

## **Mother Claudine Echernier's Call Today –**

### **To make the good God known and loved**

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#### **Abstract**

**“The Cross was her book; the Cross will be her glory”** Mother Claudine Echernier, the foundress of the congregation of the Sisters of the Cross loved Jesus Christ whole heartedly. She applied herself constantly to reproduce the life, the works and the virtues of our Lord Jesus Christ. Her deep personal love for the Cross, made her to follow the foot prints of Jesus Christ and dedicated her life to serve him. **“She lived only for him, she sought him alone”**. Her life and teachings brought new changes in many people's life. Today Mother Claudine Echernier calls us **to be witnesses of the paschal joy and to sow the love of Jesus Christ in the heart of all.**

#### **Introduction**

Mother Claudine Echernier, the foundress of the congregation of the Sisters of the Cross was born in 1801. She was a native of Feternes of France and belonged to an extremely poor family but richer in faith. Having lost her mother at the early age of 15, she had to bring up her little brothers and sisters. Even at her young age she had a thirst for knowledge and a great spiritual sensibility. Her deep personal love for Jesus Christ crucified, she responded to God's call to fulfill her desire to belong entirely to God in the service of the neighbor. At the age of 27, she came to Chavanod and began to gather children and young girls in order to teach them reading, writing and catechism. Her life and teaching brought new changes in many people's life. In 1838, the congregation of the Sisters of the Cross was founded with the guidance of Fr. Peter Mermier, the founder of the Missionaries of St. Francis de Sales. She dedicated her life to eradicate the ignorance and misery of women. Drawing the inspiration from the Gospel of Jesus Christ, she had the thirst to reveal the merciful love of the Father and the liberating power of the paschal mystery to all the people. Her love towards God was expressed through her service and sacrifice.

#### **Supreme love for Jesus**

The bible says ***“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.” (John 3:16).*** Jesus love humanity whole heartedly and gave himself as a price to redeem us. The work of salvation which Jesus did on the cross was his public demonstration of God’s love. This unconditional love captured our mother. Her generous love for Jesus Christ was manifested in her words, her thoughts and her works. She always spoke of the love of the sacred heart of Jesus for men to with such unction and with so penetrating an accent and all those who hear her were so impressively touched. She regularly read the **“Imitation of Christ”**. One day she meditated this book in a bus, an impertinent person told her “you seem to be very attentive, my dear sister. Undoubtedly, it is a friend’s letter that interests you so much? Mother replied her “yes” and she told her. I am reading the news of Jesus Christ, my only beloved.” This incident shows her supreme love towards Jesus Christ.

### **Following Christ**

The Bible Says, ***“The one who says he abides in him ought himself to walk in the same manner as he walked in the same manner as he walked” (I john 2:6).*** When love for Jesus fills a person, he will follow Jesus Christ in love. Our venerated Mother Claudine applied herself constantly to reproduce the life, the works and the virtues of our Lord Jesus Christ. Like Jesus Christ, she loved poverty, suffering, work, privations, and an obscure and hidden life. Her intentions her words and her works were animated by the spirit of our Lord Jesus Christ. The bible says ***“I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who lives, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now lives in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.”***Galatians 2:20. According to St. Paul., Jesus Christ was her life and she carried Jesus within herself. Her deep personal love for cross, made her to follow the foot prints of Jesus Christ and dedicated her life to serve him. **“She lived only for him, she sought him alone”**.

### **Love of neighbours**

The bible says ***“If you love me, you will keep my commandments” (John 14:15).*** At the last supper the Lord Jesus spoke to his disciples, ***“A new command I give you. Love one another”.*** (John:3.34). Jesus revealed here the great truth that people of God abide in God’s love by loving one another. Our Mother fulfilled the commandment of Jesus Christ. She gave herself up as much as she was able to all spiritual and temporal works of mercy. Mother had a character of

compassion as Jesus Christ had in his life. One of the incident happened in her life was, “In 1848 at the time when she took the sisters to Chaumont, she came to know the next day after her arrival that in a faraway hamlet of the important town of this locality there was some on sick with typhoid. She went over to place to spend the night there and took care of the invalid. She didn’t take care of herself at all”. Another incident was, when “the poor neighbours did not have fire wood; she informed them that we were heating our oven so that could profit by this occasion to bake their bread”. All these incidents show her love towards neighbours.

### **Denying Self**

Jesus said *“If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me” (Matthew 16:24)*. Denying “self” means giving up all our rights to our lives and rendering it to the Lord Jesus Christ. Death of “self” is a deep spiritual experience. Our mother Claudine practiced the virtue of “Denying self”. She lived a life of privations of all kinds. She was patience when she broke her leg. Only she was master of her emotion, our mother embraced it as a testimony of her affection and she imposed a penance on all those who wept.

### **Conclusion**

The Bible says **“unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit”. (John 12:24)**. Through the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ we got the priceless gift of Salvation. Through our mother Claudine Echernier’s sacrifice we got the good educational Institutions, Hospitals and many more organization to serve the poor and young children. The proof of our love to God is our willingness to suffer and sacrifice. Like our Mother we must sacrifice our self **“to make the good God known and loved”**.