

## At the Heart of Jesus

Sr. Eufemia Henryka Kasprzycka  
Born January 30, 1892, Poreba, Poland

I entered into the Congregation on April 17, 1914. Since this time, I twice had a chance to meet in close proximity and speak with Mother General Klara. The first time I met her in the seminary in Tarnow, where I was sent in May as a postulant. Mother General Klara came in June with Sr. Assistant Inocenta for a visitation. Being in the Congregation, I was wholly moved by thanksgiving to God for my dear religious vocation, and in zeal for the greatest sacrifice, I regarded each thing in the convent and each Sister as a saint. I did not know how to approach and honor a Sister who had made her final profession. I observed each Sister from all sides: how she worked, how she prayed and her behavior, in order to imitate her. The Sisters were hard-workers and were full of sacrifice and renunciation: there was in them something godly that was associated with them. And what to say about my feelings when I saw Mother General Klara? Her regal person, her behavior, her serious but cheerful face and her eyes: far and deep, penetrating and all seeing. In spite of her respectability and authority I felt that she is the true mother. Her motherly and watchful eyes followed each Sister like a shadow. I also felt them on myself. During one day of visitation I returned from the church – I had gone to Holy Mass later because that morning I stayed in the kitchen – and I sat down for my breakfast. Because I had a good appetite I ate some rolls with butter quickly. I took into consideration that I should keep up my strength, since full of health and enthusiasm, I was eager to work. This work was very hard, for we were prohibited from keeping female servants, and all heavier work waited for the postulant. Mother General Klara was sitting nearby and she observed me eagerly. Her eyes penetrated me like the sunlight penetrates a window. Her face shone with a smile and she asked me tenderly if I had it too hard, if I was content and if I did not long for my family. She ordered me to lock an upper window and continually observed me. At the end of her visitation she kissed and cordially embraced me. Oh, how happy I felt that Mother General put her kiss on my head! After the departure of Mother, my Sister Superior Salomea said: “Try not to disappoint Mother General because she expects that you will be a good member of the Congregation.” How happy I felt that I was in the convent of the Sister Servants of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus and that I was called a member of this Congregation! The cheerful and attractive goodness of Mother Klara, and her godly and maternal approach were the reason for these my feelings. The experience of these moments in the presence of Mother Klara deepened and strengthened my vocation, like the branch of a tree strengthens itself by sap flowing from its trunk. I felt that I was bound more closely to the trunk of the Congregation, and surrounded by the warmth of God’s spirit emanating from the spiritual profile of Mother General Klara.

The second time I saw Mother Klara was in 1915. I had stopped at our motherhouse in Krakow on my way from Tarnow through Krakow to Wadowice, during an epidemic at the army hospital where our Sisters and our whole novitiate was working. I was with two postulants, Sr. Apolonia and Sr. Imelda. We went to greet Mother General in her cell. She kissed us in a maternal way and sat down on a low couch, settling us down on the floor, around herself. With great love and the thoughtfulness that then filled all good and godly superiors who cared about

their young generation in that difficult time, Mother Klara spoke with us as a mother talks with her children when she sends them far away. She gave us instructions and directions on how we should behave during our trip, after we reached the hospital, during our work, and how we should react and respond, in the event of possible offensive behavior. Watching Mother Klara in our simplicity, we absorbed her each word as something of the greatest importance and holiness. The goodness of Mother, from which flowed all her words and encouragement, bound us to her, provided us with courage for each battle and strengthened our vocation. We felt that every word of Mother was filled with God's spirit, because it influenced us in God's way. We bid farewell to her and, tragically (!) we nevermore saw her on this earth.

When I was a novice, a short time after the death of Mother, I often heard Sisters who reminisced about Mother with longing, and at every occasion they exalted her virtues and God's spirit that acted within her. They used to say that Mother, herself absorbed and prayerful, watched that everything in the Convent was kept according to the Rules and the spirit of the Congregation. When she had to correct or admonish a Sister for a transgression, immediately after admonishing, she kissed and embraced this Sister, giving her proof that only care for her progress obliged Mother to do it; the maternal love in her heart toward each Sister was authentic. She could thus sweeten even a reprimand.

When we ironed linen and a novice did her work carelessly, a professed Sister, Rafaela, present with us, used to say: Mother Klara would not accept such carelessly ironed linen. When Mother received linen with wrinkles, she returned it to the iron-room because she wanted to accustom Sisters to conscientious and precise work. Mother used to say that a Sisters' work should come as out of a box. She taught Sisters to be conscientious and precise in everything.

Sr. Eufemia Henryka Kasprzycka

Karczowka, June 18<sup>th</sup>, 1955

#### Appendix:

When Mother Klara sent us to the army hospital in Wadowice and gave us various directives, she advised that we should not show fear anywhere because of our unpreparedness. We should rather have such an attitude and behavior that we could do anything. Our will and attitude of resourcefulness will then be a cause of confidence to the government, and we will never experience a lack of the help of God, if we but work with a good intention and for the glory of God.



Sr. Bogumila Anna Zajchowska  
Born December 24, 1879, Bajdy, Poland

I was accepted into the Congregation in 1900. My postulancy I spent in a house of the Congregation, and my novitiate and next years were spent in Krakow at our Motherhouse. In the beginning of 1915, I left for Wadowice, to an army hospital. Later I worked with Sisters in the army hospitals near Bukowina and Brzesc Kujawski.

I can say that Mother Klara was as a person chosen by Providence for the position of co-foundress, and later general superior in the Congregation. She had great virtue. Her face was pleasant and attractive. Her manners were composed, tactful and full of religious dignity. She was distinguished by great exactitude and punctuality. She did not like even the smallest delays and defects, such as in keeping the daily schedule and in other circumstances.

She often and for a long time remained before the Most Blessed Sacrament. When her health allowed, she took part in the common prayers and community life of the Congregation. I remember that during Lent, especially during Holy Week, she wanted to fast, but it so exhausted her that she had to reinforce her frail body with more substantial food.

She was often sick; she especially suffered rheumatic heart disease. This suffering often caused her to faint. When she felt better, she said dutiful prayers, but often after this effort she suffered a heart attack. Concerned about her health, the Sisters asked Dr. Maczka if would forbid Mother to pray so long. Dr. Maczka answered: "If she can rule so many women, she will rule herself."

When she gave orders, she asked rather than ordered. She used to say: "Would you be so kind or polite and do this." Her relationship toward Sisters was maternal but decisive. She liked giving little gifts to the Sisters. She knitted different things from wool, and, like a good mother, she would notice the needs in the Sisters' clothes, which she later remedied. She valued the Sisters' work very much.

I worked 14 years with embroidery, so I was constantly in the convent and I served Mother during her sickness. All this time I never saw that she was impatient. I did not notice even a small impatience.

Mother had also a great humility, which she practiced in her actions. Once a Sister repaired her coat carelessly, with big seams, and the material was even roughly sewn. Mother did not like this work, and said that it would chafe her. Without reflection, I said to Mother: "What kind of religious are you, Mother, that you cannot endure it?" Mother did not say a word; I did not notice any reaction on her face. At one time our Father Founder came from Przemysl. When I had greeted him, he gave me his gloves for repair. Without much thought I quickly fulfilled this task. When Mother noticed this work, she reproached me that I did not have any permission. I answered reflexively: "Do you think, Mother, I should say to Father that I do not have any permission from you?" Mother left the room saying nothing, and after a moment she came back, bent the knee before me and apologized for her remark.

Mother rigorously tested one older Sister who had entered from another Congregation. This Sister was very sensitive and the test used by Mother had a negative reaction by her. I was anxious that she might break. I dared to say to Mother Klara that perhaps it would be better if Mother would treat this Sister more leniently. I did not believe it myself when I noticed that Mother changed her relationship with this Sister. I admired Mother's deep humility. She availed

herself of even the youngest Sister's opinion, when she saw that the Sister had a reason. She listened to a remark from everybody, and she used it in her deeds.

When Mother Klara fell mortally ill, I was in an army hospital near Bukowina. One night I had a dream that Mother said good-bye to us. The military commander gave me an 8-day leave and I went to Krakow. Mother was very ill. She was very glad for my coming and she said to me: "I would like to go to heaven right now, but as God's will desires." The day before her death she felt well and she asked to call a doctor to ask him when she can get up. She died at noon. When the Sisters had rung the bell for examination of conscience, Mother wanted to arise. Suddenly her agony started. This agony persisted for but a few moments.

When Mother had come to know that Sister nurses were even near Brzesc Litewski, she was very glad "that our Congregation reached so far, where there were not any religious."

Mother kept the religious Rules very zealously, and she watched that all spiritual exercises were celebrated at the scheduled time, even down to the minute. She assigned a suitable penance for not keeping silence in places and times of silence. She had a very penetrating mind. I was sure that she could read a soul like a glass of water, and saw its interior state.

She was very kind and cordial toward guests, who visited her in abundance as the superior of the house, but all affairs she settled briefly, keeping appropriate social norms.

I regard Mother Klara as a saint, because I was touched by her virtue in her behavior and actions. There was no difference between her teaching and her life. On each account I was sure that she acted like a saint.

It seemed that Bishop Joseph Pelczar prepared her for death. The funeral was very solemn. Father Founder, Bishop Pelczar, celebrated it.

The more important affairs I commend to Mother Klara, trusting in her intercession before God.

I finish my true statement and I bless myself.

Sr. Bogumila Zajchowska

Przemysl, September 29, 1954.

Supplement:

Mother never spoke with a shrill voice. She was always very controlled. She treated Sisters very politely. "Sister would you be so kind," the phrase she used when ordering that something be done.

Mother Klara sometimes told something cheerful, but she was never foolish. She gave the Congregation an example of attentiveness.

She was very often sick. Her trouble, caused by a tumor, she relieved with mineral baths and other medications. This tumor was large and hard, surrounded by several smaller growths. She remained in bed a lot, but if it was necessary she would get up and make trips, visitations etc.

Mother Klara suffered much emotionally. She had left a Congregation that she still loved. From her own Sisters she had to endure much pain. Some Sisters did not live according to the spirit of the Congregation; others had their ambitions and demands.



Mother Klara was fearful, maybe because of her heart disease and trials in the Congregation of the Servants of Jesus.

Some years before her death, Mother said to Sr. Bogumila that when she died she would clamp her fist and would not allow anyone to take the ring off her finger.

When Mother consumed her meals, she did it always with as much seriousness as if she were praying.

Each Sister always had access to Mother.

Mother Klara gave big penances for transgressions against the Rules or the daily schedule. For example, if a Sister overslept in the morning, did not wake up at the bell and was late for prayers, she had to come to the obedience with a pillow. If a Sister cleaned her shoes in her cell, then she had to come to the obedience with the shoes.