

*SISTER MARÍA AGUSTINA RIVAS LÓPEZ, RBP...  
A WOMAN WITH THE HEART OF A SHEPHERD*



**1. MOTIVATION**

(Let us establish a sacred space to contemplate this shepherdess and lamb)

**27 September, 2017...we remember 27 years of her martyrdom**

**“Oh you whom my soul loves” Song 1:7**

A time of grace, a space to resize our life and mission...

Aguchita moved by leaps and bounds! Accepting each mission with great enthusiasm and hope. Her life was a continuous surrender of peace and trust in the Good Shepherd.

*“...the recognition of her holiness is given by the continuity of her work  
Despite the context, the difficulties and her subsequent death...” Giza*

**2. MEMORY OF MARTYRDOM**

**THE VOW OF MARTYRDOM, BY SAINT JOHN EUDES** (*OC. 12, 135-137*)

I adore and glorify you, most beloved Jesus, in the cruel martyrdom you suffered in your passion and on your cross... I adore and bless you, in the holy sacrifice of the altar, on which you offer yourself continually... I praise and glorify you in the various martyrdoms of your saints... I adore and bless the infinite love that you have, to the blessed martyrs who have existed in the Church since its inception and who will exist until the end of the world.

**MARTYRDOM, IN THE WORDS OF SAINT MARY EUPHRASIA** (*Conferences, Chapter 63 – Charity and Zeal*)

I am confident that our Congregation will become very numerous, that it will spread far and that God will grant us the grace that some will shed their blood for the salvation of souls. Do I tell you with this that you must go in search of martyrdom? No, it is enough that you have enough zeal to want nothing more than to obey and not desire or want more than that which obedience asks of you. You must be martyrs with a continuous martyrdom of sacrifice and labor.

**MARTYRDOM, IN THE WORDS OF POPE FRANCIS** (*The testimony of a Christian – May 6, 2014*)

"Martyrdom means witness. The path goes in the footsteps of this testimony, in the footsteps of Jesus to bear witness to Him and, so often, this testimony ends by giving one's life. We are not a 'religion' of ideas, of pure theology, of beautiful things, of commandments. No, we are a people who follow Jesus Christ and bear witness and this testimony sometimes comes to giving one's life [...]."

**The witness, in daily life, with death, is always fruitful. The Church is fruitful and a mother when she testifies of Jesus Christ. On the other hand, when the Church closes in on itself, does not bear witness, it becomes sterile. And the Christian who does not bear witness remains sterile without giving the life they have received from Jesus Christ [...] And it is not possible to bear witness without the presence of the Holy Spirit within us. In difficult times, where we must choose the right path, where we must say 'no' to so many things that maybe try to seduce us, it is He who makes us strong to go this way, the way of testimony:**

**We ask ourselves:** *What is the nature of my witness? ¿Am I a Christian witness of Jesus or am I a just a statistic in this group? Am I fruitful because I testify, or am I barren because I cannot let the Holy Spirit carry me forward in my Christian vocation?"*

*(A moment of contemplation. With Pope Francis' questions, we meditate on Aguchita's surrender... and our own witness...)*

### 3. YOUR PREFERENTIAL OPTION

**Apostolic zeal is the connection of the other vows, it is the heart of our vocation... it is expressed in the commitment to the defense of life (CLT).**

In Aguchita we can see:

- ✚ Her commitment to people who have been excluded,
- ✚ Her love for Mother Earth.

**We remember** Mary Euphrasia who exclaimed in her time: *"How many times did we hear of the abhorrent trafficking of Black people on my native island Noirmoutier!..."* The zeal that burned in her gave her strength to confront this scourge and to free people. *"What a joy to be able to break the double chain of those unfortunate creatures!..."* (Conf 16)

Aguchita, like the Holy Mother, heard the call of the Shepherd. We read in her personal notes:

*"I want to consume in the work of my apostolate all of the reserves of my heart, of my faculties: I want the drips of the candle which illuminates and diminishes"*

If only she were here today! She would hear the cries of the people forced to migrate, the refugees, the victims of trafficking, of the abuse of Mother Nature! ... a reality that grows alarmingly in our villages, and requires a response of solidarity from each one of us. With these two women who made their lives a prophecy, let us proclaim:

#### BLESSED IS THE WOMAN

**Blessed** is the woman who has clean eyes,  
Awake to know how to read the mystery of life,  
To understand the signs of the times,  
And discover the footsteps of the Shepherd.

**Blessed** is she who has her ears very open,  
To listen to the offered messages,  
And to welcome the voices of the little ones,  
The cries of the victims, the prophet's  
announcements.

**Blessed** is the woman who has open hands, free;  
who knows that the Kingdom of God belongs to her

and awaits it. The woman with hands that are  
available, serving, generous, so that the Kingdom of  
God may come.

**Blessed** is the woman with a burning heart,  
Who listens to the Word and becomes engulfed,  
Who enjoys the promise, spreads optimism,  
believes in utopia, and works for it.

**Blessed** is the woman who raises her arms in a  
supplicating way, aware of her need for God and  
the Spirit that nourishes History and makes the  
Kingdom possible.





## ***MEMORY OF THE COMMITMENT TO CREATION***

**Creation is a manifestation of the provident love of God. It has been given to us to care for it and to transform it into a source of dignified life for humanity (CLT).**

- **St. John Eudes:** *“I praise God and extol God’s name forever, for God clothed me in the garment of salvation and girded me with the garment of righteousness.” (Memorial of SJE)*
- **St. Mary Euphrasia:** *“In this case, react as soon as possible, so as not to become an arid and dry plant, unable to receive the beneficial influence of the sky’s dew.”*
- **Aguchita:** *“The reality of the spiritual life is a continuous imitation of God, our model; because God has felt fatigue, thirst, pain, hunger... the disciple cannot be more than the teacher.”*

### ***4. OUR COMMITMENT***

Pope Francis travels the world inviting everyone to live a **“SEASON OF CREATION.”** From 1st September to 4th October, Christians around the world are uniting to pray for the care of creation.

Suggested symbolic actions:

- Identify an environmental site, visualizing places of environmental destruction in your country...
- Incorporate a symbolic action of environmental repair... Make a public commitment
- Offer a prayer asking forgiveness for acts of environmental injustice... against the integral ecology in yourself, in the community, in the world...
- Share your commitment...

### ***5. SENDING FORTH***

***Let Aguchita fill the hearts of each sister with renewed zeal and commitment to serve all marginalized people (Sr. Ellen Kelly, Congregational Leader-04 AUGUST 2017).***

***Commission of Justice, Spirituality for the Mission – Province of Peru***

