

Feast of M. Clara

Sr. Melanie Paradis

Imagine M. Clara sitting with us in the chapel.
She has listened to the same readings we have heard today.
Imagine how these readings must have spoken to her heart, because they must have.
She lived these readings.

Imagine:

We heard from Jeremiah:

For I know the plans I have in mind for you-plans for your welfare and not for woe, so as to give you a future of hope.

A future of hope: for You and for your community

M. Clara believed in God's plans when she:

Left the Sisters of Sr. Pauline Mallinkrodt
Left Paderborn with a few sisters
Left Salzkotten, misunderstood by her sisters,
Left Metz,

M. Clara was able to believe in a future of hope when:

she faced the Kulturkampf
her sisters turned their backs on her
she was refused audience with the Pope
she had next to nothing to live on and only one companion
And she believed in a future of hope even while dying in Rome.

M. Clara must have placed her trust in God's plans for the welfare of her community when:

she sent her sisters away to France, to the USA, to the Netherlands and again sent sisters to USA after the wreck of the Deutschland

M. Clara acted out of trust that God knew the plans for her welfare, her community's welfare and a future of hope. We saw this throughout her life.

Imagine:

In our Founding Constitution M. Clara writes:

To love one another rightly must be taken seriously by all -

The great Love she had for God provided her with the grace to live her life in love:

Love for her mother and father, her family,
Love for her first community and mentor,
Love for orphans and the poor sick
Love for the persecuted Church
Love for all her sisters

Her words in the founding constitution were not hollow, they were etched deep in her heart. We have seen the results of this deep love in her life and the lives of her sisters.

Imagine:

In the Gospel according to John we hear:

Unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains just a grain of wheat; but if it dies it produces much fruit.

And so M. Clara could die to self in order that life might continue
And spread:

From Germany

To France

To USA

To Netherlands

To Indonesia

To East Timor

To Brazil

To Romania

To Malawi

To Italy

possibly to Suriname

And who knows where else

M. Clara's life and legacy lives on, around the world, in places and cultures she could not have imagined. As written in Jeremiah, She trusted in the ways of God. As in the Founding Constitution she wrote, M. Clara loved from the depths of her heart. As in the Gospel of John, M. Clara died to self so that others could live.

How do we hear these readings for ourselves today?
Each in our own way and together as community?

We are on the cusp of a new chapter in our lives as a community. We have been transformed from a Province to a Region through our own transitus of transition. How do we live into our future? Do we trust the plans God has for us of a future of hope? How do we offer the gift of ourselves and the community? Do we act out of love as a blessing in the heart of this troubled world? Are we able to let go of what no longer serves us and others? Do we die to what no longer brings life to us in order for new life to appear?

Soon we will have a simple ritual of transition of leadership for our new Regional Leadership Team.

Are we ready to face our future, trusting in God's plans for us, loving each other as best we can, and willing to be of service to the greater good of our community and the community that is all of God's creation? Will we bear much fruit?

I believe we have it in us to do all of this. I know it because I've heard it spoken through these past five days of our Regional Assembly. I have read it in the vision prayer we've created, a vision prayer with the intention to be completely open to what life presents.

We are M. Clara's sisters and brothers.

We continue to live the life of love passed on to us from M. Clara, and we are able to live transitus, to live transition, to be a blessing in the heart of the world.