the beginning were varying the apostolic path first, concentrating the mission’s objective upon *teaching and moralizing the flock in the Reform and Correctional Schools*.

And at the time that his Congregations, prompted by the same Spirit, were evolving with a singular and characteristic style, but also equally legitimate, Father Luis was becoming aware that within the different apostolic areas that the Spirit has originally inspired him, there had appeared something that was common to his two foundations and had particularly distinguished the *divine gift of mercy* that God had wanted him to give to the Church and to society was precisely that of Christian education to *those youth who had wandered from the path of the Truth and the path of Good Behavior*. It was also this apostolic area that little by little had brought to his recognition the need to present himself to the Church and in front of his followers. And it was also this same apostolic area that had propitiated the birth of a *new pedagogy* which Father Luis himself had set the foundations and to which, in his honor, had been called *amigonian*.

Establishing the Bases

From the time that he had accompanied his sons – in 1890 – in order to take possession of the Santa Rita School of Fatherly Correction in Madrid, Father Luis had endeavored, as much with his oral mastery as with his written mastery, to keep himself close to them in this pedagogic adventure upon which they had embarked – filled with much good wishes but with little technical knowledge – he had put his grain of sand for the development of a therapeutic pedagogy adapted to the concrete world of the youth who were in conflict – something that at that time was a difficult

challenge wrapped up in a scientific movement that was still in its pioneer stage within the world of technology.

Restoration of Mankind in Christ

Father Luis fully participated in the Christian concept of life that taught that man *had been created in the image and likeness of God whose true identity is love*, and as a result had been created to love and discover his *joy and his truth* in relation to his *growth in love*:

Love –wrote Father Luis – is the reason that motivates mankind in all of its acts, impartial, righteous, and in agreement with reason most of the time; egotistical, sensual and accommodating his lower appetites other times, always resulted that the axis around which turned all mankind’s desires, affection and operations in life is love; mankind was created to love and love is the necessary function of the heart which cannot live without love. Because God, who made man in His living image desired that man participate of His life which is love. . . Without love, mankind is dead. . . The heart was formed in order to love and love is its life. To love is its number one function and the center to which it naturally dedicates itself. In the same way that all life disappears should the sun stop shining, the beauty of human beings becomes veiled and vitality is withdrawn from them and diminishes their life as the universe becomes cold as a cadaver in the middle of the deepest night, so also the most sublime gifts lose their splendor and everything becomes sterile without light, without heat and without life when there is no love.

On the other hand – and following the same line of Christian thought and feeling that filled his entire existence – Father Luis located the pivot hole of growing up in love as centered upon an encounter with God. Repeatedly taking hold of the profound personal experience of Saint Agustin: *you drew me, Lord, to yourself, and my heart is disquieted until it rests in You*, Father Luis considered that the opening up to the transcendental was a dimension that could not be transferred to any other in order to grow up and mature in the ideal of love:

It is not possible – he writes in one of the texts that most closely identifies with his total thinking - to love God without His also loving his favorite object of work, and impossible to love mankind with true love if it surpasses loving God. Both objects of loving are like rays that emanate

from the same source of light and as flowers that bloom from the same stem.

And now in the pedagogic plane – and in perfect harmony with Saint Paul who on numerous occasions contemplated in Christ the perfect ideal of the human being and invited the first Christians to *grow until they reached maturity in the fullness of Christ and to learn resigned to Jesus' truth to live in love* – establishes as a *perfect reference for human identity*, the very person of Jesus and to orient towards Him the itinerary of education:

I am certain –he writes pointing in some way to the object of all education – *that, following the teachings of the life that Christ left us, human beings can be blessed and happy here in time and also in eternity. Because of this, having the Spirit of Christ, the heart of human beings must be possessed with His same feelings. These are from His unending love, from His profound humility, from His justice. . . to exclaim loudly that Christ lives inside that person.*

Taking into consideration all of the above, he wanted to establish as his top priority in his project for the education of his sons and daughters *to restore or renovate them to becoming persons in Christ* and he repeatedly insisted upon a complete *moralization* that did not only educate to better behavior or conduct but to fundamentally *educate the heart* according to the *classic values* which the Christian culture had set down for living according to *the love* that shone forth as a great example in Christ.

With love but also demanding

Father Luis, who perfectly harmonized the teachings from the classroom where he learned them to applying them in his daily life, wanted that his followers – in their work to follow the children and youth leading them towards complete maturity as persons and sons of God – to be united to the pedagogic scientific advances united to a sensitivity so flush that it was capable of *learning through experience the science of the human heart* and they would know how to relate to the youth they were educating *through the language of the heart*, even though this, along with demanding at the right time:

For the heart of mankind - he writes in a text that recalls the message of the same conversation that Saint Francis had with the Wolf of Gubio -

mercies are like flaming arrows that stab him with the fire of love and finish by converting him from a ravaging wolf into a tame sheep.

To teaching – he wrote on another occasion taking into account that true love cannot totally renounce demands – one must unite with it a correction of the one taught, because not having correction is the reason that the youth turn themselves over to their mischief. However, at the same time, this correction must be prudent and one must know how to unite to the firmness of character the sweetness and friendliness that captivates the heart of young men so as not to exasperate them.

And for more concrete guidelines towards coming in close to the life and heart of those being educated and to this a knowing how to harmonize love with demands, I leave the following written to the sons and daughters who are working as educators:

Govern yourselves and rule others always with prudence so that neither because of too much frankness and familiarity you come to not be respected, neither because being too stern you make yourselves repulsive.

Now in attending to the nature of the human heart the most beautiful way to encourage children is to awaken in them the desire to copy you; it seems to me that this is the best way to be among the children of the Home. Experience will teach them that by emulating you will get them ahead more than any other means.

Looking for a Method

Even though the amigonian type of pedagogy is oriented from the very beginning to take the child all the way into his human maturity principally through the *language of the heart*, very soon it was felt that we needed to depend upon a certain method – one that did not restrain the liberty and creativity that education always requires an *artistic process* in its essence – a method that would regulate in some way the exercising of the pedagogic action.

It was in this that Father Luis himself was the one who – undoubtedly being inspired by the principle and even in the language of the traditional Christian *ascetic* – established his foundations upon the same thus

determining the *slowly progressiveness* that always distinguished thereafter the amigonian system:

Looking at the moral conduct of the youth, the students would be classified into three orders: catechumenists, pursuants, and worshippers. The first ones, or those studying the catechism, would be those children who still held on to their past behaviors or those who werenot yet under control. . . The pursuants were those who were progressing in the reformation of their former behaviors and customs and one could see in them their desire to become better and reach perfection. The lastly those known as the worshippers were those children whose behavior was exemplary and those who would be the standard and the models for the other children.

Father Luis was also concerned – within this same context of finding an adequate method – that his first followers would accomplish from the beginning of their pedagogic work a following of their students that was detailed, scientific and personalized:

In order to know the previous situations and qualities of the youth that had been given over to their care, the teachers should make a private accounting of each student that consisted of the previous things that the youth had acquired in addition to his aptitudes, his temperament and character and the grades that he had received on a monthly basis.

And finally it was Father Luis himself who propitiated the concept of *total education* which united with instruction and work different activities which formed religious character and cultural, sport or recreation for completing character formation.

The amigonian pedagogic sentiment

Together with the founder and in harmony with him those first religious amigonian teachers were developing the pedagogic *principles* that have defined and substancially characterized the historic actuation in the recuperation of the difficult child or youth. Some of these principles – definedvery clearly in the very life of Father Luis – are those that stand out in the following text.

Educating the heart

Avoiding the temptation of a radical and exaggerated *behaviorism*, the amigonian pedagogy established the compass of its own based upon the personal maturing of the feelings of the student or said in another way using a typical amigonian initial usage – based upon the *teaching of the heart*:

In every human being – mused on the the first amigonian teachers – there is a sentimental source that we develop. . . And for that to happen we need a lot of patience and kindness in our dealings with the children . . . It is continuously necessary . . . said another . . . to appeal to the noble and generous feelings of the student . . . You cannot substitute his personal conscience for a purely exterior conscience. We need to be artists doing this supreme artistic act of forging those spirits, cultivating the esthetic of sentimental feelings.

Educating from the sentimental aspect

Now the first amigonian teaching tradition perceived with a bright clearness that the education of the heart of the student, the development of the most profound human feelings, which is *love*, is helped by the fact that these very teachers show themselves among their students to be *experts in humanity* and thus be the *true cultivators of feelings* in them:

Above all the qualities of a good teacher – one of the teachers pointed out – is the love for the students. Because if you don't love them, the objective of education is bastardized (denigrated). . .

Love - one could read in the 1927 Memories of the Saint Rita House – will always be an indispensable basis, not only to educate and mold hearts, but also to instruct and engrave into their intelligences the fundamental obligations which make men useful for themselves and for others . . . Therefore, - without slacking up on the sciences – we continue to inspire our work in love.

Towards Personal Autonomy

The amigonian pedagogic tradition was conscious from its very beginnings that true education is only accomplished in a climate of freedom:

Education – one of the pioneers of the system pointed out – is action, but this action must subject itself to that education. In order to

act, the student needs freedom, otherwise he will become automatic but not someone who follows by his own impulse and initiative the work of his education. The virtue of goodness must be freely embraced for it to be consistent.

The teacher must be an instructor of true liberty and not a policeman of coercion which kills the spirit and the personality of the student.

Thus, the amigonian pedagogic tradition was equally conscious that in order to establish this climate of freedom, it was imperative to develop within the youth his own capacity of autonomy educating and strengthening his will power:

Teaching the heart – another amigonian wrote - has to be completed in the formation of character which is the habit of a strong will power crystallized in the human soul. To educate without establishing these bases would be to build upon the sifting sands.

A good teacher must never forget that the will power is the supreme director of the man . . . the executive power of the human soul . . . Will power is that which carries a man to victory or to defeat.

Here is the great importance of the system of prevention which demands that one strengthen inside a child his will power, showing him how to “love” with all his soul to achieve a strong and manly character.

And precisely in order to accomplish this education of the will power, some of the therapies proposed in the system were established whose common denominator was the awakening inside the student the conscience that in life everything has a price and only the vigorous efforts are apt to accomplish that which he proposes:

One of the factors that nullifies one’s personality - wrote one of the Capuchin Tertiary teachers regarding this - is to find out that nothing is worthwhile. That which hasn’t cost you anything, isn’t worth anything. . . So that our centers become schools of truth it is necessary that the students learn to appreciate their work and learn to eat of the bread that they earned through the sweat of their brows . . . “ Here everything has a price” should be one of the themes that presides over our pedagogy.

Within a family setting

Following the agenda of harmonic and complete maturity of a person in humanness and in love, the amigonian pedagogic tradition – faithful once more to its Christian roots through culture and in faith – always underlined as with its fundamental values, the family setting which should reign inside the student groups:

The first natural and necessary setting for education – it was said regarding this – is the family.

Thus we see with regularity that the most efficient and lasting education is that which is given inside the family setting. . . And what is it that we do in our centers if it is not that of substituting families?

It is here that it is of great impact when a young man comes to our centers and finds in us this love that opens the doors of his heart so that he give himself over to his teachers. . .

It just could be that this youth has never felt in his life one drop of love and possibly has never experienced the sweetness of a smile . .

For us- he added – the family regimen is basic. Family life is necessary in every single one of our centers . . . If the teachers must at all times be officiating as parents to their students, it would be terribly difficult to do so if our organization wasn't based upon the criteria of a family setting.

A Loving Reception

A loving reception for anyone who arrives with us is considered as the prime and principal educative strength that we can offer to a student as the most genuine show of amigonian pedagogy and we insist on the fact that this constitutes the first witness of tenderness and the first contact of friendly communication, of empathy and of sympathy between the teacher and the pupil:

From the moment that a student comes in – it was proclaimed then in 1906 - he must be the object of as much attention as he needs and never withholding any love.

The first obligation of every teacher – it was later insisted upon – is that no matter who the student was that had been accepted into the system he was to be accepted lovingly . . . It should be considered urgent to be even

excessively friendly and affable in the privileged reception of those youth who have been mistreated and who have never enjoyed pure and legitimate joy.

We must take into account, however, that it is not the shrubbery nor the flowers nor the decorations . . . which make our centers areas of welcomed reception . . . it is, above all, the spirit of co penetration which exists between the teachers and the pupils.

Making the heart the pathway to knowledge

Since in 1892 when Father Luis had indicated to his followers – as has been previously stated – that they must exert themselves in *learning through direct experience the science of the human heart*, his sons still being pioneers in the application of psycho pedagogic sciences oriented to knowing better young men within Spain, it was considered that in a manner that was constant and unfailing the best way to profoundly know his pupil was through the pathway of the heart which is to say that of establishing with the pupil a relationship that was friendly, empathetic in such a way as encouraging him to know through the dynamic of his everyday life:

The best way to help those pupils in their recovery – said one of the amigonian teachers - is to advise, suffer with, watch over, and cry along with them and laugh with them in their happiness.

Religious teachers – replied another in 1906 – respond to their pupils lovingly without reservation and establish with them this mutual relationship of esteem and fondness that softens and lightens the load of the rules and regulations that are prescribed.

Staying close by

The emotion of *empathy* which is favorable to and makes possible learning *through the pathway of the heart*, has been nourished and primarily expressed inside the amigonian school through the attitude of *closeness*.

Beginning with the very teachings of Father Luis , he always considered that the capacity to *identify oneself in every way with others* was a characteristic quality of love. He wanted that his sons and daughters as *assistant shepherds to the Good Shepherd* not only be side by side with

their flocks, but that they also run quickly after the sheep who had strayed. Thus the amigonians established since from the very start that the *capacity of attachment with and the commitment to the lives of their pupils* as one of the most characteristic marks of their labor thus generating a *pedagogy of being present with and living with (the pupil)*:

Religious educators –he said in 1906 - *eat out of the same pots with their pupils and work with them and pleasantly relax with them playing with them in their own games.*

What is the theme of our system? - asked a Tertiary Capuchin monk -. *Love that is watchful* – was the reply. And he added : *watchfulness is like a protective fence . . . even better yet, it is like a mother’s heart beat always solicitous of her children.*

Inside our centers - commented another teacher – *there exists such a spirit of attachment formed between teachers and pupils, that they live, eat, play and interact with them in such a way as to form a family in which the older brother is actually the teacher.*

“ A Measured” kind of Love

Attention to individuality has traditionally constituted another of the principal characteristics of the amigonian emotion in teaching:

Pedagogic treatment –taught one of the teachers – *must be in proportion to the capacity of each student . . . The good teacher knows how to distinguish between his different pupils and not demand from all of them the same level of perfection. Instead he is happy with the limited measure of each and every one of them.*

This individualized treatment – that in practice has been expressed sometimes in tiny details and other times through silence; and other times with this “ knowing how to overlook something” which is so vital in our lives. It is always with this understanding that encourages us to *adjust the rules relative to the circumstances. This has produced the principal pedagogic consequence of loving each pupil “as he is” while showing preference to those who need it the most, even against the hope that every student will recover successfully.*

To that pupil who is the most difficult – readily confessed one of the amigonians – I most show the most love.

We apply our rules and regulations – said another – showing more charity and kindness to those who have fallen behind, to those who are the least likeable, to those poor ones . .

We don't judge superficially - another one added – our students because . . . God can raise up stones as sons of Abraham. Also it is not fitting of good teachers to judge superficially their pupils, but of inexperienced teachers and beginners . . .

I, in my twenty years as a teacher, have never thought to name a student “incorrigible.” We have the obligation to greatly love our pupils and those who use such offensive name calling clearly show their smallness in loving.

“Unlimited” dedication

*The ability to love another person and to love him “as he is” and to be capable to establish bonds of *empathy* throughout your daily living together; the capacity to stay bonded to the student like *a mother's heartbeat solicitous of her son*, are in direct relation to the capacity of *strength* that a teacher needs to possess in order to remain unflinchingly faithful to his pupils and to the mission itself.*

Father Luis – profound knower of the human heart and its most intimate springs – highly recommended his followers that they *always go about anxious to serve others not halfway but to the extent that even sacrifice their own lives should it be necessary* and he recommended also that they *not shy away from the work they do for God, neither fear that they should perish in the dangerous undertakings and precipices that many times they may have to undertake in order to save the life of the lost sheep*. And the first congregational tradition, instructed by him, he cared for as one of the most substantial values of their own identity was that of the *sacrifice and strength that is needed for the faithful adapting of a person in his body and soul to the arduous mission of the Institute*.

And one of the most characteristic manifestations of the strength and fortitude of the spirit that has distinguished those amigonian teachers has

traditionally been *total dedication* - or as it is more commonly said "unlimited" to those their pupils:

The teachers –so stated in the Congregational Manual – *must possess the spirit of sacrifice in order to happily put up with, or at least patiently put up with those students even on the days they are the most bothersome; not to indemnify for the hours nor show how tired they are being with them in order to make their lives the most agreeable and tolerable as possible.*

That teacher who goes into his pupils unwillingly and grumbling - insisted one of the teachers - will only be present there in body waiting until his time is up . . . These are the teachers that the student will loathe And in whom the teacher will not be able to do an educational work.

Teaching by Example

One more convincing example during the early amigonian pedagogic tradition was that of taking into consideration, that in order to be a really true *companion* of the pupils in their unrepeatable adventure of total growth towards *human emotional maturity* the teacher had to be *the example* of this type of emotion.

And this process of convincing was acquired by the first Capuchin Tertiaries once again through the one-on-one direct teaching of Father Luis who being conscious that *the example is the best preacher and that personal example had an irresistible strength of persuasion*, he repeatedly invited his followers to *personally put into practice those things which the teacher wished to transmit to his pupils and to go in front of his pupils using himself as their example so as not to destroy that thing which had just been built up:*

The great lever for the brilliant results of this school – he said in 1906 – *is the use of a personal and living example. Here you never say to the pupil "do this or that" but instead you say "we will do this"....; the teacher eats with his pupils ... he rests in the same room with them, he participates in their games and he works together with them as a team with the teacher always carrying the worst end of the stick. This says it all: Your speech impresses but your example carries the true weight.*

Those teachers capable of understanding and renouncing their own interests – what really is the basis of religious men’s personalities – would bend over to the needs and even to just simple wishes of their pupils, thus winning first their confidence and then would then lift their pupils up to obedience to duty of which the teachers were their very models.

Pioneers in the world of Wayward Youth

In 1889 when Father Luis founded the Capuchin Tertiaries and when during this same year they began a change of route in their apostolic labors which directed them to the world of the wayward youth, this type of teaching medium had not yet been explored. In Spain – with exception of the Padre de huerfanos –or Pare d’orfens from Valencia and those from Toribios of Sevilla and where the rest had not reached national identity – nothing really had ever been done. And on the international level a Tribune for Youth had not even been created yet. For this, the experience that had in 1890 begun in the area of the problematic youth, the amigonian monks accompanied and followed closely by Father Luis himself can be cataloged in all honesty as a true *pedagogic adventure* in the boasting of *educational pioneers*.

First Time Experiences

The first center directed and administered by the amigonians within the ambience of educating the problematic youth was the Saint Rita Fatherly Correctional School in Madrid. This House was without a doubt the real *“Laboratory” of a newly born therapeutic pedagogy.*

Little by little that initial experience and experimentation began acquiring social recognition, in the midst of controversies and polemics which always accompany new ideas which can be seen in the following:

The youth that the Tertiary Capuchin monks have regenerated – as had been written in a news article in 1905 - cannot be counted.

If many parents knew up close the excellencies of this correctional system they would be proud to send their own sons there being convinced of the regeneration and altruistic ends that these monks are obtaining through their work.

Recently I made a trip to visit this correctional institution to see for myself whether the stories that had been passed down from mouth to mouth about what went on inside were really true or false. And what I saw couldn't have been better stated . . .

I visited inside one of the wings . . . the cleanliness was shiny and magnificent. Their cubicles were large, their sleeping quarters were large as were their dining halls . . . Everything was squeaky clean and the air and sunshine healed and comforted everything. . . .

In one game that we watched – reported in another article in this same newspaper – the monks joined in the game with the young men . . . Further along the sidelines another group followed with lively interest a game of croquet in which the monks joined in playing with the problematic youth , and further away there was a group of youth and monks singing in a well organized choir some of the songs of that region

We were unable to detect there the spiteful look of a grudge that can be seen in other correctional institutions. Between the youth and the Tertiary Capuchins we observed that a frank and cordial friendliness existed which is not at the same time without the respect due their professors.

We were told by the youth themselves that corporal punishment doesn't exist there.

When the youth arrives to the Center and he refuses to study and he is a disciplinary problem he can work in the nursery and he is paid for his work with “coupons” with which he can purchase clothing and other supplies he needs, thus training them that they can work in order to obtain things that they need. . .

Moral education is completed with good hygiene which includes bathing and “sports” and an abundant and healthy diet . . .

When the youth show they have progressed in their behavior they receive prizes for their good conduct and study habits with “coupons” which can be used for having visitors and what is most desired by them the opportunity to take a pleasure trip outside the institution.

When the pedagogic experience at Saint Rita was nine years old, the Tertiary Capuchins who had been convinced of the validity and goodness of their method used for the regeneration of problematic youth, wanted to extend their method to a national reality. Two of them – Yuste and Godella – did not progress, but the other – that one of the Two Sisters – did become a happy reality which contributed positively to the increased interest in this newborn amigonian pedagogic system.

Underneath the splendid sky of Andalucia in the town of the Two Sisters it was said in 1908 – that a big building was being built without many of the artistic or architectural pretenses, but it was solid and clean.

It is not strictly speaking either a convent nor a school nor a prison nor a sports stadium and yet it had all of these inside this House which stated on its walls outside “The Colony of Saint Hermenegildo.”

Inside the Church there are religious Congregations consecrated to the healing and relief of all bodily sicknesses and all of the sickness of the soul.

And the saving and regenerating mission of the Tertiary Capuchins who administered this Colony was to receive in their Houses those youth whose parents had given them up as dead and for the monks to return them full of life.

The method that they used to obtain this objective was a loud secret . . . a system of “fatherly correction” which slowly softened more and more to a behavior that was more reasonable for the wayward youth. They put special emphasis on the good use of time . . . The pupils were grouped according to their different ages and classes, and put under the direction of the Brothers who lived side by side with them day after day . . .

Prizes were given for good conduct grades in the form of games and good honest amusements together with a good regimen and good diet which resulted in lifting the spirits of these youth healing and invigorating their bodies.

The fruits of such a prudent and love filled work could not taste sweeter.

Spain collaborates with this Youth Work

In 1918 something took place in Spain that determined the later history of the amigonian Congregations. This was the year that the *Spanish Tutorial Law Concerning Youth* had been approved after it had gone through many years of preparation and it had a big impact upon the role of Father Domingo de Alboraya. It was popularly called the *Montero Rios Law* in honor of the judge who had brought it into fruition. This *Montero Rios Law* set legal parameters around the problematic youth and promoted the creation of educational Centers which were adapted to the personal and social regeneration of this youth.

The first Center that was opened in Spain inside the judicial parameters established by this *Law* was the House of Salvador de Amurrio whose creation was from the initiative of a Board of Patrons, who going ahead of the law, in 1916 contacted Father Luis so that his Tertiaries would take over the administration of this Center that was projected to be built. Father Luis filled with the hope that this would open up for his own sons followed closely the preliminary conversations and supported at all times the new foundational project. When on October 11, 1919 Father Luis' monks finally took over the administration of this Institution he felt a deep sense of satisfaction.

Amurrio was providential in his day regarding the amigonian pedagogy as he had also been providential in the beginning of the Congregation in the House of Saint Rita. In Amurrio this pedagogy reached its true identity as an educational system and acquired a scientific tone which it needed even though not all of the Tertiary Capuchins understood it as such at that time.

In Amurrio this system of emotional education of the amigonians – interlaced with love and dedication towards the unadapted youth and cemented into a blind faith and an unbreakable hope in the regeneration of the youth – was being perfected as a *method* – based on *praxis and experience* inside Saint Rita and Two Sisters – until it was confirmed inside the category and renown that made it universally famous inside the therapeutic educational system.

In Amurrio, also the amigonian pedagogy – which was being perfected through the deepening of its theological, philosophical and anthropological principals – was converted into a *paradigm school* for other centers

dedicated to the specialized treatment of the “youth in conflict with the law”.

And since the time of Amurrio, the amigonian pedagogy was making a place for itself even during the lifetime of Father Luis – who eagerly followed up close each new foundation in this area – in those centers dependent upon the different Tutorial Tribunals of Spain: the Good Shepherd in Zaragoza – September 16, 1921; Saint Vincent Ferrer in Burjasot, June 22, 1923; Our Lady of the Way in Huarte-Pamplona, January 10, 1924; Prince of Asturias in Madrid which was officially taken over by the Congregation in July , 1925 but had been preceded by a big polemic between the defenders and the detractors of the Tertiary Capuchins; San Francisco of Paula in Alcala de Guadaira August 19, 1930 and the House of Observation of Sevilla in September of 1930.

Crossing the Ocean

With the founding in 1928 of the Capuchin Tertiaries in Colombia South America and most especially with that founding in 1932 in Argentina, the amigonian pedagogy decisively crossed the ocean and entered into American territory.

Shortly thereafter, the newspapers on both sides of the ocean began to make known the work that had been developed by the amignonians and to spread the news of how this pedagogic system worked:

The idea of the capacity of the administrative-technical personnel from the Saint Antonio Asylum –wrote the newspaper “New Times” on August 14, 1929 from Bogota - has given us the great meaning of preferring for the education and teaching of the most wayward youth under no matter what aspect, because they have the surety of success in a system based on love and sweetness not only to educate and mold their hearts but also to instruct and engrave in their intelligences the fundamental obligations which make men useful to themselves as well as useful to others. . .

This beautiful Asylum in the expert hands of the Capuchin Tertiary monks – wrote the president of the Jurisprudence Academy of Colombia in 1932 in the Signature Welcome Album of this House – gives me the impression of a precious machine to make true citizens ; to gather together those broken

pieces of human beings and turn them into men worthy of being called valuable for the good of the country.

The Executive Branch – announced “The Gazette” of Tucuman on September 4, 1932 – is ready to protect these forsaken youth in this city where abandoned children number in the hundreds . . .

We have repeatedly discussed this problem. In one of our last commentaries we hinted upon the convenience to transform the Youth Colony “General Belgrano” into a Reformatory. . . And it seems this hint has found an echo in the Government House, now that day before yesterday the organization, direction and administration of this Colony was given over to the Tertiary Capuchins who have specialized in correctional education in the old and progressive European countries and specialized in the moralization and scientific education as well as art and manual labor which has turned many abandoned children into men who are useful to themselves as well as useful to society. . .

They are not trying to “incorporate the Christian academic study into the province nor are trying to turn them into a monastic group. Instead they are people who have established an objective of their education as practical and that of raising the moral of men. These monks have consecrated their lives to this end. The Capuchin Tertiary monks make up a Congregation whose Principal objectives are to consecrate themselves to the ordering and administration of correctional houses and of teachers as well with their sights firmly set on humanitarian and social work that has been given over to them.

Preparing Personnel

Shortly after taking over the administration of the Saint Rita School and upon beginning their pedagogic adventure among wayward and problematic youth, the Tertiary Capuchins started noticing the importance of knowing and the learning of other similar pedagogic experiences. And in this process of learning, that which encouraged Father Luis at all times, we should specially underscore those *study trips* that were taken throughout different European countries so as to come in contact with other institutions that were dedicated to similar objectives as their own.

The first of said trips taken in 1904 by one of the monks whom another called “the pedagogue of the Father General” was limited to going over different re-educating types of establishments in some parts of Spain and also in France.

From the end of May in 1909 and as a continuation of a stay in Rome where they had accompanied Father Luis, another two monks – on a trip financed by the Minister of the Interior – visited numerous centers dedicated to the regeneration of the problematic youth in Belgium, England, France and Italy. The fruit and summary of this trip was the book that Father Domingo de Alboraya published in 1910 under the title *Reformatories for Youth and Beneficial Colonies on foreign lands*.

The following year – in 1910 – the above-mentioned Father Domingo took another study trip through Italy and it also seems through France.

But these study trips were converted into something more frequent, now that the Tertiary Capuchins had taken over the administration of the Amurrio House. The very patrons of this House – and especially that of Gabriel Maria de Ybarra – propitiated the constant technical and scientific perfecting of the amigonians especially in the field of the recovery of difficult and conflictive youth. Inside this new dynamic one must note a visit made by three monks in 1924 to the Duran de Barcelona Asylum; a long trip through Spain, France, Belgium and Switzerland was taken in 1920 by two monks, and a similar trip was made in 1930 by three monks who visited centers in France, Belgium, the Low Countries and Germany.

Later on, still during the lifetime of Father Luis, another two trips were made. The first of these – made in 1931 most specifically to Belgium centers – was very special because together with the two Tertiary Capuchin monks traveled the first group of Tertiary Capuchin Sisters who made the first trip of this kind. And the second – taken in 1933 – was made to Belgium, Germany and the Low Countries and was completed by four Tertiary Capuchin monks.

This formative work done through taking *study trips* was completed and amplified since 1926 with different courses oriented to the preparation of the teaching personnel of the centers for the protection and reformation, and they were open to others from this sector be they religious or secular.

The first of these courses – promoted by the Tutorial Tribunes of Vasco-Navarros – took place in Amurrio in August 1926. March 18, 1927 another course was begun in Madrid which lasted until June. At the beginning of 1928 there was another in Zaragoza and later – in May of the same year – in Valencia which were organized by their respective Tutorial Tribunes.

By Royal Decree, a permanent Center for psychopedagogic studies was given June 1, 1928 and the work was begun in October in coordination with the direction of the Prince of Asturias Reformatory managed by the Tertiary Capuchins.

At the same time also in Amurrio with the patronage of the Vasco-Navarros Tutorial Tribunes and with the coordination and collaboration of the Tertiary Capuchins who directed the House of Salvador these courses continued under the name *Summer Courses* as had taken place in 1926. In August 1927 there was a second to which for the first time the Tertiary Capuchin Sisters attended and in August 1928 a third one was organized and in the same month in 1930 a fourth was organized.

To add to a good thing in the formative proposal for the therapeutic professors, in coordination with the permanent Center established in 1928 in Madrid the Amurrio Center organized between October 1929 and June 1930 an intensive course where various Tertiary Capuchin monks and sisters participated.

Then, in 1931 with the political change that was taking place in the country – by official decree (though carried out mostly by the Amigonians) – the whole project was paralyzed.

However, Father Luis continued to be consoled by seeing his sons, protected by the Tutorial Tribune of Vitoria, continue carrying on with other Summer Courses for the purpose of promoting adequate formation of the personnel who were dedicated to the whole recovery of difficult children and youth.

The Sisters are also enlisted

In 1902 the Sisters included in their mission objectives of the Congregation that of the *fatherly correction*. And they tackled this, without a doubt, full of gusto and directed by the Founder himself who by then was happy and

full of hope from the good results that his Tertiary sons had accomplished in the specific field of educating problematic children and youth. This very possibly began to take on a clear picture of what in reality was the purpose of this mission that now included his two Congregations and which was particularly outstanding inside the Church and society.

However, and in spite of everything, the sisters were developing other mission objectives – which for them were equally legitimate and distinguishing – and they even enlarged them as a matter of fact beginning in 1905 with *the first evangelization* and that of *the protection and reform* was put a bit on the back burner.

But things radically changed beginning in the 1920s when the authorities who were concerned about the wayward youth, and who knew up close and valued by now the very positive work which the Tertiary Capuchins have been developing in some of the Centers dependent upon the Tutorial Tribunes for Youth, began to conceive of projects for the young wayward girl. They thought then to go to the sisters Congregation founded by the same Father Luis for their participation.

Some of the more advanced sisters in this effort attended in Amurrio - in August 1927 – the second Summer Course for teachers from the Centers that were dedicated to the recovery of youth. Father Luis – excited about hearing this news – wrote to the director of the House of Salvador:

I am so very delighted with the good news that I have been told regarding the attendance of our Sisters to the Amurrio Course and the good results this produced.

From October 1929 until June 1930 the Sisters Maria Luis de Yarumal and Inmaculada de Arraiza took part in the pedagogic correctional course in classes that were given at one time in the Bilbao Tutorial Tribune and then at another time in the conference rooms of the Amurrio Reformatory.

From July 29 to August 29, 1930 seven Sisters – among which we must point out was present the Mother Superior, Sister Genoveva de Valencia and her Secretary – attended the fourth Summer Course given in the Amurrio House. There the Sisters Maria Luisa de Yarumal and Inmaculada

de Arraiza along with being new students, they acted as teacher's aides during the practical exercises.

The following year – between July and August 1931 – these same Sisters Maria Luisa and Inmaculada took a study trip (as we have stated previously) principally through Belgium together with two of the Tertiary Capuchin monks and upon returning from this trip they officially took over the direction – November 1, 1931 – of the *House of Observation and Reform of the Holy Family of Bilbao* which was designed to gather girls and young women who were in a situation of risk or conflict. This was the first work of re-education that this Congregation had taken over. Father Luis could truly feel a sense of accomplishment and he could now consider himself truly and completely an *apostol of the wayward youth*. Had he lived one more year he would have had the immense satisfaction of seeing his daughters developing this apostleship of re-education inside the capital of Spain in the *Home School Los Arcos*, but this joy – and many of this same kind – were reserved for him in heaven.

EPILOGUE

In 12 April 1907-after thirty three years of religious life- Fr. Luis of Masamagrell, was abandoning the Convent in Orihuela. The days before have been filled with intense emotions and they have demanded from him to develop a frenetic activities. In 21st of March he had received a Letter from the Nuncio telling him the approval of the proposal to have him as an Apostolic Administrator of Solsona and would be soon to be appointed title of bishop. After the Holy Week, he has to travel urgently to Madrid, where in Monday 1st of April-second week of Easter- had gone for an interview with the Nuncio who in turn have gone to the School of St. Rita-directed by the Capuchin Tertiary Fathers- to assist to the feast of the group of senior students.

In that same Easter Week he stayed in St. Rita participating on the Friday 7th and Saturday 8th of April in an important meeting of the General Council of the Capuchin Tertiary Fathers. After having been with that, he returned immediately to Orihuela for the closing and endorsement of that guardianship.

From Orihuela he went – on the 12th of April- to Valencia for the preparations and the especial Spiritual Exercises in the Convent of Monforte took a preeminent place, for some time St. Pascual Bailon stayed with him. Meanwhile, in Rome, Pope Pius X-in a Town Council 18th of April-was accepting officially the proposal submitted by the Nuncio and commending publicly Fr. Luis as Apostolic Administrator of Solsona and Bishop of Tagaste. In the following days the press has echoed the event to the public.

At the end of May, he returned to Madrid to organize with the Nuncio the details of his Episcopal Consecration, which was done in Madrid, in the church of the Home for the disabled of Vista Alegre in the 9th of June in the same year of 1907, third Sunday after the Pentecost.

The days after were marked again with new and great activities. He visited the first place of the Majestic Kings he was received lovingly by them; and also after complemented other authorities indicating protocols. On Sunday of 16 he officiated being a Bishop in Orihuela the feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. In the same city-in his Capuchin Convent of which he was a guardian before being elevated as Bishop- bestowed for the first time The Sacrament of Confirmation received by more than a thousand persons. In Monday 24th of June the Feast of St. John the Baptist, he celebrated another Pontifical activity in the Church of Monte Sion of Torrent and in Saturday 29th of the same month the solemn cult of thanksgiving for his consecration in Masamagrell. Finally, in 14th and 21st of July bestowed sacred Ordinations in the Capuchin Convent in Magdalena.

AFTER THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD

In 28th of July of 1907 again took possession of the Apostolic Administration of Solsona through the Administration the dean of the cathedral, Fr. Hermogenes Malo Garcia, whom he appointed to represent him, and in 4th of August he made his entrance in the city, after having an overnight in the Capuchin Convent of Manresa and have had some hours of meditation in the Monastery of Monserat.

In exercising his episcopate he chose from the moment of his designation the word that distinguished the life of Christ as the Good Shepherd: *I give*

my life for my sheep. In tune to this aim, as he presented himself to the faithful of Solsona, explained this feelings that was ruling in his heart:

*I would like too present the love of Christ that you profess, and offer my life,
if it is necessary to all and each one of you.*

He remained for six years after in Solsona. During those years apart from doing the Pastoral Visit in the Diocese, gifting his parishioners twelve Pastoral Exhortations and some thirty Circulars and promoted different and important initiatives and improvements- he traveled for the second time to Rome to comply to the *Visita ad Limina* and assisted it the Canonization of San Jose Oriol; assisted in Madrid for the 22nd International Eucharistic Congress and took part in the National Congress of Sacred Music at Barcelona.

In 18th of July 1913- as he was feeling a year before- he was commended Bishop of Segorbe. In the 6th of November-having endorsed the Apostolic Administration of Solsona- he went to Valencia and to the 30th of the same month- after taking possession of the Diocese by means of Canon Archpriest who acted as representative, in the 13th he made his entrance in the city of Segorbe.

He served in the Diocese of Segorbe for twenty-one years. During those period he rounded in two times for Pastoral Visit the demarcation; he wrote numerous Circulars and above all, thirty-six Pastoral Exhortations- of which some have been considered authentic magisterial teachings saturated with many sublime spiritualism- and initiated important achievements such as : the reform of the Constitutions of the Seminary, the reatoration of the Cathedral and the Church of St.. Mary, the transfer of the remains of Fray Bonifacio Ferrer to the Holy Cave and the endorsement of this Sanctuary to the custody to one community of Religious, and the organization of the diocesan archives. Amen for all of those, he exercised during two legislatures the role of Senator for the Ecclesial Province of Valencia; presided in 1913 the National Pilgrimage of Teachers to Rome visiting of which motives for the third and the last time in his life to the Eternal Life; he assisted in Madrid the National Congress of the Third Franciscan Orders, presenting at the same time a communication; he led a pilgrimage that took place, in October 1915, to the Sanctuary of Virgin of Puig; in the 30th of May 1919 he was present in the act of the Consecration of Spain to the Sacred Heart officiated by King Alfonzo XIII in the Hill of the Angels;

crowned, among as such, the Virgin of Montiel and assisted in the coronation of the Virgin of the Abandoned, the Patron of Valencia and the Virgin of Lidon, the patron of the Castellon..

In both Dioceses, his magistrature was centered in the ministry of the *Redemption*, expressed in the inseparable perspectives of *love*- of God and of brothers and sisters- of the *Cross*. And also, in both Dioceses his preferences were the youth, the people of humble class, the workers and the marginalized of the society. Close, as he was always been, related with the most poor, defended the Gospel values of social justice and revived the conscience of the people regarding the importance of the Christian education of the youth, and in particular, the deviated from truth and good. Humble and simple, as a good Franciscan Friar and Capuchin, and moreover raised the admiration of those who are relating with the, small and great. In this respect it was told that in some occasion that when he assisted together with other Bishops in one of the reception of the King of Spain, fixing his eyes on him, King Alfonso XIII commented to his wife : *Look how saintly is the action of that prelate.*

Transferring the testimony

On April 23, 1925 Father Luis gave what would be his third and last testament. By then – even though he had not shown it explicitly – there were definite signs that his health was seriously failing.

The following year – May 3, 1926 - he signed what could be considered his true *spiritual testament* which he directed to his Capuchin Tertiary sons and daughters seeing that the respective general Chapters of his two congregations would be having their celebration. He was convinced that *these would be his last Chapters that he would attend since he was quite old*. In this last testament he summoned his sons and daughters to live in a *permanent attitude of thankfulness to God*. In this testament he awakened in his children the conscious desire to possess *their own spirituality*, since they had been especially favored with a special calling which distinguished them among the others. In this testament, speaking from the bottom of his heart he urged them to *be humble and simple always faithful to the vocational calling they had received*. In this testament he earnestly sought – as if with *something sacred* – their *faithful devotion to the Mother-Congregation*. In this testament he encouraged them to grow each day in

brotherhood. And finally in this testament he outlined teaching methods for them such as notes and hints that were characteristically his own: *his predilection for children and youth who were in situations of risk or conflict;* the assimilation of teaching methods oriented towards *seeking out and totally saving* those who were lost along with friendly collaboration to confront with *decisiveness and bravery* the adversities and difficulties they faced always behaving with a pleasant disposition that was profoundly Franciscan interwoven with simplicity, generosity and availability and above all with *tenderness and compassion.*

- *You, my beloved sons and daughters, subordinate shepherds of The Good Shepherd - he wrote to them turning over to them his last will and testament - you are the ones who will have to go seeking the strayed sheep until you return him to the fold. Do not fear dying in this dangerous undertaking which many times you may have to risk your own lives in order to save one of the lost sheep; don't be frightened by the sticky places nor of those lying in ambush to trip you up . . .*

HOMeward BOUND TO THE FATHER'S HOUSE

Even though his own misgivings that he had when he wrote his last spiritual will and testament did not come true immediately, thank God, by September of 1926 Father Luis' health deteriorated severely when he suffered an attack of uremia when he was in Masamagrell where he had gone to say good bye, as a good father does, to the daughters who had come from Colombia to attend the general Chapter.

Father Luis was urgently transferred to Segorbe, and fearing that he might die, he was given the Last Rights (el Viatico) on the 19th of November. However, this danger passed and his life, though physically weakened, was prolonged for another eight years which he spent in joyful serenity that is given to human beings who have put their lives in God's hands.

Three years after that fateful illness – on the very day he turned 75 years old, October 17, 1929 – he finalized and officially signed his autobiography which he purposely titled *Notes About My Life.* This same year he also celebrated his *Golden Anniversary of 50 years as a priest.*

In 1931, surprised with the proclamation of the II Spanish Republic in the month of April, he found himself in the Montiel Sanctuary. The following month, with the burying of the Convents, he was taken from Segorbe to Altura where his nephews picked him to take him home with them to Caballeros Street, Number 7 of Valencia where he remained for almost one month.

Beginning in August of 1932 – after having presided the general Chapters for his sons and daughters in Godella where he celebrated his *50th Golden Episcopalian Anniversary* he made his last tour of the geographic width and breadth of Spain in order to visit some of the Houses of his two Congregations located outside the Valencian territory.

During the last year of his life – 1934 – he still came to Ador on May 24th to visit the family of his friend Rosendo Roig and to administer the Confirmation Sacrament. Previously, however, he had declined to make another tour of his Houses of the Congregations in Spain, arguing that *the machine of his body was daily breaking down more and more and he was afraid of taking long trips and stays preferring to remain for awhile at the Houses of his Congregations near his residence*. He also *had left for heaven the joy of being able to know all of his beloved daughters from Italy*, visiting Galatone, and he was deeply sorry that he could not travel to America *and see with his own eyes those conditions that that land offered for his Congregations realizing how old and ailing he had become*.

June 21, he celebrated his Saint's name day in Masamagrell and July 28 he visited the house of Meliana where his last photograph was taken. Afterwards he went to spend a few days to the Cave of Santa Altura from where he returned to Segorbe very feeble due to the high altitude. August 2nd, feeling a bit better, he went to the neighboring Chapel of the Capuchin Tertiary Asylum in Segorbe to attend the Franciscan Jubilee and on August 20th he left Segorbe to go to Masamagrell on a one-way trip. He was now very ill.

In Masamagrell he received many visitors, but among them two are of special meaning. The first was from the Mayor of the town, to whom, upon asking about his health, said almost like a type of confided testament: *Here I am waiting to give my soul to God and my body to you, Mr. Mayor*.

The other visit came from Father Laureano from Burriana who was accompanied by some other Capuchin Tertiaries. At the end of this visit, Father Luis directing his comments to the visitor he urged them: *One thing I ask of you is that you love one another very much and help the Sisters. Behave like Franciscans and the Sisters of Santa Clara, sons of one and the same father.*

Having recuperated a bit, thanks to the motherly care of the Sisters he could go to Valencia on September 6th to the wedding of his nephew Luis Boada Amigo. Following this ceremony he was picked by his Capuchin Tertiary monks who came to get him and take him to the Seraphic Seminary of San Jose de Godella where on the 15th he was able to joyfully attend the celebration of the Virgin of Dolores the great Mariano love of his life.

The days following these festivities his health again failed and this time it was final. In the middle of his ailing and pains which bode for the worst, his spirit was serene and happy. It was as someone wrote then: *He couldn't fear the final moments of his life as he had spent his entire life preparing to die well.*

September 24th sitting in a lounge chair, he received his Last Rights and Extreme Unction. This ceremony took place in the midst of reserved emotions of all those present. Upon telling Monsieur Javier Lauzurica who had administered the (Viatico) Last Rights goodbye Father Luis took his hands and thanking him for his love he kissed him saying: *Mr. Bishop, I am only a sinner.*

- *You are* – answered Monsieru Lauzurica –*what God and we here know also* –and truly overcome with emotion ended up saying: *You are a Saint, you are a Saint.*

The afternoon of that Sunday September 30 at 8 p.m. – five hours before his death – upon asking he doctor who was speaking in a low voice to one of the Sisters and answered her that *soon he will be going to heaven* Father Luis found the strength to take his hands our from under the sheets and make a happy sign of applause.

When October 1st day began – at 1 hour and 15 minutes that early morning – Father Luis peacefully gave up his spirit to his Father there in Godella

surrounded by his sons and daughters of the Capuchin Tertiaries who were weeping unable to be consoled from such a great loss.

On Tuesday, October 2nd – after having visited his ardente chapelle which had been installed in his same mortuary habitations- his religious faithful sons and daughters, different authorities and many people from the surrounding areas – celebrated the first solemn funeral mass in the Church of the San Jose of Godella Seminary. The mass was officiated by Father Idelfonso Maria del Vall de Uxo, the General Superior of the Capuchin Tertiaries. That same day of October 2nd in the afternoon, his body was taken to Masamagrell where it was deposited in the same Parochial Church where many years ago Father Luis had been baptized.

On October 3rd the Archbishop of Valencia, Monsieur Melo y Alcalde presided in this Parochial Church over the “corpe insepulto” funeral. When the mass finished Father Luis’ body was taken in a procession to the neighboring Hous of the Capuchin Tertiaries where on the next day – October 4th – he was buried. Monsieur Javbier Lauzurica presided over the interment depositing Father Luis’ remains in the spot that he himself had sent to be built. The newspapers of Valencia and other publications gave their respective notification of these events.

But this wasn’t the end of it. The believer lives even though he has died. He not only is resurrected in the Last Day, but the light of the resurrections of the justified lights also the travelers who are on their way to The Beyond.

The first newspapers who wrote about these events covering his journey to The Beyond underlined as follows the quality of Father Luis’ evangelic life:

- *Not just a few lines, but actually a book, and that being a large book, are necessary to life up the excellent personal qualities of him who wears them . . . He was distinguished for his love of his fellow man whose misfortunes he not only cried over, but proceed to try to repair.*
- *The country has incurred a debt of gratitude with the Spanish Prelate who with his Reformatories he has saved and will continue to save many youth. His work is demanded and appreciated by many other nations. Spain will not forget this Saint and teacher.*

PATH TO THE ALTARS

On January 18, 1950 the Diocesan process for the *Cause of the Beatification and Canonization* of Father Luis was opened in Valencia and it was closed in this same city on November 20, 1951.

Twenty-one years later – July 7, 1977 – following a minute procedure, *The Decree for the Introduction of the Cause* was signed in Rome which opened the doors for the celebration of the *Apostolic Informative Process* which was developed in the Archdiocese of Valencia from October 6, 1979 to October 9, 1982.

Having concluded said *Apostolic Process* there arose a strong movement towards making better know the figure of Father Luis and to push an increasing rhythm towards this same Cause of the Beatification and Canonization. It is worthwhile to note the many letters that different Bishops sent personally and various National Episcopalian Conferences sent to the Pope requesting the prompt Beatification of Luis Amigo. Some of these letters such as the one that follows contains an extract from Monsignor Loris Capovilla showing clearly and with appreciation and love what the person of Father Luis truly was:

- *Repeated pastoral encounters . . . have helped me to know Bishop Luis Amigo and to savor the poem of his existence – of his vocation and of his many lively undertakings – which are narrated in his Autobiography.*
- *This narration . . . outlines the progressive ascent of this man, Capuchin to Bishop, until he obtained, in my mind, the highest achievements of the Beatitudes proclaimed by Our Lord.*
- *Filled with the evangelic and Franciscan spirit . . . he found the favorable sphere of action in order to leave footprints through his noble religious family, male and female, founded by him, for a new rhythm for catechizing Spain and from there to extend his benefits to the extreme ends of the earth.*
- *Elevated to the Episcopal dignity . . . he offered with his service the image of the Shepherd outlined by Saint John in the 10th Chapter of his Gospel.*
- *Blessed Father! This man was good and cultured, simple and prudent, wise and generous. He deserves our attention as well as*

that of his contemporaries in order that the spiritual inheritance that he has accumulated does not remain any longer buried in the archives.

- *Bishop of the saintly Church of God, I allow myself to ask Your Highness, to want to dispatch the canonical procedure and rescue from the silence of the tomb one of the richest memories and light his lamp next to many others who are illustrious in the Catholic Church. . .*

It is also worthwhile mentioning the encounters that were promoted inside the two Amigonian Congregations seeking to deepen the knowledge and appreciation for their Founder.

On the other hand – and following the idea of consigning the most significant facts that had happened in the Cause of Father Luis Amigo since 1977 –it is necessary to point out also that, after presenting it in Rome to the Cardinal Prefect of the Sacred Congregation for the Causes of the Saints, the acts of the Apostolic Process on October 21, 1982, preparations were made to proceed to open the tomb of Father Luis in order to identify his remains and be able to preserve them keeping in mind their good conservation and extraction for relics. The remains were exhumed on April 9, 1983 and were presided over by the Bishop of Segorbe, Monsignor Jose Maria Cases. Many people were present – among them we should point out the large representation of the monks and sisters of the Capuchin Tertiaries with their respective general Governors. They had the pleasure of seeing amid an indescribable emotion that the appearance of Father Luis Amigo was translucent in spite of the many years that had passed. They saw through the glass that hermetically sealed the casket, Father Luis' smile that seemed to say to those who knew him in life that it *lighted up his face and not even death could erase it*. During the days of the 9th, 10th, and 11th the medical appraisers along with the Sisters Maria Angeles Anierte and Maria Eva Andres, Capuchin Tertiaries, took it upon themselves to clean and treat Father Luis' remains in the presence of the Archbishop's delegate from Valencia as well as a Notary and a Promoter of the Faith. Finally, on April 12 – the 109th day from which Father Luis had put on his Capuchin habit and 94 years since he had founded the Tertiary Order – he was again buried after a High Mass presided over by the Archbishop of Valencia, Father Miguel Roca Cabanellas.

During the year 1984 fifty years after the death of Father Luis, renewed interest began from his two Congregations to better know and love the person of Father Luis in order to strengthen the radiation and enthusiasm surrounding him. Among the strategies that were planned to obtain their main objective for the celebration – gathered into the joyful shout of : Long live our founding father! – it is necessary to underline the strategy of making this event know was mainly from the publication in the BAC of Father Luis' *Complete Works*. This publication would be completed several years later with the edition *the minor Positio regarding his virtues*. Both works complemented and completed each other and have become for the Monks and the Sisters the *Fountain* of the most genuine knowledge of their Founder.

Then in 1985 – to the following year of that Amigonian Jubilee Year where the Amigonian Congregations wanted to celebrate the 50th anniversary of their Founder's death – there was another happening that continued to mark the rising and positive rhythm for the Cause of the Beatification and Canonization of Father Luis. February 1, 1985 the *Decree for the Validation of the Diocesan and Apostolic Process* was signed in Rome and shortly thereafter – March 4th – Father Francisco Moccia, Palotino, was named to the Cause, and Father Agripino Gonzales, Vicepostulator, proceeded under his direction to elaborate the perceptive *Positio regarding the virtues* of God's Servant which was published for the first time in Rome in 1987. From that moment on, the only thing left to do was to await the verdict from the theologians about it. This verdict came December 10, 1991 when – once again unanimous and very laudatory votes – this *Positio* was approved. A few months later, June 13, 1992 – following the favorable opinion of the Bishop and Cardinals Commission, it was read and signed in Rome in the presence of Pope Juan Pablo II. This decree recognized Father Luis Amigo as *Venerable*.

In the decree, among other things it stated:

- *The generous offering of the Good Shepherd – “I give my life for my sheep” is the spiritual hinge upon which the live of the Servant of God Luis Amigo y Ferrer was attached. . .*
- *He was a religious man of unblemished piety and profound spiritual harmony. He arranged in perfect order his Capuchin obligations that of founder and of Bishop until his last days.*
- *His spirituality, as a good son of the Seraphin of Asis and embodying those attitudes of the Good Shepherd encompass the*

Christ-centered mercy and redemption and a Dolorosa Mariology of Our Lady at the foot of the cross of Christ.

- *His solid and firm faith shines mainly because of his passionate search for God's will and for his own obedience. . .*
- *The virtue of hope is seen in his faith in the mercy and in the faithfulness of God in whom he firmly hoped. As a faithful Capuchin and diligent founder he showed a providential sense of life acting with serenity and audacity under very difficult circumstances.. .*
- *His intense charity towards God made him fervent in piety and his love for his neighbor pushed him to search for the poor, the forgotten and the sick. For the youth and especially for the wayward youth he was a true teacher admirably gifted with pity and comprehension. . .*
- *He was known also as a man of great humility and exquisite prudence and highest piety. . . .*
- *Because of his abundance in all of these virtues as a Servant of God we are convinced that we "stand before a giant in his spiritual life, a model and prototype of a religious man, priests, bishops and founders. . .*

While they waited, however, while the corresponding Commissions proceeded to the study and the verdict of the *Positio* over the Virtues of Father Luis Amigo, the other Canon Process took place in Caracas centering upon a possible miraculous healing attributed to his intercession. This Process, begun February 5, 1990 in the Archbishop's Sede continued during almost two months being closed April 2nd. The material was quickly gathered and sent to Rome where it was assigned to the Congregation for the Causes of the Saints in hopes that Father Luis would be declared *Venerable* and they could then officially proceed to his study.

The first impressions received in Rome regarding the *grace* were positive. Some of the consulting doctors pointed out the he had great possibilities to satisfactorily pass the medical Commission. The corresponding *Positio* was elaborated over the above mentioned *grace*, but on May 5, 1994 when it was officially studied inside the medical consultation, the result – which at first was indecisive – finished being negative by two votes against three.

Considering everything and on the border of what this delay in recognition of a possible grace has suspected that the disappointment in the Canonical

Cause of Father Luis of that in 1992 which came to a brilliant fast and happy ending, the knowledge of and the love of Father Luis continues to increase.