

Madrid

My name is Marina. I am Professed Perpetual in the Congregation of Oblate sisters of Christ the Priest. I started here on 22nd July 2001 and I go on full of joy in this contemplative life, in silence and solitude, in oblation and continuous prayer.

When a young and burning heart thinks about giving yourself completely to others, it usually gives way to Apostolic life, active, visible in the eyes of the world. It was also like that for me. The Lord wanted me to have an experience in a mission (in Dominican Republic) during the summer months. This marked me in such a way that I decided to go again for a longer time and live with the poor, giving them what I had: my time, my person, my faith in Jesus Christ and the strength of his love.

I spent ten months there; and during this time God was causing such a thirst in me that I did not know how or where to calm it. I gave myself to work: catechesis, looking after children, visiting prisons, caring for ill people... Until it happened something that I consider providential: one day I woke up sick, shivering and very weak. I was taken to a tiny clinic where they put me saline solution and they laid me on a stretcher. No more was needed. The doctor said I had total exhaustion. I was left sleeping for two days in which I did not wake up even to eat.

Although that incident may seem odd or insignificant, it made me reflect; and when I returned to Spain, I could not stop thinking this: I had worked to the point of exhaustion and there was still so much to do. There had to be another way to help. A more efficient way.

I could not go back to my life before. I needed to respond to that thirst caused by God's love who had given me so much. I had to pray, to listen the voice of God, and get to know His will. My soul was stirred by my experience in the mission and my heart, too impetuous, was restless with the necessity of responding to Christ's call. This frame of mind increased my concern at home. This was my situation, too tired of fighting against myself and in despair because God was silent.

But the Lord had mercy on me and his infinite patience taught me that *He calls those whom he wants* and we have no merit in His choice, made with love of predilection.

Holy Week arrived. Seven months of battle had exhausted my soul and clouded my joy. Then I had the opportunity to spend those days in an exterior accommodation at the Mother House of the HH. Oblates of Christ the Priest in Madrid. It was the occasion: I needed silence and solitude to hear the voice of God. I just wanted a quiet place where I could sort out what was like a volcano inside me. I had no contact with the sisters. Those were holy days for everyone. And the Lord was waiting for me patient and smiling.

On Maundy Thursday, with a tired heart, I repeated this prayer to the Lord: "Lord, request me whatever you want because I can't go on anymore". Then, that divine Heartbeat gave me Life: *I pray for them and I consecrate myself for them.*

I had found my place in Church! As the saint of Lisieux, I understood that the Heart of Christ continues beating day and night in desire and love for souls... However, who brings those souls the river of grace through the sacraments but the priests? How will they know the incarnate Word without priests that preach to them? How will they experience the joy of his mercy without priests absolving their sins? Where will they satisfy their hunger without priests to feed them with the Eucharist? How can they live as children of God without priests to baptize them? The Heart of Christ the Priest demands men willing and in love... They need to be holy, to show the world the true face of the Lord.

I had found that other way of giving my life until death! In silence, in solitude, in the constant love to God; offering to Him my body capable of suffering so that *they might have life abundantly*; in the constant prayer to the Father *so that they may be sanctified* and so the world may believe in Him.

Finally, I remember something that may sum up very well the meaning of our contemplative life. When I was a postulant, a few months after entering the Congregation, a priest told me, "I will be able to stand as long as you remain on your knees." I think these words are quite eloquent.

I thank God for the immense gift of the contemplative vocation, for all the blessings he gives me every day. I thank God because I have learned something: His plan is eternal over each one and He never regrets it; His call is forever and you can have a life based on loyalty of God's love that will never depart from us.

I thank God for this unique and beautiful vocation: Oblate of Christ the Priest. For the missionary experience that led me to where I am today. The mission trained me for a "major mission", it made me discover that *unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains just a grain of wheat, but if it is buried, if it is hidden, if it dies, it produces much fruit.*

I don't want to forget someone who is accompanying me on this path: Mother (as we always call the Virgin Mary). She was the perfect Oblate, who offered her body and her life so that Christ the Priest would be present among us and carry out the mission of giving the whole humanity back to the Father. She was the best contemplative, who *kept all these things in her heart*. She was the Queen of the Apostles, Mother of the whole Church. Who will dare say that the life of Mother was barren and useless because she lived in silence and hiding, *devoted to prayer, together with the apostles and some women*? Who doubts that Mother's prayer held the Apostolic beginnings of the newly born Church?

We want to be like Her, I want to be like Her, with a constant *Fiat*, a constant *be done* the Will of the eternal Father.

Marina