

Claire Monestès, XMCJ (1880–1939)

Born in 1880 in Chambéry (France) in a well-to-do family, Claire had a happy childhood. As a boarder with the Ladies of the Sacred Heart, she is fascinated by a painting of St. Francis Xavier and dreams of being a missionary like him; wasn't she baptized on December 3, his feast day? Unfortunately, following her father's bankruptcy, Claire has to go into exile to earn a living: from 1902 to 1904, she gives French lessons at a college in Dublin (Ireland).



Returning to Marseille, where her family has settled, Claire learns a trade and then meets a Jesuit, Father Eymieu; she becomes his documentalist and he later becomes her spiritual director.

Her dream of being a missionary is still there. Claire is looking for her path. In 1906, during a retreat, she decided to give her life to God. But where? In 1916, she joined a group of Christian women, the "Sociales," whose goal was to help women workers fight against social injustices. Painful failure! After a few approaches to different religious communities, Father Eymieu invites her to create something new in the midst of a changing world.

Her project slowly matures: reaching out to those who do not know Christ. In 1919, she offers young women workers in Marseille a time for reflection during their break: the "Missions de Midi;" she also opens up a restaurant for them. Other young women gradually join her. In 1921, **La Xavière** was born, of Ignatian spirituality, with the motto: "in Christo Jesu" and a saying: "Let us perpetually adapt." Claire died in Paris on February 14, 1939.

"Being available to the Holy Spirit" is what Claire wants for the Xavières, living an intense and joyous religious life, but in the midst of the world, open to the needs of the world and the Church. No work instituted, no costume, but a deep desire to "follow Christ in his mission to sum up all things and to reconcile all humanity in his Body." (Const.2)

The Xavière is an Institute of apostolic life of pontifical right, present in Africa (Cameroon, Ivory Coast and Chad), in Canada and in Europe (Germany and France).

QUOTE: "The one who will see very clearly will see God in all things."

LINK: <http://www.xavieres.org>