

A Journey of Transformation:
From the Cloister to the World

MARGARITA MARÍA LÓPEZ DE MATURANA

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Edited by Teresa Postigo & Isabel Ávila



Mercedarian Missionaries of Bérriz

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FROM THE CLOISTER TO THE WORLD

Originally published in Spain as *El porqué de una transformación*

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English Translation by JBI Language Solutions | www.JBILanguageSolutions.com

Translator: Daniel Salinero | www.TheWriteTranslator.com

Printed by

Typesetting and Cover rearranged by Yun-Ju Rosa Lee

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Preface

There are lives, stories, and events that captivate by their simplicity and astonish by their strength and transcendence. Like a seed hidden in the earth captivates or astonishes us with its creative energy, or like a small amount of yeast that transforms and recreates an entire mass of dough by transcending its own existence. In the preparation of this new edition of the writings of Mother Margarita, we wanted to position ourselves in that perspective, because if anything became clear to us when we reread her written work it was the value of smallness, when it is authentic. That smallness and that hidden force recreate and transform everything because it is the actual force of God.

When this work took shape, from the beginning, it was clear to us that it would be best if Mother Margarita were to communicate her own words to us, letting them flow from the veracity and variety of her writings. Our job has been to present her words in a chronologically integrated and ordered way in the form of a diary since her journals and notes have been collected almost in their entirety. We have only used texts from other sources when we felt it essential in order to be able to contemplate as a whole the depth of her inner life and her unconditional surrender to the mission that God had entrusted to her.

Our intentions and wishes are that these texts help us contemplate the person and the work of Mother Margarita, her spiritual journey, and her response to the signs and calls of her time. That they lead us to discover her dreams and wishes, her recreation of the Redeeming Mercedarian Charism, and that they show us the response of some nuns from Bérriz, who were as unassuming as they were brave, capable of breaking centuries-old customs and traditions in order to shed light on Jesus and extend the Kingdom of God. That these texts help us discover and delve into the meaning of this Tale of Transformation.

It's difficult to reach the depth of her personal experience, but in this book we have her deeds and gathered many of her own words. They are words that lead us through the story of her life. They are words born from an authentic experience that impels us due to its beauty and

creative capacity. They are words that are alive, have meaning, and evoke. They awaken feelings, ideas, images, and values. They are heard in our ears, even though we read them in silence. They move our hearts. They are true and open to discourse. They call on us to delve deeply, and consequently, they bear genuine fruit.

There is plenty of life and love put into play during the course of this work in a behind-the-scenes and sincere way. And there is also the inspiration and fellowship of different women, some faraway in time, others nearer to our lives, who, even though not named, have made this work possible and to whom we must give our thanks that this work has come to light.

1884-1934

The End of an Era and the Beginning of Another

It's a time of change, of crisis. The old and the new confront each other, they intertwine, they oppose each other, and they move forward. There are conflicting forces during this time period. There are tense difficulties characterized by conflicts, deep contradictions, divisions, battles, and revolutions. There are political catastrophes, disasters in the moral sphere, acts of outrage committed outside the law as well as an amazing development in the arts and sciences.

There is an assertion that the history of humanity has been one of progress, advancing in a linear fashion, in an evolutionary and ascending way. This assertion carries with it the progressive hope for the Westernization of the planet. All of the forces that move openly in the socio-political sphere defend progressivism. It is of the opinion that scientific knowledge, the power of technology, economic development, and democracy, all have the power to lead humanity to the height of its possibilities. It asserts that the problem of many nations is underdevelopment and that the appropriate solution is economic and political growth following the blueprint laid out by the Western industrialized world.

Until the beginning of the twentieth century, Europe has been located in the center of the unfolding of history. The Industrial Revolution, the French Revolution, the Russian Revolution, the great European powers and their trading states begin an era of enormous economic and political expansion throughout the world until, in the periphery of this historic setting, two great non-European powers come to the fore: the United States of America and Japan. In 1914 war breaks out in Europe. In 1917, the Marxist Russian Revolution erupts. In 1920, Europe is in ruins. Around 1925 production recovers. Beginning in 1930, Fascism and Nazism are reborn. Colonized nations continue to dream about their freedom.

China

China was in a turbulent state at the beginning of the century. The imperial dynasty was struggling with palace intrigues. In 1900, the Boxer Rebellion took place. At first, the rebellion had the overthrowing of the Manchu Dynasty as its objective. Later, the objective was to fight against the power of the Church and foreign communities. The killing of foreign missionaries provoked an armed response from Germany, Russia, France, England, Italy, Japan, and the United States. These countries forced China to pay reparations. Further reforms were attempted until, in 1911, a victorious republican revolution broke out which forced the abdication of Emperor Pu Yi. The country became a federal republic. Soon after there was a time of revolt in which they tried to restore the empire. Separatist movements flared up which forced the president to step down. In 1923, a new constitution was enacted and soon after the young republic became embroiled in a bloody civil war. The combatants were divided into two main factions: the northerners who defended the central government, and the southerners who defended the Nationalist Government in Canton of Sun Yat-Sen, founder of the Kuomintang or Chinese Nationalist Party. The fight ended in 1928 with a victory for the southerners. The National Republic of China was established. The capital was transferred to Nanking. A new constitution was enacted and Chiang Kai-Shek was promoted to Chairman of the National Republic of China. Military revolts, secessionist operations, and the communist movement once again brought violent combat back to China. In 1931 China and Japan went to war over Japan's occupation of Manchuria and their attempts at expansion. During the next few years there were offensives and battles that divided the country among nationalists, communists, and army commanders who were spread out all over the country. Some of these commanders defended international territorial concessions while others were opposed. Some of these concessions were turned into small states. The fight against communism and the Japanese invasion deepened their differences, which forced them into a civil war in 1936.

In December of the same year, generals made an appeal to put an end to the war and to convene a meeting of unification and resistance against Japanese aggression.

Japan

At the end of the nineteenth century, Japan ended its isolation. In 1868, during the Meiji period, an extremely rapid process of economic development and modernization was initiated. The structure of the state was created following Western models: Parliament and the military after the German model, commercial systems after the British, cultural life after the French, and development following the American concept. Powerful economic groups asserted themselves. The metallurgical, textile, and mining industries equipped the army and the navy, giving them the ability to withstand any form of aggression. Japanese expansion began in 1890. When the war of 1914 broke out, Japan decided to join the Allies with the intention of taking control over the German possessions. Japanese naval forces took control of the German archipelagos situated in the Pacific: The Caroline, Marshall, and Mariana Islands. In 1919, Japan was one of the five greatest powers of the world. During the 1920s, Japan's ambitions for its army, commercial interests, and territorial expansion throughout Asia grew. In 1937, Japan declared war against China.

To the north of New Guinea lies Micronesia: a multitude of small islands and islets that extend over this part of Oceania in the western Pacific. It consists of four archipelagos: the Mariana, Palau, Caroline, and Marshall Islands. Altogether there are more than 1,460 islands and islets within an area of a few million square kilometers of ocean; however, they only occupy a total of 1,173 square kilometers of land. The Caroline Islands, discovered by Spain, but not always occupied by this country, were sold to Germany along with the Mariana and Palau Islands for 25 million pesetas on June 30, 1899, the day the Spanish colonial empire was destroyed in Oceania. They formed part of the New Guinea Protectorate until the First World War in 1914 when, as a

consequence of the war, Germany lost all of its colonies and this archipelago passed from German to Japanese rule.

Spain

Having lost its colonial empire, Spain wanted to find itself. A generation of intellectuals called for the Europeanization of the country, but at the same time contributed nationalist elements. In 1898, there was a Spain that died and another that was reborn. The two Spains were characterized by a clash between conservatism and modernism, traditionalism and Europeanism. There was a cultural and social legacy that was poorly distributed. It was a silent and crucial problem that was always present and led to intellectual and social confrontation. The beginning of the twentieth century was a troubled and revolutionary period. The two Spains desired to improve conditions in the country, but the experience of this ongoing dialectical tension failed to be resolved. After the far-off Soviet Revolution occurred, the human and social map of Spain shifted daily. There was silent civil strife that would explode in 1936 in atrocious open warfare where the Spain of liberty and revolution would break through.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the demographic pull intensified. It was a period during which the Spanish population increased its mobility in search of better job opportunities and living conditions. The Basque country and Catalonia, centers of metallurgy and textile production, diversified their businesses and extended their influence to the rest of the country. Because of their industrial progress, they acted as centers of attraction. An intense migratory wave toward the American continent also increased. Hunger, shortages, and the lack of land caused thousands of families to leave for the Americas in search of a better future. More than 1.5 million emigrants left Spain during the first fifteen years of the century, depopulating many Spanish regions. Once these emigrants found a better life they generally didn't return to Spain.

The social inequality that was created by power and wealth in turn produced political differences. The labor movement laid the foundation

for the Spanish Socialist Workers Party and the Communist Party. Anarchism and its revolutionary ideals spread through Catalonia, Zaragoza, and Valencia. The National Confederation of Labor arose from a synthesis of unionism and anarchism. The rallying cry of agrarian Spain was heard in rural disturbances that deeply affected Andalusia and Extremadura. In turn, regionalism was asserted in a more nationalistic approach, favoring the path of autonomy.

There was an abundance of cultural life. Creative writers and intellectuals such as The Generation of '98, writers from the Generation of 1914, and the Poets of '27 coexisted. Literary forms such as the novel, poetry, and essay all reached an extraordinary high level of inspiration. Modernism took hold in Catalonia. The fine arts, the sciences, and research proclaimed the prestige and universality of culture during the first third of the twentieth century.

At the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth, Spain was very much a socially and morally conservative state. The Church regained its leading role in the history of the country. It supported an expansion of the industrial state. A social Catholicism was created. In a desire to identify society and culture with the Church, a national Catholicism arose. Pope Pius X, on the other hand, condemned modernism.

The Church required the implementation of religious teaching in education. The power of education was huge, especially within the family and the role that mothers played in it. The education of young girls was a religious and political commitment. Their cultural identity was constituted by the inherent responsibilities found in their roles as wives and mothers. Their education was directed more than anything else toward their hearts, character, willpower, and good manners, as opposed to intellectual knowledge. There were no mixed-gendered schools. Public examinations were avoided. The sexes were to be separated. The commitment that the Church made to education was significant. The Church was responsible for the education of one third

of all elementary school students and the majority of all secondary school students.

In contrast to Christian Spain, pluralism and secularism were becoming evident in society. The Free Institute of Education (Institución Libre de Enseñanza) came into being with the purpose of modernizing Spain. A strong anticlerical current emerged after seeing how the Church recovered to a position of privilege without substantive changes. Men began to distance themselves from all that was religious. At the same time, a feminization of Catholicism occurred. This was further manifested in the proportion of each gender among members of religious orders. Schools and boarding schools run by female religious communities were full, proof of the faith that many people placed in the idea of the feminine role that Catholic schools proposed for girls.

In order to confront feminism and its social intervention practices, Catholic women modernized their values and competencies upon which they could build a new sense of female identity. The “militant,” a term coined by Pope Pius XI, takes the place of the lady of charity. Books became obligatory training tools. Women began to undertake varied types of work. Translation, foreign language study, and knowing about other cultures allowed them to become exceptional mediators and communicators.

The role of women in history was changing. Feminism and revolutionary movements that began in the nineteenth century united countless women in a common sphere, one that was unconnected with the domestic domain. Modernity allowed them to adopt a frame of mind of individuality, of political leadership, and of future citizens. Their social function as wives and mothers was changing. Some women cultivated their spirit. Others traveled. Some went to the cities in search of employment, while others took to the streets. Women went to public meetings and entered organizations in order to denounce injustices and effect change. They were not victims, but rather authors of history. Sometimes they were silenced and endured hostilities. At times, they made advances and sometimes they faced setbacks.

Numerous women were on different paths. This is the way in which the profile of the woman was being sketched during the twentieth century.

Missionary Activity

After the collapse produced by the French Revolution, missionary activity resumed in 1830 under the impetus of Pope Gregory XVI. Belgian, German, and Italian missionary congregations joined Spanish religious orders that were traditionally dedicated to missions. Missionary work expanded alongside European presence and colonization.

In 1917, Pope Benedict XV centralized missionary activity under the authority of the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith (Congregación de Propaganda Fide). The same pope, in his encyclical *Maximum Illud*, invited all of the bishops in the Catholic world to participate in the mission that Jesus Christ entrusted to his apostles. He spoke of a billion unbelievers who were lying in the shadow of death and to whom they must communicate the benefits of redemption. He called upon them to ensure the vitality of the mission and to establish new missions. All those who worked in the vineyard of the Lord have been called to carry the light of faith to nations living in the shadows. They should have no other motive than the glorification of God and the salvation of souls. Pope Benedict XV and later Pope Pius XI, in 1926, pronounced the parameters for missionary activity. Above all, such activity had to be Catholic and in no way the work of any European ecclesiastical province. It was about creating a robust, indigenous Christian community. Beginning in 1926, dioceses were created and governed by indigenous bishops.

Training institutes were created where missionaries were introduced to ethnology and the history of religions. A theology and knowledge of missions were worked out. Missionary personnel become international. This activity continued without pause until the crisis produced by the war of 1939.

The missionary movement in Spain gained strength at two focal points: Comillas Pontifical University, run by the Jesuits, and the Overseas Institute for the Propagation of the Faith, founded in Burgos

in 1897 by Gerardo Villota, a canon of the cathedral. In the overseas section seminarians were trained to serve temporarily (12 or 15 years) as missionaries in Latin America. In the Propagation of the Faith section seminarians were trained who wished to devote their lives to missionary work. At a later time when no one in Spain could remember anything about the institute in Burgos, on April 30, 1919, Pope Benedict XV addressed a letter to the archbishop of Burgos, the Most Reverend Juan Benlloch, urging him to create a national institute for the training of missionaries. Cardinal Benlloch carried out the papal command, and on December 3, 1920, the Overseas Institute for the Propagation of the Faith became the Saint Francis Xavier Spanish Institute for Foreign Missions (Seminario Español de San Francisco Javier). To mark the occasion of the feast day of this saint, the cardinal published a pastoral letter to the clergy and the faithful of his archdiocese titled "Foreign Missions, a Papal Invitation to Burgos." On July 20, 1922, the building's cornerstone was laid. That same year the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith approved the plan for the San Jorge mission in Colombia and the first missionaries were sent.

The emergence of the magazine *The Century of Missions* (*El Siglo de las Misiones*), by Father Hilarion Gil and his collaborator Father Zameza, S.J., contributed to the growth of the missionary movement. Father Zameza motivated and encouraged the movement in great measure within the School for the Study of Missions through retreats, conferences, and missionary days. Within the next 14 years, more than 60 missionary publications appeared. In 1923, 190 women's associations took an active role in missions.

The Convent of the Vera Cruz in Berriz

Berriz, a land that abounds with forests, steep paths, pastures, natural springs, and fields of corn and vegetables, formed part of the Duranguesado Region along with other villages of the area. For a time, the Duranguesado region separated from the Lordship of Biscay to unite with Navarre. In the thirteenth century, it rejoined the Lordship of Biscay.

The parish of St. John the Evangelist in Berriz was associated with the crown of the Catholic Monarchs. On August 5, 1540, among the benefices that made up the parochial canonry, Martin de Aguirresacona, a great devotee of the Virgin of Mercy, established a beaterio of Mercedarians in Berriz. The beaterio was added to the Order of Mercy, governed by its constitutions and dependent upon its superiors. They followed the Rule of St. Augustine and the Constitutions of the Order of Our Lady of Mercy, Redeemer of Captives. The provincials from the Mercedarian Province of Castile were the ones who made the visits. They were the people in whose hands the professions were made. Everything was placed under their control and influence. Of the first three blessed ones, Sister Maria de Santa Ana, sister of the founder, issued her solemn profession on June 12, 1542, along with the fourth Mercedarian vow.

Ever since the celebration of the Council of Trent, Tridentine reform has viewed religious seclusion and communal living as fundamental in the reform of female religious life. The first urgent canon for entering cloistered life dates back to the year 1620, and as such was sent to the beaterios in Bilbao and Marquina. The nuns in Bilbao, like those in Marquina, professed the fourth vow for a cloistered monastery in 1621. As a consequence of their extreme poverty, the nuns in Berriz did not make such a profession. The provincials urged them to do so repeatedly, but they always responded the same; they didn't have

the necessary means for cloistered life. Until 1741, they could not profess to be a cloistered monastery. It was the last beaterio to do so.

Beginning in 1558 the nuns of Berriz began learning to read, write, and to be trained in music. There were choir nuns who recited the Christian prayer of the *Divine Office* and nuns who exclusively prayed the rosary. The constitutions did not prohibit them from owning goods, but they couldn't have belongings without the permission from the prelate. Soon they began to lose assets and increasingly became poorer until they reached a point where they didn't have enough even for basic sustenance. In 1861 when Sister Mercedes Artamendi entered the convent, it was a time of famine.

Around 1869, the community of nuns began teaching day students. In 1873, they opened a small boarding school. Soon they were famous for their music teaching. In 1886, Sister Mercedes Artamendi was elected mother superior. They had few resources. There were several young sick nuns and a few elderly nuns with ailments that incurred many expenses. However, with prudence and wisdom she achieved, at the expense of many sleepless nights and sacrifices, major improvements and timely reforms by her own skill and clarity.

When Sister Margarita arrived at the Mercedarian Convent of the Vera Cruz in Berriz in 1903, Mother Santa Barbara de Aguirreoa was the mother superior and Sister Mercedes Artamendi was the teacher for religious novices. The convent, with its religious Mercedarian redemptive spirit, was valued for its spirit of family, and for being open, unassuming, caring, and observant. Also, the convent boarding school was respected in Bilbao society for the manner in which it taught young girls.

Pilar and Leonor - The Origin of a Decision

On July 25, 1884, twin girls are born on the third floor of 52 Tendra Street, in Bilbao, province of Biscay. First Leonor and then Pilar. They are baptized in the Parish Church of San Anton. Their parents are Vicente Lopez de Maturana, originally from Ullivarri de Gamboa, and Juana Ortiz de Zarate, from Margarita, Province of Alava. Their siblings were Maria Dolores, Felicia, and Vicente. Their father held the belief in a republican form of government; their mother was very Christian and pious. They attended the Daughters of the Cross School (Colegio de las Hijas de la Cruz) until the age of 8. Lola, the eldest sister, was a teacher. Upon the death of their father, she was responsible for the twin's education. Pilar and Leonor were known as the twins of Garden Street, where they later lived. Being of similar physical appearance, they dressed the same, were happy, witty, and charming. They were twins, but at the same time, individuals. Leonor immersed herself in the piano—Pilar, in books. Leonor is jovial, happy, and talkative. Pilar is more serious, thoughtful, reserved, and honorable. The girls help with the printing house/bookstore that their mother opened.

The girls come from a Catholic and pious family. God enters their lives beginning in early childhood, and from then on the two girls share feelings, readings, prayer, and devotional practices. They aid the poor and share the desire to perform good works. They enjoy taking long walks in secluded places, contemplating the sea. The sea, with its open horizon, appears to them to be the reflection of the greatness and vastness of God, a God that draws them toward Him from the deepest part of His being.

When they were in their teens, two nautical students became interested in the girls and began friendships that appeared were about to go a bit too far. Being worried about these relationships, their mother told the girls to end them. Leonor obeys, but Pilar resists. As a consequence, Pilar is taken to the Convent Boarding School of La Vera

Cruz in Berriz. She's 16 years old. Her enrollment is documented as having occurred on January 10, 1901. She left on July 25, 1902.

While in the convent boarding school, she quickly gets along well with fellow students and the nuns. She's happy, a self-starter, resolute, talented, and well educated. After two months at the school, she goes on a spiritual retreat with Father Olasagarre, S.J. She takes a vow of chastity and with two other students writes a letter to the Virgin pleading that she allows them to enter there later this year to become nuns. When she leaves the convent boarding school she asks her mother if she could enter the convent, but her mother thinks it best that she waits until she is 19 years old. After returning home, her former boyfriend returns to insist that they enter into a more formal relationship, but Pilar doesn't change her mind. In the meantime, her sister Leonor, who had wanted to become a nun for some time, attempts to find a convent to enter by leaving this decision in the hands of her spiritual director. Pilar continues firmly with her decision to enter the Convent of B erriz. On July 25, 1903, she joins the Mercedarian Convent of the Vera Cruz in Berriz. On August 10, she received the habit of the Order of Mercy and changes her name to Margarita Maria.

1906-1913

Margarita, Nun from Berriz

She begins her religious life in the secluded, small, and isolated Mercedarian Convent of Berriz, hidden in silent nature, full of strength and life. There, she contemplates the strength of Mount Amboto, the flow of water from the mill, the changing of the seasons as observed in the trees, and the assortment of colors observed in the flowers. There, she also listens to the silence that is alive and that gives life. There, she begins her new way of life.

It is a new way of life in which her being is open to the experience of other levels of awareness and spiritual growth. An experience where the door to the mystery that is us, it is opened and illuminates that divine spark that shines in each one of us. It is a spiritual experience where questions, desires, and dreams acquire meaning and reality, and where the small things of life are filled with beauty and depth. These are the first years of her experience of God and of herself, a unique and personal adventure of faith, love, and freedom, traits that will give shape to the story of her transformation.

The draw and desire directed toward God opens space in her innermost being. Her heart, her mind, and all of her senses open to the mystery of God and to her human self. She openly embraces everything that is revealed to her with the intense desire of placing herself under the light and the truth that illuminate her being.

These are years during which she prays, meditates, reads, and learns. She experiments, reflects on her experience, and she writes. From 1906 onward, she writes down her feelings, desires, and intentions, as well as the manner in which she goes living them in her day-to-day experience. Her knowledge of herself and that of God and Jesus Christ begins to intertwine. These are inspirations and truths that are experienced and that begin to configure the way she lives her faith, her life of prayer, her relationships, and the manner in which her desires crystallize.

In her desire to live the truth she sees her limitations, her powerlessness, her confusions, her doubts and hesitations. She confronts her fears, her questions, and the entire reality of her life; and she does so in an honest and direct manner, without dishonesty or deception. In this opening and accepting state, she experiences the joy and confidence that something real is happening inside her.

She desires to base her life upon that of Jesus. It is a life of true happiness. It is a life of infinite love that was made manifest in human form in history. It is a life in which poverty, humiliation, and suffering appear—a suffering that results from a passion of love. This love pierces her so deeply that she offers herself unto the merciful love of Jesus in order to honor him, and in order to achieve, through Him, salvation for all men.

God's presence is becoming closer, more intimate. Her relationship with Him and with Jesus is becoming more personal and the experiences of these encounters shade all of her expressions. It is a relationship in which she feels loved and in which she wants to love. This experience of God as love provides the meaning for her existence. It's a relationship of love and freedom. It's a love lived in reciprocity. It's a love that deepens her desires. She desires that Jesus continue to live within her. She desires to become united with God, to live His life, to do great things for Him. She commences to look for him with tireless yearning. It is in this yearning that her orientation toward the world, toward the Kingdom of God, and toward missionary service becomes clearly apparent.

The connection with her twin sister intensifies when Leonor is assigned to Suipacha, Argentina. That twin connection, united by an endearing love, continues. They regularly write to each other. There are letters in which, for over twenty years, they share all of their lives, linking their hearts and their experiences with each other. They are letters in which they share their journey toward God. A journey that, out of love, they renounced living it together in the same convent, thereby offering to God what they loved most: being together. They accepted their

separation without renouncing their connection as twins, open to one another in an ongoing relationship, identical and at the same time different, a connection that is always shared. They felt this connection came from God and they were returning it to Him by way of a love without end, one that gave them happiness, joy, freedom, and peace. It is a love that is showered upon them and others, a love that continually grows when it is shared.

❧ 1906 ❧

Sunday, November 18

From now on, I want to live in an attentive and watchful manner, listening for my God. My Teacher, who is at the same time my Lord and my God, doesn't need places in which to speak to me. He can equally teach me during a half hour of prayer as during long moments of thought in the course of my activities. I will remain ready to listen so that my Teacher can find His pupil attentive at any hour.

Monday, December 10

I want to live totally devoted to my God. I have resolved to delve into the mysteries of the faith and to go deeper into them every day, since God is so big that no one can completely know Him. I have also resolved to continue purifying my emotions each day so that Christ's life might be my life, my sole source of nourishment, and the will of my Father. I want to reach that inner calm that I envy so much in the saints. This would be truly living, since Christ is life and in Him I must establish mine.

❧ 1907 ❧

Wednesday, January 9

During all this time, I have a very deep feeling of trust that allows me to completely surrender myself to God, without fear of what might happen to me. I wish to cast myself into the arms of God and to be of complete service in order to give Him further evidence of my love each day.

During afternoon prayers, I wondered how it's possible that having seen matters of faith so clearly, my fascination with them can weaken so quickly, and that I need to make considerable effort in order to adhere to my desires. I've learned that there is no victory without a fight. I am determined to fight with all of my force in order to obtain, through prayer, the faith that I need in order to live in truth. This life appears to be very short to me compared to eternal life. In this life, how shall I not strive to love Christ, and shall I not love Him with a love like His own, which is about suffering? Oh, blessed existence that enables me to love and to follow Christ and endure for His love's sake!

Wednesday, April 17

During this morning's prayers, I felt called to a very personal understanding of Christ and I remembered his words, "I chose you." Then I wondered why I should merit such a choice. I considered the nothingness from which God took me, I added to this nothingness the sins that I committed and my present state of fickleness and all of my fears. These are my merits. Yet in spite of all this, God watches over me as if I were the apple of his eye. I can't do anything on my own accord, but I can do anything through Him who comforts me. Christ is my light, my virtue, and strength.

Friday, June 14

While meditating on the greatness of my Creator I recalled his words, "I am who I am," and I began to contemplate God, a being without beginning and the cause of all living creatures. I saw clearly that God is the sole truth of all that exists and I understood, a bit more, this continual desire of mine to live in truth.

Saturday, October 12

While contemplating the Resurrection of Christ, I carefully considered how in religious life, and outside religious life, I have always lived with no other desire than the one I already have—to follow Christ with joy. It's not the physical surroundings in which I find myself that makes me happy, neither the company that I keep, nor the work that I do, nor the health that I enjoy, nor the reputation that I hold, nor the way of life that I follow. If any of these things were to change, my happiness would not alter one little bit. I have felt a profound joy upon thinking that Christ will never abandon me and I wish even more to unite with Him. I have asked Him to open my eyes of faith in order to discover and penetrate God's plan in each situation in my life.

❧ 1908 ❧

Sunday, February 2

I rejoice in holding dear the sentiments of Saint Augustin: "I only seek You, Lord. Lord, I only desire You." Considering that God wishes to live in me more than I wish to live in Him, I want to rejoice in the Lord, who

is so much a part of my inner being. I intend to remain alert, looking for Him who looks for me, and loving Him who loves me dearly. From now on I wish to live within me and me within my God.

Tuesday, December 8

Every day my desire to follow Christ increases. I aspire to emulate His life of poverty, humility, and suffering. Where shall I go if I do not follow Christ, who is the true path? I have many opportunities to follow Christ in poverty such as when eating food of poor quality or not to my liking, when over-worked, when I must rely on conformity for everything, or when I need to maintain a complete detachment from material things. Opportunities for practicing humility include when others have a low esteem of me, when people do not believe me, when I'm treated harshly, or when I am not afforded the same amount of trust as others are. Opportunities for the practice of suffering will not be lacking, such as the suffering produced due to different temperaments that people exhibit, or the suffering caused by overcoming difficulties when complying to carry out a task properly. Nonetheless, since this is all out of my hands, I am determined to choose the most arduous work for me. Lord, may Your will be done always! And since there is little that I can do on my own accord, may this little bit that I can do make my love for You grow, since You are who You are!

❧ 1909 ❧

Wednesday, August 18

For some time now, I've been tormented by intense fear and anxiety. This has led me to mistrust my salvation and lose sight of the infinite compassion of the Lord. Today I have clearly realized that these feelings are a hindrance to following Christ with munificence and faith. I resolve to cast myself completely into God's arms.

Sunday, September 26

I continue to struggle with humility and to rid myself of my fears because they are making me suffer and prevent me from following Christ with joy and from growing in the knowledge of Him and His love. I am attempting to be faithful to prayer so that my relationship with Jesus might be warm and trusting. From now on everything I do will be with Him, everything I wait for will be from Him, and I will turn to Him for everything.

I have also decided to love the Order with all my heart and to have a fondness for its saints and spirit. The Order is full of apostolic zeal, has a great love of the Cross, is heroic in nature, and exudes a special filial love for the Virgin.

❧ 1910 ❧

Tuesday, January 25

During these past few months, a sentiment that I have had for some time now has helped me quite a bit: "Never think that you can put too much trust in the Lord, nor fear total surrender to his infinite mercy." This is because true freedom is born of the generosity of love.

Sunday, March 13

I've been ill. During these days of mandatory rest, my desire to live in faith has increased. I experienced intensely that "love drives out all fear." Therefore, I am resolved to seize the present moment in order to love. I yearn for my self to die in order to better join God and do something substantial for Him. It is plain to me that the purpose of our precious life is to love and to suffer for love.

Tuesday, August 30

All year long I've had three prominent desires: to look for the will of my Father in everything (confident that I can always comply with His will), to obtain a spirit of humility and freedom (which is the sure path to deepen your knowledge and love of Jesus Christ), and to remain faithful to my life of prayer. Throughout the day, I enjoy renewing the feelings and emotions that the Lord discloses to me in prayer. "This is a great good," Saint Teresa tells us.

❧ 1911 ❧

Sunday, February 12

Throughout Lent, I continually recall the mystery of redemption with gratitude. This recollection helps me adhere to my desire to live in an attentive and vigilant manner. The Lord is asking me to trust completely when waiting for everything, to recite loving and continuous prayer when asking for anything, and to carry out continual sacrifice and achieve union with Jesus to be worthy of it all.

Saturday, October 7

I feel an intense longing to live inwardly with Jesus and Mary, detached from everything, with a frame of mind of love, simplicity, and humility. I am determined to make progress in my life of renunciation in order to make myself available to work for the Kingdom of God.

Tuesday, December 19

Leonor is already in her beloved and tranquil town of Guernica. I'm very happy about this. The books that she sent me are extremely gratifying. I'm not surprised that she likes Thérèse de Lisieux so much. Her writings are very pertinent to our God-given desires for a simple, trusting, and loving life.

❧ 1912 ❧

Friday, May 3

An offering to Jesus, through Mary: Mary, my sweet Lady, my Queen, my Mother, to whom I owe everything, I come before you today to convey my desire, because I know, Mother, you will help me to achieve it. You continue to clearly show me the path to Jesus and you give me justifiable hope that very soon you will fulfill my desire.

I want to use the rest of my life to love Jesus with a pure heart. I want to live unremembered, as if I never existed, dedicated solely to the work of Jesus, which is the glory of God and the salvation of all men. In order to achieve this I cannot count on anything more than my nothingness. I cannot count on great deeds, which I have never made nor do I see myself capable of making, nor can I count on great desires that any saint did not have. I can only count on my own nothingness, which I love with all of my soul and gives me the benefit of being one with Jesus and with everything that pertains to Him.

My only wish is that Jesus continues to be in me. My job will be to not find my self in anything, to not worry about my self for any reason, in order to not obstruct Jesus. I offer myself to Him today, through Mary, in order to honor his merciful love, which he would want for all creatures to know, and for all of the interests of his Church.

Mother, how happy I feel! Guide me always along your path of humility and selfless love. Fill me with an ever-increasing faith so that I can wait for absolutely everything that comes from the unlimited merciful love of Jesus. My only wish is to glorify Him all over the world, as He glorified the Father, and to let him know everyone with whom he has entrusted me, which is the whole world.

I surrender myself to the immense love of Jesus and with assured faith I wait for everything from Him. My life will be His because in every moment I will be united with Him. My work will be for His interests and for the unceasing sacrifice of my pleasures and preferences. In order for Him to exist in me, my self must die.

Do not allow me, Mother, to stop following and obeying you. I am yours. Keep me in your hands until the day comes that you take me to the place of perpetual love, where, in union with you, I will sing the mercies of the Lord for eternity.

— *Margarita María*

Sunday, May 5

The Lord continues to ask me for prayer and union with Jesus in order to achieve everything. What would you do if you knew that absolutely

everything that you ask for in prayer on behalf of others would be granted? Would you remember yourself? Would you lose one instant of this precious life? Do it thus and in heaven you will see your handiwork.

Thursday, July 25

A few days ago, I wrote to Leonor wishing us both a happy twenty-eighth birthday. I copied my May 3 offering to Jesus for her, warning her that if anything appeared outlandish not to think too much about it because they were simply mere ideas of mine. Besides, isn't this in the spirit of Thérèse de Lisieux? I'd be interested to know how Leonor will use this.

Monday, October 14

I wrote to Leonor again with the hope of sharing my soul with her, as I'm accustomed to doing. I look poor, small, and I feel empty. This feeling brings me an immeasurable peace. I live in the arms of God and I feel as if I were a little child who doesn't know how to wish for anything for himself. I live with joy, without any worry or fear neither for the present nor for the future. This encourages me to only work or suffer for love. Everything must be done in love and for love. "Yet I live, no longer I, but Christ lives in me."

Tuesday, October 15

Leonor has been assigned to Suipacha, Argentina. I'm overjoyed to think that she will be making Jesus known in faraway lands and in order to do so she will need to sacrifice everything. I can't stop thinking that our separation will be forever. My heart screams, demanding its other half, and I will have to embrace it intensely for the love of Jesus. He knows very well that, having given him Leonor, I give Him what I love most. From now on I will accompany her more frequently than when she was in Guernica and we will continue united in all things, sharing everything. I believe we love one another in a similar way that Thérèse and Céline loved each other. They also communicated on a very deep level, without secrets and by speaking honestly.

✎ 1913 ✎

Saturday, January 4

Today I said goodbye to Leonor. We spoke on a profound level and the hours seemed to fly by. God wants us to encourage each other forever. This is how I think it has been up to now, and this is what we must try to do from now on. My heart continues to scream out, but I am very glad. As a result of our talk, I remain with the desire to give God and my brother and sisters all of my love. Everything else, absolutely everything, makes no difference.

Monday, February 10

I hold fast to my desire to live in complete abandonment in the hands of God. This life of trusting abandonment requires that I be ready to receive everything with joy since it comes from His hands, rejoicing in the fact that as Master and Lord, I am ready to be of service when and how He wishes. My Lord and my God, from afar I can see you and what magnificence in You do I discover! O Single Truth, you are the being that encompasses all holiness, glory, and justice! I will search for You with a tireless yearning! I want to join with You and live Your life!

Monday, March 19

I can't get Leonor out of my thoughts. At night, I wonder where she might be and how she is doing. Is she sad or happy, healthy or sick? At times, I cry. I'm not shocked by my weakness. I leave my worries in the hands of God, since I do not wish anything other than to be faithful to His will. I am totally at peace; however, I feel foolish, after so much sacrifice, belittling myself over petty things. We can't write each other frequently, but we can always pray. There will never be secrets between us. I remember how we talked about all of this the night before leaving Leonor at the novitiate. It was then that we resolved to live our separation joyously and unselfishly, never letting our spirits get down, and taking advantage of our good character to spread joy and happiness to others.

Tuesday, April 1

I get the impression that Leonor is hiding something from me. I'd like to know what is making her melancholy. It shouldn't be hard to discover if I were to analyze my own feelings. Surely she must feel alone,

isolated from everything that she loves on this earth, working without receiving hardly any fruit from her labor, and trying to be accepting of it all without becoming overwhelmed. I pray that she and all missionaries receive the spirit of fortitude and selflessness.

As far as I am concerned, I don't think about the distance that separates us and I try to imagine myself being with her every time that I find myself with Jesus. I don't want Leonor to be sad about anything. Now and always, here and over there, our lives will be as one, joyous because of Jesus and suffering for Him. I want Leonor to be happy, very happy, convinced that Jesus loves her very much.

Thursday, May 22

I've traversed seas and have crossed the ocean with Leonor. Now I enter, for the first time, that pleasant corner of the earth known as Suipacha in order to continue our conversation. Leonor isn't the only one who has suffered. I've had emotional storms of my own. They have been infrequent, to be certain, but I haven't had such bad ones as I do now: depression, sadness, and confusion. I've contemplated these feelings and I've helped myself by doing so. How true it is that God works with us in a timely, delicate, and parental way.

This is a very happy time in my life. My recollections of Leonor give me such an intimate happiness that my life no longer feels so useless, nor my love so small, because I can offer unto God—in order to work for his Kingdom—what I love most of all, Leonor. Each day I have a sacrifice to offer Him: life, health, and comforts. Everything is His, the difficulties that I have to endure, everything. Leonor can be content, even if she doesn't reap any other fruit than that which is working within me.

Sunday, June 29

I've taken another jaunt to Suipacha to give Leonor her birthday pinches since our birthdays are coming up. I doubt that she received my last letter and I fear that it may have been lost. I want to receive news about Leonor. I want to know about her health, her mood, and her adventures. I also want to hear about her community—how they carry

out their days, how they supply themselves with basic necessities, and if they are getting along well with the townspeople. I'm interested in all of the details.

For some time now, whenever I think of Leonor I imagine her in peaceful and serene surroundings, in spite of any difficulties. I think of her as a little apostle and I hope she never forgets how much we spoke during our farewell. Perhaps her ministry is reduced to sowing seeds over a dry and thankless land, but when God wishes, the seeds will bear abundant fruit in proportion to the purity of love and self-sacrifice that she manifests when she works for the benefit of others. It might be that she never sees the fruit of her labor, but neither did Jesus. I continue to show enthusiasm for all that is important and big. Mary gently takes me to Jesus. I must live in Her in order to be totally for God.

Wednesday, July 30

The Father General of the Order came to Bériz. A weighty concern brought him here. The Mercedarian Convent in Lorca is at risk of disappearing due to a lack of personnel. They are afraid that the government will seize the house, since they have such a right when a cloistered convent has fewer than 13 religious. There are currently only 14 religious in the Mercedarian Convent in Lorca. Immediately, there were numerous sisters who wanted to share in the poverty and troubles with the community in Lorca. The next step will be to request permission from Rome, since this is something that is quite unusual given that there has never been anything similarly done among cloistered nuns. Of course, it would be a completely selfless aid. Their future plans are to open a school, which would give life to the community. The nuns who have offered to go there believe they would return within a few years.

Sunday, October 12

It's been a while since I wrote to Leonor. Sometimes I worry that perhaps with the passage of time, and the distance that separates us, Leonor will stop communicating with me with the same intimacy that we have been doing so up to now. I worry that she won't even remember what I look

like. What a notion! But just in case, today I reminded her that I am very much a part of her and I really feel the need to speak with her. I think this exchange would help us a lot. I am determined to always be Pilar, that Pilar for whom there have never been any secrets.

I want to find out everything that God has inspired in her and I have begun by relating to her what I have felt during my retreats. My path is very similar to that of Thérèse de Lisieux—unexciting, thanks to God. Lately, I have sensed a very strong and special calling to follow Jesus by the way of the Cross. It's a desire that gives purpose to my life, one that I appreciate greatly, and one in which I wish to persevere.

Thursday, October 30

God wants that I have a life of living faith. He asks that I turn to Jesus with complete trust, that I tell Him everything and that I wait for everything from Him. He's been asking me this for a long time! How much longer will I remain stubborn and hard-of-heart? Why don't I make good use of Christ, who is mine, for the salvation of everyone in the world? In heaven, you will see your handiwork.

1914–1918

Living by Love, Experiences, and a Guiding Light

During this period, the story of Margarita's life is, above all, the story of her journey in her life of prayer. It is a life of prayer that continues to free up her heart and mind in order to comprehend and experience love, emptiness, abandonment, unlimited trust, and total surrender. It is a life of prayer that progressively becomes ever more deep and trusting. Her contemplations begin to provide her with experiences full of profundity and meaning.

She prays by reciting the Divine Office, from the tome *Christian Prayer* (Liturgy of the Hours), along with the Gospel, and she recalls the experience and memory of God's saving grace, a treasure trove of unsuspected riches. She prays with a clean heart, empty of pride and vanity, open to what remains unknown. With admiration and respect,

she remains alert and ready to discover the presence of God in all that exists—in the mundane, in that which is hidden in every being, and in the love that flourishes freely in everyone.

She prays attentively, listening to whom is found in the innermost part of her being. She prays while learning to patiently wait for the hand of God, His unforeseeable rhythm, and His action linked to smallness and frailty. She prays with determination and faithfulness, learning how to go deeply to the root, to the essence of all. She prays while radiating God into everything. She is carried away into a unique and mysterious oneness full of meaning. She prays silently and exposed before the mystery that envelops and inhabits us.

Her life of prayer is not limited to internal reflection during a moment of her life. It becomes her whole life converted into a space and time of meaningful experiences, of discoveries that she puts into practice, of vital and significant consequences where the hand of God becomes ever more present, illuminating and transforming her.

She soon begins to speak about her entrance into the “dark night.” It is an experience that centers and purifies her. It opens her up to another more profound experience that changes the way she looks at and understands God and herself. It is an experience that prepares her for the hand of God, and the start of a union that will continue to transform her.

Her role in the school continues to broaden in responsibility. She began teaching calligraphy. Now she is more directly engaged in the education of the girls. She's with them from the moment that she wakes up until she lies down at night. She wants the girls to love and confide in her so that she can educate them better. She observes and listens to them carefully, clearing up their doubts, answering their questions, and directing their hearts. She lives for them. She plays with them, tells them jokes, chats at great length with them, and sometimes, with just her glance, she can communicate her thoughts. She continues to shape their character and develop their attributes with her patient kindness, her admirable mix of softness and firmness, her dignity that everyone respects, and her ability to understand them. She never makes anyone look

bad and each one feels loved and understood. She truly loves them. She only wants to make them into the best that they can be and to shape the image of Jesus Christ in them. She believes that God and Jesus are the ones who mainly act and if she lets them do their work, the result will always be good. She is confident that everything is solved through love.

She ensures that good pedagogical materials, books, magazines, and manuals get to that small and isolated school. She reads about and completely understands ideas that later she incorporates in an innovative way into her lessons. She's interested in all things that represent advancement and progress, and she is able to draw practical lessons from everything. She works, and at the same time, she studies. She takes lessons in accounting. She keeps up her French, perfects her English, and begins to study German. She also shares her pedagogical enthusiasm and zeal with Leonor.

❧ 1914 ❧

Tuesday, January 6

The girls are my life. I want to help them reach their potential. I want to love them with the same love that Jesus shows them. I'm centered and extremely joyful to live for them. I'm convinced that I can do anything through prayer. I acknowledge that Jesus gave me this belief because I asked him for it. I feel as if I were exiled from the community because my entire life is with the girls and it has been a long while since I have spoken with my sisters.

Sunday, April 12

As the final "hallelujah" resounded today my first good wishes were for Leonor. This is her first Easter in Suipacha. I thought about her all during Easter Week. My mind would often return to the Easter of last year, when she told me that she was definitely embarking for Argentina and she talked about her frame of mind. Now, the distance that separates us is unbelievable and so is the speed at which time continues to pass. While she struggles against the forces of ignorance over there, here I battle against indifference.

I'm more than happy working unceasingly with the girls in spite of the little conversation that I have with my sisters. I'm so happy that I wouldn't change my fortunate life for anything. I had never known, until now, how it was to love with a mother's love. There are many opportunities to do so. I take care of their health, their education, and their religious instruction. I encourage them at all times. In short, I live for them. Jesus gave all of this to me. I always ask Him to teach me how to love the way that He loves.

Sunday, May 10

On April 21, the nuns that were to go to Lorca finally left. It was a beautiful group composed of three sisters and five postulants. Two of them were former students from the school in B erriz. The Most Reverend Prudencio Melo, bishop of the diocese, escorted them to Madrid. From Madrid, the father general of the Order of Mercy accompanied them. In Lorca, the authorities received them with solemnity and the community wholeheartedly embraced them. They were moved by the poverty of the convent and, above all, by the simplicity and kindness of the sisters who never stopped showing them their gratitude. They say that it's still too early to make plans for the school because there is other work that has to be done first.

Sunday, June 18

I get the impression that Leonor is losing her happiness. Her letters are as jovial as always, but perhaps she writes them that way in order to hide her sadness. I want her to tell me everything because I want to share all things with her, her happiness, her sadness, and her discouragement. Everything is good in life when it is seen through the eyes of faith. However, when I think of Leonor I want to see her happy and trusting in the arms of God because I cannot conceive her living any other way.

Monday, September 14

I have begun writing a lengthy letter to Leonor. I believe that Jesus is taking us along the same path. It's a gentle path that keeps us in a bliss that cannot be explained to anyone who hasn't experienced it. I live totally surrendered to the love of Jesus, at a depth that few people

discover, and that I want to make the most of it with audacity, as Thérèse de Lisieux used to say. Each day I can see my nothingness better. I'm neither faithful, nor self-sacrificing, nor do I have any kind of virtue, but I like to see myself as having these qualities and I trust in the love of Jesus. I ask Him to purify me and that he freely gives me His love, if only because of the trust I have for Him. Jesus is my life. Everything he sends to me is right for me. I do not want to suffer or to enjoy, to live or to die. I only yearn that this trust in Jesus increases until it becomes complete.

I'm not sure what kind of peace God will give me living like this. I place the girls in His hands. I also place their innocence, their education, and their piety. I think that I can see that everything is working out well. I think highly of the enjoyment that I have for my vocation and the freedom of spirit that I can take everywhere. I see this as one of the greatest gifts from God, even greater than rapture and revelation. I'm enjoying it so much that I don't understand how anyone could not live for God.

Tuesday, September 15

I continue my letter to Leonor. I tried to bring her up-to-date, in broad terms, with the war that is devastating old Europe. The newspapers do not mention anything else. Spain has maintained neutrality, but fear is growing and the situation is becoming more unsettled all the time. The commercial sector is becoming paralyzed and there are entire towns, like Eibar, where all of the men are unemployed. How will this all end? I pray often that this grief might end. My trust, now and always, is in Jesus. In His hands, I place so many family and social problems that the war continues to produce. The tension in the atmosphere is also felt in the school. One of the boarding school girls has two brothers who are serving as volunteers on the German lines. Another has a father who is in the French army. Our coexistence isn't always easy. I make an effort to prevent feelings of dislike and instead try to spread peace, unity, and serenity.

Thursday, September 17

We keep getting news from Lorca. The school has opened and has enrolled 21 students. It appears that the people there are very poor and the nuns are in short supply of materials. Good spirits, however, are not in short supply. The nuns are very high-spirited and they extol the unity that reigns in the community.

Monday, October 5

I went on a retreat and I can say that it went well. The Lord expects me to surrender myself to a life a continual prayer, full of a living faith, with complete abandonment, and altruistic love. I understand continuous prayer to be a centering of all of my life in God in order to spend my life in His service. In order to accomplish this, I need a living faith that I will obtain while working inwardly with the Lord and by putting all of my trust in Him. The more that I am united with God, the better of an instrument I will be for the good of my brothers and sisters. The more incapable I feel, the more God will fill me.

Monday, October 19

I continue to pray with ease and relaxed pleasure. With just a short prayer, I can quickly feel trust and submission unto the Lord. I like to imagine myself in His arms as if I were a child in her parent's arms. With each passing day, the Lord leads me ever more into a complete trust, a trust where I find a hidden treasure and a fount of unchanging peace.

Sunday, October 25

My inner life is going well. Throughout the day, I enjoy what morning prayers have provided me. I prefer the Gospel of John as a text for contemplation, although I don't dwell on the passages that don't speak to me. Some days I pause with profound joy at "...the riches that we have in Christ." Other days, when speaking about my desires to the Lord, I pray that he showers His grace all over the world so that many can come to know and love Him. I like this prayer of intercession, asking to extend the Kingdom of God, praying for missionaries, etc., although I am not always prepared for it.

Thursday, November 5

I continue to discover God as truth, love, justice, and saintliness. But above all, I like to think of Him as the common Father of all people. In this great family, Jesus is the older brother and I am the little sister, the weakest one, and the poorest and most needy one. My treasure is Jesus who has placed all of his riches at my disposal. I want to work miracles with His compassionate love. I want to take my faith and trust to the extreme and be carried away by love.

I appear very poor. However, I'm convinced that I don't need to prop my trust up in any of my good deeds. My trust, now and always, is in Jesus. His love draws me to Him and arouses my spirits until I am convinced that through Him I can do anything, without having my sins or lack of virtue discourage me. When I arrive in Heaven and stand before my celestial Father, my Virgin Mother, and all the saints, they will find in me the triumph of the love of Jesus. They will see that, without any merit on my part, I've wrested Heaven with my bold faith.

Thursday, December 3

I'm asked to explain what the awareness of God is like that I feel inside me. It is nearly impossible for me to say a single word. I might say that I know God more than I know Him. I might say that I can easily understand Him, without understanding almost anything. A comparison occurs to me. I am before Him like a poor person who is at the door of a house. The door is closed, but he senses that inside there are great riches that cannot be seen and he waits until the door is opened for him. That is how I feel, and the door is Jesus. When He wants, I will find my God. For now, I can sense Him.

Tuesday, December 22

During these past two months, I've continued with my prayer of trust. Some days were uninspiring. Others were much more serene. Now, I enjoy peace and it does seem to me that my faith is increasing daily. I live surrendered to my God, without desiring anything for me, since I am His possession. This prayer is very helpful for me and allows me to hold on to the sentiment that I am nothing, and that nothing is owed this nothingness.

❧ 1915 ❧

Sunday, January 10

I've started the year with a new appreciation for the life of faith and a great desire to be faithful to God, even in the small things. My relationship with God has changed little. I like to see myself as poor in sentiment and so when I feel this way I receive the riches of Jesus, my older brother, on whom I depend. I continue to be happy with my life at school. I've experienced that turning to God resolves everything, even the most difficult of things.

Tuesday, February 16

Each day I value true liberty more, liberty that is based on the void of everything that does not lead to God. Authentic freedom is a fount of happiness. I've never got along well with sadness. It wastes our time and kills freedom. I want happiness, the kind of happiness that springs from inner peace and a personal relationship with God.

Friday, February 19

Several days ago I again began to fear that I am not doing what God expects of me. I am beginning to see more clearly that God wants me to have a living faith. I comprehend that this life of faith is true life and I would be living a lie the more I were to separate myself from it. I very much enjoy giving thanks to Jesus for the understanding of Him that he has given me, one that is very different from the understanding that I had of Him before. It is an understanding that is full of trust, peace, and tenderness. I owe this feeling of Jesus to Mary. I admire everything about Mary, but what I am drawn to the most about Her is the purity of the love she has for God without hoping for anything in return. For all those who admire Her, she becomes the way to lead them to God.

Monday, March 1

I live in peace, my innermost being comforted, with a very tender affection toward Jesus. It is a very gratifying confidence, knowing that everything is found in Him. He lifts me above everything without allowing me to value anything that God does not wish. His divine guidance comforts me. I like to think of the wisdom of God that governs

everything, even though I do not fully understand His means. I've been predisposed to this life of faith and trust for some time now. However, the way that I am living this life currently shows me that it is a wonderful gift.

Easter Sunday, April 4

I thought about Leonor so much during this Easter Sunday! I couldn't get the farewell letter that she wrote to me from Barcelona two years ago out of my mind. That letter made me cry. I missed Leonor because she always has been part of my being. Nevertheless, time goes on and before you know it the time will come to give each other an embrace without end. When she writes me, it is as if she can read my mind. In our life of prayer, we are at the same place on the path. I tell her that if the Lord wants to continue to increase my faith in prayer, as has been happening lately, I'm going to end up thinking I am all-powerful. I have a huge desire to be an apostle of prayer and I want to convince the entire world that in Jesus we have everything. I feel that my peace is growing daily. Nothing upsets me because I live abandoned in the Lord like a small girl who is unaware of everything and who doesn't want to leave her innocence. My conviction in the love of God is so great that I live with it in continuous celebration.

Wednesday, May 12

I feel all jumbled up inside. I feel totally deprived of the Lord's responsive help. For the past few days, I have been ill. During this time, my practice has been to love the will of God at every moment, being careful not to alter His plans. This has been what I pray for and my priority. Now my spiritual dry spell has expanded to an extreme. There are days in which it feels like I've never had a relationship with the Lord. At those times, I feel no affection toward Him, nor do I desire to have it. I ask Him to work in me as the Lord of my life and I become peaceful. Even though my inner life is suffering, he has not deprived me of his care. I feel so far away from my normal desires, but I am not discouraged or sad.

Saturday, May 29

I continue in the same spiritual dry spell, but it is not only that. I don't know if my prayer really is prayer. I can't relate with the Lord with the same intimacy that I had up to now and this makes me feel as if I had no spiritual life. I don't see any defects in me, nor do I see any chaotic emotions that would deprive me of this benefit of spiritual life. What I do find is little faith in the gifts of God. Everything is going well at school. I try to instruct the girls in the way of Jesus Christ, but I know that it is useless to do so if I am not personally united with Him.

Thursday, June 17

I think I am experiencing the dark night. I have never gone through anything similar to this. Years ago I passed through doubt, fear, dislike, and tedium, but now these are different. I'm at peace, very tranquil, but I cannot pray. *Fiat*. It's now time to say to my God, "Be there anything inside of me that is not of You?" I'll ask Him that if I am complying with His will while in this state, then he should extend it as long as he wishes. But if I am not complying with His will, may he let me know and may he help me overcome this infidelity.

Sunday, October 10

It's been three months since I've been in a spiritual dry spell in my life of prayer and I fear that I am separating from God, bit by bit. This is a new state for me. With faith and understanding of God turned off, there is no ease of prayer and rarely am I able to shake my distractions long enough to tell my Lord about my fears and desires. What bothers me the most is to not be able to find the happiness that I remember my vocation used to always bring. I accept this as a way to continue to carve the image of Jesus Christ on my soul.

Wednesday, December 1

I want to live completely for God. My communication with Leonor gratifies, encourages, and strengthens me. I've asked her to speak to me in the same natural way that she always has. She knows everything about me already. I think I haven't changed too much since we last saw each other. My life is simply one of faith with little comfort in prayer, but with

a tranquil and profound happiness having surrendered myself totally unto God. I feel joyful and centered. I have a lot of faith in Jesus and every day I receive further guidance regarding this faith. Jesus is my everything and I must surrender everything unto Him, because everything that I have is in Him.

I'm very happy in this little corner of B erriz. While my life passes by behind window bars and in strict religious seclusion, Leonor is able to move with ease throughout Argentina. O, the ways of God! I enjoy imagining the many works of art and marvelous things of nature that she must be able to contemplate. These are things that I will never be able to enjoy, but I relish the fact that others might be able to enjoy them.

Sunday, December 12

We are at the height of our preparation for Christmas in school. I have little free time, but when I do I use the time to improve my French, make progress in English, and take my first steps in German. This school year we have a very good language teacher so I should not miss this grand opportunity.

❧ 1916 ❧

Sunday, January 9

I'm not sure how to describe my relationship with God. I continue to have a hard time while in prayer and it's tough for me to accept my setbacks. The only thing that I am not lacking is a profound desire to be everything for God, to love Him greatly and to be faithful to Him. During the course of this spiritual dry spell, from about March of last year, my faith in Jesus Christ has cemented as well as my desire to surrender myself in complete peace into the arms of God, my Father.

Reading the works of Saint Teresa has done a lot of good for me no matter how despondent I may feel. They rekindle my faith and allow me to rediscover the greatness of God. They also give me a love for humility. She is the saint that I like best who can speak to me about Him. She's the one who best teaches me how to live in truth.

Saturday, February 26

I would give anything to be able to speak with Leonor. The distance between us, and the absence of one another, increases our love, but there are times when I miss her a lot. I remember one time when we were young girls Leonor didn't want to tell me something that they had told her to keep secret. Then, with wide eyes, I asked her, "Do you consider me to be someone different from you? Haven't we always been as one?" Now, I have the same feeling as I did back then. I hope that the sacrifice of our separation serves to unite us more and more.

I noticed in her last letter that she was worried and a bit sad. Also, during my dark night I attributed my perception of having a great quantity of work to do with my change of mood. But no, on other occasions where there were greater concerns I maintained contact with God. The Lord wants us to live humbly, remain alert, and leave everything in His hands. I now understand that this break in my life of peace and tranquility was necessary. It helped me appreciate how much God freely gives us. I now feel renewed and with the necessary strength to start a new life.

Thursday, May 18

I've lived this entire month very close to Mary and I've tried to know Her more. When I think of Mary the same thing happens to me when I think of God. I admire everything about Her, Her faith, Her humility, and Her very simple dependence on God. Whenever I renew my love for Her I feel as though I were entering upon a new, simple, and sublime path. It is a path of complete self-forgetfulness in order to completely discover God. Mary teaches me to live by love, in perfect purity, detached from everything.

Sunday, July 9

I've carefully thought about my religious life, 13 years of which have already passed. The Lord has been treating me differently as the years pass by. I also find that I have also changed. At first, it was rather easy to overcome some of my weaknesses. I did so joyously, almost without effort. Later, after having liberated myself of my most self-limiting defects, I began to feel more love toward prayer, which is something that I have consistently been fond of. I received a lot of beneficial guidance that was impressed upon me for a long time. Every day items of faith appeared new to me. I desired to suffer and to do something important for Christ, but I barely had an opportunity to put this desire into practice.

Now my activities are distracting. My guiding light has gone out. I continue to love my vocation with all of my soul, but without the joy I once felt. My life of prayer is sometimes sorrowful and at other times passionate. Most of the time I feel like a small child in front of his Father asking Him simply for what he needs, with the help of faith. I maintain my faithfulness to my intentions and desires. I discover in my inner self, like a gift from God, freedom of spirit and a total surrender into his hands. This is the foundation of my peace and happiness.

Saturday, September 2

Mary is helping me to discover a life of profound faith and to understand humility through the light of God. I aspire to an unassuming faith, one that trusts that everything will come from prayer. In humility, I come to the practical conviction that I am nothing and God is everything. My non-being would be humiliating, and even degrading, if I didn't totally depend upon God. This is my glory. The more that I recognize my nothingness, the more I participate in God who, seeing me living in truth, gives me His wisdom, His omnipotence, and the gift of Himself.

❧ 1917 ❧

Thursday, May 3

Yesterday, I received a letter from Leonor addressed to the community. There was no letter for me. It was one of those days when I really wanted to hear from her and I stayed there offering my disappointment and disillusionment to God. Today, I received another envelope and this one was for me. What joy! I love everything she tells me so much. Her desire to go on retreat appears very sound to me. Humility is worth a lot. It also costs a lot. I'm receiving so much practical humility from the Lord that learning about it in theory is not needed. He arranges it so that I'm left alone in my poverty, without energy, strength, or virtue. Seeing me like this helps me discover my worth. I'm very appreciative of this, but there are moments when I start to tremble with fear about myself and I have no other recourse than to wait for prayer and faith.

I've left Leonor without having really left her. If God were to give us a day to meet and talk, like we had the day we said farewell, I would not have enough time to finish emptying my heart into hers. She understands me so well. Nevertheless, I don't desire this because I now see it is not the will of God. We will find each other in the heart of Jesus.

Thursday, May 10

I did very well in my accounting class, but I've had to stop my German classes, for now. The girls' education requires all of my attention. There are 65 girls this school year and I like to educate them on a personal basis. So I study their hearts, which is what God expects of me right now. In return, I receive a vocation like I never believed I could have. I am centered and I want to continue this way. I only live for the girls. I ask the Lord to join his spirit with me in order to create the image of Christ in each of the girls.

Saturday, December 1

Lola and Cecilio came yesterday. They told me in detail about the death of my mother. It happened so quickly. One-half hour before she was out of bed. They buried her in Santurce and after some time has gone by they will transfer her to Derio, to the family mausoleum where Dad, Felicia, and Vincent are already reunited. Lola was very calm, contrary to what I would have expected. I would have wanted to ask her a few things, like where they planned on living next, but we would have had to speak about the will, so I will ask these things another time.

Leonor is very much on my mind since such long distances tend to make these kinds of blows worse. With great pleasure, I would have like to have moved to Suipacha to be at her side and to share our pain. My heart cries bitterly and shows itself for what it is, human. I wrote her after so much time had passed. I can't recall the last time I had written her. I think it had been almost a year. I caught her up a bit with the activities going on in my life. I mentioned that I continue in the same post at my school and I am busy all day long fulfilling my duties. I spend the mornings in literature classes and correcting exercises. In the afternoons, I attend to the girls and to their families. I hardly have time for anything else. There are periods where I have to devote a lot of attention to the families. I didn't tell her about the riots and attempted uprisings from the summer since I assume she would have learned about these things already. I lived through it all peacefully. I've always believed, and I continue to believe, that God guides events and he takes care of us all like a father, which is what he is.

Friday, December 14

I receive a letter from Leonor and I was deeply touched about how the death of our mother affected her. I was also touched by the opinion that she formed about my health. It's going to be tough to convince her that I am completely fine, possibly even better than ever. I don't know why she's so worried in this way since we've always spoken truthfully.

For some time now, her letters have appeared different to me. She's expressing herself in a more austere approach. Or, maybe not. It's

something that I perceive, but I don't know how to explain. This last letter, after mother's death, doesn't surprise me at all, but the one before that one was very disconcerting. I like her unassuming, happy, and open character so much that I cannot understand this change. She doesn't mention any hope for her return. I don't dream about that, but I remember that when we were saying our farewells to each other, she commented to me that her congregation's plans were to renew personnel every five years. Lord knows that our sacrifice was forever and that He can use us according to His will, even if that means we never get to see each other again. We are happy to reserve this joy for Heaven. In heaven, it will be reality that which we see here in silhouette.

❧ 1918 ❧

Thursday, June 27

In February of this year, for no apparent reason at all, I began to feel quite weak. The doctor prescribed complete bed rest. They excused me from my school duties. It's been four months now. Little by little, I'm returning to normal life. I wonder how Leonor is doing and if she had totally recuperated, even though I never suspected she could have had anything serious. What I do notice is that she continues progressing down the path of penance, a path that I, maybe because of laziness, am not very fond of.

Sunday, June 30

The program for the celebration of the 700th anniversary of the establishment of the Mercedarian Order is already prepared, ready to be printed. The bishop will be coming and he will stay in Bériz the entire time. The opening day of the celebration will be held in the school. The second day will be devoted to the former students of the school and the establishment of the Association of Alumna will take place. The alumna will join the bishop in the morning. In the evening, there will be a soirée. On the third day, the entire archpriestship will participate in the celebration.

Sunday, September 1

On August 28, I began my retreat for this year. I entered with the desire that the Lord completely transform me because I never before felt so much in need. I feel unenthusiastic, or better yet cold, in my relationship with God. I'm filled with a multitude of imperfections that deprive me from the inner freedom that I had enjoyed for so many years. Such as I am, I place myself in the hands of the Virgin and I pray that she free me from the chains that keep me from uniting with God.

Friday, September 6

Today the retreat ended. The Kingdom of Christ has been everything for me during these days of prayer. It is the base upon which everything else is established. I have felt called, with infinite love, to follow the true Christ. I have felt called to participate in the mission that God the Father entrusted to his Son: to announce the Kingdom of God and to save my brothers and sisters. Our Father wants me to devote myself completely to others.

1919

The Silence and the Seed

In that small and isolated Convent of Bériz, the roots of the Redeeming Mercedarian Spirit were sent deep into the ground of contemplative life. The convent had a redemptive tradition, the fruit of a fervent and insatiable desire for Love and Freedom, Dignity and Justice, Beauty and Goodness—a desire that has spouted in all lands and throughout history. It was a passionate desire that was the force that triggered many quests, paths, and transformations. It took shape in the thirteenth century at a time of war and piracy, of conflicts, battles, and death. This gave rise to a large number of captives who were abducted during struggles involving power and avarice. These captives were without freedom, uprooted, and oppressed, far away from their native lands, objects of possession and coercion, and nothing more than merchandise.

Pedro Nolasco, a merchant by profession and traveler of lands and seas beyond ecclesial and political borders, open to other worlds, felt hurt by the pain and oppression of these captives. He and his companions transformed their role as merchants into a redemptive action of knights for freedom. They were laymen, expert swordsmen, intelligent, and audacious. They were called redeemers because they were freely and joyfully ready to give their lives or to remain as hostages in exchange for a life of dignity and freedom for their friends, the captives, as a gesture of the superabundance of love for Jesus Christ that they had. It was a gesture that was framed in a Fourth Vow of redemption that expressed the entire meaning of their existence.

In 1919, two missionaries came to Bériz, a place that was open to the horizons of God thanks to those unassuming and welcoming nuns. The missionaries were the Carmelite Father Vicente Zengotita, who was returning from his missionary service in India, and the Jesuit Father José de Vidaurrázaga who was on his way to the Vicariate of Wuhu, China. They spoke in broad terms about missionary life. This appeared

to be an insignificant incident and a casual visit. But it turned out to be like a small seed from which a transformation would sprout, a new direction that would change their lives and open their horizons in unsuspecting ways.

Margarita maintained a prudent silence while this missionary seed grew by deepening its roots and then coming to life again. During 1919, she kept her diary silent as well by not creating a single entry. It was a silence upon which was projected the shadow of a cross that wounds her. She experienced suffering and pain that was in the center of her life and from which she could not escape. Pain, loneliness, and silence are elements of the human condition. There was silence before unanswered questions. There was silence before that which doesn't have any explanation. There was silence so that false and empty words would not arise. There was silence in order to not create any harm. There was silence in order to make room for the truth that is beyond reason. There was silence and loneliness in order to listen more profoundly, to be receptive to love, and to experience profound creativity and liberty. There was silence and loneliness in order to face the cross upon which God is also silent. She depended only on God, in silence, ready to listen to Him who is in the essence of her innermost being. She waited to enter into the depths of her desired love, into the crux of divinity that is the singular place for silence and union.

She kept her diary and notebooks silent for two long years. It's a time when her correspondence with Leonor suffers. She writes infrequently. When she does write, she does so with a certain amount of reservation thereby breaking the promise that they made to not interrupt the communication that they always had. They promised that they would continue to communicate in order to keep their hearts open to one another even if it meant their communication was to be in the form of a letter.

In order to find an explanation for this silence and for her breaking this promise, we can only rely on a few references made later by Mother Margarita when Leonor demanded to know the truth of what was

happening to her twin sister. Her sister's accurate intuition and the comments made in response to three letters from Margarita in 1919 (which were inexplicably lost) are very revealing.

In these letters, Leonor begins by openly complaining: "In a few days it will have been one year since I have received a letter of yours..." Months later she expresses her wish to know in more detail the cause of her sister's suffering, but then she resigns herself to accept not knowing: "It seems to me that you live embracing the Cross of Jesus Christ, which is what I aspire to do. Of course, I would love to know the details about what happened to you last year, but I understand that you must not tell..."

Wishing to know more, in January 1920, Leonor insists on knowing by being direct with her questions and by expressing her doubts. She intuits the cause of Margarita's reservations and attempts to interpret them: "...but what is happening with you? I'll tell you what I think. The first thing that I felt was the desire to be by your side and demand that you tell me everything... I can't deny the interest that this story inspires in me, a story whose principle character, or victim, was a part of me. But if you don't think it prudent, don't tell me. Duty and charity come first... From here, I perceive that someone or some members of your community who were previously well-liked and kind to you have poorly interpreted the work that you are doing in school... What I don't understand is the intervention of the prelate since I believe that you would be compliant. I also don't understand how the cause of all this could have disappeared, thereby putting a full stop to the question... How much you must have gained during this time of trial and tribulation! Who could have gone to your side and cried with you!"

All indications are that Margarita was reserved in her communication with Leonor due to a question of loyalty toward a person who was "previously well-liked" and hadn't come to understand the impression that the missionary spirit was having on the school. It was a person who was moved by responsibility to preserve convent life and the good running of the school free from "novelties." No doubt

this person appealed for the intervention of the bishop of the diocese to put an end to her fears. This person was probably Mother Natividad Urizar, mother superior of the Convent of Bériz. Margarita always felt a great fondness toward her. And she had always felt loved by the mother superior. Her mandate was from 1914 until March 1919, when Mother Nieves was elected to this post. With this nomination, it could be thought that “the cause of all this...disappeared, thereby putting a full stop to the question.” From that moment on, Mother Margarita could always count on the unconditional support of Mother Nieves, and she will maintain a great friendship with her.

Her spirit, always receptive to what the Lord would do, came out stronger than before due to these tests. Two years later she would write in her diary, “Mother Nieves called upon me and we spoke at great length about the father general's plans and about of fears that ‘N.’ has about both of us and the future of the house. I do not want nor fear anything. I feel with a living faith that I am supported by the Lord...”

1920-1923

The Old and the New Are Intertwined

She just turned 36 years old and she can't believe the change that she's experiencing. It's almost as if she didn't know herself. Her hope is increasing. Her inner life has increasingly been going deeper at the same time that the growth of her love has expanded her life. She feels as if she were in a phase in which the old and the new are becoming intertwined with a special charm and where horizons and paths are opening to her. It's a beautiful period of time that brings her much joy, growing in love.

Day after day she writes down her impressions, feelings, desires, and frame of mind. She feels new, more profound, and ardent desires. She hungers to live in truth, to live in the way of God and to transform into Him. She feels a resolute calling to sainthood, a calling as clear as when she was first called to a religious vocation. It is a calling to detachment, to be empty of everything, to unite herself more with God and to save the world. It is a calling to identify herself with Jesus, her life Teacher, to continue to work for the Kingdom of God. She prays, she has trust, and she dares to ask for it all because she feels that these desires are the love of God in her. She surrenders to God and confides in his trust. He, who gives the desire, makes reality, and this fills her with encouragement and peace.

However, the ever-present God can appear to hide and be absent. Her experience while in prayer is anguished torment. It is dry, desolate, weary, and empty. It has become merely an exercise in raw faith. She hungers and desires to relinquish everything in order to unite more with Him, but she only feels the emptiness of distance and absence, of deep loneliness and silence of the dark hand of God in the experience of night. She rereads Saint John of the Cross. Her reading illuminates her own experience. She understands herself better. She feels that her hunger for the union with God helps her make progress. She wants to leave her self, to transcend her boundaries, abandon herself, surrender herself and, at the same time, she feels as if she were chained to this "I",

to the ego enclosed in herself, the one that wants to detach itself, becoming free and open so that God can act without hindrances. She thinks that it's not a question of determination or virtue, but of superimposing the hunger for God over every other desire, love, or fear.

In the darkness of her night, she perceives that the existence of God doesn't depend on her, her determination, ideas, or feelings. She perceives that God is more than a word or a desire. He's an experience that one cannot completely decipher. He transcends and surprises us. She comes to understand that God is a mystery, a bottomless abyss, never revealed nor possessed. He is an enveloping and vast mystery of life and love. He is at the same time evident and hidden, present, and absent. His absence is also a sign of His presence. His absence leads to a deeper search, guided only by love and faith.

Her faith, even though she thinks it has been extinguished, is a dark and loving experience that allows her to confront the shadows and continue walking the path, dispensing with certainties, accepting absence without clinging to anything, and trusting. Her life of prayer continues to be an exercise in raw faith, without sentimentality, in unity and simplicity. It is a life of prayer of love, of transformation by desire. It's a life of prayer that deifies her and draws her in each time with more force.

During these years, she lives and dreams with a desire and a certainty of reaching union with God, of transforming her small self in to the immense self of God and to reestablish everything in Christ. This aspiration gives her strength for everything and she tries not to abandon these ideals amid her work and activities. She attempts to move from one activity to the other in peace and tranquility, with equanimity, like someone who leaves God for God.

She continues to share a fondness with Leonor that doesn't diminish with distance or time. She shares her suffering and the tough and arduous aspects of her missionary life with Leonor. They also share their life of prayer and faith. It is a faith that in Mother Margarita is being

converted into pleas ever more audacious and trusting, for the expansion of the Kingdom of God.

During these years, the missionary spirit becomes inseparable from school life. It becomes part of the educational vision of the school. It becomes part of everything. It permeates the walls of the boarding school. Through Leonor, it goes to influence the Carmelite Schools and by means of the *Missionary Yearbook* (Anuario Misionero) it impacts all the schools of the order. The mutual understanding and acceptance of this missionary spirit between students and teachers is complete and the community participates ever more with enthusiasm within the atmosphere created in the school. But not everything is harmonious. A few parents intend to withdraw their daughters from the school. Within the community, Mother Nieves learns about the worry and fear that a sister has for the future of the house. She confides in Mother Margarita. They understand the situation, but continue in trust with the work that they had undertaken. In 1923, Mother Nieves is reelected mother Prioress of the community and Mother Margarita became Counselor of the community and named principal of the school. It was a vote of confidence for the work that they were doing. Mother Margarita begins to wonder about the plans that God had for Bériz.

❧ 1920 ❧

Friday, March 19

The missionary movement within the school has been cemented to such an extent that it doesn't appear to have been in existence for a few months, but rather for years. On the Feast of the Epiphany, the school held a raffle whose proceeds would go to help the missions and Fontilles, a benevolent association. That same day a Board of Directors was appointed and nine Missionary Groups were formed.

Today, on the Feast of Saint Joseph, the Association of Mercedarian Missionary Youth (Asociación Juventud Mercedaria Misionera) was born. The atmosphere in the school is difficult to describe. The missionary spirit permeates everywhere. There is a contagious enthusiasm among the girls and the nuns. The girls devise ways to obtain funds. Correspondence with missionaries intensifies. Life within the boarding school is extremely spirited. Festivities, soirées, and conferences are organized. Little by little, a specialized library is created.

Thursday, May 6

I contacted Father José Zameza, Deputy Director of the magazine *El Siglo*, and I asked him for help with our plan for creating a specialized library of missionary books and magazines in our school. I prefer books that are narratives written in Spanish for the girls. For me, anything that sheds light on missions whether in Spanish, French, or English.

Friday, May 28

I met with the students. This year there are about 60. They are on summer vacation during July and August. I suggested to them that we organize a missionary campaign for these months and we are already putting this into action. Another plan that I have in the works is to change the magazine *Vacaciones* (Vacations) to *Anuario Misionero* (Missionary Yearbook). I proposed sending it to all of the schools in the order and to take advantage of its pages to invite the readers to participate in the Missionary Movement. And since I believe there may be difficulties, I've asked for a letter of approval from the Father General. I would love for the Mercedarian Order, which has been eminently

missionary in nature since the beginning, to occupy its rightful place at this time in history of the Church.

Monday, June 14

I dared to suggest to Father Zameza something that I've been thinking about for some time. I believe that they should study the best way for the Association of Saint Francis Xavier of Bilbao to become more popular and to be within the reach of everyone who wants to work in missionary service. I understand how well and how much this association labors, however, due to the way it began and the way that it is currently supported, only the elite of Bilbao participates in it. Knowing the character of Bilbao well, it's not going to be easy to change direction, but I also see the need for everyone, big and small, to be given the opportunity to become a member. Of course, the wealthy of Bilbao is able to contribute better economically than any other group. But this is not the way to instill the missionary spirit in all young people, which is what we claim to do.

Saturday, June 26

Now it's Father Vidaurrázaga's turn. I've had two letters of his that I have yet to answer, one from May 18, and the other from June. It's impossible to give him an exact idea about the enthusiasm that the mission in Wuhu has awakened in the girls. They want to take on the support for Ou Juen School by sending 500 pesetas each year. Now we need to know what he thinks about this initiative.

Besides catching him up on the activities of the school, I permitted myself to ask him some questions. I've been thinking about the types of work that the missionaries must do and I would like to get a better idea about what they actually entail. I'm touched greatly by the loneliness and isolation in which they live, especially during the first few years. My little problems appear so insignificant in comparison!

Tuesday, June 29

I'm enjoying it so much in school. The missionary spirit continues to increase in an incredible manner. It constantly stimulates school life. It promotes gestures of solidarity and generosity. It also promotes a frame of mind of collaboration and availability. It encourages the spirit of dedication and opens the way for great initiatives. I'm convinced that the missionary spirit simplifies the education of youth. It makes them take an interest in serious reading material and makes them feel the need for more and more instruction. The missionary spirit opens horizons, awakens curiosity, helps to discover the lives and customs of other people, makes cognizant their reality and compels them to want to get involved in it themselves.

Wednesday, June 30

I wished Leonor a happy birthday. We are now 36 years old. We're at the beginning of something new that isn't comprised of vestiges of spring-like dreams. I began thinking about my religious life and it's just incredible how much it has changed over the years. At the end of the day, of course, it is essentially the same, but the means, the path, and the impulses from God vary a great deal. Only two things remain unchanged: the appeal that prayer has for me because it lets me relate intimately with God, and the love and dedication that I have for everyone. As far as everything else is concerned, I don't recognize anything as being the same. My current life is new and old at the same time, but has such a special charm that it makes me feel as if I were living in one of the most beautiful and important periods of my life. It's beautiful because it brings me joy and important because it makes my love grow.

Thursday, July 1

Yesterday, before my letter for Leonor went out, I received one from her. If she's not a witch, then I'm a fortune-teller! She asks me to speak to her about missions, which is what I just did in my letter to her. Leonor and I really are one, and there isn't a single good idea that I think of that I don't feel the need to let her know about.

I hope that, through her efforts, the missionary spirit extends to all of the Carmelite schools. I'm convinced that if all teachers were to educate in this environment, it wouldn't be long until Spain and Latin America were to overtake other countries in the work of evangelization and promotion of missions. How many times have I thought about everything we could accomplish if only Leonor and I were together! Our plans and zeal would have no end.

Wednesday, August 18

We will enter retreat on the 30th. Perhaps God will inspire me to something new. For now, he insistently remains asking for continuous prayer. With the support of Jesus, I surrender myself in his arms, humble, charitable toward my fellow man, and appreciative of suffering. Above all, regarding this last item, could it be that the Lord is preparing me for a Way of the Cross such as the one from my most recent years? If that is so, I'm going to need strength that I do not currently possess. When I look back I begin to tremble. But, in spite of everything, I'm happy to have gone through these tests because I learned a lot.

Saturday, August 21

Father Zameza was here the day before yesterday. It was our first meeting since we began writing each other a few months back. He didn't have a lot of time, but we took advantage of the time we had. We spoke about the loneliness of the missionary, which is exactly how I always had imagined it. We spoke about the very arduous mission that the Lord entrusted to Father Vidaurrázaga. He also talked about the predilection we imagined that the Lord aroused in us to have such an interest and fondness for the mission in Wuhu, qualities that cannot be explained simply by anything that was not the love of God preparing us for something important. Before he left, he asked me to write an article for *El Siglo* on the informative value of the missionary spirit in school. If I go ahead with this, it will be the first thing of mine that I have published. Why not give it a go?

Thursday, September 2

I have a new desire to live in truth. Always in truth before God! I want to be apart from everything that troubles and disturbs, because the path to truth is unchangeable peace, trusting abandonment, an absolute generosity.

I mentioned these things to Father Zameza and today he wrote to me giving encouragement and adding the words “I do not decide.” I don't know why, but we religious have a custom of speaking in this manner. We feel that we have a duty to be humble and hide our true feelings. That's why we don't help each other as much as we could. I agree with Saint Teresa when she says, and rightly so, that those of us who try to truly serve God should always be fearless and speak plainly.

Friday, October 29

Just when I began writing to Leonor, another one for letters arrived. I was very happy to see the caring and missionary spirit that it contained. Well done, Leonor! She barely mentions her and her inner life. I'm afraid that Leonor is falling into the habit of not saying what she feels so that “people won't think she is more than what she is.” I already told her to let go of this silly modesty. It doesn't get you anywhere. I think that we religious take everything that is not said in a humbling way as boasting. This makes it increasingly difficult for us to speak from the heart. I asked her to speak plainly to me, like I do her. It has gone very well for me in retreat. My only aspiration is to empty myself of everything in order to unite more with God and to carry on with a life of continuous prayer. I want to carry the light of Christ to the far corners of the earth. How? I don't know. I only know that with humble and trusting prayer, united with Christ, I can do anything.

❧ 1921 ❧

Tuesday, January 4

Since December 22, the father general of the order and two councilors have been in Bériz. Also, the bishop of the diocese has been with us for the past two days. It's unimaginable the extravagant number of soirées and impromptu events we had to have in the school.

We've had some very tranquil days here in the community. I've taken advantage of this to present my plans to the father general. He not only approved all of them, but he appeared to be very enthusiastic about the missions. Right away, I wrote to Father Zameza and I asked that he pass by here as soon as possible because I had a lot to tell him and something to ask him about. I didn't tell him anything in advance about my plans knowing that I would tell him everything once he got here. What I did do was to congratulate him for the work that he did with the Archbishop of Burgos, Cardinal Benlloch. I consider it a big step in the missionary cause. I asked that he bring me a copy. He knows well that I can keep a secret and I won't say that the Pastoral Letter is his work.

Wednesday, April 20

I invited Laura Luque from the Teresian Institute (Institución Teresiana) to spend a few days in Bériz, but she wasn't able to come. She had to suspend her travel plans at the last hour because of health problems, but neither of us has lost hope of seeing each other. I think it's important that we share our plans. A single person can only do so much! Even more so, if the "single person" is a cloistered nun like I am.

Saturday, April 23

With a determined will, I continue to attempt total surrender unto the Lord, in the style of Saint Teresa. My desire to unite with God by totally renouncing all things is superimposed on all of my thoughts, plans, and desires. I know it's difficult to accomplish, but He who gives the desire, also makes reality. This fills me with encouragement and peace. I hunger to live in truth, to think and act in absolute agreement with faith, and I am learning to maintain myself in truth as I follow Jesus.

Wednesday, October 5

Laura came, finally, on the 30th and stayed here until the 2nd. I was delighted with her personality, talent, and abilities. But her health is not good and having so much work to do I don't know how she is going to end up. We talked a lot about missions and pedagogy, two things for which she was a wealth of information. I asked her to participate in the series of seminars that we are preparing for schools and centers of education. I also asked for collaboration from Father Zameza. He will return from Holland in January. I know that he will be very busy, but since it has to do with missions, we will continue to count on him as always.

Wednesday, October 19

Today I began a new notebook: "Diary and Retreats." Each day, I intend to note my impressions and feelings, my desires and frame of mind. I think that this will help me remain faithful to my work and to respond, at every moment, to what God expects of me, which is what is most important to me. I've encouraged the older students to keep their own diaries. It appears to me to be an important means of education.

Friday, October 21

First thing this morning I was reading Saint John of the Cross and I stopped and began reflecting on this question "Where have you hidden yourself?" This encourages and comforts me, but I'm not able to understand my inner state. I continue to have an inexplicable spiritual dry spell in my life of prayer. It's not only dryness that I feel; it is an anguished torment, which reminds me of the "hell of the soul" that the mystics describe. I can't remember when I have suffered so much. *Fiat.*

Tuesday, October 25

In school, there is something that we all perceive. It's the influence of the missionary spirit. Among the students, some have begun to receive a calling to religious life and some of the parents are thinking about withdrawing their daughters from the boarding school. We are not going to worry ourselves in the least, nor lose one bit of enthusiasm. We will have the number of students that God wishes for us to have, not one more, not one less.

Thursday, October 27

I continue reading Saint John of the Cross. It is so uplifting. I understand it all, but I feel so far away from what he's describing, but not so far away and my desires. I've been aspiring to this type of life for a long time now, what I call true life, and I know that God has one thousand paths for us to unite with Him. I put myself in his hands and I trust in my faith.

Monday, October 31

I pray at five o'clock in the morning. I offer myself to God so that, like on soft wax, he might impress his aspirations on me. I feel full of a soft peace and delighted that he makes me not desire anything more than what I now have.

Thursday, November 3

During my prayers, I cannot think about any other thing than to see me poor in front of God. I enjoy descending into my nothingness and contemplating the greatness of God. An abyss calls to another abyss. I pray, I trust, and I dare to ask for everything because I hope for everything. With these feelings as a foundation, I have had a happy day today, very busy and organized, just how I like it.

Friday, November 18

I'm reading *The Living Flame of Love*. It leaves me hungry for the good that I am pursuing and desirous of relinquishing everything in order to unite more with God. I can clearly see that God is busy directing me and that I need to empty myself of everything and let him act. I understand this emptiness of not letting anything affect me at all—in order to live the life of God. It is something very similar to living in truth, a sentiment that I have understood for some years. From now on, I am going to exert special care in fomenting a hunger for God, both within and out of my life of prayer.

Sunday, November 27

What a totally blissful day—an exceptional meditation and an indescribable feeling of God that left me renewed and desirous of tirelessly pursuing union with Him. Whenever I feel like this, I like

repeating the canticle of Saint John of the Cross that describes my present state so well: “In search of my Love / I will go over mountains and strands; / I will gather no flowers / I will fear no wild beasts; / And pass by the mighty and frontiers.”

Monday, November 28

In the school, there is an atmosphere of peace that permeates everywhere. There is happiness, union, and love—in a phrase, the Spirit of God. I've been talking to the students about Hindustan and I attempt to make them understand that in apostolic life everything depends on prayer and a testament of life. Later, I expanded on the idea that I have, one that touches me greatly, about missions. The whole world is a great family of the children of God. We are his favorite children since we live in his house, the Church. Those who do not have faith are also the beloved children of God, but who live far from him and neither know nor love him. Our job is to look for these missing brothers and sisters and have them know and love Jesus, with whatever means we have at our disposal. Who can say that he loves Jesus if he doesn't work to transmit his love?

Monday, December 12

I pray laboriously. It seems very difficult to achieve inner peace, which is what I'm searching for, solely by the love of virtue. I understand that everything is made easy by superimposing the hunger for God above desire, love, or fear. May the zeal to unite with God be my life and all of my joy.

Tuesday, December 13

I pray the Divine Office from the Liturgy of the Hours while feeling the psalms. I find them very opportune for my present state of being. In order to maximize my faithfulness to God, my desire to rise above my sensuality, health, and rest was renewed during prayer. I cast myself into His arms and I wait for the type of union that he wants to give me. His paths are infinite. My work will be to relinquish everything and let him act, leaving for me only my faithfulness to His grace, and growing aspiration for him.

Wednesday, December 14

After eating, I slowly savored true life while taking my walk. I'm not sure how to explain the joy that I experienced by merely thinking about living in this way. Living in truth is remaining always in God with a living faith. It is having a frame of mind of love and faithfulness. It is finding life in God, to discover Him as you would light in the shadows, counsel in doubt, and strength in battle. It is a life of prayer that is completely full.

I am able to understand this “living in truth” much more than I can correctly explain it. I would say that I live in a new world. It's a world that has been known in the past, but is now being enjoyed abundantly. I want to weave my life with love and faith without it ever unraveling again.

Sunday, December 18

My love for the Crucified Jesus stirs inside me. I feel the desire to live in love for the Cross. In my littleness and my poverty, I continue to feel embarrassed about how much further I have to go while continuing to follow the footsteps of Jesus. In this life of faith, one that I wish to keep, I have so much yet to learn about noble self-sacrifice, self-forgetfulness, and unconditional surrender. I've reminded Jesus that He is my Teacher. I have asked Him to teach me by means of simple prayer, something that I am drawn to so much.

Monday, December 19

I'm becoming increasingly established in a life of faith. I want to live in love, abandoned in the arms of the Father, without having anything or anyone disturb my peace—neither work, nor events, nor the little regard that others might have for me. I resolutely intend to progress toward a union with God, living in truth, with a living faith and practice, love and faithfulness. I want that the union with God to be my life and my continuous aspiration.

❧ 1922 ❧

Friday, January 20

It's been over a month since I've written in my diary. When the retreat was over, I had to work on the summer program and enrollment. There

were also rehearsals, soirées, festivals, and movie projections. The girls had a great time. Everyone could feel the liturgical spirit, happiness, and companionship.

I don't know what to really say about my inner life. It lacks absolutely everything that is profound. This is living a raw faith to an extreme, an extreme that I've never experienced before.

Wednesday, January 25

I performed my meditation at the usual time. I'm convinced that there doesn't exist a single book that can get me out of this numb state in which I find myself. On the other hand, I can squeeze water from the stone that is my heart by finding God within me after exercising my living faith and awakening my thirst to unite with Him. I put myself in the hands of God without desiring anything except to live in faith and in that simple and singular oneness that I can understand but that I cannot explain.

Thursday, January 26

My state of my life of prayer is extremely pitiful in every sense of the word. It's beginning to sadden me and is even beginning to cause me worry about the state of my inner life. I'm determined to surrender myself to the hand of God without desiring anything in return.

Monday, February 6

It's been a very full day. I prayed first thing in the morning as the Lord has taught me. It was an exercise of raw faith, a negation of myself, and a transformation into Him through desire. This prayer deifies me and I feel its influence all day long. I can contemplate, but I can go no deeper. I'm convinced that the Lord doesn't want me to leave this prayer of faith.

Sunday, February 12

I pray my way in solitude and I feel full of the Spirit of God. I am detached from everything and am living a life of truth. The prayer of faith increasingly appeals to me. And in it I'm convinced that life is precious because I can pray with a living faith and because I can make it "a gift" for others.

Monday, February 13

Mother Nieves called on me and we spoke for a long while about the plans presented to the Father General. We also talked about the fears that "N." has about us both and about the fears she has for the future of the house. I neither want nor fear anything because I feel with a living faith that I am grounded in God.

Tuesday, February 14

With some work, prayer is fulfilling. As my sole treasure, I've insisently prayed for the Spirit of Christ in order to feel and to work as He does, appreciating suffering and exhibiting unconditional charity.

Thursday, February 16

The missionary spirit permeates everything. It is inseparable from the life of the school. This school year counts with 90 boarding school students, a bit less than last year, but it is the best school year that I have known so far. Fortunate indeed was the day that we met Father Vidaurrázaga! I don't tire asking the Lord to send missionaries to Wuhu to help with the mission there. And for Father Vidaurrázaga, I always pray for the same thing: the soul of an apostle, patterned after Saint Paul, in order that he might want to only know Christ and Christ Crucified, and everything that is found in prayer. For me, I pray for the spirit of continuous prayer in order to live in truth and only for God.

Friday, February 24

Strenuous prayer. Silenced faith, as if I never had a relationship with God. I'm puzzled by such a sharp change. In the afternoon I reflected on my inner state and God granted me an appreciation of Him. I suffer. The suffering is greater because it is internal.

I spent quite a while with Lola. She's been coming often lately. She's not used to expressing her feelings, but I can almost guess what she wants to say to me. It's not too hard for the simple reason that we're cut from the same cloth. By simply telling her what I feel, we are always in agreement. I've proposed taking her away from the monotonous and tedious life that she leads. I've been giving her the translation work

that the Missionary Institute has entrusted to me, and she has been doing a marvelous job, her and Cecilio.

Saturday, February 25

I haven't written to Leonor since August. She knows very well that I enjoy writing her, but there are periods when time just flies by. Half way through the month I decided to catch up with my letter writing, but I got discouraged seeing the pile of letters that were waiting for me to answer. I had 54 letters in from of me.

I'm not surprised that Leonor had liked the life of Mother Pilar Borrás so much, since she embodies the spirit of her institute so well. I, on the other hand, got little out of reading that book. But that's not unusual since there are very few books that conform to my taste. That's why I'm content with the ones I have and I never tire of them. I believe that I will have the works by Saint John of the Cross and Saint Teresa for the rest of my life. In those books, I always discover something new. They are a veritable gold mine.

Monday, February 27

I want to catch up with Leonor! I don't know why we want the amount of energy and enthusiasm that God gives us if we don't use it to follow Christ. There is no doubt that we will accomplish it. It's a question of determined determination, as Saint Teresa says.

Monday, August 21

I felt the presence of God during afternoon prayers. I wouldn't know how to describe it except to say it was like a quiet pleasure, soft, profound, full of peace, something that I enjoy without thinking about anything. It's like a calling that God directs to my inner self without me having to work at all. It is not I who am looking for God, it is He who draws me to him and who calls me.

Tuesday, August 22

Today the Lord gave me an intense feeling of His love. While I was praying that He gives me His perfect love, and recognizing how far away He was, all of a sudden I felt very close to Him. It is a special gift that he often gives me. I intensely prayed to the Lord so that He would give me

His perfect love. I asked Him for it with so much faith that he left me this something that connects me to Him. He renews and transforms me.

Friday, August 25

I can't begin to say how much I took pleasure this afternoon in desiring a union with God. I discovered this life of union with the clarity and light with which He sometimes illuminates me. A life that is entirely divine in which everything about me disappears and only God is seen, aspiring to Him, and to inhabit Him. It is a life of absolute renunciation in order to be ready to embrace any job with enthusiasm. It is a life of surrender and of continual prayer in order to leave all of my cares in the hands of God and to always turn to Him through prayer to renew this fire of pure love, a fire in which I want to be consumed.

Wednesday, November 1

In October, I was getting ready to move to the Convent de la Merced in Bilbao. They had requested help in opening a school and it was determined that I help would help them with the organization and pedagogical guidance. But it appears that the Lord disapproved of the idea and sent me a brief but serious illness precisely during the days that I was to have been gone.

Today I'll be able to tell all about it to Leonor, although I think that Lola probably has already given her the details. On October 12, I lay in bed with pneumonia and a very high fever. On the 17th I received the Viaticum, and on the 18th the Extreme Unction. My sisters had already given up hope for my life and even I had come to believe that it was the hour that I would see and possess my Lord forever. How I would love to be able to express the feelings of peace and of surrender that God gave me! I did not go looking for Him. He freely came to fill me with His presence in such an admirable way unlike I have ever experienced before. I never lost consciousness for a single moment. Even though I was aware of the many prayers they were reciting for the benefit of my health, I pleaded with the Lord that if I was not to be of service any more that He take me with Him. But, since he didn't take

me, I have the grand hope of still doing something important in order to serve and glorify Him.

I have the desire for a new life of holiness and forgetfulness of everything that is not God! I want to always live in His arms, to eagerly look for His glory and to love the Cross with passion. I never want to lose these three aspirations.

Friday, December 1

The girls are increasingly showing more eagerness toward the missions. No one, except for the nuns who can feel it, could notice the extremely intense missionary life that exists in the school. I wonder what God has planned for the future of this house. There is something that I can discern, although perhaps it's only in my dreams, born from my growing love of missions. I am praying a lot for the Lord to call upon us to go do great works as service to Him and for His glory. How fortunate are those whom He chooses to work and suffer for his Kingdom!

Monday, December 18

The school in Lorca is going well. They have 200 students, but our nuns there don't see an easy return to Bériz. They were just elected to the posts of superior and instructor of novitiates. They are committed to be there for at least another three years.

Saturday, December 30

I received a letter from Leonor. After reading the (condescending) part that said "...she could give me points for developing the topic about the description of missionary life," my eyes watered up and my heart sank. I will tell her that I don't even want to think that she has suffered because of me. But is it possible that she has come to think that I am forgetful, and that due to the time and distance that separate us, the love we have had for each other has diminished? How can she judge me like this? She only needs to look at her heart in order to pardon me. The only reason for the delay is because I have a lot of work and, more than anything else, as far as the letters are concerned, I am always behind with the one that is the most urgent. I will not be neglectful any more, since I

perfectly understand her complaints. They are the same as those of all missionaries.

Sunday, December 31

Yesterday, I asked Leonor to talk about her life of prayer in her next letter. It has been a long while since I've been able to contemplate and I look to God however I can. I always turn to faith and to God when I am lacking in some area, which is my normal state of being. I'm inclined to pray a lot for the Church and my supplications are increasingly more bold and trusting. The Father continues to remind me of his promise of more than ten years ago, "In Heaven you will see your handiwork." This encourages me to ask for so many things. That might seem pretentious to some and cause them to laugh at me. But I understand that this is what the life of faith is. We have to give importance to the words of Jesus when he entrusts us to pray for the expansion of His Kingdom.

❧ 1923 ❧

Saturday, February 17

I received a letter from Father Zameza. He appears to be worried because he believes that there is little guidance in missionary work. If I were to see things as he does, I would suffer a lot, too. But I'm convinced that it is God who is to provide the guidance and organization that the Church needs.

Sunday, March 8

Today we held the community chapter meeting of nuns in order to determine who would be responsible for what post. Mother María de las Nieves Urizar was reelected mother superior. I am to remain in the positions of school principal and counselor of the community.

Sunday, May 20

The father general of the order is about to go to Chile, accompanied by Cardinal Benloch. From there, they plan to leave for the Mercedarian Mission of Piauhy, in Brazil. I understand that it is a very poor mission. The missionaries there experience poverty, great distances, and a very arduous life. I hope that this visit awakens the desire in all of the order to serve in missions.

During class yesterday, I took advantage of the time to speak to the girls about the mission in Piahy. I also spoke on the redemptive history of the Mercedarian Order and about its future—one of missionary service par excellence, from my point of view.

Tuesday, June 19

I share a lot in common with Father Zameza. One thing that we share is the difficulty we have in showing our feelings. It's one of the drawbacks of the Basque character. We would be foolish if we didn't encourage ourselves not to overcome this impediment. I think that, at our age, when God gives us a vocation to unite with Him, for the utter renunciation of everything, He is giving us a very special gift. It is a gift that is more substantial than ecstasy or revelation. And I say “at our age” because I've always mistrusted the enthusiasm that surrounds novelty. In our lives, there is room for nothing other than a faith stripped of sentimentality. This is my experience and this has always been my path.

Friday, June 29

Just as I had asked her, Leonor related her experience with prayer. Even in this we are twin souls. In my life of prayer, I only know how to love—by asking God for His love, by covering myself with Christ, and by trying to penetrate the greatness of the Lord about whom I know so little but can discern so much. Uniting with God is my greatest ambition, one that provides me with the strength for everything. Before, I used to think it was bold of me to hope for such a lofty gift, but now I intend to plead for it from God given that it is His desire that I hold to unite with Him and to transform into Him. This is what I live for and dream of. I try to make sure that I do not abandon these ideals amid so much work.

I continue to saturate myself in the literature of Saint Teresa and Saint John of the Cross. I can't count the times I've read their complete works. Each time I discover sublime mysteries and incentives for me to delve into the pure love of God. Reading Saint John of the Cross, I have learned to what point there needs to be death of the “self” in order to unite with God, something that I wish for so much. I want to kill my “self,” my sole enemy.

Monday, June 30

June has been a month full of extraordinary graces that I want to acknowledge and thereby grow in love. I believe I have never felt so close to God, nor have I felt so much spiritual strength in order to be faithful to Him. I live with the certainty of achieving union with God, of transforming my small being into the immense being of the Lord. It's a conviction that encourages me greatly because it appears to me that it is God who wishes to bestow this gift upon me. The Father gives me a constant desire, ever increasing, and fresh encouragement to progress in a life of renunciation. This morning, while meditating on my program, I felt encouraged by God through that calm and peaceful state that, at times, He bestows upon me and that gives me certainty in the Way of the Cross.

Thursday, August 16

The retreat begins. I join in with the desire of giving everything unto the Lord. My plan is to clothe myself in Christ and to relate with him in poverty, humility, and sorrow. Just like the missionaries do, and just like I have always wished to do.

Saturday, August 18

Extreme gloom. Unhappiness. Weariness. It was a day of real suffering.

Sunday, August 19

The grief continues, but with moments of light and inspiration. During those moments, God wants to have my love and confidence grow in the person of Jesus Christ. Jesus is my good and patient teacher who never tires of teaching me. I want Him to teach me to love work and to place my glory in it. I will liken my life to His and pray that He gives me such high knowledge. At other times, I will ask that my teacher speak to me about the Father, so that I might love Him and so that He might give me His love in order to continue to work for the Kingdom of God.

Wednesday, August 22

I have greater gloom and apathy than that of previous days. I feel cowardly toward everything great. Incapable of any affection, I place myself in the hands of God and I let Him do as he wants. I also suffer physically. This may well contribute to this terrible state of numbness in which I find myself.

Thursday, August 23

In spite of this state of gloom, I have a good relationship with God. On the other hand, I lack the generosity that I should show others that my position as a school principal requires. I must encourage, motivate, and gladly perform my tasks whenever they help the instructors and teachers carry out their “responsibilities.” I should move from one task to another with a sense of ease, in peace, with equanimity, as someone who leaves God for God, without showing the annoyance that I feel after having been interrupted, time and time again, during urgent tasks in order to go to the reception area or any other place where my presence is required.

1924-1925

God's Plans for Berriz Begin to Take Shape

She began her spiritual journey with the profound desire to commit herself to Him. She attempted to always be faithful. During these years, she journeyed down a path of exploration, listening for the voice of her beloved. It was a path full of sincerity, openness, and trust. She enveloped herself in a passion and desire to discover and learn. She came to know not through theory, but from her inner self. She practiced with persistence, willing to follow and see what opened before her. She tried to be in tune with what she experienced and draw practical implications for her life. She confronted shadows and made it through the night. She left the narrow prison of her small self that blocked the path toward her true identity, an identity that is found in the divine being, her deepest nature. She's been through a process of purification, of true spiritual liberation, of emptying, detachment, and surrender. She knows who she is and what she wants. She feels free, agile, and able to surrender herself eagerly to the hand of God.

She is conscious of the fact that she received free gifts and unique graces that she must now help bear fruit. She lives in faith, without wasting time or energy. God acts, bursting in with such force that makes her exclaim, "The Love of God has taken over my heart and I know he wants to completely transform it. A wave of new life is penetrating me. It is no longer I who lives, it is Christ who lives in me."

This experience of love increases her desire to delve into the awareness of God. She is conscious of the fact that this knowledge of God increases the love that is in her. Getting down to the essential, to what is truly important, devoid of everything that is not love, she sees that her smallness and poverty illuminate the greatness of the mystery of the Incarnation of God.

Being cut from the same cloth, she shares with Leonor the same aspirations and experiences but with different emphases. Leonor, who is

drawn more toward reparation, is more inclined toward penance. Margarita, due to her experience of merciful love, is oriented toward detachment and the emptiness of self in order to make room for the love of all.

God is transforming her just as he is transforming Berriz. His plans for Berriz begin to take shape. They observed a triduum of prayer in order to discover the will of God. What they contemplated was active cooperation with the missions. The triduum served to confirm these plans. A few months later, Mother Nieves suggested to the community the possibility of sending a group of religious to Wuhu, in the Vicariate of Anhui, China. She asked that the nuns freely declare their feelings about the plan in writing. Of the 53 nuns with a right to vote, 26 accepted the plan with enthusiasm and offered to go to the mission; 15 accepted the plan, but did not mention whether they intended to go; 5 approved the plan, but did not feel a call to missionary service; 4 nuns, even after deciding that the plan is for the glory of God, stated their objection to it and asked that everyone reexamine it; 3 sisters didn't know what to write down. The majority of the nuns held a favorable view of the plan. All of the nuns had love for Missionary Work, for the Order, for the house, and for the sisters.

After the Father General approved their plans, nothing was going to stop them. Rome authorized them to establish missions in mission countries. They are now missionaries. Everyone wants to help them. They don't lack difficulties. The nuns believe they are living a dream. A vast horizon is opening before them. There are additional plans besides going to missions.

❧ 1924 ❧

Saturday, January 5

I'm resuming my diary after a long silence. Of all that happened to me during this time, there is only one thing that I want to highlight. It is that since I began corresponding with Father Sancho beginning last September, a spirit of humility has been encouraged in a way that I hadn't known. I want it to become part of my being to such an extent that it forms the basis of my relationship with God. I feel loved with such fondness. I don't know how to reciprocate a love so freely given. I have trust that the Virgin will make me like Her, and I also trust in my God. He, who gave me this new inspiration, will not leave His work incomplete.

I've been in bed for ten days. I have a silly, persistent fever that doesn't make me suffer nor does it bother me too much. My prayers these days are reduced to asking Jesus to renew and purify me. I want to dissolve myself in my smallness in order to respond to the love that God has for me.

Sunday, January 6

I sense a desire for a new life, one that is only of God. How well I understand when God illuminates me and how blind I become when this light of God is lacking. I want a life of faith and of surrender in the hands of God. I want a life of prayer, desirous of glorifying the Father. How splendid are the paths of God, and what infinite varieties I'm discovering. I've asked Jesus to steer me along his paths, now that I am completely trusting in Him.

Saturday, February 16

God's plans for Berriz are increasingly taking shape and we are feeling closer and closer to Wuhu. I've written to Luisa Beristain so that, as the good Carmelite that she is, an abundance of prayers could be recited on the 19th, 20th, and 21st of this month. Everyone in the community of Berriz, accompanied by Father Aparan, will participate in a triduum of prayer and discernment. So, we need an abundance of guiding light from Heaven in order to discover the will of God regarding a very

important and grave matter. I've also asked Father Vidaurrazaga for prayers so that soon we will be able to give thanks to God together.

Thursday, February 28

The triduum of prayer confirmed our plans. God has taken the missionary plan of Berriz as His own and he arranged it so that the plans were approved, even the ones that didn't look favorable in the beginning. Now we are only awaiting a visit from the father general, which will happen in May at the latest. Until then, we'll start writing everything down. The plan has progressed and I think that it is much more important and significant than what we had imagined.

Wednesday, March 5

I wrote a long letter to Leonor. I didn't say anything about "missions," because if I do I might reveal a secret that even the community doesn't know about. We can't let anyone know about it until the father general interviews the council. These are no longer hopes of mine, but rather a grand plan that we will soon make public, as long as they don't reject it.
Fiat.

As far as my life of prayer is concerned, I'm not sure if I was able to communicate to her about my experiences or at which point I now find myself. If I forced myself during prayer it was because I wanted Him to help me. It has been about two years now since I gave myself to God in a new way, with faithfulness that only He knows how to provide. I became extremely determined not to place any obstacles in front of the action of the Spirit. Since then, I have begun to feel a great ability and appeal to a life of prayer. There were many days in which I felt a strong obstruction. It was something new for me and I didn't know what to call it. Of course, I would now say that it was something that the mystics call the suspension of the faculties. My memory, my mind, my understanding, and my will were not under my control. They were very disconnected from God. They were as if I were not in control of any of them. My whole body was in this state. I didn't feel tired. I didn't have any type of feeling in my body. It was as if my body wasn't mine. I experienced this quality of prayer for about two months, not every time,

but often enough. Later, I would experience this quality of prayer every once in a while for an entire year. Then I never experienced it again. I wasn't concerned about it then, but later I sought counsel and it appears that it all ended because God expected more unselfishness from me. It was then that I resolved to concentrate on taking better care of my health. There are many times when I will be able to negate my “self”, but I will proceed slowly, because I concede that I am a coward.

Saturday, March 27

I am coming to understand that being all for God is equivalent to total surrender, like losing myself in God and disregarding myself completely. It is like perfect humility that holds as fundamental the joyful acceptance of my own nothingness and the humble knowledge of the greatness of God. I understand it as saving all of my “fortitude” for God, without allowing it to be used for anything that is not for His glory. Also present is an exquisite, calm but active awareness and vigilance, like when one is waiting for the loftiest of gifts.

Friday, April 17

I received new guidance on inner life and a new call from Jesus to live a life only of faith and love. I have intense desires to only look for God. He unravels me with the love that is Him. He looks for me and makes me understand by such delicate means. He has conveyed the completeness of his Spirit and He continues to softly call me to faith and to love. The awareness of so many gifts from God fills me with joy. I want to be a docile instrument in His hands. The Kingdom of God and all of my tasks at hand are the subjects of my prayers.

Wednesday, April 23

I'm suffering as if I were far from God. Praying is difficult, but I happily continue. I have less guidance and, at times, I fear that I will never reach union with God. I feel like I'm going backwards instead of progressing in my life of prayer. I feel like my former aspirations were nothing more than an illusion. I welcome faith and work and I tell the Lord that it's enough for me just to serve Him. But it pains me to think that I won't be able to reach the intimacy that I desire in my relationship with God. But I won't lose heart. It's enough for me to have raw faith in order to love God and to follow Christ.

Tuesday, May 13

This morning they gave me two letters from Leonor. The first one came veiled in fog and darkness, as Saint John of the Cross would say. I'm happy that Leonor is going in that direction. I have a little experience of this fog myself, although in my case it might be the result of my tepidness of spirit. Anyway, I believe that we are worthy of great merit while in the middle of a spiritual dry spell, which at times is dreadful renunciation, because we hold to our intentions and we continue to pray, or to suffer in prayer, better said. It is to participate a bit in the suffering that Jesus endured so greatly because of the love He had for us.

On the other hand, I laughed a lot at my twin's second letter. How funny! I think that she's going to worry herself to such a degree that she's going to end up all wrinkled and ugly. Oh, the things that Leonor does! In regard to the content of this letter, we're not going to agree. I'm not affected too much about aesthetics. On the other hand, health, comfort, the thought of being useless for work, or cold (which has always been difficult for me), all of this has much more of an effect on me. I think that what is important is that there be a great deal of love of God. It was the flames from the love of God that warmed the saints during their austerities.

Wednesday, May 14

What a fortune-teller she is! Leonor guessed the secret. Soon, I will be able to give her all of the details. This month the father general of the order will come to Berriz and then everything will be decided. There are plans besides going on missionary service and we are expecting plenty of hurdles. And maybe there will be more than just hurdles! I think it's a question of praying a lot since it deals with a plan that gives so much glory to God.

Leonor continues making progress in what she was doing. I had imagined that she would be working tirelessly so that her institute would be taking an active role in missionary work. We just have to take the lead in these matters. Cloistered life complicates these things so much!

Thursday, June 19

I have a new desire to identify myself with Christ. My weak body resists in this struggle, but I'm not saddened to see me so cowardly. I gain strength by reading Saint John of the Cross:

“In search of my Love / I will go over mountains and strands; / I will gather no flowers / I will fear no wild beasts; / And pass by the mighty and frontiers.” These verses take away all of my fears and allow me to clearly discover the will of God. The courageous life of that Leonor leads also boosts my determination.

Monday, July 14

The Lord helps me discover my poverty with clarity. Doing so leaves me no room for dreams of self-love. I see myself with nothing good and so I look to Mary and I pray that she makes me live as She does and to participate in her humility. From within this humility, I pray that we might live deeply and completely in God, a reality of which I am such a long way from achieving.

Sunday, August 10

In his last letter, Father Vidaurrezaga appears to be hurt and disillusioned due to my silence. He's afraid that the missionary spirit may have cooled down in the school. I want him to know that he is not correct at all. To the contrary, the missionary spirit grows day-by-day and because of that we need to give many thanks to the Lord. The small seed of a few years ago is converting itself into a lush tree. And if everything I foresee comes true, very soon I will be able to say the words, "Now, Master, you may let your servant go in peace, according to your word, for my eyes have seen your salvation..."

Friday, August 22

I have a great desire to love Jesus Christ in a totally new way. I want to love Him in the name of all those who do not love Him. I want to continually think about Him. I want to sacrifice myself for love and to use my entire life to glorify Him, just like He glorified the Father. Good Jesus! If you want to fulfill my wishes, give me a new, ardent heart, one that knows how to love You, as You deserve. I am persuaded that Jesus wants me to only live in love and that my job is to grow that love until I can say with Saint John of the Cross, "My soul has been employed / And all of my abundance in His service. / I no longer keep cattle / Nor have any other office, / My only exercise now is to love."

Monday, August 25

The Lord is persistently asking me for prayer, penance, and continuous exercise of solitary and strong love. The love for Jesus Christ moves me to do this, as does the love for the expansion of the Kingdom of God and the desire to renew the redeeming spirit of the Order. I understand solitary love to be continuous inner penance. It's a negation of pleasures, empty of everything, and a mind firmly directed on God. Strong love is what I call a quality of fortitude that is stronger than anything and that breaks with everything just to please God, even in the smallest of things.

During afternoon prayers, I stopped to reflect on what I call the "preferences of God." The soul prefers and extols that which is poor,

humble, and contemptible to the world. How different are God's thoughts compared to our own! And, how far away am I from living these preferences!

Saturday, August 30

I've settled my two debts with Leonor. I hadn't written her since June and, in addition, I totally forgot to congratulate her on her 40th birthday. I spent the Feast Day of Saint James very close in spirit to her and prayed to Jesus that He allow us to journey together in this new phase of our life.

I get the feeling that for some time now I have had a new love for God, a new relationship with Him, a new desire to follow Christ in truth, and a desire to be like Him in the most painful way. These are only desires, but they are new desires born of the life of prayer that he wanted to give me and that changed me so much. Now I can clearly see that Christ wants these desires to become action. I count on Him with trust. I have a blind faith in prayer and I hope that this faith and trust increase until they become complete and all encompassing.

I find myself so far away from Leonor! I have to say that I cannot bear that that little ragamuffin exploits this situation. It's also difficult for me that her letters are less loving and intimate, at least that's how they appear to me. I prefer to continue to see her compose them with that innocence of hers that I like so much. I want her to tell me absolutely everything even if I die from jealousy. I am very much aware of the distance that separates us, but I would never hide anything from her.

Friday, September 5

The Father General was here at the end of August and we presented the missions plan to him. The entire community was alone with him and he left very touched. He was determined to think the plan over carefully and to consult with the fathers in his council, with the Congregation of Religious, with Cardinal van Rossum, and the Pope. If approved, an immense horizon will have opened for us!

Monday, September 29

Everything is progressing quickly and I believe they are laying the foundation for a great deed, the importance of which no one, not even we, fully understand. I feel in my heart that this will happen very soon. The Lord will be with us.

Thursday, October 30

Without us having tried, they have offered us a considerable amount of capital to build a school in Wuhu. We told this to the Father General a few days ago. The day before yesterday he wrote us a lovely letter. Even though he still hasn't met with the Pope or with Cardinal van Rossum, the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith and the Congregation of Religious took to the plans with a lot of enthusiasm. We can now call ourselves missionaries, although not exactly from Wuhu because before that can happen the vicariate apostolic of Anhui needs to accept our offer. Our Father General ended his letter with some very endearing words and blessed us as missionaries in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. This solemn blessing touched the community. Later, we sang the *Magnificat* that has the antiphon of "Redeemer of Captives." How appropriate that was.

Personally, I can't explain how I felt. I felt as if at that moment a new era was beginning, not only for this community, but also for the order as a whole. All of my premonitions are coming true. A confident desire and hope remain in me that Our Mother of Mercy will renew in us the heroic zeal of those first redeemers and that she will choose us to work and suffer greatly for her Church. I also hope for a resurgence of the Mercedarian Order. Although, again, these could very well just be dreams of mine, I do not want to wake up to any other reality.

Friday, October 31

We are now missionaries! The houses that are established will depend upon Berriz. And, once we are in a mission, this monastery that observes papal enclosure will become episcopal, that is, governed by a bishop. Immediately, a missionary novitiate will begin. We will expand the current building for that purpose. We are now preparing ourselves for the comments and remarks that will come forth from immediate family and strangers alike. Certainly, they will brand us as daring, pioneers, and imprudent. They might even say that we are taking a risk with the future of this school, which is going along well as it is. And I won't have a small part to play in all of this. I welcome it, especially if it glorifies the Lord!

Wednesday, November 12

I want to practice the love of the Cross, but I don't know how I can. Right now, I am in a community that loves me very much, I am among girls who get along so well with me, and with this optimistic nature that God has given me, —there is no Cross possible. There are only trifles. I've prayed to Jesus that He work in Leonor and me in order to effect the transformation that we are seeking, so that love might be the sole motive in our lives.

Thursday, November 20

In regard to missions, there is nothing new. We're eagerly awaiting the answer from Father Huarte, vicar apostolic of Wuhu. Some Jesuit fathers among others are discussing our plans at great length. Some have the opinion that we are not up to what is required for the job, and others, since Berriz is an autonomous convent, say we will be lacking personnel in the end. Still, others are truly happy. I chuckle to myself because, since God is with us, what can we fear? We've already begun the expansion work on the novitiate. We added a new floor since we are sure that the Lord isn't going to leave his work incomplete and will want to send us many good people with a calling for missionary service.

Monday, December 1

Leonor is asking me for news about the missions, but other than the details that I gave her in my last letter, the only thing I could add would be that the Father General was granted a private audience with the Pope who was very pleased upon being informed of our plans. He asked him to tell us that the Lord will bless this community for such an inspired idea to serve in missions and that He will fill the community with his sacred grace. And then the Pope also blessed us with all of his heart, thereby predicting that we would grow in spirit and that we would benefit from more people with a vocation to this work. Our joy over this blessing was immense.

All of the superiors have approved our plans. The nuns are ready to be sent. And an economic endowment that is capable of covering the costs for the construction of a school has been confirmed. We only need the vicar of Wuhu to answer in the affirmative in order for us to publically announce the plans and prepare for the exhibition. We hope that everything will be resolved by January.

Friday, December 12

Days have gone by and the long-awaited letter from Monsignor Huarte still hasn't arrived. I've asked Father Vidaurrazaga to use all of the means at his disposal with the bishop, since those of us here in Berriz would like to know what his wishes are so that we might know what we need to abide by. We would like him to speak frankly with us because if God doesn't want us to go, we will not insist upon it, even though it concerns Wuhu, a mission for which we have always felt a special fondness. For us, the only thing that is important is that God blesses our desire to work on behalf of our brothers and sisters in a more generous way than we have up to now.

❧ 1925 ❧

Friday, February 6

We received the letter that we so wanted from Monsignor Huarte, vicar apostolic of Anhui, in which he accepts us as missionaries of Wuhu with all his soul, life, and heart. The plans are now public within and without the community and there is a lot of commotion.

Bilbao is about to celebrate a Missionary Week that appears to have been created with us in mind. They will hold a superb exhibition in which we will have a small space. We'll explain the plans for the school in Wuhu and some of what has been already prepared for its establishment. During the week, we'll participate in a series of conferences that will be held in the Parish Church of San Vicente. Father Zameza will publish a brief article daily in the Bilbao press. In addition, we are printing some informative leaflets about our mission in China.

Tuesday, February 10

I wasn't surprised by Leonor's account of her experience of the “dark night” since I was there right in the middle of the “tunnel” for more than three months. I don't know how we stumbled into this! Her experience was exactly the same in every detail to what I experienced, even her inability to really explain herself. During that time, I felt so much weariness and tiredness that, even when experiencing things that would normally enthuse me, I had to hold on to faith so as not to falter. Only by looking to my desire to work and suffer for the Kingdom of God did even the plans to go on missions not seem like nonsense to me. Now that the dawn is appearing I feel closer to God than ever. I feel his presence during the day and a great desire to be faithful, but when I go to prayer and it all sounds like “Babel.” Projects, writings, missions, everything appears so strong and vivid that I can't help but to feel the vacuum left by the lack of prayer. But I don't get discouraged and I continue forward.

In exchange for these dry spells and inner darkness I receive from God a very clear guiding light on the life of faith, dark faith, the darker the better, with nothing profound within or without of prayer. Raw faith

is enough for me to love God and to follow Christ. Why feel something from God if soon I will possess Him? How I would like to speak with Leonor at leisure about this life of faith. I no longer have that prayer of suspension of the faculties, nor do I want it, since I know that in the blink of an eye God can transform me into Him. I live waiting for that happy moment.

Sunday, March 22

I look so at ease in my poverty! I would totally lose heart if it weren't for prayer, since God is the only one who can change me. He makes me desire humility so continuously that I'm sure He will end up giving it to me.

I want to hear something about Leonor. I have the feeling that peace and a new brilliance have returned to her spirit. I'm inspired. I enjoy ease of prayer although I am deprived of brilliance and sensitive advice. I have grand desires for humility while following Christ. I am ready to delve deeply into the knowledge of God, since I see that this knowledge will increase the love in me. How easy it would be for Jesus to clear up this darkness that impedes me from seeing Him as I want to. I like repeating the prayer to Him, “Lord, let me see!” because I know that it's enough that he wishes for it for everything to be illuminated for me.

Friday, July 3

During these last few months, I have received unique graces from God. The love of God has taken control of my heart and I know that he wants to completely transform it. A new current of life permeates me. “Yet I live, no longer I, but Christ lives in me.” He occupies my memory and ignites my will with desires of God that never are satiated. He calls my inner self and prepares me from morning light to go to Him. I can't quite explain such waste of God's graces. What is this, Lord? And what are these desires that you give me to follow Christ and to practice renunciation and humility?

When I go to prayer, I only know how to love and how to desire to descend to the bottom of my nothingness so that Jesus will come to me.

I ask Jesus that he teach me how to pray better and that he guide me, since I seek something that I don't know how to explain, even though in my inner self I have it well defined.

Thursday, July 23

Today the Most Reverend Father Huarte, bishop of Wuhu, visited us. It was the first time he had been to Berriz. He celebrated the Eucharist and stayed to eat. In the afternoon, the school held an evening literary event prepared exclusively for him. Doña Victorina, our great benefactor, attended as a guest. Everything was so very official. The community didn't deal with any specific issues with him.

Tuesday, August 11

The bishop of Wuhu visited us again on August 6 and left us the pertinent points for the modification of the cloister, etc., so that we could study them carefully before sending them to Rome for their approval. Today he returned and we told him of our consent. He assured us that everything was coming along well and that we could begin preparations for the first exhibition set for September 1926. A whole year's wait! At first glance it appeared to be such a long time, but Bishop Huarte has everything well planned out. He won't return to China until Christmas. And when he arrives, he will need time to set up a small house where the missionaries will live until the school is constructed. For now, six or seven nuns will go and later two more every year.

The work that is most missionary in scope that we will do in China won't have to do with the school building or the offering free tuition, but rather the education of Chinese girls who belong to the Work of Presentation Institute, a great contributor to the missionary wherever she or he may be. This institution, which is very well organized in Shanghai by French Jesuit fathers and the Auxiliary Mothers, also French, doesn't exist in the Vicariate of Anhui. They are going to open a house of instruction in Wuhu and this house will be ours, and that will be our task. We missionaries of Berriz are going to have a vast field where we can work for the Kingdom of God.

Wednesday, August 12

There have been continuous fluctuations in my spirits since March. I've gone from a very bad state of despondency to a state of soft trust, from complete helplessness in regard to my life of prayer to having an extraordinary abundance of quality in my prayers. The Lord lends me His hand so that I might feel my smallness. I am happy with what He lays out for me. I only want to grow in love and humility.

Thursday, August 13

It still hasn't been decided who will be going to Wuhu. My name is not mentioned, not even when people are conjecturing who might be going. I would be very happy and delighted to go. I feel a calling to it, but I will be satisfied just knowing that the work is being done. At least for now, with Leonor in Argentina and me in Berriz, we will be missionaries through prayer. If only Jesus were to choose me to give everything, even my life, for Him!

As far as our determination to serve in missions is concerned, we count on the unconditional support of the bishop of the diocese. In addition, even though as an autonomous convent we don't depend on the order when making decisions, the Order has approved, blessed, and applauded the steps we are taking. The previous Father General helped us quite a bit. And now the current one, Father Juan del Carmelo Garrido y Blanco, recently elected and previously unknown to us, has written to us with loving congratulations.

Tuesday, August 14

Sisters Natividad Urizar, Presentacion Areito, and Purificacion Escondrillas are preparing for a trip to Madrid. They are going to the Mercedarian Convent of San Fernando. The bishop of Madrid, who knows us well and cares about us so much, firmly supports that community. He has asked that two of them take the posts of mother superior and instructor of novitiates. There were a number of sisters who admirably offered to fill these posts given that it deals with becoming a part of a community that is totally unknown to us. In Berriz, it appears that we are living a dream, and I don't know where we

will stop along this line of expansion that we have embarked upon. I prayed to God that we not take a single step that does not follow His will, and that we not be afraid to initiate what He wishes no matter how difficult or hard it may appear to us.

Wednesday, August 15

Leonor mentioned to me that the Carmelite Sisters of Charity want to go to the Caroline Islands. There is no mission that tugs on my heartstrings like the one in these poor islands, inhabited by unassuming people of noble heart. May God direct them there. However, it's my understanding that there are great difficulties that must be overcome first. Monsignor Rego, vicar apostolic of the Caroline Islands, needs to consider this carefully due the frequent typhoons that occur there. People go without houses and goods for hours on end when these happen. Last year the missionaries there suffered great hardships, almost perishing from hunger. Things have improved since then now that there is better communication with Japan. Every three months a ship passes by and there are now more possibilities for acquiring provisions.

Friday, August 21

I contemplate the Incarnation. My poverty and inability illuminate the immenseness of mystery. I continually invoke the Holy Spirit, Father of the poor, and I pay heed to Mary. In Her I discover the type of inner life that I want to live.

Saturday, August 22

The Gospel passage in which Jesus calms the storm on the sea touches me and fills me with faith and love. It makes me think of my life. I think of my storms, both exterior and interior, that disturb and terrify me. These are storms that make me fight and exert myself. I think of the presence of the Teacher who calms everything and soothes inner strife. Fear is lack of trust in God. I've never understood that more than I do now.

Wednesday, December 1

Doña Victorina visited us last Sunday. She was very interested in having Father Zameza visit her. She didn't mention a word about what she had promised for the mission in Wuhu. She was very endearing and told us about her trip to Rome and her visit to Lisieux, but nothing else. In Rome, the Pope granted her a private audience. She is very grateful to the Father General of the Society of Jesus. She's also grateful to the father general of the order for sending her a letter of fraternity.

1926-1927

Breaking with Centuries-Old Customs and Traditions

On January 23, 1926, the rescript from Rome arrived in Berriz authorizing the nuns to establish missions in mission countries. There was much excitement within the community. Dreams and hopes were being fulfilled. On September 29, the first exhibition left for Wuhu. The missionaries were going to the country of their dreams—faraway and mysterious China. The small and isolated cloistered monastery had opened its doors to the world and its first missionaries breached papal enclosure, breaking a centuries-old tradition.

Mother Margarita spoke highly about the virtues of those who were going and the redeeming missionary spirit that they possessed, all of which induces them to want to give their lives for their brothers and sisters. With faith and trust in God, they are open to their new reality and they are enthusiastic about it; but, they harbor no false illusions and they have their feet planted firmly on the ground, conscious of the renunciation and suffering that await them.

Right after the missionaries left, alarming news about China arrived. There was talk of imminent war. For some, sending nuns under these circumstances was reckless and imprudent. But the nuns have another way of looking at what was happening. They believed that it was God who was motivating them to go and they were sure that He would proceed with his work. The missionaries arrived at Wuhu and began to write back. They had to be ready for anything. In Berriz, they knew that these nuns were important, with an enviable spirit, and ready to give it all up for the Kingdom of God.

The outlook for China was becoming increasingly dark. The situation was getting worse with each passing day. In spite of that, the missionaries were happy with their fate. Mother Margarita was looking out for them. She would follow what they were doing and would be with them through her letters. She worried about their situation, but at the

same time admired their braveness and serenity. These were very difficult beginnings for everyone. She saw them as being both jostled around and chosen by God. She interpreted events through the light of her faith, her experience, and her trust in God. They evangelized in secret with the same life energy as from the tree of the Cross. They were stones that had to be well polished before you could build upon them. She encouraged them. Jesus was conveying his redeeming spirit with generosity. For this reason, even though the horizon was getting dark, she wanted their lives to be cheerful and happy. The war was changing the plans for the school. These were plans that didn't appear as certain as before and a bit too European.

The second exhibition left in October of the same year. It headed for the Caroline Islands. The missionaries went eagerly and well prepared. They were aware of the isolation, loneliness, and poverty that they would be experiencing. They were a testament to happiness, generosity, and magnanimity.

On April 17, 1927, Mother Margarita was elected mother superior of the convent. Mother Nieves was elected vicar. They were voted for unanimously. In her new post, the manner in which she interacted with others became clearly evident. For those who dealt with her, they came to know her well and became fond of her. She radiated friendliness and confidence. She had a smile on her face. She conveyed a sense of simplicity, sincerity, serenity, and depth. She had a spark of light that came from her heart and was lit by love. She had a way about her that intuited desires, helped to get rid of sorrow, smiled in the face of fear, and emitted trust. In her proximity, you felt warm and welcomed. She demonstrated patience in the way she listened. She was open-minded, comprehended deeply and was kind. She possessed profound convictions and good judgment. It was a judgment that gave importance, courage, and boldness to her faith. It was a total way of being and way of life that she brought with her now to a new post of responsibility.

Through the use of conversation, love, and gentleness, she wanted to foment the desire to work and suffer for the Kingdom of God. She proposed uniting the sisters in these ideals. She prayed that they receive the spirit of action and the spirit of prayer, whether they were leaving for missionary work or staying. This was the way she always tried to live her own life. She understood that living for the Kingdom of God encapsulated it all.

There was increasingly more unity in her spiritual development. There was a union of her being and her deeds with God. There was a union of her prayer and her actions. She came to love and to do the right thing in everything. Unity and coherence in everything gave her peace and joy.

She thinks about the order and about Berriz. She contemplates about how the redeeming spirit is growing in Berriz and, along with it, the desire to actualize the fourth vow of giving their lives for their brothers and sisters. She's convinced that the effectiveness of missionary life depends on their faithfulness to the Holy Spirit.

❧ 1926 ❧

Sunday, January 31

The rescript arrived in the mail this morning, signed on the 23rd in Rome, in which the Congregation of Religious and the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith authorize the nuns of the Convent of Berriz to establish missions in mission countries. The enthusiasm of the community is incredible. The redeeming spirit has made us missionaries.

Given that everything is now completely resolved, the exhibition for Wuhu will leave in September as previously planned. In this way, we will fulfill our dream of tirelessly working for the Kingdom of God in a more generous fashion than we have up to now. It appears that the Lord is pleased with His work because ever since we became missionaries we've been receiving an extraordinary increase in the number of people with the calling for missionary service.

Monday, February 22

It's been five months since I wrote to Leonor. The truth is, I haven't written to anyone else during that time either, but that's not a good excuse. I don't know how much I cried when I read her last letter. Her zeal to follow Christ encourages her to sacrifice everything for Him. Hopefully, she doesn't hinder the action of the Holy Spirit and she continues progressing to wherever He inspires her. I'm filled with happiness that Leonor is progressing well, even though I don't have that kind of munificence for penance, nor for many other things, like she does. There are things that horrify me just by thinking about them.

Peace and joy fill my inner self. I'm happy about everything, including my poverty and my imperfection. I live while holding the merciful hand of God, in whom I look for everything. Everything that I need to do, I try to do well. I unite easily with God during the day, as easily as when someone breathes air. I notice an increase in intense faith—a dark, firm faith—without extraordinary brilliance. I maintain an inner peace and stillness. My prayers are made up of many things: they are an exercise in raw faith, persuading myself of my nothingness and of the everything that is God, and they are a request to the Lord that

his Spirit be at work in everything as He would want. During prayer, I'm filled with the desire to glorify the Father. I'm filled with apostolic spirit and of love for the Church. I deal with all of these things with God during prayer.

Wednesday, February 24

There is nothing specific regarding the departure for China. From one day to the next, we wait for a letter from Father Huarte with the details about the departure, which we continue to believe will happen by mid September. However, it's more important that we get everything right. I just finished filling out paperwork that the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith sent us. The cost for six tickets from Marseille to Shanghai comes out to 8,534 francs, some 12,000 pesetas. A small fortune.

Saturday, May 22

Tomorrow is Pentecost and I'm preparing with continuous invocations. I feel a loving devotion to the Holy Spirit whose inherent nature is love. He can give me a life full of selflessness and surrender to the very end. I can do anything with the strength of Spirit. Lately, both Mother Nieves and I are bearing heavy crosses. We need a lot of prayer and a very intense faith in order to work with the skill that's needed.

Monday, May 24

This morning we finally got news from Bishop Huarte. He believes that the best time to leave here would be during the last two weeks of September. So, in less than three months our dreams will become reality. The first exhibition to China by Mercedarian Missionaries from Berriz will take place then.

There is little time and so much to do, but the enthusiasm of the community will be more than enough to get it done. The six who will be going have already been named. They are Sisters Maria Begoña Dochao, Auxilio de Maria Urizar, Expectacion Echaniz, Josefina Bilbao, and Encarnacion Vicandi and Aurora Chopitea. They are delighted with their fate and very moved. All of them have many skills. One of them is fluent in French and English. But the best about each one of them is

their redeeming missionary spirit that prompts them to want to give their lives for their brothers and sisters. They don't have false illusions. They understand that they will need to deal with great sacrifices and quite a few difficulties, especially in the beginning. Those who go later will find the way cleared for them. For me, what is really important is the desire to work and suffer for the Kingdom of God, and they all have this desire. I don't deny that I envy them quite a bit.

The date of embarkation has already been determined and the tickets have been ordered. The Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith has granted us an aid in the amount of 8,400 liras.

Saturday, August 14

I've been feeling the same way all year long, but today it really became clear to me. I believe that the excessive determination that I employ in my activities is dampening my life of faith. I worry about everything turning out well, as if it all depended upon me, and I give so much of myself that I am impeding that intimate relationship with God that appeals to me so much. Nothing has changed in my relationships with the others because my desires of dedication only decrease when I become depressed, fearful, or trepidatious. When that happens, it's as if I were someone else and, if I could, I would flee from myself and would even want to hide from God.

I'm going to fight against this despondency that hurts me so much and surrender myself to humility in order to start on a new path. I will do this by uniting my inner self with God and by seeing his hand in everything that happens. I want to arouse in me the desire to work and suffer for the Kingdom of God. I'm going to try to have my sisters accept these same ideals, through considerable love, communication, and tenderness. This is what God wants from me now.

Friday, August 20

The community is like soft wax, ready to be used for anything. I want to follow Christ more closely. I don't think about anything else. I live for the Kingdom of God. I live to work and suffer for the Kingdom of God. My continuous prayer is also for His Kingdom. I pray for

everyone, for those who are going and for those who are staying. I pray that they all receive the spirit of action and the spirit of prayer, two things that I have desired so much.

Sunday, August 22

Father Vidaurrezaga is counting the days that remain before he reunites with the missionaries. The missionaries haven't yet seen the day when they will embark for the country of their dreams. And we, the ones who stay, are feeling happiness, sorrow, and jealousy all at the same time. More than anything else, we feel gratitude to God who looked to Berriz when choosing the instruments for his Kingdom and His glory.

I've been overwhelmed these past few days with last-minute preparations for the exhibition. The sendoff will be on September 19. On that day, in the afternoon, the six missionaries will leave for Marseille. They will embark on the ship *Chambord des Messageries Maritimes* on the 24th, the feast day of Our Lady of Mercy. During the entire voyage, they will enjoy the company of two Jesuit fathers from the province of Leon, who are also going to Wuhu.

Monday, September 20

Berriz is beginning a new era. It opened its doors to the world and its first missionaries breached papal enclosure. Yesterday, we had the sendoff. The archbishop of Valencia presided over the Eucharist. Fr. Angel Sagarminaga preached. Family members, friends, people from the surrounding area, and more than 200 students were in attendance. It was all very moving. It was a very special moment when Mother Nieves blessed the missionaries. Then the archbishop placed the Cross upon them. People rushed forward to kiss it, which made it difficult to leave the church. In the small plaza in front an immense crowd awaited the missionaries. Being at peace and happy, the missionaries had words of inspiration for everyone.

It's been a very full day and one of mixed emotions. I missed Father Zameza very much. I have a heart full of gratitude, happiness, and encouragement, yet at the same time I feel an inexplicable sense of sadness that makes me enormously sensitive to everything. I attribute

this to the natural feelings that come from separation and to the fact that the sisters who left were like the right arm of the community. Mother Nieves and I have spoken about this and we have come to the same conclusion: we would do this a thousand times again in order that missions receive the best.

Saturday, September 24

At four o'clock in the afternoon, the *Chambord* set sail from Marseille. The missionaries have only just embarked and people are coming to tell us about war in China in a very alarming way, and as something that appears imminent. They say that we are very reckless sending the expedition under these circumstances. If I could explain to them how God was arranging everything, even the most little of things, no one would say that it was rash to fully trust in Him. If God wants to establish a mission based on work, we couldn't ask for a better beginning. He carries his work forward. We are only instruments in His hands.

Sunday, October 10

We now have news from the missionaries. The day before yesterday a package full of letters arrived from Port Said dated September 29. They appear happy, full of inspiration, and in an enviable mood. The voyage is going well except for the unavoidable discomforts that go along with a voyage of this length: heat, living in want of certain things, and a diet to which they are unaccustomed. We are sending them telegrams to almost every port.

Friday, October 22

Father Aguirre was here yesterday. He caught us up on the meeting he had Monday with Doña Victorina and Father Zameza. Father Zameza will be in charge of presenting to Father Guimera, proxy for the mission in the Caroline Islands, our desires of establishing a mission in these islands of the Pacific. Last night Mother Nieves, convinced that Father Guimera will accept our proposal, convened a community chapter meeting and the new mission was welcomed by all, with enthusiasm and an enormous affection. There were numerous spontaneous offers to serve in that mission. I believe that the exhibition will be prepared soon and that volunteer personnel will not be lacking.

Tuesday, November 2

A cable came in from Shanghai: "We arrived well. Peace." Signed: "Mercedarians." An explosion of happiness filled the entire house. The missionaries arrived well and they found peace there. We can't ask for more. Of course, we can't harbor the illusion that it is total peace, but at least there is peace at the mission.

We haven't heard anything yet from the mission in the Caroline Islands. Every day we hope for a letter from Father Guimera accepting our offer. They only talk about missions in the community now. Even if they only achieve nothing else but the desire to work for the Kingdom of God, I would be more than justified to have gone down this road.

Thursday, December 2

Yesterday, a letter from the missionaries arrived. It was written in Wuhu. They have so much to tell us. In Shanghai, the vicar apostolic of Anhui and representatives of the fathers of the mission received them. Later, they embarked for Wuhu with the bishop. When they entered the mission, it was already nighttime. The house surprised them a lot. They expected it to be in poor condition and dilapidated, but it looked gorgeous to them. It was well furnished and full of little details. It wasn't lacking in anything. The welcome from the Jesuit fathers was very warm and fraternal.

As soon as they have settled in, they will begin a study of Chinese. I think that the great distance that separates them from Berriz will be very difficult for them and that in spite of frequent and regular correspondence they will become terribly homesick. In Berriz, we jump for joy with each letter that we receive. It's like a dream to me that the mission in Wuhu is already a reality.

Tuesday, December 7

I've fallen behind again in my correspondence with Leonor. Even though no one could have guessed it during these past few months, after the school year began it has been difficult for me to organize my activities. I'm not surprised about her struggles because when the Lord lets go of our hand, it's normal to feel our own weakness, although I prefer to think that Leonor has returned to her usual peace. I really like her desire to be forgotten. I don't ask for anything. I only want to love God wherever He places me.

Sunday, December 24

The war in China is looking bad. The mother superior of Wuhu has written a letter to Mother Nieves that we still haven't read to the community so as to not alarm anyone too much. Wuhu is about to be converted into a center of operations and the nuns must be ready for anything. They appear to have courage and an enviable spirit, ready to give their lives for the Kingdom of God. Communication between us continues to be good. They write to us every ten days.

The establishment of a mission in the Caroline Islands is proceeding well. The project will soon be made public. It appears that the Lord, who loves us so much, is fulfilling our desires.

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Wednesday, January 19

The outlook for China is becoming increasingly darker and the situation there is getting worse day-by-day. In Berriz, we are concerned for the missionaries. Today we sent them a cable, but we don't know if they received it. But we also live in trust. The Lord takes care of them as He does everyone else. Perhaps they need to suffer anxiety and affliction. Only the Lord knows why He has sent them to this situation. He could be making it so that the war in China causes the values of the Kingdom of God to take root there. We continually suffer for them with this constant uncertainty between peace and war. It's a way of participating in their work. We're convinced that following Christ is by way of the Cross and we don't have any other plan. We ask that the spirit of fortitude be given to them, to all missionaries, and to everyone everywhere.

Wednesday, February 2

The news that comes out of China is increasingly alarming. Father Vidaurrazaga has been harassed and mistreated. We are living in true anguish thinking about him and the missionaries. Our fears increase each day. We pray a lot for the situation to improve and so that they may continue to work in peace. We continue to receive regular reports. The sisters appear very content with their fate. The happiness and the fortitude that they show in their letters is an encouragement to us all. They are so brave!

Friday, February 25

Pessimism about China continues to spread. It all appears to be ominous and we wonder if the missionaries will need to return. I suffer greatly when hearing such things, and I don't feel I tell them enough how much I love them. Their letters make me suffer and make me joyful. I am sure that God is allowing this war to happen for a purpose that we do not yet see. All of us, girls and nuns alike, continually pray that this revolution serves to establish the Kingdom of God in China.

Saturday, February 26

Yesterday I received a letter from Leonor. I keep going back to reread it because there is something about it that feels good to me, although I'm not quite sure what it is. I do know that it is not sorrow or discouragement due to my poverty. It's more like a very serene happiness. I'm not as selfless as she is, but I want to follow Christ closely and I want to suffer for his Kingdom. At this time in my life, I'm not suffering. But I do foretell that I am going through a period that is perhaps the most valuable of my life. Rarely do my premonitions not come true.

Friday, March 25

There is a lot of anxiety in Wuhu due to the advancement of the revolt toward the north. Sister Begoña Dochao wrote us from Shanghai quite worried because of these events, but mostly because she was separated from the rest of the community. Later we found out that the sisters in Wuhu had no choice but to abandon the mission and that they are safe in Xujiahui. If Shanghai needs to be evacuated, they will embark for Hong Kong or Saigon. From there, they would send us a cable and wait for orders from Berriz because they are incommunicado with the fathers of the mission and with the bishop.

Sunday, April 17

I was elected mother superior. I'm touched and sad at the same time. I'm sad for what I'm leaving behind, especially the school. My responsibility weighs heavily on me. It's been a very long day. When I finally returned to my room this evening, I found a letter from Leonor. I open it and I found four lines and the words "You don't deserve any more." I started to cry because this time I hadn't failed her. I wrote her a long letter at the end of February.

Wednesday, April 27

Tonight the community read the latest letter from Xujiahui. The missionaries were able to meet with the bishop who just arrived in Shanghai with 36 missionary men. The others are on their way there. They are all very effected about the evacuation of the vicariate. What a difficult test this is! The Jesuits in Manila have offered their residence to the French and Spanish fathers. They also found a house for the sisters. I am sure that this test will help them a lot in growing their redeeming spirit and missionary character. They don't have to think about big things because, from now on, they are evangelizing in secret with the same life energy as from the tree of the Cross.

Friday, April 29

I addressed the community as mother superior for the first time. I remain confused in this house where so many sisters are examples of virtue and now the Lord has permitted that I receive the name of mother superior. My smallness is becoming even more self-evident. Because of this, and persuaded that I am incapable of governing aptly, prudently, or intelligently, I place my supervisory responsibilities in the hands of the Virgin so that She might watch over the order and over this community with the care and tenderness of a mother.

I wrote a letter to address the missionaries. I'm saddened that perhaps they won't find the same tenderness in me as they do in Mother Nieves, but I want them to know that she and I are as one. I would like for them to continue to write her and to give me their trust.

Saturday, May 7

I'm at peace. The community is very happy and loving toward me. I also truly love them. I understand that I will need to exert myself a lot in order to respond to the demands of my post. The Lord helps me and I have a great trust in Him. During yesterday's retreat, I renewed my resolution to be meek and gentle in order to care for all the sisters as much as they want.

Friday, May 13

In the meeting today, I opened up my heart again to the community. I want to be mother to everyone, from the strong to the weak, from the more timid to the high-spirited, and I want everyone to believe this. I want that love unites us and that we help each other carry our small loads. If we are living in community, it is because we all are looking toward the same goal, and in order to achieve it Mary is opening up horizons that are increasingly clear. I want that the redeeming missionary spirit be our insignia.

Saturday, May 14

The missionaries are living their exile with a frame of mind full of faith and serenity. I never thought that they would have to leave China! I've suffered greatly since they left Wuhu and now I live with continuous anxiety. The Lord is testing the missionaries in everything. He's shaking them around like wheat in order to get choice bread from them. I'm sure that when they have finished with the chalice that he's prepared for them, He'll have them return to Wuhu and will bless their dedication to the mission in an incredible way. I pray with all my soul that the Lord, having already chosen them to suffer for His love, gives them fortitude, happiness, and an abundance of zeal so that they might be able to confront whatever torment may lie ahead. This difficult beginning is God's stamp that declares the mission in the living rock that is Christ.

Thursday, May 19

Father Zameza was here on Monday, the 16th. He came to tell us that Monsignor Rego has accepted us for the mission in the Caroline Islands. The expedition will need to leave this year. This seems a bit hurried to me. I've already written to the bishop and to the provincial father of Andalusia giving them my approval, since I don't want the establishment of the mission be delayed on our account. The first thing that I thought of was to have those who will be going to the Caroline Islands meet with the sisters at Wuhu or wherever they might be, either in Shanghai or possibly in Manila. I so want to inform them of such pleasant news.

So many letters have been coming in! The male missionaries in the Caroline Islands are extremely happy with our decision. I'm confident that together we will work diligently for the Kingdom of God. I carry these islands in my heart and I have a huge penchant for this mission. This is not something recent, but rather something that I have felt for many years now. They are small islands that are very poor and lack so much. Due to the war in Europe, they were left without missionaries.

Wednesday, May 25

Recently, I can't help to think that in another ten years the mission in Wuhu will be very successful. The sisters who will be going there later on will find that the way had been cleared for them. They will remember little of how much the founding sisters had to endure. That's life. In Berriz, there has also been privation, anguish, and hunger. And now it is full of life. For that reason, I do not tire of telling them that they are laying the foundation for a great achievement and that the Lord wants the first stones to be polished well.

Jesus is giving them his sweet, happy, and serene spirit. I tell them that it's good that they continue to be communicative because circumstances require it. No matter how dark the horizon becomes, their lives have to remain very light and happy. When in doubt they should always lean toward communication and being sociable because they will need to put up with annoyances and not get discouraged. I would feel horrible if these events were to sour their character or make them return in a peculiar or melancholic state of being.

Tuesday, May 31

I'm writing to the sisters in Wuhu. The letter that we received from the superior mother seemed to parallel the conversation that Father Zameza, Mother Nieves and I had about the school a few days ago here.

Sister Begoña has the same ideas as I do with respect to the future of the mission. We also think it is indispensable that the missionaries should be able to count on a secure income. It would be absurd to build a luxurious building now, like what was at first intended, and invest all of the capital into it. Our project was ill considered and too European.

It was necessary that there be a war in order that our project could be modified. Without the war, it would have been impossible to introduce any modification.

The project that everyone approved was to use the capital that was offered by Doña Victorina for the construction of a good school in the belief that in two or three years it could support itself. But now things have changed. They will have to abide by new laws and it's impossible to foresee the future. It appears that it would be wiser to set aside the first quantity of capital offered of 300,000 pesetas and save the remaining 400,000 to create a fund to assure the ongoing maintenance of the mission.

I believe that Doña Victorina would think that this change of plans is reasonable if the bishop were to explain it to her with the tact that he uses so well. But I understand that even though we are in agreement, it's not up to us to make direct observations since she did not make the donation to the Mercedarians of Berriz, but rather to the vicariate of Wuhu. The only thing that the sisters can do is speak with the bishop, tell him what they think, and also add that they have consulted with Berriz and that we are in agreement.

Wednesday, June 1

The Lord guides their work with gentleness and fortitude. Little by little He divests himself of everything and gives it to the missionaries. In return, Jesus is conveying to them the redeeming spirit of His that he has given so generously up to now. I do not tire telling them that they must encourage each other. It would be a shame if they were to become downhearted or intimidated. I worry that their judgment might become limited. I would like to witness their moments of relaxation and find that they tell jokes, are spontaneous, and have good humor. Now more than ever they need a light and happy heart. The Lord, who chose them to be his apostles, is taking them by the narrow way of the Cross. In the community, I would want there to be happiness and broadmindedness. They are seeds from Berriz transplanted in China and, although the circumstances don't help, they must make an effort to preserve the spirit

of Berriz: honest, happy, unassuming, spontaneous, and natural. It is the legacy of this house.

Monday, June 20

Yesterday I received a letter from Leonor written May 29. She appeared to be her funny old self again. I had a good time reading it. I'm glad she didn't address the letter to "Mother Superior." It sounds a little stiff to me, a bit too worthy of reverence, and a little unpleasant coming from my sister. "Margarita" is more unassuming and happy.

I sent her a letter that Father Sancho had for her. It was sure good luck that both of us came across this father. He is an important guide. He taught me a righteous path of humility. I say that he taught me, not that I learned, but I want to follow that path because of him. I have a great fondness for him that is well rooted.

Monday, June 27

I've been in bed with a fever for over 20 days now. My spirit is calm. I've made new discoveries about love that I have for myself. I feel drawn to humility. And I'm happy that my post requires me to live detached from everything, especially from my own self-esteem. I am calm because Jesus is with me.

Saturday, July 30

During the sisters' absence, who continue to live in Xujiahui, the house in Wuhu was looted. They were only able to save the piano, some sewing machines, and a few typewriters that had been put in a secure place by the fathers of the mission. Today a letter arrived, via Siberia, with news that saddened me greatly. I thought that at the beginning of August they would receive the order to return, but it didn't happen that way. Leaving is going to take longer. How I would like to know the truth about what is happening with the missionaries! Only God knows how much they are suffering and how far this will go.

Monday, August 1

Yesterday, Doña Victorina returned. All of the community met in the entrance hall of the school and there, in front of her, Father Zameza read the official letter from Monsignor Rego accepting us for the

mission in the Caroline Islands. I was touched and confused over how the sisters so easily offered themselves for such a difficult mission. They have great desires to work and suffer for the Kingdom of God. Living on islands that are so poor and isolated, they won't lack opportunities to act upon their desires.

Saturday, August 13

I received letters from the sisters in Wuhu. They tell me that they have written to Doña Victorina proposing that she modify her plans in regard to the establishment of that mission. I was afraid that they would take such a hasty step!

Sunday, August 14

In China, the war is increasingly becoming exacerbated. The southerners have occupied the house in Wuhu and the fathers' residence again. Monsignor Huarte had to urgently travel from Xujiahui to Wuhu. What I feel bad about the most is that the missionaries have been left alone again. It's clear that the Lord wants to squeeze this bunch of Mercedarian grapes that are the missionaries, and crush it well so that it becomes excellent wine. Little by little all of the human support is being taken away so that they only have Jesus as their sole refuge. One day, they will enjoy remembering the difficult beginnings that they are going through now.

Monday, August 22

I want to face my illness without complaining. If I'm asked about my health, I will simply say how it is. I will attempt to not complain about the lack of time or about tasks that overwhelm me. All of this makes me feel so small and worries me. I will look for peace and will perform everything in a calm manner to the best of my ability, trusting greatly in God. My self-sacrifice continues, in silence, which I will use in order to give my all to everyone who needs me, like the love of a mother whose only purpose is to look after, listen, and comfort others. I will also attempt to do this for my inner self. I want to make the most of the affection that everyone has for me in order to accompany them in the pursuit of Christ.

Tuesday, August 23

I need to exchange views with Father Zameza before Doña Victorina receives the letter. I'm afraid that the letter that the sisters in China wrote isn't going to sit very well with her. I feel very much ill at ease about all this. I trust that everything can be worked out.

The Jesuit fathers are looking for sisters to open a school in Anqing. As soon as we found out, we contacted the provincial father of León. For Berriz, a new house near Wuhu in China would be of great benefit for the changing of personnel, for vacations, and for the exchange of experiences. The difficulty lies in the fact that we can only provide personnel. We can offer personnel who are full of enthusiasm to work for that mission. We don't have the means to build a school, so they would need to help us—including paying for the tickets over there, which can be quite expensive. Not every mission can begin with the splendor with which Wuhu began. If the fathers were to have a house that they could assign to us, a modest mission could definitely be established and then wait for God to give a helping hand. We don't aspire to more than that. Here we have nuns available who are brave, in spite of the uprisings happening in the country.

Friday, August 26

Yesterday a storm broke out. Exactly what I was afraid of! This afternoon Doña Victorina arrived with a letter that she had just received from the sisters in China. In general terms, they spoke about the benefits of changing some of the plans. They also said that they had written to me with more details.

Doña Victorina, being the well-mannered and polite person that she is, tried but couldn't help but to show how upset she was. However, she was also very intrigued. I gave her the letter that I received for her to read while letting her know about the uneasiness that I felt upon reading it. She felt that all of the reasons should have been explained to her by the bishop when he was here, and then she, upon seeing the difficulties, would have accepted or rejected the project in its totality. But now her intention is to continue forward with the building of a good school.

We agreed that we would each write the nuns in Xujiahui and tell them to cease in making any changes. What Doña Victorina does not imagine, not even remotely, was that the bishop was right in the middle of this. She thinks that this came only from the nuns who, fearing the war, were trying to ensure their future.

Saturday, August 27

I wrote Wuhu. No matter what I could say to the nuns, they would never be able to imagine the awful days that we've spent because of the proposal they made to Doña Victorina. We're going to end up in such a bad position. Relations are deteriorating so much that even the plans for the Caroline Islands may be delayed. I'm sorry that they hadn't relied on my opinion and the bishop hadn't consulted her, as he should have. But what hurts me most is that they have displeased Doña Victorina. I wrote them a letter using three pieces of paper. I couldn't restrain myself and now I feel shame for having worried them so. I asked that they conduct themselves with supreme discretion and that they should understand that they should not get involved in things that don't concern them. I've told them this repeatedly. I reminded them that Doña Victorina only promised 50,000 pesetas for the nuns and that she is very far away from wanting to give more. I also wanted them to know that their proposal to change her plans sat with her so badly that she said it was pure impertinence on their part and that she regrets having been part of this mission.

Thursday, September 15

I received a letter from Doña Victorina. It was a very serious letter, much more than I could have imagined. She said we were selfish. It appears that she mistrusts nuns in general. Maybe she has reason to believe this. Since she feels this way, I am not surprised that she has come to believe that the bishop's plan, as explained by Sister Begoña, is something that we have concocted ourselves as a preconceived plan. This distrust hurts me greatly.

In spite of the situation in which we find ourselves with Doña Victorina, I don't believe that the plans for the Caroline Islands will

become undone. We were so afraid that they might! The personnel have already been named, but the date of the expedition has yet to be decided. The six tickets cost 18,000 pesetas. We're thinking about writing to the Mission Procurement Office for help. If that doesn't pan out, I don't know where we will get that kind of money. The Secretariat of Missions in Vitoria sent us 3,000 pesetas. We are very much appreciative of that.

Monday, September 19

All during the day, hour after hour, we remember the missionaries in Wuhu on the first anniversary of their departure for China. How little did we know then that after one year they would be placed in a tighter enclosure than that of Berriz, far from their mission and depending only upon the providence of God. Jesus is quenching them with the tasty honey of his cross.

It's been a hard year for them and for us, seeing them without a house and going from place to place, but joyful for the cross that they have been asked to bear. In Berriz, we live waiting for a cable informing us of their return to Wuhu. Sometimes I fear that one of them won't be able to resist the heat and will fall sick in a strange house. Let's hope they know how to take care of themselves and they don't have any qualms about asking for what they need to endure, as best as they can, while away from their home.

Friday, September 30

I met with the community. We took a look at our Order, its history, and the first redeemers. So many saints, so many martyrs, and so many heroic nuns! And in the present time, so many women of prayer who would gladly give their lives for the love of Christ! And us? Within this Mercedarian family, we are a privileged community that is very much loved by our Mother. Here, Her favors are generously bestowed so that, following the footprints of the first redeemers, we live totally committed to the redemption of our brothers and sisters. In order to do that, She opens up all of the paths and She provides all the means.

Mary wants to make us into a very apostolic community. In order to do so, each one of us must believe that the effectiveness of missionary life depends on our faithfulness to the Holy Spirit. May God continue to cast His eyes upon this community in order to make us instruments of His Kingdom and His glory.

Monday, October 17

It's been decided. The expedition to the Caroline Islands will leave Berriz in November. Four nuns will be going: Loreto Zubia, Inocencia Urizar, Pilar Lorenzo, and Maria Teresa Cortazar. Sister Aurora Chopitea, from the community of Wuhu, will meet them in Shanghai. All of them have an admirable spirit. They are very much aware of the many sacrifices that await them in a place that is so isolated in the Pacific where they will find themselves poor, isolated, and lacking communication with Berriz. The desire to work and suffer for the Kingdom of God gives them strength for everything.

On an island as poor as Pohnpei, the sisters won't be able to secure future supplies. But the Lord will take care of them and will not allow them to lack the necessities of life or the materials needed to build a school. Doña Victorina has reaffirmed her promise to contribute an annual sum that is sufficient for the maintenance of the mission.

Tuesday, October 18

It's difficult to imagine how the Mercedarian Spirit is growing in the community and how we feel about the apostolic zeal of the early Redeemers, who were anxious to die in order to save their brothers, is being revived in us. Within this atmosphere, a desire has sprouted within us to actualize the Fourth Vow, the essence of our order. Today we could formulate and express the vow in the following manner: "I promise, according to the dispositions of my superiors, to aid in the redemption of unbelievers and to place my life at risk for them if necessary while doing so."

This afternoon I wrote to the Father General of the Order expounding this desire. I asked him if this letter is enough or if we need

to request this from the Holy See with an *Officio* so that it has proper force.

Sunday, October 30

The sendoff for the expedition to the Caroline Islands was impressive. And that was after having organized it in less than two days. At the end of the day Friday, Father Aguirre committed himself to celebrate Mass. Father Zameza was in charge of the Homily. And Father Guimera, who came from Seville, placed the crosses. Everything came together easily and without a hitch.

At the entrance of the church everyone congregated in the little plaza of the convent in order to say farewell to their missionaries. It's impossible to express the atmosphere of the moment. Everyone, whether from the house or not, was very moved thinking about the moment in which in which they would find and embrace the ones who are in China. Being very serene, they were a testament to happiness, generosity, and greatness of spirit to everyone. The difficult tests that those in Wuhu are enduring do not discourage them; to the contrary, they are driven to imitate them. They seek to work and suffer for the Kingdom of God. They will not be lacking in poverty, privation, or sacrifice while in those isolated islands.

Saturday, November 5

The first letter from the sisters arrived. It is from Marseille. They appear to be very brave. They left the port yesterday at four o'clock. At that same time, we celebrated a liturgical act in Berriz. This morning we sent a telegram to all of their ports of call: Singapore, Colombo, Saigon, and Hong Kong. We also sent another cable to Father Faber so that he could go meet them in Shanghai. The only thing left is for Father Vicario to return from Marseille and give us all the details of what happened. We expect him back tonight.

Monday, November 7

Yesterday we received letters from Xujiahui with great news. They are preparing the house in Wuhu with the hope of returning soon. Right away I began to reflect with Mother Nieves, would it be possible that in just a few days they will be able to meet up with the ones who are on their way to the Caroline Islands? This same morning we sent a cable so that they would not escape to Wuhu before seeing them.

Monday, December 5

On a large map, we are following the route day-by-day that the ship André Lebon is taking. This way we can learn our way around the world, as some might say. We are anxiously awaiting their arrival in Shanghai because all of us want to participate in the hug that those of the Caroline Islands and those of China will give each other on that day. A little while ago Father Olangua was here and he showed us a movie taken in Xujiahui. We saw the house, the classes, and the gardens, but we didn't see the Mercedarians from Berriz because they had already left for Wuhu.

Friday, December 9

I met with the community. The love of God is the only force that is capable of moving the world. It's not enough that we be pious, self-sacrificing, and women of great prayer. If we are not *one* in spirit, we won't be a sign of the Kingdom of God before the world. Jesus said to his chosen ones, "This is how all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another as I have loved you."

Monday, December 12

Yesterday at lunchtime we received a cable from the nuns that are voyaging to the Caroline Islands saying that they had happily arrived in Shanghai. All day long we haven't been able to do anything but think about how the encounter must have gone with the sisters from Wuhu, because we're sure that the bishop would have had them return to Shanghai so that the joyous occasion would be complete.

Wednesday, December 21

I don't know what happened in Wuhu. The Catholic daily newspaper *El Debate* talks about how times are very difficult now for foreigners, and that those who can have taken refuge in an English cargo ship. Could it be that having just arrived the nuns had to take leave again? Mother Nieves and I have been trying to calm each other down, but there are moments in which everything becomes dark and difficult.

Saturday, December 31

Yesterday I began writing to Leonor and I am sure that she will rebuke me. And, to some extent, she won't be wrong to do so. My activities take up all of my time when I'm up and, when I have to stay in bed, I dictate my letters so that they can be typewritten later. But the letters for Leonor do not allow for this solution.

Today I've tried to catch her up with everything. I've been sick since May, but I know that my general condition is good. And since I'm a coward, this series of miscellaneous jobs is good for me. I don't want to get rid of them, but rather make good use of them, since I believe they are a shortcut to unite myself with God. I live in peace and with a trust in God that encourages me a great deal. My greatest fears have passed and my most intimate desires are being fulfilled.

1928–1929

Willing to Go Wherever God Wants to Take Them

The authority that Rome grants to go on missions is valid only for six years. They believe that the moment has arrived to take steps in order to insure the continuity and the future of missionary work by those in Berriz. Mother Margarita wants to visit Wuhu, the islands, and pass by Japan. She wants to live for a long while at each mission and experience missionary life. She wants to accumulate her experiences, difficulties, and views regarding possible changes. She ponders the reasons for this trip, she consults, she listens, and she lets the idea ripen. She then decides to undertake the trip with the missionaries that are going to Pohnpei. The community is concerned, but they support her.

She writes facing the sea in the bow of the D'Artagnan. She describes what she is seeing and feeling. It is an account in which her view of the world, her sensitivity, her way of being and of relating with others, her feelings, and her faith begin to be told. It's an account comprised of language full of emotion, intelligence, and beauty. It's a language that reveals herself and the God who loves her.

She traverses seas and countries. She looks and listens. She takes steps and discovers new and unknown paths. Her trip is a departure from her world and what she knows, in order to throw herself into the unknown, into the strange and different. It's an opening of her self to allow the discovery of different types of beauty, other colors, and forms. It is listening to other voices, other tones, and sounds. It's hearing other languages and the language of life. Her trip is a vital apprenticeship of what is different and diverse. It's an encounter with multiple and diverse aspects of God as found in creation and humanity, with its endless beauty and riches. It's an encounter with the world in which she discerns in depth its oneness and its openness to the great mystery of life, the amazing great mystery of God that is in everything, that lays the foundation for everything, and that permeates it. Her trip is

an experience of astonishment and of joy, of happiness and of the gratitude upon contemplating what others often don't know how to see: the amazing nature of infinite love that encompasses and embraces everything, without excluding anything, from the smallest and insignificant of things to the most magnificent, and that spreads out without end in marvelous multiplicity, diversity, and richness. She experiences a God that doesn't wear out in any of His manifestations, is not possessed by anyone, and is free and alive in everyone. She also experiences lacking and emptiness, detachment and renunciation, anxiety and tears. She experiences the uncertainty and responsibility of having to make decisions on her own. And at the same time, she undergoes a new experience of the universality of love, of its breadth and depth, where borders disappear, as does the one-of-a-kind access to God, and where the smallest of things are filled with a sense of the light of the Redeeming Christ. It's an experience of the love of God for all, and of the Kingdom of God—where you cannot arrive alone, but must go together.

When she returns to Berriz, she has many issues to resolve and projects that she needs to move forward without fear of difficulties. She works tirelessly. She becomes informed by studying everything in depth using concrete, exact, and clear pieces of information. When problems emerge she goes to the root cause in order to resolve them. She always looks for realistic and positive solutions. She makes decisions and keeps to them firmly and with resolve. She does her best and then leaves everything in the hands of God.

After her experiences, they decide to ask Rome for the necessary changes to facilitate the proper development of missionary work. There are so many changes requested and they are of such an important nature that a fundamental transformation is involved. They want the transformation to be understood by the order and by the community. In order to accomplish this, Mother Margarita sees it necessary to travel to Rome, but Rome denies her authorization. In spite of Father Vidal's encouraging letters, she feels that everything is going to

be tangled up and spoiled. She cannot understand the intervention by the Mercedarian fathers in regard to this issue, nor how Rome could have been unfavorably informed.

Faced with this new situation Mother Nieves advises her to speak frankly to the community. Gathered in chapter meeting, Mother Margarita informs them that they are at the crossroads. Then, with clarity and sincerity, she begins to address all of the points without needing to clarify a single one. Later, she speaks to each nun individually. She doesn't note the least bit of misapprehension, displeasure, or disagreement. Every single one is determined to ask Rome to transform the congregation and to request that new constitutions be approved at the same time.

It would be a transformation that leads to changing centuries-old traditions. They would be breaking and leaving a structure defined by papal enclosure, one that encircles them behind barred windows in order to separate and isolate them from the rest of the world. It would be a transformation that would lead them to change a monastic way of life that is an obstacle to missionary life. They must change a life style, supported by regulations and practices that defined a way of living, thinking, and acting and which provided them with security and a good outcome. It would be a transformation that will lead them to sacrifice, renunciation, great troubles, and risks. But they are motivated by a love for others that propels them toward a mission for which they find themselves ready to give their all, even their own lives, as Jesus did. Open to God, they have discovered that God wants something more from them. They are prepared for anything for the love of God. The Lord acts within them and they are determined to go to wherever He would like to take them.

❧ 1928 ❧

Monday, January 2

We received letters from the missionaries in China, dated December 8, and postmarked in Xujiahui. They contain very comforting news. We had speculated a thousand different things about the time the “Chinese” and “Carolinian” nuns were going to spend together once the latter arrived in Shanghai. Now, Sister Loreto tells all about it in great detail. She talks about their arrival in Shanghai, the indescribable encounter with Sisters Auxilio and Josefina, and with Sister Aurora who was waiting to join the expedition. She spoke about the reception by Father Faber and the assistance that he gave them during the entire trip.

In Berriz, we thought that the boat would only stay there for two days, but from what they tell us it looks like they stayed there for over one week. They must have enjoyed themselves so much! I can only imagine them, in the evening, seated on their beds, and asking each other question after question. It's touched me more than I can express since I've been so worried thinking about them being all alone during that long voyage. Four of them are still very young and the fifth one has no experience with the modern world because she's been cloistered for more than twenty years. Once again, God has shown how a good Father cares for the small and humble.

Sunday, January 8

The exile in Xujiahui has ended. On December 21, Sisters Josefina and Auxilio returned to Wuhu after sending the voyagers off and taking care of some business. The community is now at ease. I find myself wanting to know how they are beginning their communal life, since I'm worried that they are too close all the time. I insist upon the same thing in all of my letters. I want them to make an effort in maintaining a spirit of family, like in Berriz, and that they should have frequent communication among themselves by exchanging views often. And when they are observing silence they should give themselves more space than what they do here.

Wednesday, January 25

On December 22, the expedition to the Caroline Islands arrived in Tokyo. They tell me that they were able to enjoy a few days of much deserved rest. On January 16, they were invited by Monsignor Giardini, apostolic delegate of His Holiness, who received them in his own house and invited them to tea. His Excellency appeared very pleased that they were going to islands where there weren't any nuns yet. He encouraged and congratulated them while speaking highly of them for having been capable, for the love of Christ, to leave papal enclosure for such an important undertaking.

Thursday, January 26

The expedition to the Caroline Islands has changed direction! We received a letter from the sisters informing us that by order of the bishop, Monsignor Rego, they will be settling in Saipan, an island of the Marianas that I believe is more important than Pohnpei. The sisters, knowing that this decision would surprise and distress us, disclosed that Pohnpei will not be without nuns because the bishop would like for us to prepare a new exhibition right away.

Those of us in Berriz will need to think carefully about this. It's true that in the novitiate they talk about nothing else except the Caroline Islands, and that it won't be hard for me to select new personnel. But before we undertake this, the economic conditions in which the nuns would find themselves would need to be made clear. Doña Victorina offered a pension of 15,000 pesetas annually for the maintenance of one house on these islands and I know very well she will not increase that amount. But if the bishop is prepared to support the mission, we would be delighted to send a new group of nuns on the date that he indicates. We would need to know in a timely manner since we do not want to go in haste.

Friday, January 27

I met with the community. The feast day of Saint Peter Nolasco, founder of the order, is approaching. We need to pray a lot so that he might shower upon each one of us and over this house that heroic charity that drove him to surrender his property and his own life in

order to emancipate captives. We would ask that he help us rise above all comforts and emotions for the love of our brothers and sisters. Would that we could die for them.

Tuesday, March 6

We received a cable from Saipan. The expedition arrived happily on the 4th. We communicated the news to Doña Victorina. This change of place did not sit well with her again. We didn't set out to upset her. God only knows that everything was changed against my will.

Saturday, March 10

Father Faber and Sister Maria Loreto insist that we send a new expedition to Pohnpei this year. It appears that this is what the bishop wants, too. The house is ready and the fathers there have made some changes with us in mind. The vicariate will be in charge of the establishment of the mission. However, the question of tickets needs to be addressed. This time it will be more difficult to do. Seven nuns will go on the expedition. Four will go on to Pohnpei and three will go to Wuhu as per their request. The tickets for everyone would come to 25,000 pesetas. A small fortune! And this doesn't account for equipment, necessities, or other things.

Wednesday, March 14

For some time now, I've been mulling over the idea of going with the expedition to Pohnpei. At first glance it might appear absurd, but I have solid reasons for pursuing this. The apostolic delegate for Japan has expressed a desire that we establish a mission in Tokyo. I need to speak with him and address the matter carefully. Both the sisters in Wuhu and in Saipan, as they continue to experience missionary life, are finding it quite difficult to comply with the current constitutions. They need to be modified. In order to do this, the best thing to do would be to confer with them regarding the changes that later will need to be presented to Rome for approval. The authority given to us in 1926 to go on missions will expire in January 1932. Even though we imagine that this authority, having expired after six years, will be reconferred to us without expiration, we feel it's important that the legal question be resolved

before that date. Because if not, in the future there may be a mother superior with a different point of view and could place the missionary work of this house in jeopardy.

I don't know when the most opportune time will be, but it's in my interest to make this trip before presenting changes to Rome in order to ponder and reflect on things carefully. I'm afraid that the council will oppose my desire to travel in fear that something might happen to me, but I have no such fear. I'm now in much better health. After eight months of being unable to manage in ordinary life I've been going to choir since January, and remaining there during the whole time. I'm also now participating totally in community life. Anyway, there's time to keep mulling the idea over.

Friday, March 30

I met with the community. At this time, being close to Easter Week, the Gospel needs to be our friend and guide. We should especially review John, chapter 15 carefully. In it Jesus lovingly reminds us with sweetness and insistence that “No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends.”

As Mercedarians and redeemers, our attitude must be one of always being joyfully ready to give our lives for our brothers and sisters. It's not enough to be grateful for redemption with words; one must follow Christ through suffering. And He will be in charge of providing us with the fortitude and happiness that we need in order to fully live our redeeming missionary charism.

Thursday, April 5

I like Father Faber's frankness and simplicity. I like the way he speaks plainly and doesn't beat about the bush. It's only in this way that will we get things done and get the establishment of the missions off on the right foot. I also communicated my fears to him today in a direct manner. I don't know how he will tackle the subject with Monsignor Rego, but we have to confront it. I think it best that the house in Saipan move forward with help from Rome and Japan. The pension from Doña Victorina should remain for Pohnpei, as she wanted. She is very

endeared to this island and if we do not respect her will she could again come to think that we have deceived her. I know that if the mission in Pohnpei were to remain under the charge of the vicariate the nuns wouldn't lack the necessities. But it's not that. I'm trying to avoid heartaches for the person who is trying to help us.

Tuesday, April 10

Yesterday, the first letter from Saipan arrived. It was full of good news. The sisters were welcomed with love, admiration, and gratitude. It was the first time anyone had seen nuns in Saipan. Beginning early in the morning, the majority of the inhabitants of the island had begun to congregate at the port in order to welcome them. Some arrived from far away. Later, after having witnessed the nuns come ashore, they walked as if in procession toward the church to give thanks to God for what had happened. For the moment, the sisters have settled in temporary housing until the school is built.

Thursday, April 12

We have a good selection going to Wuhu. Sister Maria Belen will be going. She has an even temperament and a lot of spirit. She is humble and happy. She's a good fit to help in the dispensary. Also going is Sister Maria Itziar who excels in everything. We thought about sending her to Pohnpei, but she is so gifted for languages that we thought she would learn Chinese quickly and well. She plays the violin well after having studied for six years and she's knows the basics of the piano. She knows how to sew and she's studied English for two years. Her character is unbeatable and her spirit is very much in the style of Berriz. Of course, all of this is just a plan since we can't think of sending them without previously consulting the bishop.

Friday, April 13

There's nothing new from Pohnpei. I believe that the establishment of the mission will happen this year. There is great enthusiasm for both China and the Islands here in Berriz. In addition, they are advising us to establish a mission in Japan. Fathers Faber and Zameza are

encouraging us. And the sisters in Wuhu and Saipan have given us their full support. If we decide to go, we would begin by sending two nuns to the house of the Ladies of Saint Maur one or two years before, so that they can begin learning Japanese.

Wednesday, April 18

The sisters in Wuhu are truly missionaries. Nothing frightens them. Taking advantage of a period of peace, the vicariate is building a temporary school in the Chinese style in order to attend to the instruction of its future *presentandinas* (young women who were studying to become either teachers or catechists). It will take six years for them to finish their educational program. Once graduated, they will begin their work in the mission schools. For two more years, they will continue with their training for missionary life. The work that they will perform in the districts that they are sent to is very much appreciated.

Friday, April 27

The matter of the school in Wuhu has been resolved. Doña Victorina has said the last word on the subject. She's decided to finance the building, but her donation may not be used for furniture or for maintenance expenses. This decision, if it's irrevocable, could change the direction of things and the future of this mission.

Monday, April 30

I believe that the time has come to write to Monsignor Huarte to find out what his position is regarding the future of the school. The original plan has been through so many changes and at this time there are some items in the plan that are unclear and need clarification by both parties. It's always difficult to talk about these matters and I wouldn't do so if it weren't for the obligation that I have to look after the future of this house.

In fact, when we offered to go to Wuhu in 1924, we could only count on our goodwill. We were encouraged by the assurance that the fathers gave us because they knew the mission well. They said that if we were to open a school it would soon be self-sufficient. We didn't dream of a school like the one that they offered us since the generous financial

aid from Doña Victorina appeared later. But the war came and with it we questioned whether it would be a mistake to establish a house without being able to count on stable finances.

It's true that, ever since the beginning, we committed ourselves to the instruction of the future Chinese converts, a task that remains a priority with the vicariate. But now I wonder if they couldn't join the two activities. In Berriz, personnel won't be lacking for either of the two things. But if the bishop intended for something else, he will have to make it very clear how the sisters are going to be supported. Berriz will continue to help them as long as it can, but when they use up the 50,000 pesetas that Doña Victorina donated (and they've already spent 20,000) we won't be able to maintain that house from here. It's hard enough to welcome the new people who have a vocation, sometimes without a dowry, and instruct them for the length of time that is necessary and then deal with the expenses needed for trips and equipment.

During this difficult situation, I take comfort in seeing the nuns with so much courage to work for the Kingdom of God. They are not frightened away by the difficult beginnings that they've had to endure.

Friday, May 11

I wasn't able to write long to Leonor. But I didn't want to have to explain to her how I could have had a letter written from Father Sancho for her for a few weeks and not send it to her. I'm not surprised that she likes his spiritual guidance so much. What humility he has! It's something that I've never witnessed before. He's very unassuming. He always tells the truth. His truth is as clear as water. He's transparent. With a trust that is more than fraternal he has told me his sorrows. Jesus wants him crucified. My dealings with him have left me with the desire for humility and love for the Virgin Mary.

Today I'm a bit sad. I'm sure that Leonor has noticed it with that intuition she has about me. I feel selfish, cold, and incapable of loving with the intensity that I would like. But this is not my usual state of being. Ordinarily I live in peace, trusting God, who sometimes lets go of my hand a bit so that I can feel my smallness.

Friday, May 18

We've enjoyed this last letter from Wuhu. Sister Josefina was correct to write with a sense of humor, because if she had told the story about what happened with the soldiers in a serious manner it would have frightened us much more. I've given thanks to God for the good spirits and energy that they all have, so typical of missionaries. The fathers of the mission admire them for their zeal and for the fact that they are not fearful when in danger. They love them very much and, even here, their valor and good deeds are talked about.

Sunday, May 20

Monsignor Rego has accepted the plans for the establishment of a mission at Pohnpei. The expedition will depart in August of this year, unless something unforeseen happens. We will never be able to thank Father Faber enough for having cleared the way in a very considerate manner. He's even prepared to hand over to Saipan some donations that he personally received. That's just too much. I suffer to think that by helping us, he stops looking after his health. He's not in that great of condition. I'd like to know, with complete honesty, how he is. And I'd also to know what's the latest about his possible change of destination. The missionaries and I need him in Tokyo.

Wednesday, May 23

I just told the missionaries about my trip. And if things do not take a wrong turn, within a few months we will be strongly embracing each other once, twice, one hundred times. We'll talk a lot about Berriz, Wuhu, the islands, new projects, and about all the joy and sorrow that we have endured for the Kingdom of God.

Thursday, June 21

Father Vargas Tamayo has asked that we collaborate in a mission that the Jesuits have in Magdalena, Colombia. The proposal was received with true happiness. However, for the moment we will neither accept it nor reject it because we need further information. Today I sent him a small questionnaire that I would like to receive back when in Japan, given that I won't be returning to Berriz until March. In the meantime, I

ask the Lord that he illuminate us in order to make sure that we are following His will.

Saturday, June 30

After surmounting an unending amount of difficulties, the third expedition of Mercedarian Missionaries of Berriz is ready. It is made up of eight nuns: Redentora Pasaman, Concepción Bernaola, Belen Vitores, Dolores Requejo, Itziar Olavarria, Teresita Elorduy, Serapia Martinez, and Angela Larrañaga. I'm going with them. And if new problems don't arise, we will leave Marseille on August 10. After having been cloistered for 25 years I will be undertaking one of the longest voyages there is! We'll be on the water for 42 days going from Marseille to Yokohama. Then 15 more days until we reach Pohnpei.

The community in Berriz is very concerned, but everyone supports me. They see that this voyage is not only advisable, but also necessary. I'm going ready for anything. The Lord will be my strength. I ask Him that He be my light and my guide for everything that I need to do and decide.

Today I told Leonor the news. I think that she will be happy to know that Lola is coming with us and that on my return she will be my sole traveling companion. Lola is paying for her own ticket and she is donating a much-needed piano to the house in Saipan as well.

Monday, July 9

From the 3rd to the 9th of this month, we were on retreat with Father Chalbaud. The purpose of these past few days was to leave all my plans in the hands of God, plans whose sole purpose is to propel the missionary work of this house, overcoming any fears, and seeking the will of God in everything that is done no matter how small it might be.

Tuesday, July 10

I received a wonderful letter from the father general encouraging me to do everything that I had proposed for my trip. Father Vidal also wrote me in a very expressive and caring manner. But the person I need to sit down with before I go is Father Zameza. I need just two hours. I've told him that this time I can't do without exchanging views with him.

Sunday, July 29

These past few days have been exhausting. I hurt watching these wonderful nuns that I love so much suffer, and who, like me, find separation difficult. They are difficult decisions, but necessary.

I received a very affectionate and moving letter from Father Zameza. There are times in which these expressions of affection are appreciated. He's too good to me and to us. I don't know what he could possibly do in the future that he hasn't done already. I've never told him how much I appreciate him looking out for us. I also don't need to tell him because we understand each other and he can guess it, just as I understand and can guess the full meaning of his letters, no matter how short. But it's different this time. I feel the need to tell him about my appreciation as if I were leaving and not returning again. I want him to know that I carry him inside me. May God bless him. I ask that He do this now and always. Always.

Wednesday, August 8, Marseille

I feel as if months have passed since I left Berriz. The days and nights seem so long! I have everyone's face in my memory. I keep them inside me. Even though I don't want to, I become very emotional when I think of them. So many things are becoming mixed up and confused...

nostalgia, affection for others, and physical fatigue among other things. But I'm not sad or too tired.

Everything is fine in Lourdes. What a hubbub at the station. There was such a muddle with the suitcases. They went missing and then they had us go to a different place until, finally, almost shoving our way, we boarded the train. We didn't find any seats. There were only three seats available and they weren't next to each other. And we still had a trip of 11 hours. We all stayed in the hallway until, two or three hours later, the coach was almost empty. The train was moving along quickly and with such a violent clatter that it was impossible to get to sleep. In the morning, we found our habits, our hands, and our faces all covered in soot. What a disaster! But, even though we weren't presentable, we were in Marseille. The problems started just as we got there. The 16 pieces of luggage that we checked in July hadn't arrived. We couldn't put in a claim because we didn't have the claim tickets. Brother Cartier tried to calm us down and did the impossible by recovering the cabin baggage. The nuns are full of serenity and spirit. I ask Jesus at all hours to allow the Holy Spirit guide me.

Sunday, August 12, on board the D'Artagnan

Today I am writing while perfectly nestled on the bridge on the ship's bow, facing the sea with the passengers behind me. I feel like I've been traveling for months by car, by train and now by boat.

Father Vicar escorted us until he left us in the company of the good Father Olarquiaga and two brothers, who hardly said a word to us. They appear to be very timid. Later, Don Pablo situated himself in a spot on the dock so as to not lose sight of us for as long as possible. We affectionately watched him and waved back to him when he waved to us. Everyone was very moved; perhaps I less so than the others due to this natural state of calm that God has given me. Not true. More than once did I have to hold back my tears in order to not become emotional.

I was thinking about Berriz and I could imagine everyone watching the clock. It was 4:30 exactly. Time to set sail. After a long farewell, we attempt to get ourselves situated. The cabins are small. I'm with Lola.

The bed is so narrow that it's impossible to move. The food is very good and the dining room is luxurious. On the bridge, where we spend the greater part of the day, we always meet with the same people. I don't think it will take too long to make friends. Within three days, we will be in the Red Sea. We'll see how we are treated. For now, our only concern is for the trunks that are in the storage hold. I doubt that it's possible to retrieve them.

Tuesday, August 14

The sea is gorgeous. It's choppiest than when we embarked. I like to see it like this. And if it weren't for seasickness, I would want it to whip up even more. I'm invited to pray. The noise from the waves and the immensity that surrounds us is the most appropriate organ to accompany the Christian prayer of the Divine Office. How well they know the psalms! I ask the Lord that through us he continue the work that he began.

I didn't write anything yesterday. Early in the morning, we passed Stromboli Island. I was very impressed. Little white houses dot its hillsides, crouched among the rocks facing the sea. Whenever we catch sight of land, all the passengers run to the railing. The same thing happens when a boat is spotted in the distance. These are the only things that happen when on the high seas.

Wednesday, August 15

We woke up on the open sea. Three birds with very colorful wings made a landing on the bow of the ship. There is land near. At 7:30 Port Said is seen with its long port that we can almost touch. A statue of Lesseps guards the entrance.

There are sloops, tugboats, and gasoline-powered boats. There is incessant movement. The entire crew of the D'Artagnan is on deck. Before docking, we see six English torpedo boats. Soon we see some small colorful boats full of people who with shocking speed scale the rope ladder to enter bridges and passageways. They offer necklaces, panoramic views of the port, and all types of fruit to the passengers.

After a six-hour layover, the boat continues along its route. We enter the Suez Canal in early afternoon. Parallel to the wharf, twice we see the train from El Cairo. And at night, the lights from the small vessels and distant houses are confused with the stars in the nighttime sky. I contemplate the magical view in silence, for a long time. I don't know how long.

Friday, August 17

We didn't get very far last night. The heat in the cabins was unbearable. At 2:30 in the morning we passed in front of the Sinai Peninsula and at 5:00 we left the Gulf of Suez to enter the Red Sea.

The passengers, ever courteous and well mannered, keep looking at us with amazement. At night, the bridge is all ours. The murmur of the waves mixes with our prayers. A contrast is brought to us by the wind that carries the sounds of the orchestra, the laughs, and the applause of those who are enjoying themselves below deck in the dance hall.

Friday, August 24

The sea is rough. Even the officers are feeling sick. When the sun sets the heat becomes unbearable. Whole days have passed since I've been able to write. They say today we will be passing in front of Goa. We can't see even an inch of land. We only see this expanse of water upon which Saint Francis Xavier, the apostle of India, navigated centuries before. Who can work for the Kingdom of God with the same effort that he did?

The wind keeps blowing. The sea is very choppy with a rocking that is very typical of the Indian Ocean. We've left the congestion of the Red Sea behind. It was dreadful. Two passengers from third class died and we are just finding out about it now. They were Arabs. Everyone is saying that we picked the worst month of the year to travel.

Saturday, August 25

We left Berriz 20 days ago. I feel like I've been writing very little. The rocking of the boat doesn't bother me too much no matter how severe it gets, but the heat drains me and makes me completely useless. I go on the bridge by myself to enjoy the sea, since it's a bit more airy up there,

but then a gale begins and I have no other recourse than to retire. I don't get tired of the sea. I always find something different about it. It tells me many things about God. It tells me about His greatness, His vastness, His power, and compassion. And since the sea treats me so well, we've become friends. We'll soon see how he behaves when we have to travel to the islands in small boats. I hope our friendship doesn't dampen.

Monday, August 27

The arrival in Colombo is announced for 10:00 in the morning. Our “giant” is already surrounded by tugboats, shore boats, and gasoline-powered boats. We make the most of it by setting foot on dry land. An Indian offers to accompany us. Thanks to him we pass through customs without a problem. Later, he hastily takes us first in a streetcar and then in *pus-pus* all the way to the convent of the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary. We visit the chapel and the hospital. We were, to say the least, able to form an idea of the work that these sisters are carrying out here.

Sunday, September 2

We woke up in Singapore. The landscape is very new and picturesque. There are small islands, tiny, with flora of a very intense green. The entrance to the port is very narrow. Since it is an obligatory route between the east and the west, this morning we crossed with two transatlantic ships and various merchant ships.

A nun from Saint Maur met us and took us to her house, which was very close. It is a gorgeous convent with a spacious garden. The city is over the top of anything that we have seen so far. In the neighborhoods, there are narrow streets and tiny shops. The indigenous people, however, are tall, flexible, and appear intelligent and nice. On the other side of the city there are large avenues like in the best cities of Europe, paved to perfection and with gardens on both sides. The architecture is varied. English-styled detached houses dominate the area.

Tuesday, September 11

Today we spent a few hours in Hong Kong. I went around with Lola. There are so many of us that we take turns. Outings, besides being tiring, can be quite expensive. When we return to the boat the mail had already been delivered and we confirmed, much to our disappointment, that there was nothing for us. We left the port a little before nightfall. Soon after, a rumor was running around that the TSH radio station in Shanghai announced there is a typhoon in the Chinese seas. Right now, the sea is peaceful and tranquil.

Thursday, September 13

During the entire night, we only moved ahead a few miles, very little when considering the journey that our “giant” is on. The sea roars furiously and the news of the typhoon is definitely true. It already passed through Manila and is heading in front of us at a velocity of 16 miles per hour. The shipboard radio station is in constant communication with Shanghai and the D'Artagnan is following their orders scrupulously. We've been riding out the storm for the past two days, at times headed slowly toward the critical zone and other times heading back to Hong Kong in prudent retreat. Everything is tied down on deck and the passengers walk from port to starboard without daring to ask any questions. I'm not afraid that we will sink. I think God as other plans.

At nightfall, the sea is roaring even more furiously. They have bolted down everything, even the cabin windows. The waves pound the window glass on one side of the ship and on the other. Suddenly, an abrupt rocking movement heaves the heavy chairs along the floor of the dining room. The water surges. Great mountains of water crowned with foam appear and then disappear. And in this colliding of waves deep abysses open which threaten to swallow the D'Artagnan up. We see the hull of a ship adrift, oars, and the remains of small boats.

Friday, September 14

The boat's horn wakes me up. It sounds like a human cry in the middle of this sea that is so enraged. Mid morning I managed to go up on deck. And from the women's lounge I contemplate the convulsions of the sea in silence. All throughout the day, the yellowish and muddy waters

continued to recover their green and blue color. At sundown, the China Sea is completely calm. In the distance, we can see the banks of the Yangtze River. I'm extremely nervous, just like on the first day. I dream of hugging my daughters from Wuhu and Saipan. They must be waiting for us now in Shanghai and perhaps are fearful for us.

Saturday, September 15, Shanghai

Shanghai welcomes us with rain. Sisters Begoña, Loreto, and Auxilio are waiting for us on an uncovered wharf while putting up with a downpour. It took us almost an hour to berth at the quay. But, finally, they are allowed to board ship. We embraced one, two, three times. And with jubilation we headed toward the women's lounge. Just when we got to the best part of our conversation it was time to leave ship. It continues to rain. An afternoon that is dark and sad but in no way influences our good mood. In the Mission Procurement Office, we greet Monsignor Huarte, who is as nice and good as ever. We talk about generalities. We will meet again in Wuhu. The person that I did speak at length with was Father Faber. He sees the establishment of a mission in Japan to be opportune and necessary.

As soon as we are able to, we will leave for Xujiahui. What a nice way to take advantage of the time. We talk a long while about Berriz, Wuhu, and Doña Victorina. We speak about the future of a school that was planned with such a commotion and that now has an uncertain future. Everyone agrees that we now must wait for the new education law. For the moment, the missionaries are dedicating themselves to the instruction of the Chinese converts. It appears to already be a fact that the support of the sisters falls under the charge of the mission. Again they find themselves in the hands of God. It's beautiful to live clinging to divine providence. When I speak with the bishop I'll know how we are in regard to debt.

Saturday, September 22

We embarked the D'Artagnan once again on the 18th. Father Faber is accompanying us. Sister Begoña from Wuhu and Sister Maria Loreto

from Saipan have joined the expedition. On the ship, a vessel we have come to consider as almost belonging to us, we were welcomed with affection. The ones who are staying, Itziar, Teresita, and Auxilio, gave us an emotional farewell. I also couldn't contain my tears when I was saying goodbye. The horn blew and we started to move away little by little.

On the 20th, we arrived at Kobe. It's the first Japanese port that we've come to. At the dock, the longshoremen waited until the ship dropped anchor. No one yells, or gesticulates, or even appears to speak. The vendors start to slowly unload black boxes that were all similar in shape. And as if the wharf were a store's window they begin to open the boxes and arrange them so that the passengers can see them easily. The seamen leave a half of what they earn here. I enjoy imagining the affection that they must feel for their wives and children in order for them to select such fanciful souvenirs from the Far East.

We're expected to arrive at Yokohama today, the 22nd, in the morning. Ever since yesterday some waiters and a part of the crew have been coming to say goodbye to us. They have been showing us photos of their families with such fondness. These men of the sea move me. They are rough and sensitive at the same time. They are good and honest. I said goodbye to them with emotion and sorrow. The port is in view now. The wharf is one of the cleanest I've seen. There aren't many people and they stay waiting in the same silence as in Kobe.

Sunday, September 23, Tokio

We are now in the capital of Japan. It is 5:30 in the afternoon of September 23, eve of the Feast Day of the Lady of Mercy. We made the journey from Yokohama to Tokyo in an electric train composed of four cars, clean, fast, and filled with passengers.

The Ladies of Saint Maur have welcomed us marvelously. And with us only having just arrived, Monsignor Rego, vicariate apostolic of the Mariana and Caroline Islands, came to greet us. He's a missionary who is unassuming, gracious, with an honorable appearance and who speaks about God with a great trust in his loving providence. He is happy with the missions in Saipan and Pohnpei. He says we should

establish a house in Tokyo. I believe that if the Lord wants us to work for his Kingdom here, in time He will show that these are His plans.

Monday, September 24. Feast Day of the Virgin of Mercy.

The missionaries from Berriz, Wuhu, Saipan, and Pohnpei met in Japan on this important day due to a very special act of providence. Monsignor Rego celebrated the Eucharist. The hymn of the order sounded to me like a special call from God to work for his Kingdom in this far corner of the world. We remembered the first redeemers who freely gave their lives to liberate captives. And we asked the Virgin Mary that she allow us to become seeds of Christ wherever we may be.

Father Faber came to congratulate us. He has great confidence that the Lord will help us. He feels that the establishment of a mission in Japan needs to happen, although for the moment the lack of resources precludes such a project. I suggested that the project begin slowly. But he feels, knowing this country as he does, that if he goes down that path we run the risk of failure. He thinks we need to buy a plot of land, one that he's been looking at, valued at about 200,000 yen, some 600,000 pesetas, and that a school needs to be built that is better than those that already exist.

I wonder where we would get such capital. We would need a miracle. Father Faber is so sure of the success that a good school would have that he advised me to ask for a low-interest loan or maybe mortgage the house in Berriz. This latter seems a bit too daring to me. Overall, during the time that I am to be here if we don't see any other solution, I will propose it to Berriz and then leave it in the hands of God. I am so inspired to move forward. I know that the Holy Spirit is guiding me, and He must do so, because I feel so very alone before important matters that are difficult to resolve.

Monday, October 1

Yesterday I received a letter from Mother Nieves. It made me suffer and brought me joy. I've hardly slept tonight after thinking about what she was telling me and about all of the things I have to do. I've told the Lord

many times that he should accept my sleepless nights and my tears in order to lay the foundations for the missionary work that He has entrusted to us.

Tuesday, October 2

It is impossible to make a record of all of the plans that we made during the past eight days since I've been in Tokyo. It is also impossible to give an account of all the streets we've been down looking for houses to rent. And what houses! The ones that were in the Japanese style appeared to me to be toys that you could put together and then disassemble. They have sliding walls made of paper, a structure made of wood, floors with *tatami*, and ceilings that you can almost touch with your hand. And they rent for an amount that is out of reach.

Wednesday, October 3 Today we left first thing in the morning to look at a piece of land that the Jesuits have in Asakusa and are willing to cede to us so that we can build a temporary house. It's an extremely small lot, but we talked about how the house could have three floors. It's in a working class neighborhood. And it has the advantage of having a Catholic church nearby. I liked it a lot.

From there, we went to the archbishop's palace. We had a 10:00 am meeting scheduled. Father Faber and Sister Maria Loreto accompanied me. After waiting for a few minutes, the archbishop received us in his office. We exchanged a few words about Saipan and Pohnpei. And then right away he went on to ask me if I was going to leave some missionaries from Berriz in Tokyo. After disclosing some of our desires about this to him he told us that we could count on his permission to do so. Later, he was interested in all of the steps we have been taking. We spoke about the plans for Asakusa, but he felt it wasn't in a suitable area that would allow the sisters to be able to live from their work. Then he thought for a while and added that if he could, he would give us a piece of land within the gardens of the archbishop's palace. I understood him well, but it appeared so out of the ordinary to me that I thought that I had misunderstood. I left very moved by the kind reception that he had given us. And even more for having given us

permission to establish a mission in such a very simple and spontaneous manner. Now we can take firm steps.

Wednesday, October 10

The archbishop has confirmed his offer to us and wants us to build a temporary house at the entrance to his garden. I don't know how to explain what this means. It is something that is so unheard of that it has surprised everyone. It appears that, at one time, the vicar-general was opposed to the idea, but now he is so enthusiastic that he is going to oversee the construction. The cathedral is two steps away. And the sisters would be able to stroll down a gorgeous avenue, shaded by centuries-old trees, whenever they want. I don't know what more the Lord could bestow upon us. Yes, there is something more. Beginning in March, when it becomes available, we could use the small residence that is on the other side of the garden. It's suitable for classes and for use by the missionaries from the Islands when they need to come to rest.

Friday, October 12

We now have permission in writing to establish a mission in Japan. This mission needed to be done. The Lord has made me feel this way and, in His presence, I have selected the personnel. It's decided. I will leave four nuns in Tokyo: Begoña Dochao from Wuhu, Loreto Zubia from Saipan, Redentora Pasaman, and Angela Larrañaga, members of this recent expedition. In Berriz, they might feel this is too many people; but, having seen things the way they are here, it cannot be any other way. It will also be difficult for them due to the change of destination that I have had to make, but I will explain it to them on my return. I'm confident that they will understand.

Saturday, October 12

The plans are already made. The house will be 14 meters by 8 meters and will have two floors. Construction will cost 30,000 pesetas. Since I know very well that in Berriz we are having a difficult time with funds, I have told mother Nieves that they will have to ask for a loan from the bank or get the money however they believe best. Everything has been

explained completely to those in Berriz. Now I need to wait. I have full confidence in Mother Nieves. Whatever she does, it will be done well. The important thing is that, no matter how it's done, the money must come here by the end of December at the latest. Construction begins the day after tomorrow.

Sunday, October 14

The builders are requiring one-half of the estimated costs in advance. And thanks to the generosity of the vicar-general, this new difficulty is already resolved. Now we have no other alternative than to move ahead with the contracted agreement.

This afternoon I wrote to the community of nuns. I remember them often. I know that they know it and I can assure them that the best moments that I have with my crazy imagination are when I see myself again in the community hall. There's not much time left, and before you know it I will say goodbye to trains and ships, cars and streetcars, *pms-pms* and palanquins. But in the mean time, I want them to be reassured that I'm in good health. I really feel good. I'm resting well and I've barely lost any weight. I'm in style with my tanned skin, almost black. I don't know if they will recognize me. Lola is in superb condition. And the others, they are as happy as clams. Each one is wishing to begin their mission.

I hope to pass through the large door of the convent by the time March comes. How we are going to hug each other! And we'll spend such marvelous moments telling each other so many things.

Thursday, October 18

We had a visit by the Ladies of the Sacred Heart. We all went to meet with them. They have a magnificent school with large gardens and a forest that completely surrounds it. At the entrance the aristocratic emblem that distinguishes them can be perceived. It is a fine building, almost entirely made out of wood. They have more than 60 boarding students. All of them are from the high nobility of Japan.

The mission is Australian. All of the nuns speak English and French. They are extremely friendly and pleasant. They offered us tea

and we accepted. They asked me about our order. Its history, our redeeming spirit, and above all, our fourth vow impressed them.

Tuesday, October 23, aboard the Yawata-Maru

The Ladies of Saint Maur gave us a very fond farewell. We left Tokyo at 1:30. Two young Japanese girls accompanied us to Yokohama. They know Sister Maria Loreto and they can't manage being separated from her. When we arrived at the port, we found out that the Yawata-Maru wouldn't be leaving at 4:00 in the afternoon as was announced, but rather tomorrow at 10:00 in the morning. The bridge was already full of people. They were third class passengers, almost all from Okinawa, who were fleeing from the misery of their native land in search of work and refuge in the islands, especially in Saipan.

Wednesday, October 24

It's ten o'clock sharp and the entire crew is on deck. There are people all along the wharf. Here the farewells are special. No one shows their emotions and feelings. I could count the number of people crying on one hand. The *Yawata* takes off slowly, as if it found it difficult to leave its loved ones in order to go further into the ocean. From high up on the bridge multicolored streamers begin to fall and as the ship moves away the streamers begin to form a bridge that connects those who are leaving with those who are staying. Later, little by little, the boat turns around on a tranquil sea.

Friday, October 26

At 6:00 in the evening, we see land in the distance. It's the island of Futami. Against all precaution, we see how the Yawata-Maru sets off toward it, laboriously, in the middle of a sea that quickly has become extremely angry. As we get closer our admiration grows. We are approaching a gorgeous bay, a very safe port, which the maternal providence of God has placed in the middle of the immense Pacific. They appear to me to be the arms of God extended in order to embrace and shelter us from the fury of the waves.

The Yawata puts down anchor while negotiating enormous boulders. It's then announced that a typhoon is drawing near and that it

was currently passing over the island of Saipan. The word is spread that we will take refuge here until Tokyo announces that the danger has passed.

Saturday, October 27

The news about the typhoon is so alarming that the captain is resolved to wait as long as it is necessary. We had a horrible night. The wind blew with such fury that it seemed like the boat would tip, in spite of it being well protected.

The bay, on the other hand, is so tranquil that we decide to disembark and get to know the island. Right away a gasoline-powered boat comes by, ugly and old, and we prepare to get in. You have to stand up at the railing of the *Yawata* in order to descend down a rope ladder that incessantly moves. We do the best we can. The gasoline-powered boat leaves at full speed, full of people, with everyone standing. In the middle of the bay we withstand a strong downpour and we disembark much cooler. The island is much more inhabited than it appears. It has three to four thousand inhabitants. The tree-covered streets are wide and the houses are low. There are many little stores in which they sell a bit of everything—groceries, jewels, dresses, hats, ice cream, and cards. Each one is a *Printemps* in Paris.

Wednesday, October 31

On the 29th, we woke up to the ship having been anchored and well secured. In spite of wind gusts that were of hurricane speed, at 9:00 in the morning the ship whistled and we began to move. They warned us beforehand that the sea was very rough. And now after two days the swells continue to increase.

An indescribable sadness can be seen in the passengers and the crew. We're in the middle of a horrible storm and no one knows when it will end. And if that weren't enough, they tell us that we won't be able to disembark in Saipan even though we'll arrive at the port. This is bad news for everyone, but especially for the passengers in third class that have been crammed in together. Since they can't get out to the bridge,

they are dying of heat in the cabins. There are many sick people, especially children. They've asked the captain to return to Futami.

I've never seen such an angry sea. The boat sinks down so much that it becomes flooded by the waves and I get the feeling that at any moment they are going to come to tell us to put on our lifejackets. The danger is great since we are dealing with a small, older boat with an excessive load. Just in third class alone, there are four hundred men, women, and children.

At noon they only served us a sandwich. No soup, or bread, or anything else. They tell us that the voyage will be prolonged by quite a bit. We've been in open sea for eight days and the provisions are running out. Normally, the captain and the officers are served Japanese food, but today they didn't need chopsticks. They had a sandwich with a bit of ham and a smattering of butter like everyone else.

It's good for me to experience a bit of the sorrowful side of the life at sea. But since I don't have the privilege of ever getting seasick, all the rest is bearable enough. What affects me the most is the heat. It's strong, very strong. Very few nights have I had a full night's sleep.

Thursday, November 1

Today, after three nights of anguish, we were able to sleep without being startled during the night. The passengers seem happy and radiant. Tomorrow we will arrive at noon in Saipan. The passengers in third class look like they are walking skeletons. The children cry a lot. They are sick and hungry. I go toward them more out of love than to try to alleviate them. I share out everything that we have—cookies and chocolate. Even the men are extending out their hands.

Friday, November 2, Saipan

We're now in Saipan. A splendid morning has awoken. The island is big with a mountain in the background. The houses are white, very low, and with gray roofs. They look like wisps of fog bound in the green of the palm trees. For a distance of one hundred meters the blue of the sea becomes an emerald green. The waves collide with the coral reef and

create a garland of white lace that makes the green of the water clearer, more intense, and full of nuance.

The bay is calm, an ostensible calm. Those who know these ports say that there is no sea more untrustworthy than the sea of Saipan. They are sure that today is a bad day to disembark. They are not without reason. The Yawata-Maru is moving greatly side-to-side. Then we see a barge that is coming closer, pushed by the waves. The passengers prepare to descend a wooden ladder from which you have to jump by taking advantage of the moment when the boat is closest to the ship. Those who fall in the water run the risk of being carried away by the current or being squished against a ship due to the violent swaying back and forth of the barge. Seeing this, we are afraid. But we don't think about it too long. We all want to embrace our sisters in Saipan, at all cost. Our turn arrived, and before we could react, we were safe and sound. I will remember this all of my life.

The port is about twenty minutes away and we don't take long to discover the missionaries among the crowd that had gathered on the shoreline to see the show that was the disembarkation. When we docked, I was the first to jump on to land. I didn't see anything else because my daughters were hugging me all at once. I cannot describe these happy moments.

Later on, we found ourselves surrounded by all the people. We passed through the middle of them, greeting everyone with affection. They have very nice faces, a clever look about them, and an expression of honesty that I've never seen anywhere. They are Chamorros, and among the women there are some Carolinians. The children sing. Then, almost in processional manner they lead us to the church. Monsignor Rego directed a few heartfelt words to us. We also gave a brief greeting.

From there, we went to the convent. Schoolgirls from the convent school—Chamorros, Carolinians, and Japanese—received us by singing the Magnificat, the chant of the meek, learned from the Mother of God. We felt touched. It's getting late and these good people don't appear to want to leave. They do not tire looking at us with wide eyes. When we

are alone, accompanied by the bishop and Father Faber, we looked over the different additions to the convent that were recently made. We were very impressed.

Saturday, November 3

At three in the afternoon, they had a nice welcoming reception for us. A group of little girls, about two to four years old, presented us with typical fruits from Saipan in beautiful woven baskets: pineapples, bananas, and even a chick. While they were offering these gifts to me, they were reciting verses of gratitude. More than once did I have to hold back my tears.

This evening, after the sun went down, we visited the Carolinian neighborhood. It's the poorest of the island. The houses are simple huts with palm-thatched roofs. The Carolinians who see us go by are very happy by our presence and greet us respectfully. Some hide so that we do not see their nakedness. Little children carelessly play totally naked. They appear to be little bronze figurines, with deep black eyes, and full of expression.

And now the time has come that I write something about the nuns. I see that all of them are in good health. They display an enviable mood and they are so busy that they don't have a moment of free time. I see that they are happy, hard working, unassuming, totally dedicated to their mission, and full of good spirits. I confirm, with amazement, that they are all eating well and they don't feel this burning thirst that wears me down so. The Lord takes care of them as his own. It's only been fifteen days since they moved to the new house and they are still rearranging things. They will settle in well.

Sunday, November 4

It's Sunday. We leave early in order to get to the six o'clock mass. I didn't expect to see so much bustling activity. Way before the start of mass, the area surrounding the church was full of groups of people who were engaged in lively conversation.

I was very moved while in the church. I got shivers just listening to so many voices, so crisp and powerful, interpreting hymns and canticles

that are almost always reduced to a profession of faith. They form a perfect choir and sing in a single voice. They intuitively harmonize as if singing with three or four voices. The church, which has a capacity of six hundred people, was completely full. I feel that God must enjoy these unassuming people so much, people who show that they love Him so much and who do not tire of praising Him for hours upon hours.

Monday, November 5

In the morning, we return to the Yawata-Marú to continue our voyage. We say goodbye briefly, which is almost better because you suffer less. I leave them and Saipan with an “until we meet again.” At three in the afternoon, the Yawata continues on its journey. Now, we head to Pohnpei.

During this trip, I spoke often with the bishop. He's happy with the two missions. It was very good that we had to deal with him since his jovial and unassuming character squares perfectly with ours. He's given us his permission for the sisters to have a chapel in the house. And, difficult as it was for me, I made use of the time to address the topic of money. I commented to him how hard it was for us to get the money together for the tickets and how we had no other recourse than to ask Father Guimera for the 10,000 pesetas. He thought that we did well to ask and requested that we consider it a donation. So now I no longer have to worry about that debt. We also spoke about the house in Saipan. It's already been decided that the Mission Procurement Office will take charge of its maintenance.,

Tuesday, November 13, Pohnpei

We're now in Pohnpei. We arrived on Sunday the 11th at 8:00 in the morning. But when the four founding sisters, Concepcion Bernaola, Belen Vitores, Dolores Requejo, and Serapia Martinez, got off the boat, it was 9:30.

With what joy did we greet the Black Rock that advances in the sea at the entrance of the island! From the boat, the landscape is fantastic and incredible wherever you look. Everything from coral reefs to

diminutive islands strewed out over the sea like fluffed up carpets. It's impossible to imagine anything like this.

The islanders were waiting for us in the port while singing harmoniously. I got a lump in my throat after seeing and hearing them. I would have wanted to hug them all, one by one. Some of them, those who came from distant islands, had been waiting for three days due to the delay of the Yawata that was caused by the typhoon.

We had barely touched ground and the people made way for us. A woman welcomed us and gave us a bouquet of flowers. The islanders continued to sing. I wanted to say something to them, but I could only greet them with the “Kachelelia” that they kept repeating so joyously. We went up a steep street and arrived at the church. Father Pons, who was both unassuming and endearing at the same time, explained to the people why we had come. The church was overflowing with people. Even the Protestants came to mass, drawn by their curiosity no doubt. Later, we were led to the house that the sisters will be occupying temporarily. The whole town followed us. Upon seeing them, the father superior invited me to direct a few words to them, which Father Berganza translated. I said very little but spoke from my heart.

All through the afternoon, people didn't stop coming to greet us. Among them was Donato, someone we had heard of quite a bit. He came to tell us, on behalf of all the native people, that they could never express their gratitude enough for the sacrifice that we had made in our lives, coming from so far away to help them. When he spoke about us making a sacrifice he bowed his head down low and two large teardrops fell, thereby revealing his magnanimity.

Sunday, November 18

Today I spoke for a long while with the father general of the mission. He thinks that the missionaries will be able to move into the new house in January. They will be living in what was once the convent of the German sisters. They are renovating it quite a bit. It should turn out very nice. They've made some additions and added a balcony from which they can enjoy a view of the sea. The school is in a separate building, and just two

steps away from the convent are the boarding school bedrooms. The property is large. It goes up to the sea and the church is nearby. I don't know what else they could ask for.

The fathers and brothers of the mission are all very good and obsequious. Father Berganza is a true ascetic. He has nothing more than bones, skin, and beard. But he's neither shy nor a man of few words. He maintains pleasant conversation. He's devoted to guiding and helping the sisters. The day we arrived we found food ready and the table set. And almost daily he brings whatever they have: fresh fish, goat meat, pineapples, or bananas. They are true brothers.

Friday, November 23

Before we left Pohnpei, they wanted to treat us to an outing to the reef. We got to the quay where, while balancing onboard the mission boat, five smiling Carolinians were waiting for us. Without the use of oars, we sail along the island's coast. They want to show us the coral reef and in order to do that we need to be in perfectly calm seas. Later, they change direction and row toward a small island. The waters there were calm and transparent to a depth of four to six meters where we could see a coral garden of unimaginable beauty.

We went the same way on the return trip, but in silence, looking through the transparent water at the treasures that reflect the wisdom, power, and kindness of God. The afternoon is tranquil and the sea is serene and clean. The profound silence that envelops us causes the rhythmic sound of the oars slicing through the water to seem even louder. Everything invites us to lift our hearts to God and to love Him for being so good in his immense greatness.

Saturday, November 24

I'm enjoying myself a lot. Pohnpei is a mission like I imagined it would be, poor, with many hardships, and without a promising future. The islanders are unassuming, noble, and honest. You can see straight to their soul through their eyes. I'm confident that God loves them very much.

When I return to Berriz, everything will seem like a dream. During this voyage I have come know many different kinds of customs and I have interacted with people who are very different. Speaking of people, of all the ones that I met none are like these islanders. These are the people that I've got along with the best. I don't tire looking through their clear eyes. How deserving they are that missionaries dedicate themselves to them.

Within four days the Yawata will return from the Marshall Islands. We will embark again and head to Saipan, leaving this bit of heaven behind. Brave missionaries will remain here who, with their dedication to the mission and their testament to life, will attempt to proclaim Christ. Once they've settled in, they will begin to study the language. They will begin catechism instruction as soon as they can, giving Father Berganza time to get around to other islands—islands that he can only rarely travel to now. In this way very soon, with the nuns' help, they will be able to “Hear the word of the LORD, O nations, proclaim it on distant coasts.”

Sunday, November 25

I don't know why, but each time that I write to Mother Nieves I feel the need to get everything off my chest and I reveal even my most hidden thoughts. When I wrote to her from Tokyo, I had great inner sorrow. Within three or four days, I suffered more than during the entire trip. Since that time many things have happened, but the most important of all is my overriding need to know what the council thought about everything that I did in Tokyo. I will still need to wait a long time before I know! Today I can say that I'm confused as to the manner in which the Lord is guiding me. When I named the personnel for Tokyo and the islands, I did so based on what God had me understand. And now that I have visited these houses and comprehend other distinctive features, I see that it wasn't I who chose the personnel and I wouldn't make any changes for the world. This trip, more than just being convenient to make, was necessary. Not because I had to right wrongs or abuses anywhere but because at this time, during the beginning phase

of these missions, the communities of nuns need to be cared for greatly. They are like tender young plants that have just begun to live.

Saturday, December 1, aboard the Yawata-Maru

We left Pohnpei yesterday, the 30th. The four founding nuns of this mission accompanied us to the boat. It was a sad half hour. We all talked, but in a very strained manner. When the moment came, we said goodbye almost without realizing that it was forever. They were watchful to see that we embarked without any problem and we were just content to see them happy. We saw them leave laughing. Later, the gasoline-powered boat kept appearing smaller as it left until it disappeared from our view. The Yawata now navigated at full speed. Pohnpei was becoming blurry, little by little, until it became a small spot on the horizon. It was the day of Saint Andrew, the loving apostle of the cross.

Sunday, December 2

We spent all day in Fefen. Father Faber was missionary here. It's an unimaginable island. I don't think I will ever see a landscape as marvelous as this one. The mission house is just two steps away from the sea. On the bottom floor, at odds with all of the cannons, is the church. I'm moved by its state of destitution. How little do we know in Europe about the lives of these missionaries!

After the obligatory greeting, they invite us to eat. From the balcony where we were situated, we saw a large esplanade full of people. Not one more could fit inside the house. Every once in a while the bell would ring announcing that an important person from the island was coming to greet us and bring us gifts such as pineapples, bananas, papayas, and other fruits of the earth.

Early in the afternoon, we are taken to a high plot of land where the missionary wants to build us a house. The site couldn't be more beautiful. The townspeople who have been following us appear to be joyful and grateful. They chat and laugh like children. A young man draws near the missionary and asks that he tell us that we should stay with his family who will love us and not let us lack for anything. I tell him that we can't at this time, but to pray to God so that, if He wants, we

should go soon. Then, a young woman came up to us and advised us to remain here on the island so we didn't have to keep coming and going. How happy I would be if I could oblige them!

Wednesday, December 5, aboard the Yawata between Truck and Saipan

I'm taking advantage of the peaceful sea to write to Leonor. Before I do, I reread her letter. It makes me laugh. In it, she advises me that I shouldn't refrain from doing something simply because of a lack of money. Of course not. At times, I fear that I risk too much because I'm not just dealing with personal interests, but rather with decisions that affect the entire community of nuns.

Everything appears to be going so providentially that people, upon seeing us starting so many missions, believe that we have a lot of capital and great material support. When, in reality, we have absolutely nothing. The temporary house in Japan is beginning with a loan and I hope in the Lord that it will move forward. As far as the missions in the islands are concerned, one receives a fixed sum from Doña Victorina, and the other, nothing. The one in Wuhu began with much commotion and when it was established, and we couldn't go back, everything changed and the missionaries remained completely in the hands of God. But neither they, nor the others, will lack the necessities, just like what happened with the voyages, which are very expensive. In one way or another, the Lord has been providing us with just what has been necessary. It's beautiful to live in this way, clinging to the loving providence of God and depending on His providence for everything.

I've asked Leonor to pray a lot for me because the Lord has put difficult matters in my hands that require prudence, a lot of spirit, and bravery. I need the light and strength of God in order to do what He expects from us, without drifting away from His will for no matter what reason.

Sunday, December 9, Saipan

Since the 6th, we've been in Saipan once again. The school will be for female day students and completely free. Within just a few days, two

hundred forty primary school students were enrolled. We also enrolled a group of Japanese youngsters in private classes for music, painting, drawing, and cooking. Japanese class will be obligatory for everyone and will be facilitated by a young Japanese lady who graduated in Tokyo. By contrast, Spanish classes will be private and remunerated. There is an absolute frenzy for learning it.

For the time being, the vicariate is in charge of maintaining the house. But I hope that, soon enough, Saipan stops being a burdensome mission for the Office of Mission Procurement. I also hope that Pohnpei needs to benefit only from the help from Doña Victorina and is even able to begin putting some money aside.

Monday, December 10

I'm enjoying a few tranquil days of rest. I help the teachers with enrollment and in planning the curriculum. And when they take part in visiting the sick, I go with them. This afternoon we were in the house of an old lady who, consumed by the years and by pain, smiled at us amicably. I was moved by the degree of extreme poverty in which she lived as well as the degree of gentleness of her appearance. In these islands, the missionaries have an ample field in which to work for the Kingdom of God, even in the most out-of-the-way places.

Tuesday, December 11

This morning I went to visit the Governor. Sablan, a very educated Chamorro who has served as interpreter for me, accompanied me. He received us kindly and after a little bit of general conversation we entered on the topic of capital for the school. Even though in Saipan Japanese school is obligatory from the age of eight, there are many children who are not receiving an education because in order to be admitted all children are measured anthropometrically. They disregard those children who are not well formed according to their norms. In any case, in order to avoid conflicts, I prefer to make sure everything is clear. The governor says that in the Japanese school there is a lack of space, and until they build a new building they will gladly allow us to admit girls

of any age to our school. He expressly asks that we admit those girls who cannot finish their program due to a lack of ability. I leave happy.

Thursday, December 20

All day long I've been receiving visits of farewell. These good people, unassuming and kind, want to demonstrate to us the effect that they have on us. In addition to having troubled themselves in coming, they also bring gifts. The house begins to fill with the typical fruits of the land. The counselors have each brought two or three fresh eggs tied in a white handkerchief so that we could have them during our voyage. Then they delivered a lofty discourse that they had learned well.

At 3:30 in the afternoon, we left for the port, accompanied by the sisters and the older students of the school. We attempted to make our farewell be as brief as possible, disguising with a smile our sadness that was overwhelming us all. Sadness mixed with happiness and joy, because with Christ and through Christ every sacrifice is small.

Before we knew it, the little motorboat starts to move away and our eyes stay fixed on the port, on some white bundles that keep getting smaller all the time, and on the distance that keeps growing between us.

Wednesday, December 26, aboard the Yamashiro-Maru

It was nighttime when we boarded the *Yamashiro-Maru* on the 26th. And as had been announced, it didn't continue on its way until early in the morning of the 21st. Having just gone up to the bridge we were surprised by the figure of a tall gentleman, elegant, with a European demeanor, and who greeted us very kindly. He was Mr. Bauvis, a Dutch businessman who was coming from the Celebes Island where, as we later found out, he must have large amounts of land. He speaks German, English, and French very well. And thanks to this latter language, the monotony of the voyage will be broken.

Indeed, during the six days of the voyage thus far we spoke with him at length. He's a Protestant, but has a great regard for the Catholic religion, a religion to which his mother and some friends of his belong. He's a man who is a friend of truth and someone who is worthy of

finding it. I gave him the Kemps in French, the one that I had used all of my life. He's promised to write me.

We spent the festive season of Christmas aboard ship. The 24th, Christmas Eve, passed by unnoticed. On Christmas Day, breakfast was as it always was, but in the afternoon, we noticed that they were decorating the dining room in the Japanese style, with flags from different countries, wreaths and lights. It didn't take long to learn that they were going to celebrate Christmas in our honor. That was a nice touch. In response to their kind thoughts, we put on our good habits and we showed up in the dining room as elegant as possible. They had us sit at the officers' table, something that was completely out of the ordinary. Mr. Bauvis was to the right of the commander and we were on the left. They served us a veritable banquet of dishes, liquors, and for desert, cake complete with a Dutch windmill. We expressed our gratitude for such an unexpected gift.

At night, while on deck, we listened to the *Adeste Fideles* on the radio that we bought from Berriz. We were moved. After we contemplated the sea in silence for a long while, we retired to our cabins. I thought about the paths of the Lord. I also thought about each one of these brave missionaries that I just left in the Marianas and the Caroline Islands. We will be praying a lot in Berriz. Love and prayer can accomplish everything.

Thursday, December 27, Tokyo

At three o'clock sharp, we disembarked in Yokohama. Afterward, we had to go through a long interrogation. As soon as the *Yamashiro* docked, the police and the medical corps boarded. The latter looked at us and moved on. The police, on the other hand, conducted a thorough interview with me. They spoke in English and wanted to know absolutely everything. How long we had been in Saipan. In which boat did we travel. How long did we layover in Pohnpei. If we had ever been to Japan before and for how long. From which European port did we depart. It was an interrogation conducted as if we were starting judicial proceedings.

Father Faber and Sister Cerdá, along with Sisters Maria Begoña, Redentora, and Angela, were waiting for us at the port. We were in the Convent of Saint Maur by six in the evening. The ladies were as kind as always, and I was impatient to get alone in my room and in front of a pile of letters from Berriz. What a disappointment! No journal or letter from Mother Nieves, nor anything else from her that would answer the thousand and one questions that I asked her before going to the islands. Only four personal letters, nothing else, and they were mostly just about scolding me for writing so little. Really, they think I write little? I don't do anything else but write during my free time.

Friday, December 28

I wasn't able to sleep last night. The first thing I did in the morning was to telegraph Sister Nieves so that she would be at ease. We have just happily completed the longest and most difficult part of our itinerary. Later, I sat down and wrote her purposefully, not hiding anything, not even the great sorrow I feel for not having received news from the council. I need many things answered, but above all I need to know if they are happy with my negotiations and decisions. I still do not know what the ramifications there were in Berriz regarding the changes that I had to make in personnel in Wuhu and in the islands in order to leave four nuns in Tokyo. I also don't know if they were able to acquire the necessary capital for the establishment of the mission. I don't know anything. I only know that Mother Nieves has written me and her letters are at this moment in transit from Saipan. The Lord is having me not read them and having me continue in doubt. Glory be to God.

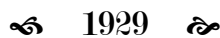
I've always been grateful that dear Mother Nieves tells me about her sorrows and grief. I am even more grateful for the fact that she tells me what she thinks of me. It's a show of trust on her part, although it hurts me to see her suffer about something that doesn't exist. I could never have more trust in her than I do right now. I've asked her to help me. I've asked that she pray to the Holy Spirit on my behalf because I need more of His guidance and grace. Without them, I am incapable of doing anything. The Lord is teaching me so much during this voyage! I

feel very close to Him. My life is full of frenzy, but I look for the Kingdom of God in everything. I have it because of a great gift from Him.

Saturday, December 29

As I thought, the little house will be finished by January 15, but won't be able to be moved into until the first part of February. Since it would be useless it to remain here for no reason at all for another month, and because we would outstay our welcome the Ladies have given us if we stay past the Epiphany, we've decided to take a trip to visit Wuhu and return just in time for the inauguration even though all of this will cost us more in fatigue and money. We will leave January 4 and arrive on Saturday, the 11th. I've already cabled the missionaries and asked that they do not go to Shanghai. The expense is great and it is difficult to travel in the winter, unless it's absolutely necessary.

Father Faber has communicated to me that a check in the amount of 32,000 pesetas has arrived from Bériz. Along with it came some very stirring letters from Mother Nieves as well as the sought after authorization from Rome for the establishment of a mission in Tokyo. This makes me believe that in Bériz everyone is happy with what we have done. And that's how I am going to continue to believe since I'm trying to avoid worrying about it.



Thursday, January 3, Tokyo

I haven't had a moment's rest ever since we arrived in Tokyo on December 27. I haven't even been able to write to Leonor. Visits, meetings, and the New Year's celebration have all taken up my time.

On New Year's Day Father Candau, from the Paris Foreign Missions Society, came to visit us. He's French-Basque and speaks Spanish perfectly. He commented to me that he likes our mission because he's convinced that Japan needs more nuns with our nature. He made me feel at ease and flattered. I believe once everything is done, I'll be leaving Tokyo in a calm frame of mind because the archbishop, Father Faber, and the fathers of the seminary will do what they need to

in order to help our missionaries. They love them very much. They are very impressed with the spirit that the missionaries have and they are pleased with their happy, forthcoming, unassuming, and dignified character. I gave thanks to God for allowing there to be people who look after us with so much kindness.

Friday, January 4

Today we left for Wuhu. Another round of goodbyes. Tokyo woke up to seven degrees below zero. Everyone tells me that the winter in Wuhu is even rougher. I just finished packing my bags since we're going within a few hours. We will be traveling in the Yokohama Express to Kobe and there we will aboard the Nagasaki-Maru, which will take us to Shanghai.

A moment ago, they gave me a very bulky envelope from Berriz. I opened it with a lot of excitement. Inside there were only personal letters and a small sheet of paper from Mother Nieves. In it, she wrote that I must be fed up with so many letters. How ironic! Nothing would make me lose neither my appetite nor my hope for more letters.

Saturday, January 5

We had a good trip aboard the Yokohama Express. At 7:30 in the morning, we were in Kobe. We headed to the dock in a taxi where the Nagasaki-Maru was anchored. It's a mail ship weighing six to eight tons that makes the Kobe to Shanghai run in forty-eight hours. It's from the same Nippon Yusen Kaisha firm that took us to the islands.

Sunday, January 6, aboard the Nagasaki-Maru

Yesterday the sea welcomed us in a calm state, but later, just after leaving Nagasaki the sea became enraged and began to toss the boat around without any consideration. When they announced that the dining hall was open, Lola and I went down as calmly as ever, but we found it deserted. We're the only ones during the whole trip who could stand on our own feet.

Monday, January 7

We awoke to a sea that was improving all the time. We arrived in Shanghai on a very placid sea with splendid sunshine. Before we could leave the Nagasaki they made us open our trunk. It wasn't easy for them

to let us take our camera with us. Father Iruarrizaga came to welcome us. Accompanied by him, we set off for Xujiahui. Before we even had time to greet the Auxiliary Sisters they wanted to know all the details of our trip through the Marianas and the Caroline Islands. We had dinner and then again immediately got in the car that brought us and went to another dock and to another unknown boat, the Suiwo, of the Indo-China Steam Navigation Company, which took us to Wuhu.

Tuesday, January 8, aboard the Suiwo

The only people on board going to Wuhu were five young Chinese youths that appeared to be students, a young German girl who was traveling alone, and two American married couples with small children whose parents looked to be Protestant pastors. We didn't interact very much, except with the young German girl. The cold was so intense that we were forced to stay locked up in our cabin. During the whole day, only a distant mountain was spotted.



Bilbao. House where Mother
Margarita was born on July
25, 1884.



San Antón Church,
where she was baptized.



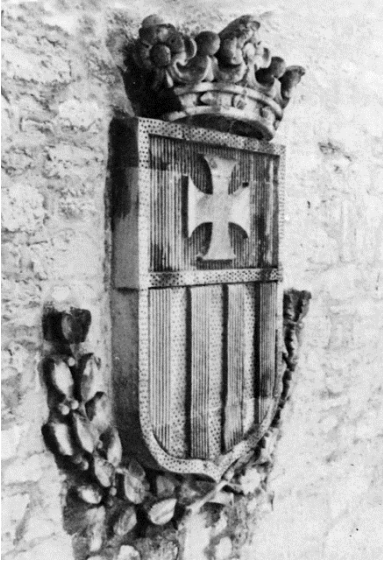
Bilbao. 1897. Pilar, her twin Leonor, and her eldest sister Lola.



Bilbao. 1903. The twins of Garden Street.



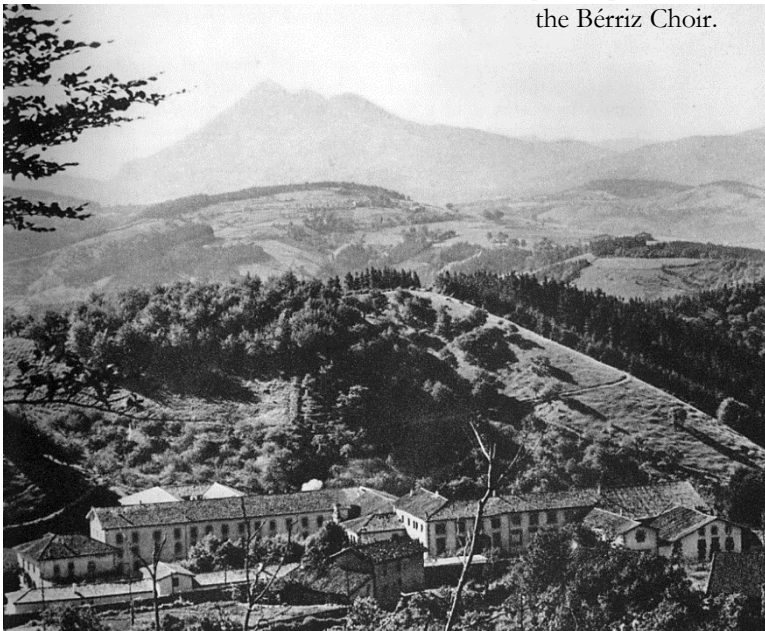
Mercedarian Convent of the Vera Cruz.



Coat of arms of the Order of Mercy.



Our Lady of Mercy, Redeemer of Captives, presides over the Bériz Choir.



Bériz. Panoramic view of the School and Convent of the Vera Cruz.



Praying the Divine Office.



Reading and Contemplating on the school's playing field.



Bérriz. 1926. Missionaries, just days before leaving for Wuhu.



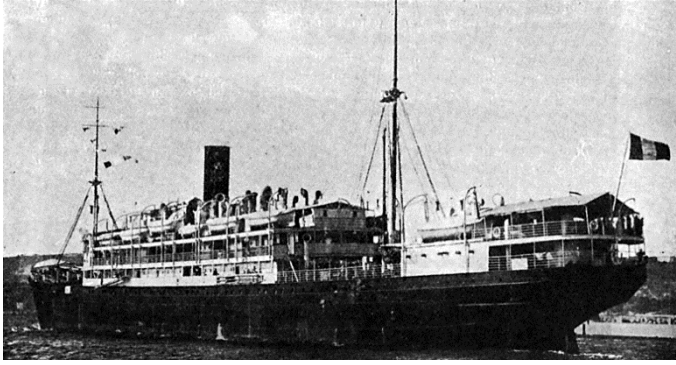
Preparing for the mission.



Schoolgirls working in groups.



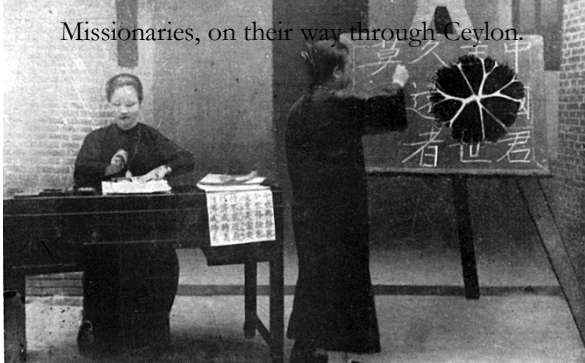
Playing basketball on the school's courts.



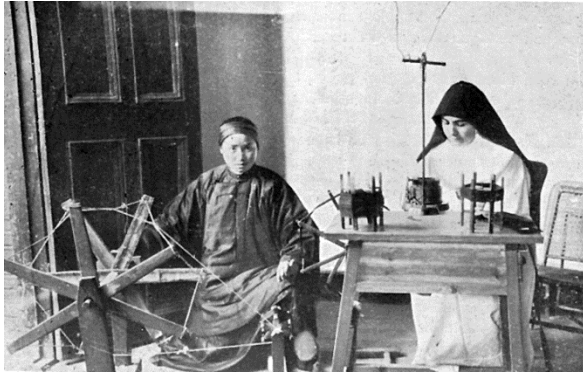
On deck aboard the Chambord.



Missionaries, on their way through Ceylon.



Future "presentandina."



Novice "presentandina."



1928. Mother Margarita's visit to Wuhu.



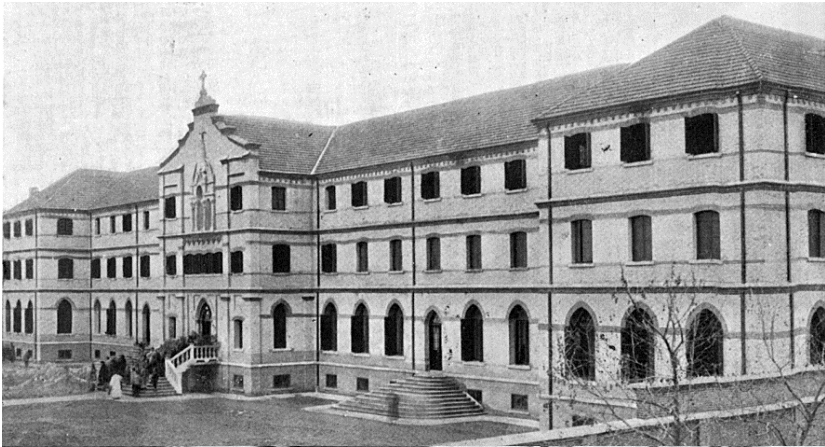
A young aspirant.



A young postulant.



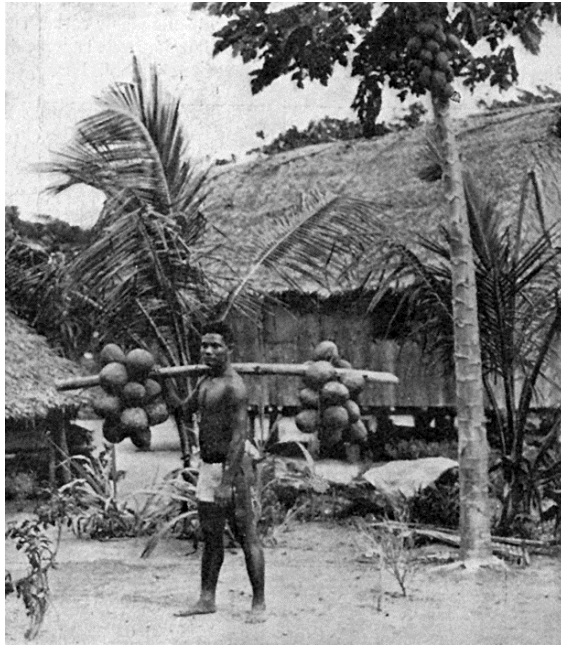
First Mercedarian nun from China.



1927. Expedition to Saipan, moments before embarking in Marseille.



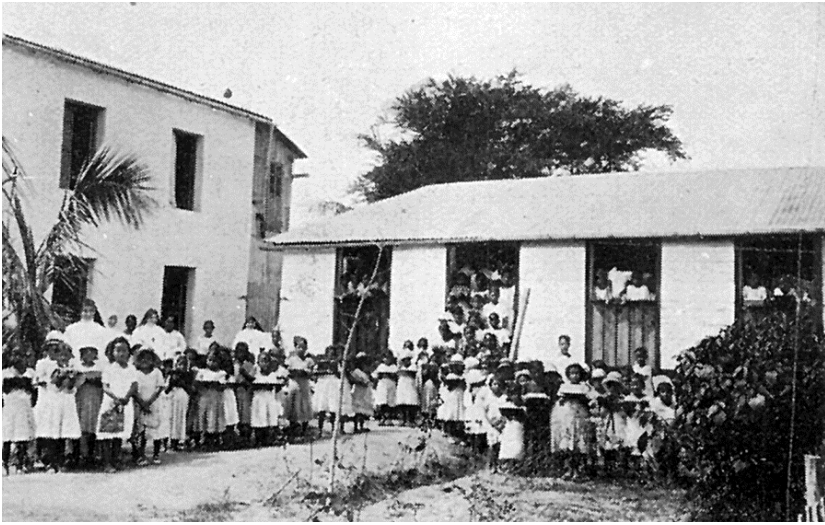
Saipan, 1928. Traversing the island.



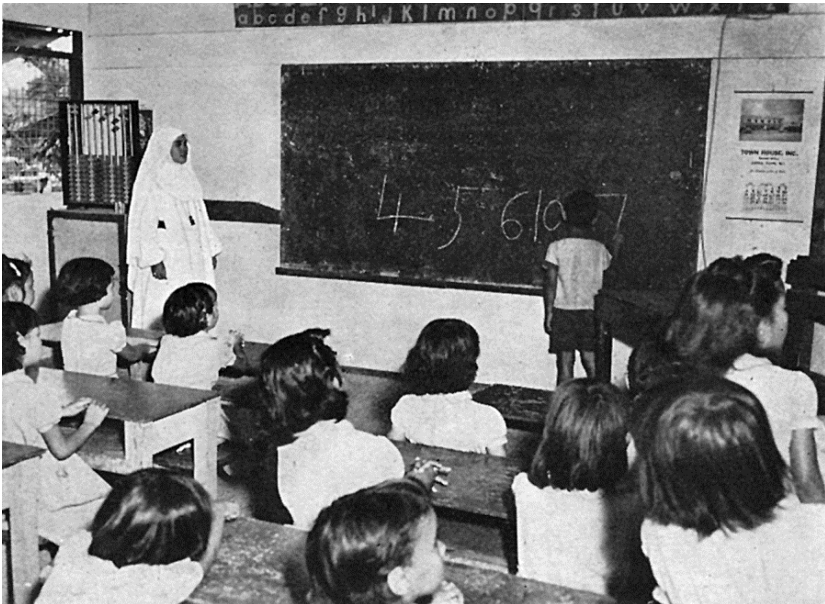
A youth from the Caroline neighborhood in Saipan.



Missionaries visiting families.



Girls and nuns at the school's entrance.



In a math class.



With a few Japanese ladies and students.



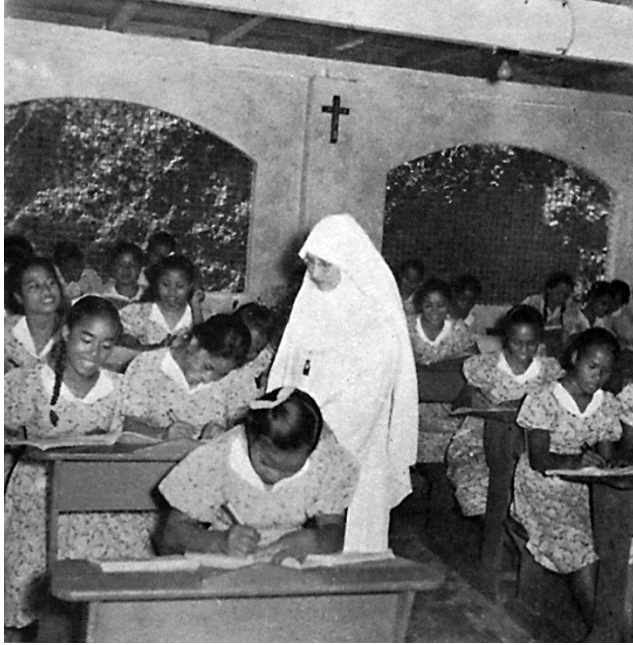
Saipan, 1928. Mother Margarita's visit.



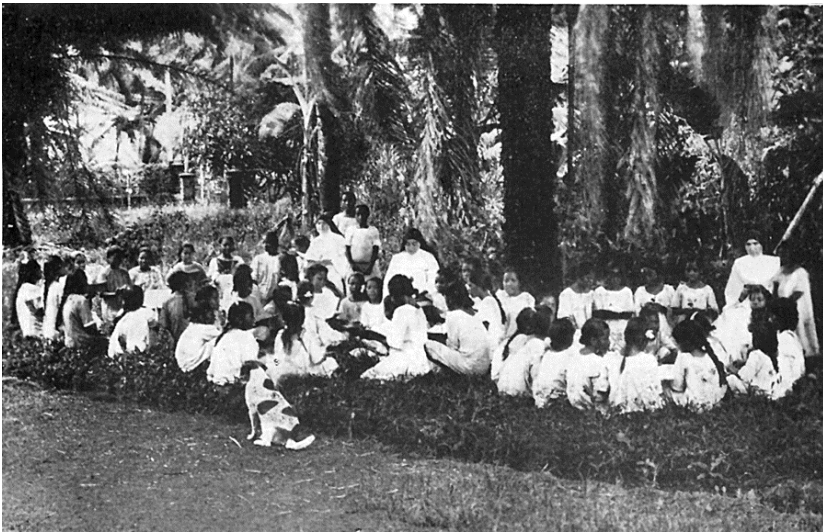
Missionaries in Pohnpei, 1928. First house.



Plying the vast sea in an outrigger canoe toward distant islands.



Girls in class.



Catechism instruction in the open air.



Sewing class.



Attending to patients in the dispensary.



Working in front of the house.



Playing ball.



Pohnpei, 1928. Mother Margarita with the community of nuns and her sister Lola visiting the island.



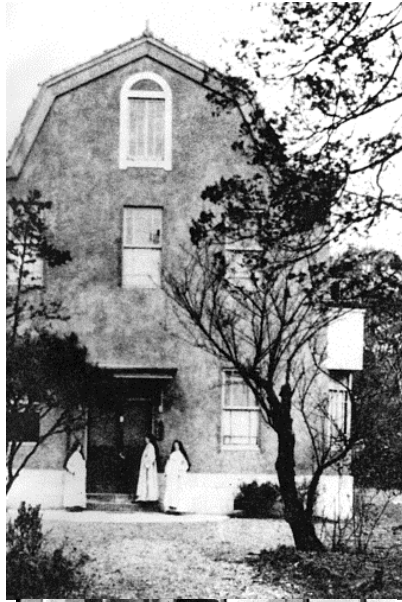
On an outing around the island of Pohnpei in an outrigger canoe.



Japan. Mount Fuji.



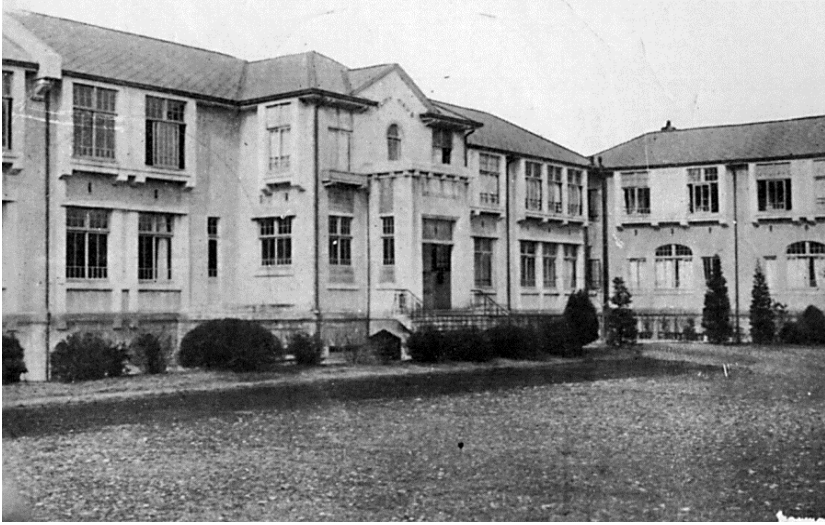
1928. Mother Margarita with the expedition to Pohnpei
on the stairway of the Archbishop's Palace in Tokyo.



Tokyo, 1929.
First house of the Mercedarians
of Bériz in Sekiguchi.

Young Japanese girls.





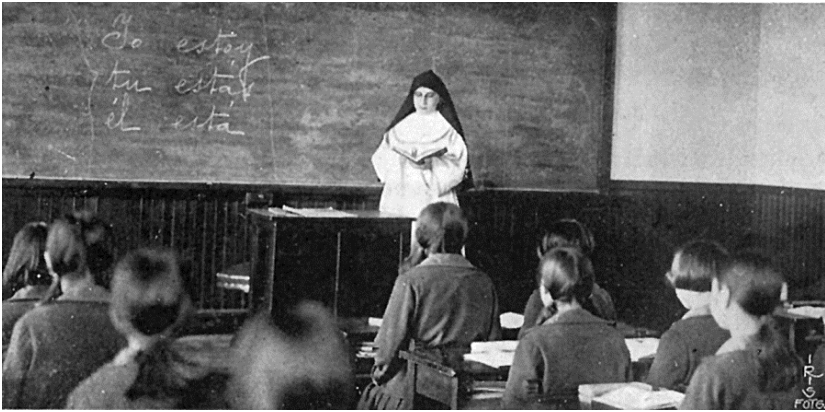
1931. School in Koen.



Faculty of the school in Koen.



The Community of nuns in Koen.

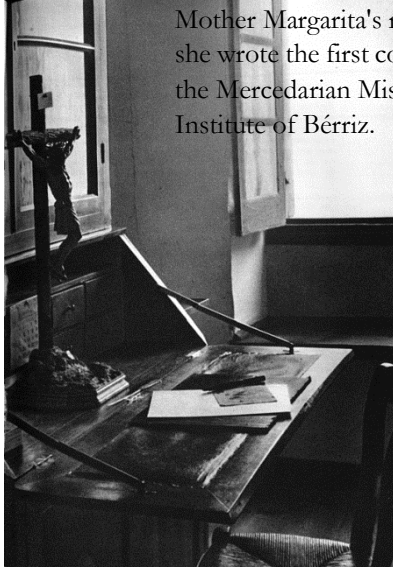


Spanish class.

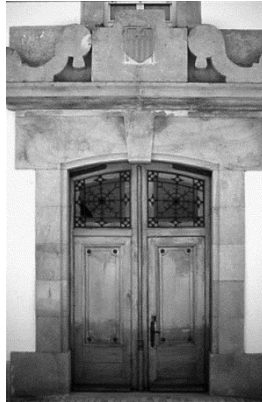


Typical Japanese shop.

Mother Margarita's room where she wrote the first constitutions of the Mercedarian Missionary Institute of Bériz.



Convent entrance through which the first missionaries passed, thereby breaching Papal Enclosure.





Church door of the Convent of Bériz. A place of desires and observances. A witness to its transformation.

Wednesday, January 9

It's 9:30 in the morning and we are in front of Nanking. The traffic is intense in the port. There are Chinese, Japanese, French, and English ships as would be expected in a great industrial metropolis. It was in Nanking where those riots against foreigners took place last year. It was at that time that the outrages and the poor treatment that the fathers of the mission had to bear were commented about with such fortitude.

Within a half an hour, we were packed and going up to the bridge. Just before seven, we began to notice the distinct movement of the crew that tells us that we are nearing a port. We go on the bridge and run into Sisters Auxilio and Expectacion who came to welcome us. We hugged each other with a happiness that is impossible to describe. Meanwhile, Sister Otaegui is communicating with the porters. We follow behind, being careful where we stepped. The night is very dark and there is limited visibility.

Saturday, January 12, Wuhu

I'm now in Wuhu. I'm in the mission that Berriz began to dream of in 1924, and to which it sent its first missionaries in 1926. I'm now in the little house from which I have received so many letters. I go from one side to the other with the desire of remembering everything. I pause in the chapel. I go through the vegetable garden. I stop at the garden wall that was assaulted so many times that even the stones speak to me about so many events. Some are happy and endearing. Others are painful and dangerous. But these unassuming and heroic missionaries experienced them all with the same redeeming Mercedarian Spirit.

At the gate, I embraced the other half of the community. The schoolgirls welcomed me with a "bue-nas-no-ches" (good evening) said in the nicest way in the world. They are young girls, almost all a little overweight, with expressive faces that laugh, chat, and play with an enormous happiness in their eyes. As soon as we said goodbye to the girls, we went to have dinner. It would be better to say that we went to visit with each other, to look each other over, and to convince ourselves that we were really together with those, who two years ago, we bid

farewell without knowing when we would see them again. We had dinner and ate well. We had a strong desire to talk. Lola and I were happy to have Berriz-style soup. The after-dinner conversation was long. We enjoyed everything and went to bed late. I found the nuns to be in very good health, almost better than before, in spite of everything they had to put up with because of the war.

Monday, January 14

This afternoon I visited with Zenon Aramburu, father superior and my old correspondent whom I hadn't personally met until today. He's a kind, discreet man, and full of sweet dignity. He spoke to me in detail about the outcome of the matter regarding the school and Doña Victorina. He is very happy with the freedom to act that the vicariate enjoys so that a school can be built that pleases everyone.

Tuesday, January 15

I'm enjoying myself greatly. I have a good opinion about the community. These nuns have become true missionaries. They are happy, united, and full of good spirits and tested in every way. They are totally dedicated to the instruction of the Chinese converts. They dream about the new school. And they are ready to give it all, even their own lives, for the Kingdom of God.

The house that they live in is pretty. And, compared to the one in the islands, it's a big house. Of course, it will become small once the number of aspirants begins to increase. The sister's mission here will be big. I'm very encouraged about how much and how well they work.

Thursday, January 17

Wuhu woke up dressed in white. It's still snowing. I can see the fathers' garden from my window. It's gorgeous. The baptism of a group of adults was held in the cathedral this afternoon. We decided to attend despite the storm. It was worth it. The ceremony was long. The catechumens, while in a semi-circle, occupied almost the entire presbytery. At the end, they all came to greet me. How I would have liked to have told them how much I prayed for them, but I had to be content with

saying to them over and over gongxi, gongxi (congratulations, congratulations).

Tuesday, January 22

The bishop showed up early at Seng-Mu-Yuen. We chatted for two hours about the situation in China and regarding some important points about the government's position on the Church. It's still unknown if they will or will not respect the so-called personal immunity of missionaries, nor if they will recognize the right of personal property that they have enjoyed up to now. I've been told that the apostolic delegate of the pope, Archbishop Constantini, is now in the governor's residence in Nanking. Up until now, absolutely nothing has emerged about the motive for his trip. Later we talked about the school, about the work being done by the Chinese converts and other topics related to this house, but without reaching any concrete decisions. Monsignor Huarte is a straightforward man who is sweet to deal with, very spiritual, and agreeable in every way.

Friday, January 25

From time to time, I continue reading and answering overdue letters. I believe I will continue doing so until I finish my voyage. The only thing I'm sorry about is that Mother Nieves is suffering because of things that aren't worth mentioning, caused by this poor way of communicating. I don't know how to explain to her that the things they say about her don't have an impact on me. I have complete trust that cannot be taken away by anyone, no matter how much they try. The day that we see each other in Berriz, she will realize that not only is my trust in her the same as always, but also is even greater. Soon it will be like always and we will be seated again, one on the bed and the other on the trunk. We will make plans and we'll encourage each other to continue forward.

Tuesday, January 29

The economic problems of this house have now been solved. I just finished my fourth meeting with Monsignor Huarte. Both he and the fathers agree that as soon as they publish the education laws, the future of the school will be decided. Everyone assures me that we will

have many students and also that the pension will be so small that it will just cover the costs of the school. But, thanks to God, it has already been agreed that the vicariate will be in charge of paying for the support of the sisters by allocating them with a fixed annual pension of 275 piasters. It is a sufficient quantity so that they do not have to suffer hardships. They are as happy as I am. We are also grateful for the kindness of Monsignor Huarte. I've spoken to him with complete clarity and he agreed to each item that I laid out in a letter before I left Spain. At all times, I worked as I understood how God would want. I don't know if I left any loose ends because I didn't have anyone to consult. I went through some very difficult times due to the delicate and challenging nature of dealing with economic questions face to face. But I was determined to do so and I even dared to ask the bishop to put his decision down in writing. It was difficult for me, but now it's done. I am extremely happy.

I've written to Berriz to inform them of this pleasant news. This will be my final letter from Wuhu. Tomorrow we will all say goodbye with heavy hearts. These farewells are so difficult! But you have to expect them. These hard moments are softened a lot due to the nuns' good spirits.

Wednesday, January 30

I slept very little. I really suffer a lot with these farewells. I heard two loud rings at 5:30 in the morning and I supposed that they had come to take us to the port. I wasn't wrong. It was Father Muguero who came to tell us that a Chinese ship had arrived and we had to leave right away. And with that I hugged those who were remaining tightly, and the rest of us got on the road. It was hard for me to say goodbye so quickly, although it was probably for the best.

Thursday, January 31, aboard the Kian-Wah

It's the Feast Day of Saint Peter Nolasco. How little have we been able to celebrate this great day. But, in fact, I feel happy to be navigating down the Yangtze River and to be able to offer to God this continual

back and forth for the expansion of His Kingdom in China, Japan, the Marianas, and the Caroline Islands.

I leave this mission happy. No matter what is said about the sisters, it cannot rise to the level of the good impression that I have of them. I have found them to be cheerful, unassuming, happy, and totally dedicated to their mission. This is the best gift that I take from Wuhu. I don't need to tell them how much I love them. They know that I carry this little house in my heart because it's the first mission from B erriz.

Saturday, February 2, aboard the Nagasaki-Maru

We left Shanghai yesterday at nine in the morning. And by 1:30 today, Saturday, February 2, we were at Nagasaki. Father Faber was waiting for us at the port. Within two hours we passed through the principal areas of this grand city, the cradle of Catholicism in Japan and land of martyrs. I would have very much liked to greet Monsignor Hayasaki, the first Japanese bishop, but he was not in his palace. In the Foreign Mission Procurement Office of Paris, I did have the opportunity to meet Monsignor Tierry. I was impressed by his humility and modesty. He had just finished transferring his palace, the cathedral, the seminary, and other parochial buildings to Monsignor Hayasaki. In a nutshell, he placed in his hands fifty years of apostolic work in order to begin again from ground zero. That's how selfless these missionaries are. After a bit of pleasant conversation, we set off for the church of the martyrs to pray before the sacred relics.

Monday, February 4, Tokyo

We are now in Sekiguchi. We gave the sisters an enormous surprise since they hadn't expected us so soon. What happiness! There were questions and more questions about Wuhu. And at the same time, what impatience! All of them wanted to show me the house. The truth is it's very inviting and very large for what is accustomed to in Japan, although it's all relative. It had only been occupied for four days. I can't describe the details right now. I don't know how I'm going to do everything that I have to do during these next few days.

Monday, February 11

The archbishop celebrated Mass this morning. And this afternoon he presided over the inauguration of the house in Sekiguchi. The act couldn't have been more simple and cordial, with nothing out of place. All of those who were invited were very happy.

The archbishop blessed the house with liturgical glory. And following behind him, wanting to see it all, were the guests. Having reestablished order, he began his address in French. He remembered the martyrs of Nagasaki, among them being two Spaniards and even a Basque. He praised our redeeming spirit, showing his contentment and hope for the mission. I should have answered him in French. But just before we began my mind went blank and I had to unleash my heart, limiting myself by showing my gratitude. Later, tea was served like in the grand Japanese receptions. I haven't stopped being grateful for all of the congratulations. Thanks to my French, I got myself out of some tight spots. From now on, I'll have to focus on learning more English. Everyone believes that I speak it correctly. I know that I don't, but I would have been viewed poorly if they thought I didn't know any.

Wednesday, February 20

It's impossible to describe the pile of things that have fallen upon my shoulders since I arrived in Tokyo. Trips to Yokohama. Father Breton in Omori asked us to visit there. He's very interested in having us see some sites where we could erect our future school. There are many gorgeous and suitable sites, if we could only buy them, of course.

Then there were all the continuous visits, among them my final meeting with the archbishop. The economic issue has also been resolved and everything is now very clear concerning what will happen in five years after the period allowed for the temporary house expires. I'm satisfied and sure that the archbishop will look after the sisters in a fatherly way. All in all, during this time I've had to confront a verifiable “babel” of issues and necessary observances that have taken all of my time. I'm tired of reasoning by myself. But, thanks to God, soon I will be able to reason with Mother Nieves. I dream of the delightful serenity in

Bérriz, although I fear that I won't be able to enjoy the peacefulness that I want. During this compulsory exile, a little bit of everything has happened. I have not been lacking for concerns or work. But there has also been an overabundance of joy. Above all, there has been the joy given to me for feeling carried by the loving providence of God in every situation of life.

My life of continuous prayer has been enhanced having gone through these great nations where the *Adveniat regnum tuum* does not fall from anyone's lips. I've enjoyed dealing with the missionaries. They only breathe in God. The simplicity of the islands has penetrated me to my core. China and Japan appear to me to be very different missions, with different requirements, but the most important thing for me for any mission is to let God do his work and to trust greatly in prayer.

Thursday, February 21

The time has come to say goodbye to Tokyo and all of the Far East. The time for saying our sad goodbyes is even more sorrowful in this house because it is the last one that I leave. And, having left it, I feel the great distance between me and the other three houses. You have made me so joyful! The Holy Spirit lives in you, you live in the heart of Berriz, and Berriz lives in you and owes you a great deal for your spirit. If this spirit continues to grow, we will continually become more like God.

I thought about going to say goodbye to the archbishop, but he beat me to it and brought me a Japanese painting of the Virgin as a keepsake. Later, accompanied by Father Faber and Sisters Loreto and Begoña, I left for Yokohama. In the port, the Empress of France was waiting majestically for us, painted white, gleaming, and clean. It's a superb transatlantic ship weighing 18,400 tons and with a cruising speed of 18 miles per hour. We looked around below and then went to the bridge.

They asked the visitors to disembark over the loudspeaker. We said goodbye to everyone and then Lola and I stood there alone, disoriented among the passengers. We were focused on not losing sight of the ones who wanted to accompany us, until the horizon mixed together with the infinite and we didn't see anything else but water. Then, we decided to

return to the cabin where we remained in silence, seated one in front of the other. Loneliness feels so heavy during tough times like these!

Tuesday, February 26

Life on the Empress is totally self-contained. We hardly went on to the bridge due to the cold. Instead, we divided our time between the lounge, which is magnificent, and the cabin, which is not at all uncomfortable. Among the two of us, we have unending conversations about what we left behind and what awaits us in B erriz. In the lounge we read, write, and play the piano. We have breakfast at eight. It's a nice breakfast. The waiters are friendly and well mannered. It's at this time that they hand out the ship's newspaper. It's a summary of the main headlines received by radio, all very well presented. The ship's purser greets us every morning in English and never fails to let us know when there will be a concert. A sextet has performed three times already. They play marvelous classical music along with a jazz song every once in a while.

Friday, March 1, aboard the Empress of France

Tomorrow, the 2nd, we will disembark in Vancouver. I dedicated the entire afternoon to writing letters since I want to take advantage of this first port to send a thousand hugs to Tokyo, Wuhu, and the islands. I'm ending up so far away from them!

Saturday, March 2

At noon, they came to our door to tell us that we are to wait in the cabin when in Vancouver until an agent comes to help us complete all of the formalities. We will then be directed to the train. All right.

Sunday, March 3, from Vancouver to Montreal

The day started out looking dispirited and sad, like it wanted to snow. We put our heads up to the windowpane and saw a landscape that is so marvelous that we remained in the same position almost the entire day. We saw the Rocky Mountains that cross Canada pass in front of us as if they were projected onto a giant screen. It is difficult to describe: Atlas, inaccessible, majestically somber, austere loveliness, and mysterious beauty. Often our train travels through narrow mountain passes and the landscape disappears only to reappear with renewed

beauty. Until suddenly, capricious streams of water hurriedly fall from unreachable heights and end up below forming a placid and peaceful lake. The vegetation, half covered in snow, boasts a range of incredible shades of green, from a dry reddish-green to the darkest wintry greens. But nowhere is seen that fresh and placid green from the southern islands. Eternal summer exists there, and here the beauty of winter with its tone of sadness—but beautiful—very beautiful, as well.

Tuesday, March 5

It was very cold when morning broke. We keep on traveling and we hardly see anything other than an enormous white blanket that hides the landscape. The sky is clear and as we continue, the ground begins to get rough and uneven and we start to discover the secrets that the snow was hiding. There were small pine wood forests, lakes of frozen water, and daring curves. I've never imagined anything so beautiful.

The train rests from ten to fifteen minutes when at the more prominent train stations. The passengers take advantage of this by getting off the train to stretch their legs out a bit in the cold. At these times, we met people who we knew from the Empress, who would run over to say hello.

Thursday, March 7, Montreal

We arrived at eight in the morning. It continues to snow and a frozen wind lashes harshly at our faces. We are told that someone is waiting for us. And in fact, at the bottom of the steps of our passenger car we came upon an agent of the company who spoke French and who was sent to help us. He led us to an agency to reserve tickets for St. John and to confirm the cabin number in the *Montclare*.

Friday, March 8, aboard the Montclare

We traveled all through the night. A splendid day dawns and at ten in the morning we begin to perceive the sea and the train, and little by little, we start moving along the pier until we are left at the base of the Montclare's stairs. We enter along with an avalanche of travelers and we soon find our cabin, number 250.

When we arrive in the dining hall, it is full of people. The orchestra plays during the entire dinner. There is opulence and an etiquette that perplex us. I wonder how it must be at night. Everything is so excessive and frivolous that we feel out of place. And because all of this boldness causes me to not feel comfortable, I write a note to the Chef Steward letting him know that we would like to eat in the cabin and asking him how much it would cost us for this service. He answers that they would accommodate us with pleasure and at no charge. From the cabin we can hear the missed notes of the orchestra, the songs, and the applause. Every night there is a dance until the early morning hours.

Monday, March 11

If we could push the ship, we would. We are so impatient to know when we will be arriving in Berriz that I'm not sure how many visits we made to the information office. They assured us that if there is good weather we would arrive on the 16th, and not before.

Saturday, March 16

We spent the morning packing and giving tips. No one deserves them more than the kind waitress who served us daily in the cabin. At noon, the ship slows down. We are in Albion. From the bridge, we can already see the long piers of Liverpool. We get off and it takes us two hours to approve a visa for our passports.

In the port, we recognize and greet friends we've met along the way. After a long wait in customs, we prepare to take the train to London that is leaving in just ten minutes. We arrive at about 10:30 at night. We take a taxi and we go down two or three streets until we reach the Convent of the Sisters of Mercy.

Sunday, March 17, from London to Paris

From now on our voyage proceeds at a frantic pace. This morning, after having visited the Spanish Slave Sisters (Madres Esclavas), we went to another station and took a train to Dover. After we settled down, we said goodbye to Father Williams Kirkpatrick who so kindly accompanied us.

The weather was splendid when we arrived in Dover. We entered the ship before we had to time to find out what it was called. On the bridge, an immense throng of people was crowding together. There are suitcases everywhere. And there was such a freezing cold that the crossing to Calais will always be engraved in my memory. We entered the dock at two in the afternoon. Right away we could perceive Father Vicario in the distance. I tossed my black cape behind so that he could recognize me. What happiness! Moments later, Lolita Prado arrived.

We collected the luggage and then boarded another train. We didn't stop talking until we could see Paris. It would be better said that we didn't stop talking until she saw us with her stunningly bright-lit lights. I can't say very much about Paris. All of the streets are congested with cars, people, and with a deafening racket. Our taxi took a long time to get to the Quai d'Orsay Station. But at last, seated in the passenger car, I can breathe with ease. This is my last train. And this time it will leave me in Spain.

Monday, March 18, Donostia

At ten in the morning, we stepped firmly onto Donostia. I wanted to see more than the beauty of its promenades or avenues, its blue sea or its elegant Bay of La Concha. What I was really excited about was being with the people and the villagers who breathe sincerity and dignity. We went to Mass at the Jesuit fathers' residence and we were able to greet some of them on behalf of their brothers in the Orient. Then we rested, even if it was only for a moment, from the hustle and bustle of the past few days. In the afternoon, we visited the Mercedarian fathers who welcomed us in a friendly manner.

Tuesday, March 19, Bériz

It's the Feast Day of Saint Joseph. I can see the Convent of Bériz in the distance early in the morning. I imagine that it has left the hillside and has climbed up the summit to greet us.

Convent of Berriz, I greet you, too! Above all, I greet you in the name of those brave missionaries who one day passed through your walls and

today are the seeds of Christ in faraway places like China, Japan, the Marianas, and the Caroline Islands.

I'm back home. They welcomed me with incredible affection. They are all so good! In the chapel, we sang a simple *Salve Regina* and a Magnificat to the Virgin in the style of a Gregorian chant. It was devout and I savored it deeply. I gave thanks to God for this trip that was, for me, a very special gift. It was a trip that enlightened me as to what missions really are from a practical point of view, and made me feel the needs that are so great and so hidden from many. Now it will be much easier for me to prepare the personnel for each mission. I'm also happy and grateful because during this time I received from God the extraordinary gifts of prayer and union with Him under unfavorable circumstances. The Lord pushes me to love Him with all of my strength.

In the community, everyone was happy to have me back home and I was happy to find myself among them. They want to know about each and every one of the missionaries, about their work, about their joys, and about the hardships of each mission. Beginning today, we will meet in the chapter room after eating to share what we have lived through. We'll have things to talk about for a long time. The impressions that I can provide them are excellent. I can talk for hours upon hours, but I will never be able to give them an exact idea of the love that these missionaries have for Jesus Christ nor of the selfless dedication that they have for their mission.

Sunday, April 7

A few days before I went on my trip, Father Elizondo was here and cautiously spoke to me about the desires of the Mercedarians of Barcelona to orient their institute toward missionary work, and how he felt inspired to propose a merger with them. I spoke about this with Mother Nieves and Father Chalbaud and at first we thought it was a good idea.

Now that we have conversed about what each person has thought during these past few months we see that it is a delicate topic that has to be studied purposefully. Thanks be to God, this community is very

united under the same ideals. We have numerous people who have received a vocation and, given the education of the young sisters, we can expect that it will continue to grow within the simplicity and family life that has been and is characteristic of this house. I wonder if we run a risk by growing too quickly. That “something” that is uniquely ours might disappear. I'm talking about the simplicity and the freedom with which we currently can present the plans of the community while being confident of the fact that each one of the religious will be in agreement.

Tuesday, April 9

These days I spend whole hours in the reception area attending to the family members of the missionaries. The mother of Encarnacion insists that the missionaries in Wuhu must be living in poverty. She says that before she was receiving letters in beautiful envelopes and that now they are small and miserable. I've already written to the missionaries and asked them to find large and strong envelopes so that their relatives won't have that worry. I enjoy visiting with these family members so much, and they have made me laugh so! I have given a souvenir to each family from the ones that I brought back. The father of Sister Teresita, who was very touched, kissed the tea and the chopsticks as if they were relics.

Friday, April 12

We are enjoying these days very much. They are full of paschal joy that the Liturgy radiates. Everything leads us to rejoice in Christ the Redeemer. This joy should bring us to respond to the challenge of the Apostle Paul when he says, “If then you were raised with Christ, seek what is above.” To live the life of Christ isn't impossible, nor is it difficult for someone who has abandoned everything for Him and for His Kingdom. In order to do that, you must leave useless worries aside and, with softness and tranquility, attempt to acquire that inner freedom that is achieved when one lives united with God. So many little and trivial things occupy and involve us all too often!

Thursday, May 2

I have a letter from Father Elizondo in front of me. After having thought about it quite a bit, I responded to his proposal today. After having thanked him for his efforts I presented him with my fears. I worry that with the merger we would grow suddenly and run the risk of losing that “something” that the Lord wanted to give us out of kindness: the spirit of family and an unassuming and natural bond. I don't know how to say it any other way. In my opinion, it's a very valuable jewel that we should never get rid of. With my heart on my sleeve, I don't know if I am doing anything wrong by fearing it, but I can't avoid feeling that way. If later we see that the plan is the will of God, we would not hesitate to carry it out without fear of difficulties.

Wednesday, May 8

The Mission del Magdalena in Colombia will have missionaries from Berriz. Today the council has kindly and gratefully accepted the proposal made to us by Father Vargas Tamayo on behalf of the provincial father. We are happy to collaborate with the Jesuit fathers in such a hard and difficult mission. The first expedition will take some time to be called up since it's better to go slowly and wait until the first male missionaries have become established, similar to what was done in China and the Caroline Islands where the experience was very positive.

Saturday, May 11

I'm very happy that Father Faber's posture has changed respecting the mother superior of the house in Tokyo. His frankness has given me cause to tell him that Mother Begoña, in spite of occasionally having a narrow point of view, is entirely good, dignified, impossible to behave with malicious intentions and also has a heart that is much more sensitive than what appears. She is a woman of God and she brings all who deal with her closer to Him. She has opened her heart to me in such a way that she has won mine completely. She hasn't mentioned anything to me, but I fear that she has noticed the indifference with which Father Faber has treated her up to now. I hope I'm wrong. I believe it would be good if the two would sit down and speak to each other about this so that any mistrust that might exist would disappear.

Sunday, May 12

In regards to the future school in Tokyo, none of the attempts to raise capital that we have tried up to now have been successful. In order to ask for a loan from any entity, they would need to send me final numbers and concrete details. For now, I don't see any other way of securing a loan except to mortgage the house in Bériz. That's a step that is just too risky since it is the house upon which all of the others depend.

In order to decide with any type of certainty, we need a clear and exact estimate since the most difficult problem won't be securing capital, but rather coping with the interest due during the first few years. I also believe that we won't be able to dream about acquiring a property that is 9,000 Japanese *tsubos* large. Four thousand would be sufficient. And needless to say, the construction will have to be completed one section at a time. Having said that, I don't mean to imply that we are going to get to work immediately.

Tuesday, May 14

Through Father Olangua, we found out that a new expedition of Jesuits will be leaving for Wuhu in the latter half of August. If there are no setbacks, seven missionaries from Berriz will also be going with the fathers. Three for Wuhu, two for Saipan, and two others for Pohnpei. When selecting the ones to go to Wuhu, we tried to respect the wishes of Monsignor Aramburu. Given their ages, personalities, and abilities, I believe that they will play an important role in the instruction of the Chinese converts. One of them will fill the hole nicely that Sister Begoña left when she was sent to Japan.

Thursday, May 16

I need to speak purposefully with Father Vidal. I have serious inquiries to make of him about the future of this house. Soon, the authorization that we received from Rome to go on missions will end. Before an application requesting permanent authorization is submitted, we need to study all of the items that came up during our trip that need to be modified. Some of them are of such a nature that an essential transformation is involved. We have to consider the pros and cons well

because it is better to renounce our current way of looking at things than to find ourselves bound to something that in the long run could hinder the effective implementation of missionary work.

It is also necessary to create new Constitutions because the current ones have entire chapters that no longer speak to us. It is a delicate topic. I think it advisable that we resolve it with the support of the Father General of the Order if we don't want them to look upon us like a branch that has split from the Mercedarian trunk. It occurs to me that it would be good if I could travel to Rome in order to speak personally with the Father General about the necessity for this new direction and to speak about the reasons that lead us to this conclusion. With his support, any change, no matter how big, would be well received by the Order. The community would accept it and I could act free from all fear.

I doubt that I would need specific permission for traveling to Rome. I think the one I have for going on missions is sufficient. I've asked Father Vidal to ask. It would be in my interest if I were to plan the trip at a time when he is in Rome so that he could advise me about my visit to the Congregation of Religious.

Sunday, May 19

It's Pentecost. The community in Berriz is experiencing the Liturgy on a very deep level. During the great Feast of Pentecost, during which the Church celebrates the arrival of the Holy Spirit, we all ask that the Spirit of God flow upon the world, upon the Church giving it new vitality, upon Berriz and its missionary work, and upon each and every one of us. I've asked everyone to pray a great deal for me because I have important matters to attend to that require a lot of energy and courage. I'm also praying considerably so that the Holy Spirit might be my light and my guide in everything that I must do and decide. Without its strength, I am incapable of doing anything. Now, more than ever, I need the Holy Spirit to guide me and to not allow me to take a single step without Him.

Saturday, June 1

Father Vidal is helping us a lot. Besides being an expert in canon law, he's an advisor to the Sacred Congregation of Religious and for the Propagation of the Faith. We asked that he study each one of the changes that have to be made to the Constitutions, changes that we will present in Rome for approval. Today we received a letter from him responding to everything in much detail. I agree with him that the question of solemn vows are secondary for us and making simple lifetime vows is more appropriate for the missionary life that we have set forth on. This is what the young sisters will do from now on, whether or not they go on to missions. I believe that the community will accept this without resistance. With this, the problem of enclosure is resolved. It's not in our interest to keep papal enclosure although it might be good to leave a bar or two in order to please those most reluctant to the change. We do think it's very important to keep Christian prayer (Divine Office).

Since the creation of new Constitutions requires composure, time, and much reflection, for the moment they are urging us to have Rome consider some minor issues that cannot wait. We would want that the novitiate be two years in duration in order to properly instruct the novices for missionary life. It is also imperative that the community not be limited to a set number of sisters. There are now eighty of us and our maximum number is set at ninety. Considering the ones who have just been admitted along with others that we know will be applying for entrance, we will surpass the established maximum. Another point that we would need to clarify, as soon as possible, is in what form will the missionaries participate in the next chapter of 1931. It would be unjust if they couldn't make it. We already have four mission houses and possibly another one will be established in Colombia.

Sunday, June 2

I received a letter from the bishop of Madrid Alcala speaking to me about the need to send more personnel to the Convent of San Fernando in Madrid. Exactly fifteen days ago the chapter and the council met and resolved to stop fulfilling these types of requests. Experience shows us that giving this type of individual help is only a

short-term fix for these types of problems and that later on things return to being the same as before. The problem for us is when those who return after fitting in well with the community that they went to help start to yearn for customs that don't exist here and that we should always favor that other community. And if, on the contrary, they don't fit in well, they are always criticizing things that in Berriz we don't know anything about, nor can we remedy, and that disrupts the peace within our community. Besides, it's not only the community in San Fernando. Lorca keeps asking us for personnel. The same request is coming from Seville. Bilbao doesn't have enough teachers for their school and they look to us. We would like to help as we have done up to now, but we don't see it as a positive step because we believe that measures should be taken that deal with the root of their problems instead.

I hope that the bishop understands our reasoning and continues to love us as before. We are the same that he met when he was here, and neither time nor distance has changed us even though we cannot appease him with this particular matter.

Wednesday, July 10

With very little time, as we are accustomed to in Berriz, and working day and night, we have prepared what we will be sending to the Exposition of Barcelona. It's our little contribution, but we are happy about it. We will be presenting very nice examples of handicrafts from each one of our missions. But what we all liked the most were the charts that were prepared by the community. One is on parchment, painted in miniature, and gives a very good summary of the past ten years of the school's Missionary Association. And another one, larger and painted on gold cloth, gives the rationale behind the redeeming origin of the Order and the missionary direction of the Convent of Berriz. Both, each with its own style, give a good idea of who we are and the spirit that moves us.

Friday, July 26

Father Vidal arrived in the afternoon of the 23rd and has stayed through today. He's helping us a lot due to his knowledge about how things are done within the Vatican environment and due to his long experience in

canon law. We've reworded the petitions that we are going to present to Rome because he didn't care for the ones that we sent to the Chancery Office last week. He thinks that this new rewording will be better accepted in the Congregation of Religious. He has enlightened us about many things. All in all, I continue to think it's important that I go to Rome this year, in October or November at the latest. I believe that in order to avoid any misunderstanding it's best to be able to personally converse with the Congregation of Religious and the Propagation of the Faith regarding the items that we want to change, especially the most essential ones, given that the stability of our missionary work depends on these changes. It appears risky to me to leave matters that are of such vital importance to us in someone else's hands.

Thursday, August 8

We said goodbye to Father Sancho on the 2nd of this month. When leaving, he left me a letter for Leonor that I couldn't mail until today. I've greatly enjoyed his unassuming and humble way of speaking to God. He carries the love of God so deeply within him that he transmits it to others without even trying.

Sunday, August 18

I'm so happy that the community in Tokyo feels so well attended to by the fathers of the mission who love them more each day. But what makes me the happiest is knowing that they are all in good health. I see that the heat is oppressive and I worry that they will lose their appetite. I also don't want them to have to tolerate wearing the wool habits until they can't stand it any longer, but rather that they all feel free to use the cotton ones since they are much lighter.

Monday, August 26

Today the second round of the retreat has finished. I enjoyed it so much!

Now I prefer everything that has to do with following Christ over gifts from prayer. I want to identify myself with Christ and think of myself with complete truth. I remain at peace, trusting and happy, although at times I think that I lack selflessness. I want to progress in my

life of renunciation by leaving comforts, the excessive care to my health, and my desires to be loved behind while avoiding having others know that I suffer physically and morally. I will attempt to not complain of being overwhelmed by work or for lack of time, contenting myself with having everyone believe that it's a simple duty of mine to peacefully welcome them at any hour as if I didn't have anything else to do. I want to give of myself without measure.

Tuesday, September 3

I received a new letter from Father Vidal. Having read it, I am convinced that it would not have been prudent to directly solicit Rome for the transformation. Considering everything that we've asked for, it appears to be a better tactic to me to wait for the Congregation of Religious to propose it to us. In this way the Order will be more receptive to it, and all of the changes will be more easily accomplished. I also believe that it's important that all of the nuns give me their consent in writing, since in fact it is the community that is requesting the changes. And on its behalf I will speak to the Cardinals.

Wednesday, September 4

Even though Father Elizondo has put it aside, the plan for a merger with the Mercedarian Sisters of Barcelona has not been definitively resolved. I've informed the house council that he has neither demonstrated a desire to continue forward with it, nor has he expressed any opposition to it. I have also asked that he give the community his opinion on the matter. There is something that we all understand very clearly, and it's that this is not a good moment to be occupying ourselves with this matter because we need to focus all of our strength in resolving our legal situation. I look at it all very serenely and the difficulties do not bother nor trouble me. I am convinced that if that is what God wants, He will direct everything and will unify the wills of everyone with the efficiency and gentleness of His Spirit.

Wednesday, September 11

In Xujiahui, numerous young women have made their desire to become Mercedarians known. For the time being, they are going to live

with the community for a few months so that they can get to know us and so that they might delve into their vocation deeply. This will also allow the missionaries to get to know their character and abilities. To be able to rely on Chinese people who have a vocation is a great step forward and is worth contemplating carefully. I've written to Father Zenon Aramburu, superior father of the mission, putting this matter before him. His accurate advice will guide us in correctly resolving this very important item.

Tuesday, September 24

We celebrate the Feast of Our Lady of Mercy by showing our gratitude to our Blessed Mother for the many favors that she has always wanted to bestow upon us, and especially for the favor of having chosen us to make Jesus known to others. I asked her to look out for the order that she founded, and to make it a redeeming order for the many captives that there are in the world.

Tuesday, October 1

I'm bewildered. By chance, I found out that the Father General of the order is in Spain and on the 13th he will embark for America. This trip completely disrupts my plans since it coincides with the dates during which I had hoped to be in Rome. Besides negotiating our matters in the Congregation of Religious, I was also going to Rome to present our plans to the Father General and to speak to him about the necessity of some new constitutions. I feel it's important he be informed and to count on his approval since this would lessen the uproar that will undoubtedly be raised in the order. Instead, now we would be giving the impression that we are taking advantage of his absence in order to do without his opinion. I have no other choice than to tell him in a letter what I would have liked to say in person. In spite of everything, I'm going to ask that he stop in Berriz on his return from America. I think that two hours should suffice in order to touch on the most important points.

Thursday, October 10

I continue in debt to Leonor. I have two letters of hers in front of me. One is from August 18 and the other is from September 14. She's telling me about some very personal things that are causing her to suffer. I would tell her, although possibly she doesn't need to be told, that this experience helped me to prefer following Christ over the gifts from prayer and to think about myself with complete truth.

What she says about the exam for a teaching authorization got my attention. I don't know what studies she is referring to. In any event, I like how we have to continue to study for one reason or another. Knowledge opens horizons and we discover a little bit of the wisdom of God.

Monday, November 11

I'm very upset because of the mission in Tokyo. The house in Sekiguchi is running into huge difficulties. The biggest of which is the attitude that Father Faber displays. He has such a poor opinion of Sister Begonia that she can do nothing right. In Tokyo, when I named her mother superior of the house, Father Faber's attitude appeared neither impartial nor dispassionate. No one needs to tell me that the mother superior has defects. I can see them. But I also know that she has other qualities that allow me to maintain my judgment about her. This lack of understanding is provoking a tension in our relations that is very difficult for me.

Friday, November 15

After what we spoke about the missionary spirit in the community yesterday, I feel it's important that I stress some basic points from our apostolic training in the meeting today. The missions are a work of the Spirit and, therefore, of prayer. The Kingdom of Christ in the world is the only mission of the Church. Understanding it like this, and assuring ourselves that we are living members of the body of the Church, is a very special gift from God. It's a calling to a full and perfect inner life. Our desire from the Kingdom of God is that it brings us to continuously pray for the missionaries and to ask for them the same flame that the Holy Spirit lit in the Apostles in the beginning of the Church.

Together with the spirit of prayer, nothing seems as important to me as the witness of life of the missionaries. Happiness, dedication, faithfulness to the Father, and trust. Missions need nuns who have much inner life, who have demonstrated self-sacrifice, are level-headed, and have had the greatest possible preparation.

Wednesday, December 4

I finished writing the Constitutions. It was hard for me to accept this responsibility and I resisted as much as I could. The adjustments have now been made. I was very careful to keep intact everything related to the Mercedarian charism of redemption of the Order, the *raison d'être* of the missionary spirit of Berriz.

The writing process has been long and laborious. Father Vidal provided me with some examples. Using this as a foundation, I made a first attempt and then discussed it, item by item, with Mother Nieves. Later, Father Chalbaud examined them carefully and changed a few paragraphs. Days later, I convoked a community chapter meeting where they voted for four delegates who, along with the four consultants, studied the Constitutions in detail. After they introduced some details that I had totally overlooked, each one gave their consent to submit the first Constitutions of the Mercedarian Missionaries of Berriz to the Holy See for their decision.

This afternoon the archpriest of Durango, acting as a delegate for the bishop, received the consultants' unanimous decision. In addition, they also have authorized me to make any alteration that needs to be introduced. I think that we've done everything that we can. And now that we're all on the same page this would be the time that I should go to Rome to expedite the process before others come here with a different assessment than our own and start muddying things up.

Saturday, December 7

My heart was telling me that something big was happening in Wuhu. And no matter how much I tried I couldn't get ahold of any reliable information about what was happening in China. No one knew

anything and everyone blamed my imagination until a letter arrived on October 27 that made reference to “the events in Wuhu.”

Yesterday, finally, the letter that had gone missing arrived. In it the sisters tell everything in detail. I read it to Mother Nieves. I had to interrupt my reading every so often because a knot in my throat stopped me from continuing. It's distressing what they had to go through. What a long night and what frightening uncertainty, having found themselves isolated and waiting for the soldiers to assault the house at any moment! And what an exciting and ingenious system of communication thought up by Monsignor Huarte using a tin can! I can imagine the strength of spirit each one had and how each one would offer their life to God!

New information is coming in and I'm feeling better because nothing unpleasant has happened again. Troops continue passing through Wuhu, but they come in peace, not like before when they were knocking everything down and leaving a trail of blood and destruction.

Thursday, December 19

Through the Chancery Office, I received a communiqué denying me permission to travel to Rome. Thanks to a letter from Father Vidal, the denial didn't turn out to have too negative of an impact on me; but even so, I was quite affected. I don't know if I can express the gratitude that I feel toward Father Vidal for everything he does and wants to do for Berriz, and also for some very encouraging letters that have comforted me and given me hope. If it weren't for them, I'd be much more afraid than what I am right now. I would fear that everything was coming undone and was ruined for one reason or another. I fear that this denial will make the bishopric think that Rome does not favor the changes we want to introduce. I'm also afraid that the paperwork already begun by Cardinal Cerretti will be halted.

Thursday, December 26

On the 24th, I received a letter from Father Vidal that upset me. The past two days have been the gloomiest in my life. The kind of days in

which everything becomes dark and difficult, as if I had lost faith and trust in God. I read and reread his words of encouragement and they appeared to me to have been written with real affection, but I was not convinced that the proceedings in Rome were carried out well. No matter how much I thought about it, I couldn't understand the intervention of the Mercedarian fathers in our case. Nor could I understand how they could have reported unfavorably about us since I can't picture how they could say anything other than we managed without them. I think that maybe the letter that I wrote to the father general alarmed them. Outside of that, we didn't report anything about them, nor do we have any reason for doing so from this point forward. I imagine that they will not like our desire to transform ourselves into a missionary institute because they don't see the true motives that we have, but perhaps, they might one day.

Two days have passed during which the worst of the storm occurred. The letter strikes me differently. I recovered my strength and consulted Mother Nieves and Father Chalbaud who advised me to speak frankly with the community and to propose to them whatever I think we should do. The fact of the matter is that I was already prepared to do so since what hangs heavy on my heart the most is what the community might think and feel about the transformation and the new constitutions into which many difficult items have been introduced.

Tuesday, December 31

The entire community has spent three days in prayer to ask for guidance and submissiveness from the Holy Spirit. Then, during a chapter meeting, I informed them as clearly and truthfully as possible that we were at a crossroads and I began to address the principle points: the need to transform ourselves into a congregation, the changes that this option would lead to for the cloister, the changes of administration, and in vows. The important thing was that the new Constitutions were to be read by everyone, not just by the delegates and consultants. And, one by one, after having read the documents, the nuns shared their opinions and disagreements with me.

I spoke simply and completely to them about everything, leaving out nothing that needed to be explained. There was such an atmosphere of caring and unity that we felt that God was among us. Later, I spoke to each one individually, without finding the least bit of misgiving, displeasure, or disagreement. The enthusiasm, trust, and willingness of everyone helped comfort me greatly.

The decision has been made. We will ask Rome to transform us into a congregation while retaining the title of Order. And at the same time we will request that the new constitutions be approved. We are willing to go wherever God wants to take us.

I've told Father Vidal about everything. I have a lot of confidence in the interest that he places in our matters, in the affection the he shows us, and in the standing he has in Rome. The most intense part of the storm is over. We had two bad days, but I came out of them more encouraged than ever thanks to the goodness of God. And the attitudes that I see in the community—how they are united in wanting and asking for the transformation, and the trust that they place in me—would give courage to the most cowardly person.

1930

The Weaving of a Transformation

On May 23, 1930, Rome issues a decree transforming the cloistered Mercedarian Convent of Bériz into a missionary institute. On August 14, the approval for the new constitutions arrived. In them, the redemptive character of the new institution was defined. Its hallmark was the fourth vow of working with redeeming love and to give their lives for the freedom of new captives.

God is found in the origin of this transformation. Love and freedom are also found. The origin of this transformation is found in a small and solitary “beaterio”, poor and hidden among the hills of Bériz, where some nuns, humble and unassuming, dedicated to prayer and work, were open to God and to His love.

It is a transformation that is intertwined with the spiritual journey of Mother Margarita. A journey of union with God and of participating in His compassionate and merciful love—a boundless love that is infinite and available for all of humanity and creation. The transformation was made due to His love. In it, His happiness and bliss were felt, and with this same love those cloistered nuns' hearts, desires, and wishes were transformed into missionary dreams of justice, liberation, union, and universal fraternity.

It is a transformation willingly made with openness, courage, and gentleness. It is made with good judgment, complete understanding, and respect for all the nuns. It is accompanied by, participated in, confronted by, shared with, and supported by all those men and women who saw in Mother Margarita someone who reveals and radiates the love of God. It is a sought after and desired transformation, wanted by all the nuns, unanimously requested by secret ballot, and welcomed with profound joy and happiness.

It is a transformation in which they felt chosen by God and one in which they experienced God's miracles during their every-day lives. These were miracles that were hidden from many, but seen clearly with

their eyes. They were closed to self-interest, but open to the sole interest of God and His Kingdom. It is a transformation from a redeeming life to a missionary life of redemption with a heart of boundless love that excludes no one. It is a life of dedication that is open to truth and love that set them free and creates a spirit of fraternity. It is a life similar to that of Jesus. It is a life in which they are transformed into the seeds of Christ, into seeds for a new humanity. They are transformed into the seeds for a world of God.

During this year, the love that Mother Margarita has for Jesus Christ grows deeply. She wants to grow in poverty with Jesus, detached from everything. She wants to love life in order to work in the midst of suffering and worry. She's convinced that love purifies and serves as the light, life, and strength for a struggle without rest until death. She feels profound happiness in the small things and in doing good. She wants to shower the happiness that God gives her on everyone. She wants to convert her entire life into love and expand the Kingdom of God. With the strength of the Holy Spirit, she wants to move forward, always forward, without ever turning back. She trusts in God and wants to be bold in his trust. She experiences that God's love makes his promises a reality.

❧ 1930 ❧

Sunday, January 12

I received a letter from Father Vidal. It's long and very kind-hearted. In it, he tells me about the items that were granted by Rome. I read a few paragraphs from it to the community and we spent a good while as a family. And now I'm happy that that dark cloud pushed me to do what it did. The community responded to my trust with their trust, and now I know that I can count on their unconditional support. Now the path is cleared so that the legal question can be resolved forever. The missionaries are up-to-date with everything and will be very happy with the steps we are taking in order to ensure the continuity of our missionary work, which they began with so much heroism. I sent them a

copy of the document that we signed here along with a blank sheet for them to sign as well. I am sure that their vote will carry much more weight in Rome than the vote of all of the nuns in this house.

Tuesday, January 14

Sister Presentacion returned to Berriz after having rendered a valuable service to the community of San Fernando in Madrid since 1925. She's so worn out that she appears to be made of tree roots, as Saint Teresa said about Saint Peter of Alcantara. Thanks to God she is getting better day-by-day, although we very much doubt that she will recover completely.

Thursday, January 16

We sent Father Vidal a copy of the Constitutions by certified mail so that he might carefully review them and tell us what he thinks. Most of all, we want him to look carefully at how the vows are worded because the revised fourth Mercedarian vow is written there, the one in which we vow to give our lives if necessary for the redemption of captives. This ideal of redeemer recovers its former sense of “remaining as hostages,” which is understood to mean remaining in the mission, if necessary, even if our lives are in danger. It's been a while now since I wrote to the father general of the order expressing our desires to him.

Friday, January 17

It's unquestionable that the Lord wants something from this house. Young women are arriving from the most unexpected places. They are coming from Mexico, Colombia, the United States, different European countries, and, of course, from the surrounding areas of Berriz. They all come with the desire to go on missions. The convent is going to become very small in number soon. There are 91 now in the community, including 28 novices.

Friday, February 28

Rome granted our most urgent authorizations. From now on, the novitiate will be for two years, although the second year will not be canonical in the strict sense. There is no longer a limit to the number of sisters that can be part of the community; therefore, we can continue to

admit aspirants. They've also excused us from having an enclosed school, something that caused so many headaches with the families. Some of the "bars" have disappeared. The community is celebrating the changes with joy and people are seeing this with amazement and warmth.

Tuesday, March 11

Father Federico Melendo has been named vicar apostolic of Anqing. Having just found out about the news, we congratulated him by cable. And we took advantage of the opportunity to again offer ourselves to this vicariate. We also got in touch with the father superior of the mission and the Provincial of León. Actually, we always saw it necessary to have another community near the one in Wuhu. When we tried to have one for the first time in 1927, we offered everything that we had—missionaries. We didn't have anything else. Now we can contribute, in addition, an aid that we feel is sufficient so that the community might survive the first five years until the school becomes self-sufficient. If the mission can provide them a house, the economic problem would be solved.

Thursday, March 13

Letters arrived from Rome. It can be deduced from them that the paperwork for the transformation is at its most critical point. The Congregation of Religious asks us for three new requisites. We need letters of recommendation from the prelate of the diocese and from the vicars apostolate from each of the missions' sites. There must be a secret ballot in which all of the community votes, including novices and postulants. It must take place in the presence of the bishop or one of his delegates. And they request a petition addressed to His Holiness requesting the transformation, composed in Latin and signed by the sisters of the council and by all of the Capitulars.

We already wrote to Vitoria letting them know of these new requirements from Rome. And we've asked the bishop to come to personally preside over the secret ballot vote that the community will take part in. In this way, he will have the opportunity to know us better.

Monday, March 17

The community has enthusiastically prepared for the secret ballot by holding various meetings. I am available to anyone who wants to talk about her doubts or difficulties with me. I do so with pleasure and with much respect, and the community thanks me for this. I admire everyone's enthusiasm and humility.

Friday, March 21

Mons. Mateo Mugica answered my letter in the most thoughtful and caring manner ever. He would have liked to preside over the secret ballot, but he doesn't want it to be delayed since he wouldn't be able to come for a few days. He named the archpriest of Durango as his delegate. The community felt bad that the bishop couldn't come or his vicar, but everyone felt good that the archpriest of Durango has been delegated to come since he is a well-known person and very trustworthy.

Saturday, March 22

This afternoon the archpriest of Durango showed up, accompanied by his secretary, in order to preside over the secret ballot required by Rome. We met together in the Chapter Room. The entire community was in attendance, including the novices and postulants.

Having completed the obligatory formalities, the delegate read the petition that we are going to present to the Pope. He didn't want to add anything, since he supposed that we all know well the scope of what we are asking. Without further delay, he began the vote with the same excitement as all of us. After the first vote count, the delegate, not being able to contain his excitement, proclaimed the results: completely unanimous. Not one vote was lacking from the 94 of us that make up the community. Such was the happiness of everyone that immediately a thunderous applause broke out. Later, the Secretary read the act that, together with the petition, would be sent to Rome through the Chancery Office.

When we were alone, the Community gave free reign to their feelings. Happiness, delight, gratitude, and congratulations. It is a bit difficult to describe. I feel that the Virgin Mary, our Mother, granted us

a very special “gift,” and that our Father gave us one of his best gifts: the spirit of union and charity.

Saturday, April 5

The Ladies of Saint Maur, owners of Koenji, have made a new proposal to us through Father Faber. The offer appears interesting to me. But it would be good if the community of Sekiguchi and Father Faber were to exchange views with people who understood Tokyo in order to assure us that the site is appropriate for a school and that the house meets specifications. I believe that I recall the last time we talked about this matter they asked for 100,000 yen. Now the building is valued at 185,000. That doesn't appear too much to us if the payment terms are good.

Saturday, April 12

Mons. Mateo Mugica has written to us in a very attentive manner predicting that soon we will see our desires fulfilled and saying how happy he was. With this letter, all of my doubts and fears have faded away. Although, I am unaware what was in the letters of recommendation that went to Rome because they sent them there directly.

Monday, April 14

I searched through the file and I looked everything over carefully that referred to the fourth vow. From 1552 until 1914, when new constitutions of the Order came into force, all of the nuns of this house made a fourth vow of “giving your life, if necessary, for the redemption of captives.” I found two formulas, one from 1552, and another from 1645, which are very curious. The fourth vow also appears in all of the former constitutions. But what can't be said is that the religious had put them into practice in the same way as the Redeemers. Now, on the other hand, we can execute this ideal of redemption. I hope that Rome consents to our wishes, noting the antiquity with which this vow has been professed in Berriz. It would be a gift from God if they were to grant it to us exactly how it appears in the new constitutions.

Monday, May 12

I've dedicated all of my free time today to Leonor, since I'm determined to respond carefully to her letter of March 20. In it she told me of her being named mother superior of her house. My premonitions weren't headed in that direction, so it goes to tell you that I don't have the gift of prophecy. I'm also not surprised, nor do I think it's a bad thing. Deep down inside I'm very happy. This position will present her with many opportunities for self-sacrifice and union with God, at least that was my experience. Although, sometimes I feel that I've lost the sweetness of contemplation that I once enjoyed in my relationship with God. My current life affords me an endless number of opportunities for renouncing my most intimate joys in order that I might give myself to others. I'm happy that I don't belong to myself and that I am able to give my all—my time, my rest, my health, and my life. What I am sorry about is that Leonor is sick just as she is beginning her new position. But I'm sure that if the Lord wants it to be this way, it is for her own good. I've suffered morally because of my aches and pains, and at this time my lack of good health is my most terrible cross. Many days I have a fever and I don't sleep well. I get up and start working. Sometimes I do so while suffering a lot, and other times I'm a bit better. It's hard on me because when I suffer the whole house suffers. But I don't want anything different. I try to simply live in God.

Sunday, May 25

The transformation has been granted! It happened so quickly and easily. I can't stop being amazed nor can I stop giving thanks to God who has shown himself to be so good with us. Father Vidal told us the news in advance. Right away, I read the letter to Mother Nieves and I notified Father Chalbaud by telephone. He asked for a copy so that he could savor it slowly. Later, I communicated the news to the consultants and the chapter members. The community's happiness is immense. We're waiting excitedly for the complete text of the rescript.

I'm overflowing with gratitude. I say a special prayer at night in order to give thanks for the transformation. I no longer have to wish to be useful to the Church. My inner self is prudent and reserved. It feels intense joy, the knowledge of God, and very vivid desires for others to participate in this joy. My soul is in celebration.

Tuesday, June 10

The rescript for the transformation has arrived!

It's a precious and invaluable treasure, signed in Rome on May 23, "the Convent of Papal Enclosure of the Mercedarian Sisters of Berriz, along with their subsidiary houses, is hereby transformed into an institute of simple vows..."

I read it over and over again, wanting to translate it literally. Later I called Mother Nieves and between the two of us we were able to perfectly understand what was most important to us. The Mercedarians are also going to be very happy when they learn in what terms the transformation has been granted. The community is enjoying what it has achieved to date. Each day we are confident that soon only the approval of the new Constitutions will remain to be accomplished.

Thursday, June 12

The father general has traveled directly to Rome without having stopped at any of the houses in Spain. I wrote to him in Vigo, welcoming him, but my letter didn't arrive in time. We would have liked it if he were to have stopped by in Berriz. We had hoped that this would have happened. But now I have no other choice than to address the issue of the transformation of the convent into an institute in a letter. I don't know how to begin to give him the news.

Friday, June 13

The vicar apostolic of the islands responded to my inquiries. It's been decided. We will send four young religious. Two will go to Saipan and the other two to Pohnpei. The ones going to Saipan are Ana Maria Larracochea and Maria del Niño Jesus Garate. Both of them are well prepared to work in the school and to give classes in piano, music, painting, and drawing. The ones going to Pohnpei, Berchmans Gondra

and Francisca Mendizabal, can help with catechism instruction. Three from Wuhu, Maria Blanca Calero, Maria del Sagrado Corazon Acha, and Maria Angeles Dominguez, are being assigned to Seng-Mu-Yuen.

Everything regarding personnel is arranged. But again we run into the problem of getting enough money together for the trip. We need seven tickets and we have to pay in pounds sterling for the ones from Shanghai to Tokyo. This is an additional hardship due to the devaluation of the peseta. Up to now, after having turned to all of the people I know, we've not even been able to come up with a third of what is needed. I've already presented the situation in which we find ourselves to the bishop and I hope that the diocese responds with the same generosity as they did in 1927. The only place left for me to turn to is the Propagation of the Faith.

Saturday, June 21

The community in Sekiguchi had mentioned to us some time ago that the fathers of the mission were considering the possibility of purchasing a plot of land in Yoyogi, where the school could have a brilliant future. Two weeks ago, we received more detailed information. And since that time I don't know what else we could possibly do that we haven't done already. We've made inquiries, met together, and deliberated. My head hasn't stopped spinning day or night. I've been reflecting and praying. I've asked the community to pray in order that we might make a correct decision. As a consequence, we've decided that we cannot think about Yoyogi or about any other place that requires us to expend capital that we don't have. We've taken many steps to try to secure a loan and there isn't a single entity that wants to risk giving us one to be used in a faraway place such as Japan. And even if they would give us one, we could not bear the enormous amount that we would have to pay in interest even for the first two years.

On the other hand, in the Koenji proposal we see a ray of hope in that it's not essential to buy this piece of land that Father Faber is talking about. Berriz isn't prepared to start up expensive missions. If it had to do with making a sacrifice, even if it meant the whole community

had to fast on bread and water for a long while, we would do so with pleasure if it meant that the school in Japan would materialize, but it's not about that. It's an absolute impossibility. I've already told them that it's necessary to face facts and either start bit by bit or do nothing at all. Berriz has started few things on a grand scale. All it takes is remembering the establishment of the house in Wuhu which was begun with so much noise and appeared it was going to have a brilliant future. The reality has been quite different.

Monday, June 30

In front of me, I have an especially harsh letter from Father Faber. In it, he makes some very serious charges against me. This time I'm going to defend myself by making myself clear and by being frank. From the very beginning I noticed an excessive effort on his part to have Sister Maria Loreto be named mother superior of the house, but since I didn't agree with his judgment, he's been increasingly showing his frustration with Sister Maria Begoña. And regarding this particular point, upon which we have never been in agreement, it has appeared to me that he has never seemed impartial or dispassionate. I never said that he was generally prejudiced or biased. He also accuses me of a lack of honesty, for not having answered one of his letters. Now I'm telling him that I overlooked it, thinking that that was best, because I didn't want to enter into a game of bickering back and forth. I admit that I was mistaken. I think that having said this, everything is cleared up and I don't have to defend myself any more.

Saturday, July 26

I just finished writing the father general of the order. It wasn't easy for me to let him know everything we've been through during his absence. I tried to explain to him why it was necessary that we organize ourselves as a congregation so that we could continue the missionary work that was begun in 1926, without forsaking who we are and by maintaining the redeeming spirit of the order intact. That is the sole reason for our existence as a missionary institute. I sent him a copy of the rescript from the Holy See by which we were granted this

transformation. I hope that he is happy for us and that, as father of the order, he encourages our desire to work tirelessly for the redemption of the many captives that there are in the world.

Wednesday, July 30

My soul is tender. I desire to follow Christ more perfectly from a foundation of humility and poverty. I want to grow in poverty with Christ. I love poverty and I desire to feel its effects. But I see me worse off than ever. I live comfortably, never in want of the necessities, abundant in the superfluous, and I hardly take notice. I'm going to begin again, without concessions. I want to take advantage of the opportunity that my post gives me by living detached from everything. I want to overcome my desire to be admired.

I take great pleasure in seeing myself as being created and loved by God, and seeing that I am destined to love and possess Him. This dependence upon God is engraved deeply in me. That is the way I want to live. It is this dependence upon God that is the origin of my peace and happiness.

Saturday, August 9

I have asked Father Faber that he join with the mother superior of Sekiguchi to begin negotiating directly with the Ladies of Saint Maur regarding the conditions for the acquisition of Koenji. Concerning the pledges that should be made, I expressed myself with complete clarity. I stressed that at this time Berriz does not have the kind of capital necessary for the purchase of the piece of land that Father Faber considers indispensable. It's not that we are afraid of doing so or that we do not understand his reasoning. Neither are we thinking about a school that doesn't have official recognition, since it would be difficult for it to become self-sufficient. We are only attempting to think realistically.

Saturday, August 16

The rescript of the approval of the constitutions of the Institute of the Mercedarian Sisters of Berriz has already been issued. We were almost surprised since we hadn't expected it so soon. It is dated August 14. In it the Redeeming Missionary charism of the institute is forever defined

and the fourth Mercedarian vow is updated to be “to give my life, if necessary, for the redemption of captives.”

Monday, August 18

Finally, Father Sancho has been permitted to come to Berriz in order to continue writing about the history of the motherhouse. So many permissions! So many difficulties! When he comes we will speak leisurely. I've told him some things about the retreats and I've reminded him about one of our former aspirations.

I come out of retreat permeated with the spirit of Christ. Few special graces are bestowed in life. This has been a retreat for following Jesus Christ the Redeemer. I'm left with desires to be embraced by His love in the most painful way, if only to imitate Him. The inspiration that I have had most frequently these past days is one of surrendering myself to a faith and blind trust in God, seeking His glory, and forgetting myself. Now when I think of dying, I'm happy. Before I didn't feel that way, although I always wanted to. I love life in order to work and suffer for Christ and to love Him amid the struggle. I want to convert my whole life into love. So many desires and hopes bubble within my inner self that I have no other choice than to trust in God and to be bold in my trust.

Friday, September 5

The fourth expedition headed for missions from Berriz on August 25. The nuns were enthusiastic and brave. The bishop of the diocese came for the farewell. He placed a crucifix upon them. During the Eucharist, Father Zenon Aramburu, bishop from Wuhu, spoke.

They left Marseille on the 28th. On this expedition, more than on any other, I felt the loving providence of God who turns his promises into reality. I've had some serious concerns because just days before I lacked half of the necessary funds for the trip. And because, when the three missionaries for Wuhu, the Jesuit Fathers, and the rest of the passengers disembark in Shanghai, the four young religious will remain all alone with the crew since they are the ones going to the Marianas and the Caroline Islands.

I prayed quite a bit for these two problems to be solved. Eight days before the expedition left, a young lady from Bilbao visited me. She was someone that I hardly knew. She handed me a sealed envelope with some help for the trip. When I opened it, I found the exact amount that I was lacking—ten thousand pesetas. My second worry has also been resolved. The night before they left for Marseille we found out that the archbishop of Tokyo, the same person who gave us part of his garden to construct the house of Sekiguchi, was also going to embark the *André Lebon*. I can't be anything other than grateful, calm, and touched.

Friday, September 19

I live in peace, with a young heart. I work at always being optimistic and I try to have others be also. I want to shower on others the happiness that the Lord gives me, and go through life like Jesus doing good works. In my position, I have a continual practice of kindness, patience, penance, and the forgetting of self. I do not fear suffering if Jesus is with me. I want to make use of the times that I suffer to engender Christ in everyone that I come into contact with. It is a gift that the Lord freely gives me. I'm much happier than I believe I am worthy of and I hope to be more each day. I feel happiness in the simple things and even humility feels easy for me.

Saturday, September 20

The matter of the merger with the Mercedarian Sisters of Barcelona has been forever settled. There will be no merger, not even a meeting. Father Vidal was the intermediary and used exquisite tact. The mother general wrote me. Her letter shows she is extremely kind and appears to be a very serene person.

Sunday, October 5

We now have in our hands a copy of the Constitutions with all of the deletions and changes made by the consultants. Mother Nieves and I leafed through them quickly and right away noticed that as a whole they are very good, although whole chapters have disappeared that we thought very highly of. They altered an article in the first chapter.

Among other changes, they substituted the title of the Order for that of the Institute. That's something we counted on.

Thursday, October 16

I had wanted to write to the Provincial Father Alberto Barrios to notify him of the new direction of the motherhouse, but Sister Natividad beat me to it. There is nothing unusual that this sister should have her prejudices and fears. Nor would she be the only one. It all comes from not knowing or appreciating the true motives that brought us to transform the convent into a missionary institute and to write new Constitutions. Sister Natividad has been away from Berriz for many years, embedded in the community of San Fernando in Madrid. During these years we have changed a lot and the community doesn't stop growing. There are now 101 religious in the motherhouse, and 25 in missions. And on the Feast Day of the Immaculate Conception five more will enter. Although it's not that we are many or few that is important, rather that we know how to respond to our vocation wherever God wants to place each one of us.

Friday, October 24

I've felt a calling throughout my life, an infinite number of times, to follow Christ by way of the Cross. This was especially so during the retreats of 1914 and 1917. I still feel this calling but now in a different way. It is a clear invitation, urging me to embrace the cross even in the smallest of things. My love for Christ has gone deeper. And I can say that I feel encouraged and strengthened. But I see myself as a coward, a friend of gifts and comforts. I flee suffering and I complain regularly. I feel the need for a torrent of graces from God in order to follow Christ, as I understand it now. I want to begin to follow Him unconditionally. His love draws me to Him and I desire to grow in that love. In order to accomplish this, and to expand His Kingdom, I want to surrender myself to a hard life that I will continue until I die. I want to be someone who distinguishes herself the most in His service.

Tuesday, November 4

The more that time passes, the more grateful we feel for having achieved a transformation that was as difficult as it was necessary, in such a quick and flawless manner. So many times we worried about it, thinking that it was a bigger task than our strength would allow, and without seeing a shimmer of light that could help us know where to begin! But the Lord, who loves us greatly, wanted to put Father Vidal on our path so that he could solve the difficulties. We will never forget his work, sacrifices, sleepless nights, or the immense affection he placed in everything that had to do with us.

Friday, November 7

I've outlined a detailed plan for following Christ. Throughout my life, I will be faithful to continuous prayer. I will have a harsh life by surrendering to my duties. I won't ever give up when facing the constant work of disturbing activities. I will give of my time to others without complaining, with a happy heart and face. I will quietly sacrifice only for Jesus.

I want to surrender my life to love, without anyone noticing my continual sacrifices. I am determined to deprive myself of pleasures and comforts for the love of Christ. I want to be embraced by His Cross and to take pleasure in it. I want to bear my physical and mental maladies in silence and with the least amount of sleep that is necessary. I want to participate in a continual practice of giving. And now I begin without a break. I've lost so much time! There is so little time left in my life! No comforts. Eternity is long. Love purifies. I want to always love and center my heart on God. With the strength of the Holy Spirit, I'm going to move forward with this program without turning back. Forward, always forward, while my life lasts.

Wednesday, November 12

We've taken a huge step in Tokyo. The negotiations for the purchase of Koenji and the adjoining lot are on track. The Ladies of Saint Maur have improved the terms and the sisters of Sekiguchi have urged that we accept them. We're on the way to arriving at an agreement. It's a very

bold step, but the work seems to be so much of God that we haven't hesitated in pursuing it.

We've decided to mortgage some holdings of the community. They are free holdings and aren't associated with canonical endowments. By doing this, we raised 63,000 pesetas. We are also relying on another 72,000 from a lady who has left it in deposit to the community at 5% and that, upon her death, wishes to donate it and have it go to the missions.

Saturday, November 22

The community in Sekiguchi has spent a tense few days. They should have received the cable yesterday. I couldn't promise them anything until I tied up many loose ends that are yet to be tied. No matter how much they think about it, they would not be able to understand what was involved for us in sending 20,000 yen that has a current value of 96,000 pesetas. Nobody would believe it, but during these past few years, with the income that we have, we barely can live. We're asking for work from everywhere. All in all, we've happily put this capital at risk for the purchase of the land. We rely on the providence of God, who has never failed us when it comes to missions. I've promised the money by the end of the year and I hope to keep my word, although I won't have any extra time since permission will probably need to be requested from Rome.

In regard to the personnel that they are asking for, still nothing has been decided. If it's essential that they speak English from day one, the only one who has it mastered is Sister Gloria, but I don't know if the council sisters will want to send her. For me, it would be an enormous sacrifice to send her, not only because Sister Gloria is the joy of the community, but rather because she provides assistance to me that cannot be duplicated. She relieves me from a lot of the correspondence that we have to complete and I have total confidence in her. But, in spite of all that, I am only concerned with doing the will of God.

Sunday, November 30

The community in Sekiguchi is displaying an enormous amount of enthusiasm. They would like to have everything ready so they could open the school in mid-April. They would like me to go to the inauguration, but I have no other choice than to say no. The date will coincide with the first General Chapter meeting of the Institute. In order to convene it, I only need to wait for Rome to declare in what way the missionaries are going to participate.

Monday, December 1

The order kindly published the rescript of our transformation in their bulletin, followed by brief words about this motherhouse. They also published the letter I wrote the Father General and his response. They did a good job. I was surprised to see all this, but happy, most of all, for the houses of the Order that didn't know about the change and could have misinterpreted it.

Saturday, December 13

At ten in the morning, in a simple act, the bishop delivered the Constitutions to us. Then, he congratulated us for the spirit of unity that exists in the community, which moves him to love us in a very special way. He arrived yesterday afternoon and just now left. He promised to come preside over the election of the mother general. During his visit, he appeared to be pleased, familiar, affable, and paternal. He knew exactly what to say to the community and everything fell into place. I expect that this good atmosphere will serve to help grow the mutual love that we have.

Sunday, December 28

Tokyo told me that if I could leave here soon, I would arrive there in time to close the contract and attend the school's inauguration. I've already told them that they could do without me since it appears to me that it's too soon to make a second voyage. But in view of the importance that this mission has and the force with which Father Faber is insisting, the council sisters think I should go. They feel it would be better to postpone the general chapter meeting. On the other

hand, Father Chalbaud didn't even want to hear me talk about it. He feels that we shouldn't do anything of the kind until the election of the Mother General of the Institute and its council has happened.

Monday, December 29

We quickly prepared an expedition to Japan. Three sisters are going and will remain there: Maria Rosa Vacas, Beatriz Salaverria, and Eloisa Martinez. Sister Cecilia will also go and then accompany me on my return.

We will depart from Marseille on January 15. It's difficult for me to undertake such a long voyage with so many inconveniences. I'm asking the Holy Spirit to guide me with His light and to support me with His strength in order to do the will of God at all times. I know that everyone's prayers will be with me.

Father Zameza has supported me in everything. This time, I feel more grateful than ever. I haven't told him enough. I feel comforted thinking that he understands me well. How I wish he could penetrate the depth of my heart, which is full of deep gratitude and true affection. I know that he will understand.

1931

Peace and Trust Amid Uncertainties

The first general chapter meeting of the missionary institute is held on July 30. Mother Margarita is elected mother general, and Mother Nieves vicar, both unanimously. She begins her work with the support of all the nuns, with recent the experience from her second missionary trip, and at a critical and troubled moment in history when the Second Republic is proclaimed in Spain.

During her second trip, Mother Margarita makes a more profound discovery about missionary life. The houses are progressing along; the nuns are more established in their missions, living the redeeming spirit. She admires and learns from them. She understands them and shares

her concerns and desires with them. She's convinced that God wants to expand his Kingdom through the least among them.

During the trip, she receives news of Leonor's death. It appears like a lie to her, as if her death was a dream, but it really happened. And there's her faith, piercing everything, comforting her by thinking that Leonor is with God, who she loved so much. She feels the deep and enormous emptiness of Leonor's irreplaceable presence, but she doesn't feel sorrow. She thinks that Leonor's life was so full of desire to unite with God, that she is happy now that she has been able to achieve her desire. She envies her full life and would like to live with the selflessness that Leonor had during her last years.

When she returns from her trip, the situation in Spain is uncertain and troublesome. The relationship between the government and the Church is tense. In Berriz, the nuns are calm despite the commotion found in the rest of the country. They live watchful of how the political turn of events is changing. They live peacefully through these turns of events, in the security that God will watch out for them with the same tenderness as always. At the same time, they are cognizant of the fact that they have to be ready to face anything with happiness and strength. Mother Margarita is convinced that God will turn everything that they have to endure into something good. They have to put themselves into His hands and be trusting. God always comes to the assistance of the least among us.

Being current with what is happening, in her writings and conversations she expresses her feelings, uncertainties, hardships, her interpretation of faith, and her trust in God and in the community. She doesn't judge. She doesn't maintain a political position. She doesn't complain about what is happening. She faces situations, looks for solutions, and she moves forward. She does not doubt God.

She lives dedicated to her position and to her responsibilities. The letters from the missionaries fill her heart. She wants to teach missionaries to know how to live in God and totally dedicated to their mission. She wants them to take on all things big and small, able to do anything. She

wants them to know how to live in community and alone, uniting active and contemplative life. She wants them to be united in harmony, with permanent peace, happiness, and complete joy.

Besides the peace and joy that accompany her experience, she now feels strength and a new sense of courage that returns her to her center. It's a center where she has already felt the nucleus of life, the mystery of the divine that inhabits all of creation. She experiences that God is not separated from or outside of His creation. God is in the center of everything. He is the life and the ultimate essence of all that is. He is a point of primordial unity where everything converges, unites, and opens without excluding anything or breaking the harmony of this immense endless mystery of life and love of which the entire universe forms a part. He is an experience of abundance. It is a deep and fundamental experience from which she supports her conviction that there is no authentic missionary life without an abundance of inner life.

❧ 1931 ❧

Thursday, January 1

Finally, the purchase agreement for the school in Koenji has been signed. We've contracted a debt of 181,000 yen, payable in six years. Yesterday and today were two of the gloomiest days of my life. It was as if I had lost my faith and trust in God and I could see nothing other than the enormous burden this school entails. It's been crushing and almost insufferable. I would have given anything to have Father Zameza here. All of the theory about humility is nothing compared to the sensation of poverty that I had after enduring these storms. I believe many more await me. I want to trust in God.

Sunday, January 11

With just a few hours left before I start on my way, I receive an urgent letter from the sisters in Tokyo asking us for 30,000 yen that the government requires as a deposit. This is 30,000 yen more, when we don't even know if they received the money order for the other 20,000 that we cabled for the purchase of the land. It was something we did at a notable loss for the community because securities in Spain have never been lower. During this delicate time in Spain, this new an unexpected requirement by the Japanese government has alarmed us greatly. First, because of the great difficulty it is to sell securities now. Second, for the great loss that the community will suffer. And third, for the many hoops we have to go through in order to buy foreign currency.

Sunday, January 18, aboard the *Athos II*

Just as was forecast, we boarded in Marseille on the 15th. Feliciana Arias joined the expedition and paid for my voyage. We said our farewells in Berriz on the 12th. The young nuns are going with an enviable happiness and spirit. I was sad sensing the work yet to be done. But I was ready for anything. And only God knows what this “everything” will encompass. I think about Berriz a lot and with such special affection for the ones who are ill.

The *Athos II* is a good ship, very similar to the D'Artagnan. I found my way around right away. The farewells were crushing. Lola was very

calm about what I feared. We gently entered open sea, bit by bit. I'm traveling with Sister Cecilia and in the other cabin are the three young nuns with Feliciana. We spend a nice time on deck. There are two other groups of religious. There are two Spanish Sisters of Adoration who have a nature that is very similar to ours. And there are nine Little Sisters of the Poor who we barely see around and appear to almost hide. They are very unassuming and quiet. All of them are young. They are two Australians, one Indian, two Chinese, and the rest are Spanish. I made a friendship with an American married couple. He's a history teacher and is headed toward El Cairo for an educational trip. We made ourselves understood in French. Also on board is a talking movie company. Ever since we left Marseille, they haven't stopped working, morning and afternoon, filming a movie. There are many actors, almost all of which are traveling in first class. They're behaving well. They wanted to film us by surprise, but they weren't able to do so. They leave the Athos in Djibouti.

Today, Sunday, January 18, we awoke to gray skies and a choppy sea. I have no other choice than to stop writing because the swaying back and forth is getting more noticeable. I also can't focus. My mind is on Berriz. I'm sure that the community is with me in prayer and that everything will turn out fine. The project that is taking me to Japan is God's work and prayer unites us with Him. I'm going to need continual help from the Holy Spirit and a lot of faith and hope. Having this, I don't want anything more.

Friday, January 23, near Djibouti

Now we're almost used to life aboard ship. The first few days were really bad. Only Feliciana and I remained on our feet. It was hard seeing everyone seasick, not able to eat, and without energy to get out of bed. The only thing that makes me suffer is the heat and seeing others suffer.

Every afternoon we have a good time on deck reading and then talking about what we had just read. For me, the sea view makes me effortlessly forget all of my cares and prompts me to throw myself into the arms of God. I feel like a little girl sitting on her mother's lap.

I hope for some letters when we arrive in Djibouti on the 25th. I want to hear about Berriz and about Spain. I'm worried about the prospects of the upcoming elections. I've asked Father Zameza to keep me informed.

Tuesday, February 3

I received a letter from the Father General full of affection and wisdom. I'm struck with how in tune he seems to be with all that we we're doing. The Virgin Mary, Mother and foundress of our Order, takes care to pave the way. These past few days I've been praying a lot so that the entire Order might become more directed toward missionary work. I see no other way that we can continue to fulfill the promise of our name and of our beings as redeemers. Nor can we achieve the reality of our dreams of being active and heroic members of the Church, working in the most difficult posts. The spirit of surrender of the first redeemers encourages me and I want to be bold in my trust.

Tuesday, February 10, Saigon

Barely two hours ago, the Athos II docked in the port and we settled in the house that the Sisters of Saint Paul of Chartres have in Saigon. The same sister came for us who had come for me on my last trip. The Sisters of Adoration also left with us. For the three days we are spending here, we have been given a room adjoining the basement for all of us. It's worse than what they gave us on my first trip, but we are content. I think a lot about Wuhu where, finally, it will be like we are with family.

I spent a long while in the chapel and, for now, we have no plans. Most want to rest because they've been seasick since Singapore and the heat is suffocating. Our next port will be Hong Kong.

Sunday, February 22, aboard the Woosung

We arrived in Shanghai on the 20th as expected. The Augustinian fathers came to receive us. When in the port, it did not take us long to find Sisters Auxilio and Maria Blanca who had just arrived from Wuhu. There were so many hugs and so much happiness from everyone. Later, they gave me letters that had arrived for me. Among them, there was one from Lolita telling me about Leonor's illness without giving me

more details. She must think I already knew about it. Another one from Mother Nieves also didn't say anything about it. I made a lot of wild guesses, but I'm sure that while at Wuhu I will receive more news. I can only imagine how much it affected Lola to find out about Leonor's illness without having me close by. It's hard for us to suffer and even more so to persuade ourselves that the Cross is the surest test of love. During moments like these, I rest the best by placing myself in the arms of God.

Monday, February 23, Wuhu

We are now in Wuhu. In addition to our sisters, Father Aramburu, father superior of the Mission, Father Muguero, and Brother Otaegui have come to the port. On the way to the house, we see the plot of land where they are thinking about building the school. The weather is unpleasant and the streets are impassable due to many potholes. But in spite of it all, we arrive at Seng-Mu-Yuen without any mishaps.

As soon as I am free to do so, I anxiously look at my letters. One letter from Lola leaves me relatively calm. Then I open another one from Father Chalbaud dated January 31 and I find out about the awful and unexpected news. I couldn't believe that I was reading it right. I reread the sentences three or four times as if I were convinced that I had been confused, but then I realized that it was true. Leonor is in Heaven! I was happy for her and then I felt the same inexplicable emptiness in my heart that I did on that day that I left her at the novitiate of the Carmelites in Vitoria.

Right away I began to suffer for Lola. To think that she was about to board a ship for Argentina and she would have been able to see her! God did not want it. There is a reason why things don't turn out the way we would want them. Perhaps it would have been worse for her to return alone with this terrible shock. In any event, blessed be the Lord, we can rest comforted that she is now joyfully with God, who she loved so much. I have no doubt about that and the rest is a question of embracing the Cross. The hardest thing for me is to not be with Lola at this time. I wrote her. I told her that if she didn't have the energy she

shouldn't write back, since Lolita writes frequently. I ask that she be given strength.

Friday, February 27

I received a letter from Lola dated February 6. I was expecting it. It was very emotional. I wanted to know her feelings and they are so Christian and so composed that I gave many thanks to God. I still don't know if it was on January 29 that she received the cable with the news of Leonor's death. Each morning when I wake up, I still continue to think this is all a dream. I wouldn't want for Lola to worry about me. I'll tell her not to worry because I am perfectly healthy and I am in the hands of God, ready for whatever he wants to send my way.

Wednesday, March 11

I had a meeting with the Bishop and with the superior of the mission. They were very happy that we were granted authorization by the Congregation of Religious to open novitiates in the missions' houses. It's already a done deal in Wuhu. On the 19th, the Feast Day of Saint Joseph, a young Chinese woman will begin postulancy. She completed her studies in Xujiahui and for the past few months has been living with the community. She has a good disposition and a determined vocation.

As far as the school is concerned, everything is set to begin construction work. At the end of the day, they will build it on virgin land at the entrance to the port. It's a magnificent site given that it has easy access. First they will build the facade's pavilion, adapting the exterior to the blueprints of Bastida. It appears that Doña Victorina is satisfied.

I've also spoken to the bishop about the possibility of having the Mercedarian fathers be in charge of ten churches that the Jesuit fathers cannot attend to. The first step has been taken. In Wuhu, the order could live its fourth vow of redemption heroically. And we could work together so well. I've already written to the Father General.

Monday, March 16

We are now on the return trip. We had a good voyage from Wuhu to Shanghai and now we've embarked on the *Nagasaki-Maru*. This ship brings back bad memories. In less than three days, we will be in our little

house in Tokyo. I'm praying a lot. Some very important and delicate matters await me, but with the strength of the Holy Spirit I do not fear problems.

Wednesday, March 25, Tokyo

I've been in Tokyo since the 19th. The school will be inaugurated on April 6. They are selecting students now. The faculty is made up of seven Japanese teachers. The principal and four of the teachers are Catholic. The motherhouse is pretty and cheerful. It turns out to be small, although big enough for the first three years. When they are done building the pavilion, it will have the capacity for 600 students. It's not a lot for the schools in Japan.

Within a few years, if everything goes well, the school will be able to cover its own costs. But until then, especially in the beginning, the economic hardships will be severe. The teachers have to be paid, the debt needs to be paid down, and we need to meet the terms of our loans. I strongly trust in God since the outlook couldn't look darker. We'll have to manage and work hard. The Virgin Mary will open the way for us.

Monday, March 30

They are asking that I write about Leonor. Of course I could say quite a bit about her personality, but I won't do so. She's a part of me, and by praising her I praise myself despite the fact that there was a lot of physical distance between us. I asked Lola to get in touch with mother Nieves because in Berriz, in a new file, there is a folder that Sister Gloria knows about that contains all of Leonor's letters. Even though they may ask for them, I won't allow them to be lent to anyone. And even if the Carmelites should want them, I will not give the precious originals to anyone. The reason for this is because publishing these letters would be like publishing the most intimate details of my life, given that between the two of us there were no secrets.

Tuesday, March 31

I received a letter from Father Zameza. His affection and goodness of heart touched me. A word from him is worth more to me than many words from other people. I continue receiving accounts about Leonor

from the sisters that attended to her and from Father Beguiriztain who dealt with her a great deal. I'm also receiving them from Father Ortega and others. Something strange happened to me. Loving her as I do, I haven't felt sorrow. She lived such a full life and with such a huge desire for God's love that I am happy that she has left this shadow of a life. She is fortunate! I don't envy her death as much as her full life. Death comes when God wishes. What I would want is to live with the selflessness with which she lived, above all, during these past few years.

Wednesday, April 8

On the 6th, we had the benediction of the school. It was a simple ceremony, very similar to that of Sekiguchi. Today classes began. The official inauguration will take place in June. It will be a public act in which the students will take part as well as government officials and teachers from other schools.

Everything has been fine with Father Faber. Neither of us has brought up things from the past. Our relationship has been very cordial. The truth is, we owe him all of the gratitude in the world. Without his determination, efficiency, and personal effort, the school wouldn't be as far along as it is now. In regard to the future, I'm encouraged, although I do have some worrying moments. This is the difficult part of the missions, one that falls to me and that I take on with pleasure.

Tuesday, April 21, Saipan

In Yokohama, we began our voyage on the 11th of this month to the Marianas and the Caroline Islands aboard the *Omi-Maru*. During the entire voyage, we had bad seas and a bad trip. On the 16th, we disembarked in Saipan. After just having arrived, we were surprised by the news on the radio that on the 14th it was reported that the general election results of the 12th determined that Spain had been declared a republic. Soon after, Father Faber confirmed the news to us from Tokyo. Now we won't know anything more for a month when mail from Spain will have reached us. We are in the hands of God. And I entrust this motherhouse and the entire institute to Him.

I found the community to be very well. Everyone is happy and united. They enrolled more than 300 students this school year. I'm only going to be here for six days. Tomorrow a boat headed for Pohnpei will pass by. We want to take advantage of this since there won't be another one for up to two months.

Tuesday, May 5, Pohnpei

The Yawata-Maru left us in Pohnpei on April 28. There was a furious wind during the whole voyage, but the crossing was more bearable than the one to Saipan. The sisters and a group of schoolgirls were waiting for us at the port. Right away I saw that the missionaries were worried about the situation in Spain.

I'm having a calm few days, enjoying the happiness and silence of the world and forgetting about the rest. I really enjoy the good spirit that reigns in the community. I'm moved by the joy and unity of the sisters. They are very happy. I'm quite pleased with the job they are doing.

Friday, May 22

We said goodbye to Pohnpei on the 15th and undertook the return trip to Tokyo. It's been a good trip so far. While at Truk Island the bishop of the Marianas and the Caroline Islands boarded. He's very happy with the work that the missionaries are carrying out. I also had the opportunity to speak with Father Pons, father superior of the mission, about the plans regarding indigenous vocations.

We weren't able to disembark in Saipan, but the missionaries were able to board. They brought me letters that had bad reports about Spain. We had very emotionally goodbyes. I'm very anxious to get to Tokyo and get my hands on the letters from Spain. The lack of information is increasing my worry. But the only thing that I can do now is wait patiently until the 26th when we disembark in Yokohama.

Wednesday, May 27, Tokyo

Yesterday in Yokohama, even before we disembarked, we could see Father Faber, who had come for us. We took the train to Tokyo. The hours went by slowly while the father was catching us up on the political events in Spain. He commented about the confrontation between the

state and the Church and he told us about the shocking outrages stemming from violent anticlerical sentiments in the street that reached such an extreme point that churches and convents have been burned, first in Madrid, and then in the provinces. It appears that Cardinal Seguro, Primate of Spain, had to flee to Rome because of a pastoral letter of his, signed by seven archbishops, that the government found distasteful.

It was known that, upon proclaiming the Republic, Fernando de los Rios proposed expelling the Jesuits. And, it seems, the council has already agreed, but is delaying the expulsion until they find some evidentiary fact of political interference by the Jesuits.

Tuesday, June 2

The nuns in Berriz want me to return as soon as possible. The situation for all religious is uncertain and troublesome, not just for the Jesuits. The first secular law appeared April 14. In it, the right of all individuals to exercise the religious confession of their choice in public and in private is respected. On the other hand, the circular order of Mr. Azaña, minister of war, dated the 18th, seems to have surprised everyone due the quickness that these series of measures have been implemented without at all taking into account of the Agreement that is currently in force. They also tell me that on May 6 a commission was created that is in charge of drafting a constitution. Given all of this, and without knowing details or the ins and outs of so many things that are being rumored, I'm not surprised that Berriz would want me to return as soon as possible. In Tokyo, I only did what was necessary because it's taking me a while to organize my trip.

Monday, June 8, aboard the Asama-Maru

Our farewell in Koenji was sad and hurried. We were accompanied to the port by part of the community and four teachers from the school. The *Asama-Maru* is one of the best boats we've been on up until now. The service is very good. And the voyage is turning out good too, although sad because of the uncertainty due to the many versions of the latest events in Spain that we are being told. The days go by and I do not

stop thinking about Berriz. I continuously wonder if I'll ever find peace. I hope so. I pray often so that all of these events end up having a good effect on the Church. I also pray for our little Institute to grow and develop quicker with the winds of persecution. And, above all, I pray that we may grow in the spirit of Redemption.

Monday, June 15, San Francisco, California

We arrived in San Francisco. It's an immense bay. The city appears to be an amphitheater when viewed from the sea. They treat us with incredible friendliness and deference while in customs. An agent from the Cook Company accompanied us by car to the residence of the Jesuit fathers. We bring letters from the rector of Tokyo and from Father Faber. The welcome is very good. They show us the school and invite us to dinner. Later, they accompany us to the station. We cross the bay in a ferryboat and entered directly in the train station. That same night we left in train bound for Cleveland. We were able to get the tickets without any difficulty.

Saturday, June 20, Cleveland

Today we arrived in Cleveland after four long days on the train. During the whole trip, the panorama has been dry and bleak. But I will always keep a heartwarming memory that moved me greatly. On an outcrop of rock, written in white paint, I could read, "God is love." Some Mercedarian fathers as well as Mr. Manzini and Mr. Rafael Temaglio, father and brother of our novitiates Ida and Agnes, were all at the station waiting for us.

Friday, June 26

Agnes and Ida's relatives took us to their home and showed us the city. The meals from each day became a veritable banquet and, in wanting to treat us well, we've ended each day completely exhausted.

The Mercedarian fathers would have wanted us to see all of Cleveland. We saw the museum, the park, the churches, and the property that they bought in Hudson for their future novitiate. They even made us climb a 42-floor skyscraper. We will never be grateful enough for the kindness that they showed us. But there was no mission. The fathers offered us a

parochial school, but the building doesn't meet minimum standards. We don't have the economic means to make the necessary modifications, nor do we have the necessary personnel at this time that has mastered English to the degree that this mission would require. Cleveland will have to wait. A mission in Chicago, where there is an important Mexican settlement, appears more practical to me. They've promised to take up the matter with Cardinal Mundelay's secretary.

Tuesday, June 30, New York

We entered New York early in the morning of the 27th. Vally Aguirre was waiting for us with some letters from Berriz. We read them right away. The news is worrisome. In spite of the petition presented by the Ministry of State to the Vatican stating that the primate of Toledo shouldn't return to Spain, Cardinal Segura returned secretly on June 10. He was detained on the 15th and expelled on order of Minister Miguel Maura. They also told me of the expulsion of Mateo Mugica, the bishop of Vitoria, who is so loved and esteemed by all of the Basque people.

Monday, July 6, aboard the Paris

On Wednesday of last week, we embarked on the *Paris*, a magnificent French transatlantic ship. There are 1,400 passengers of various nationalities. This appears to be a type of "babel." The service on the bridge, in the cabins, and in the dining room is unbeatable. We made friends with two Spaniards, Mr. Tortosa and Mr. Segrelles. Mr. Segrelles is a painter, Valencian, and works in New York. The other one is Catalan and the manager of the Maison Louis. Up to now, the voyage has been relatively good, although there have been some bad days that were cold and had dense fog.

Wednesday, July 8

This morning we docked in Le Havre. We traveled to Paris on the first train we could find, where we spent the rest of the day. Thanks to Mr. Segrelles we were able to rest a few hours in a Spanish hotel. At ten o'clock tonight, we left for Bordeaux.

Thursday, July 9

We arrived in Bordeaux at ten in the morning. Father Garamendi, my sister Lola, and her niece Lolita were at the station waiting for us. Right away they provide us with news from Spain, all very sad. They confirm to us that all religious congregations, not just the Jesuits, are threatened with expulsion. I can't get my head around that, but if these events come to pass, we've taken advantage of our stay here to see the two houses that just days before Sisters Nieves and Gloria came to see in case we are obligated to leave Berriz and the community needs to seek refuge.

Saturday, July 11, Bayonne

Today we left Bordeaux at eight in the morning and at eleven we were already in Bayonne. Since Bishop Mateo Mugica is exiled very near here, I stopped for a few hours to be able to greet him. It was a fond meeting in which I was moved as much by his fortitude as by his graciousness. We talked about many things.

Sunday, July 12

We are now at home. We got here just as it was getting dark, after passing by Loyola. The encounter with the community was indescribable. There was so much emotion, happiness, and uproar that awaited me. We couldn't wait long enough to even have dinner and we met right away in the Chapter Hall. We exchanged thoughts until well into the night.

The community is very calm in spite of the strong commotion in the rest of the country. The preliminary draft of the constitution that considered the Catholic Church as an institution of public law and guaranteed religious education did not get unanimous approval by the government. Constituent Courts have been convened and a commission was created with 21 delegates, chaired by Jimenez de Asua, in order to write new articles. However, this commission has managed the religious questions even more radically. Article 24 mandates the dissolution of all religious orders and the nationalization of their property. And according to Article 21 all education will be secular. Apparently there are huge differences of opinion, which makes it difficult to know if these articles will be approved or not. The only thing

that we can do is put ourselves in the God's hands and trust greatly in prayer.

Tuesday, July 14

Concrete plans from the Prefect Apostolic of Magdalena arrived regarding the establishment of a mission in Bucaramanga. When I left Spain in January, my plan was to go through Colombia when on my return from Japan. I wanted to get to know the Prefecture of El Magdalena and I almost promised doing as much to two Colombian novices that we have, who persistently asked me to go there. But the current political situation in Spain caused me to accelerate my return. And now, until things are normalized, it's very difficult, if not impossible, to think of establishing a new mission. However, I do not doubt that the Lord will continue clearing the way.

Thursday, July 30

Today, July 30, on the eve of Saint Ignatius of Loyola, we held the first general chapter meeting of the Institute. Justo Echeguren, vicar of the diocese and representative of Bishop Mateo Mugica who continues in exile, presided over the elections. It was a simple act, and very informal. I was again elected Mother General of the Institute and Mother Nieves was reelected Vicar. It was a unanimous vote for both of us.

Thursday, August 6

I'm now arranging my activities. From now on, as Mother General of the Institute, I want to live totally dedicated to others, dealing with everyone on an intimate, close, and frequent basis. My job is to guide and encourage with intense faith. I've begun writing to the missionaries. And as the mother to all of them, I've asked that they pray for me, now more than ever, because I need guidance and grace from the Holy Spirit in order to govern the Institute as Jesus Christ would, with high-mindedness.

Thursday, August 20

The Mercedarian fathers want us to establish a mission in Texas. The proposal is attractive to me for two reasons. It would be a good mission established among very humble people and it deals with a

Hispanic community. I read the letter to the council and everyone thinks and feels as I do. I've written to Fr. John Murphy asking him for more information. I hope that we can move forward with this mission.

Friday, August 21

We live watching how the political winds blow. We especially watch to see what the wording is in the constitution that they will eventually institute. The government's overall disposition is very radical, although lately the press has been talking about how those who are more conciliatory may win the day. In Berriz, we are at peace in the confidence that God will watch out for us with the same tenderness as always. And, at the same time, we are prepared to confront everything with happiness and strength. We are in God's hands. And the time has come to trust in Him.

Saturday, August 22

In a situation that is as difficult as the one we find ourselves in now, I want to pay a lot of attention to the communities. I've set out to train missionaries who know how to live in God. Detached and humble. They are dedicated to Christ with a happy and trusting heart. They are missionaries that live for God, the Church, and all of our brothers and sisters. They wait for the Holy Spirit, who is our guide, truth, inspiration, and strength. All this because the Lord wants to expand His Kingdom through the least among us. I've attempted to train missionaries who are totally dedicated to their mission. They are capable of easily accepting discomforts and sacrifices, without thinking they are too big. They are missionaries who neither envy nor look down on other missions because they are all part and parcel of the one mission of Christ. They are missionaries that take on what's small as well as what's big because, with their sights on Christ the Redeemer, sacrifice disappears and is erased. As Christ gave His life for our redemption, the missionary should give her life for her brothers and sisters. I want missionaries who are united in love and are harmonious. They must be generous in forgiving and able to forget trivial things. They should be sincere, loyal, and have a greatness of soul. They must be even-tempered, open, and

have good judgment. The life of a missionary should be a life of prayer, personal union with Christ, and unconditional dedication to our brothers and sisters—uniting active and contemplative life as much as possible.

Monday, August 24

For now it's going to be impossible to comply with our economic commitments in Japan. Everyone is telling us that the situation regarding the religious is deteriorating moment by moment and we could end up being dissolved by decree. Just three days ago, it was proclaimed that religious Communities and the entire Church in Spain could no longer do business in securities, or sell or transfer any type of property. And according to the Ministry of Governance this is only the beginning. Our hands and feet are tied. Values of securities have hit rock bottom and no one wants to buy them given the uncertainty of the nation's future. We have no idea as to how long this might continue. The most optimistic among us hope that things will normalize once the constitutional debate, which began today, has finished, and the President of the Republic has been named. But no one thinks this will happen before mid-October. Until all of this is resolved, we can only count on God to help us with the day-to-day expenses of this motherhouse. We're dependent upon His Providence even for our "daily bread."

Thursday, September 3

All of the Catholic newspapers in the North have been shut down for an indefinite amount of time. During these past few days, it was rumored that all of the religious will be able to stay, but that the Jesuits will be expelled. The Lord wants to begin governing the Institute at a difficult time. We don't know what the future holds for us religious, but we do know that God keeps vigil over us and can make everything turn out for the better no matter how much we will have to suffer. God wants that this wave of persecution that threatens us to not continue forward and that we can continue to keep our novitiate open. Our mission houses are beginning to go through some very stormy days, but we can't give up trusting. God always comes to the rescue of the meekest among us.

Sunday, September 20

In the middle of this month, a rumor was running rampant about the imminent expulsion of the Jesuits. Troops that were occupying a large part of the north were infiltrating Azpeitia, thereby giving birth to the resulting state of social alarm. These have been very agonizing days. Indeed, the expulsion decree that also dissolved the Jesuits was signed and was to come into effect on September 8. But two days later the situation changed and nobody knew why. It was later said that Mr. Lerroux, President of the League of Nations based in Geneva, asked the government to suspend the expulsion until he arrived in Madrid. It's now being commented that such a radical and undemocratic move against the Church is being poorly viewed by the League of Nations.

Tuesday, September 22

For some time now, everything has been like an invitation to live in God. To seek the way of tranquil prayer. To not rest until God wishes that I do so. I want to follow Christ more closely, keep my desire to do so alive, empty myself of everything, and keep my hunger for God. I feel joy in wanting a closer relationship with Christ. I don't deserve it, but God wishes it. He always gives it to whoever seeks with humility. I've asked that He dwell permanently within me and that I feel full of peace, joy, and receive a new impetus that helps me return to my center. I can't conceive of a vocation for missionary service without a full inner life.

Thursday, September 24

I congratulated Father Chalbaud since I wanted to let him know somehow how much we love him and how much this affection is growing through the passage of time and as we get to know him more. I'm living through one of those periods of time in which recognition and caring are aroused and the need to reciprocate is felt. But it's impossible. What I have received is so much and what I can give is so little. We owe him so much gratitude.

Tuesday, September 29

In the council today we dealt with the matter of Tokyo, which we hadn't touched upon due to my fear of bringing it up. We carefully read the plan prepared by Father Chalbaud that deals with repaying the debt for the school. We approved it after discussing it point by point. Next year we will pay 20,000 yen and make two installments out of the four that remain for the payment of interest. I feel like a great weight has been lifted from me even though the burden continues to be the same. I felt it was my duty to clear up this point but I feared strong opposition. There was none thanks to a previous conversation with the Mother Teacher. We had a rough few moments, but her kindness allowed her to understand my reasons.

Thursday, October 8

The relationship between the government and the Church continues to be very tense. While the Vatican negotiated the forced resignation of Cardinal Segura, which eventually took place on September 29, the Nuncio and a commission of bishops are trying to arrive at an agreement with Alcala Zamora and with Fernando de los Rios on some articles of the constitution. We are in a very critical week. Matters of great interest are being discussed. The suspense is enormous.

Saturday, October 10

The political horizon continues to be bleak. We've had months of anxiety and uncertainty. Now the climate is less tense and the persecution against the religious does not appear to be as close at hand as it did fifteen days ago. We don't know how long this situation will last since they still haven't voted in parliament on the articles of the constitution that directly concern religious congregations. No one dares to guess the outcome. There are days in which everything seems to take a more moderate turn and others when positions become so radicalized that it borders on the incredible. As long as the parliament does not make a decision, we won't know what we will have to abide by.

Monday, October 12

The religious storm that we thought had subsided just got worse. Sometime between today and Thursday, something very serious is

feared for the Jesuits and probably for all the religious. If it happens, we will imitate Christ's flight into Egypt and we will joyfully accept the opportunity that this gives us to follow Christ more closely. Poverty doesn't scare me, or how much we might be affected, but at the same time I feel cowardly and miserable. My nothingness gives me the right to complete protection by God. Now I know why humble people neither get exhausted nor become sad.

Thursday, October 15

The most extreme positions have been softened thanks to the amendments presented by the Republican Action party (Acción Republicana) and a speech by Azaña that was harsh in tone but more moderate than article 24. “The dissolution of religious congregations and the nationalization of their properties” will be applied only to the Jesuits. But all religious are prohibited from dedicating ourselves to teaching. The die is cast and while the current composition of the parliament lasts the only thing that we can do is to get around this difficult situation as best as we can.

Tuesday, October 20

I've dedicated all of this afternoon to writing carefully to the Superior of the communities. I asked all of them to accept their posts with a spirit of faith, trust, happiness, and humility. If they live in unity with God, He will guide their steps and shape their hearts, making them affectionate and loving with everyone.

Their principle task is to foment the spirit of family and help the community grow in a life of prayer, happiness, fraternity, and unity. In order to do so they must treat everyone with affection, respect, trust, freedom, love, and candidness. They also must be treated with a big heart and serenity of spirit.

They also need to communicate kindness, apostolic spirit, and a desire for the Kingdom of God. They should awaken and support the young sisters' aspirations, and help everyone develop their abilities. All of this must be done with a lot of prayer and humility because it could appear that not everyone is happy with their performance, but this

should not discourage them. Their poverty will help them live in continuous prayer. They will be cognizant of the fact that the Holy Spirit rains down on the poor. Reading good authors will help them continually discover new horizons.

Friday, November 27

I'm waiting for a check that I requested from the Center of Operations in Madrid to be able to send to Japan. The check covers the two installments of interest that we owe the Ladies of Saint Maur. There is an additional 7,000 yen going to clear the bill we have with Father Faber. It's become so difficult to send money overseas even with the good personal connections that I have.

Sunday, November 29

I had a meeting with the young sisters who are preparing to make a life commitment. I intend to make these meetings not only about spiritual direction, but also about the instruction of judgment, character, and attitude. I want them to tell me what they feel and what they want. I want them to explain to me any difficulties they have with trust, resting assured that I am always pleased with them and never tire of listening to them. My attitude will be one of being attentive to their instruction and always ready to give them a helping hand. I want to give them my affection, support, and the benefit of my experience.

Now that the Institute is getting underway, I want to shape an entire generation in every respect. Able to do anything. Missionaries who are discrete, unassuming, prudent, sincere, active, and responsible. Prepared to live actively and in solitude, if the Lord so desires. Prepared for any kind of hardship and for true happiness. With an unalterable peace and complete happiness. *Alter Christus* in their judgment, character, and attitude.

Monday, November 30

The letters from the missionaries fill my heart. My greatest joy is seeing that everyone has a good disposition and is enthusiastic in their dedication to their mission. They are extremely sincere and frank with

me. I am learning a lot from them since they are able to do what I don't do because of cowardice. I want to be close to each one of them.

Wednesday, December 9

Lola wants me to write about my memories of Leonor's infancy and youth for the nuns in Suipacha. Even though Lola knows the same as I do about those years, I'll do so with pleasure to make her happy. The bad thing is that when I speak about Leonor, I speak about myself. We were like two bodies that shared the same soul. We could never be separate from each other and our mutual understanding was incredible.

Leonor talked about becoming a nun since she was really little. She loved pretending to be in long and silent cloisters. She was fond of books about religious austerity. She took communion every day and prepared to do so with a lot of prayer beforehand. She arranged her life like a nun would from the age of ten to about fifteen. She meditated daily and read spiritual books. She conducted a nightly examination of conscience and went on a monthly retreat. She had to be very creative, of course, since she had to do this without anyone noticing.

She took a vow of chastity at the age of twelve. One day she told me about it in secret and I will never forget what I felt. It appeared to me to be a very big deal what I was hearing. She enjoyed praying for half the night and in order to do so she had an understanding with the maid to come and wake us up without anyone hearing. We converted the kitchen into an oratory and the hours went by slowly and quickly at the same time. I remember that the only book that we looked at then was *The Quarter Hour of Prayer of Saint Teresa*.

She had an open and jovial character and there was a friendliness that surrounded her everywhere she went. She was witty and funny and she had a gift of captivating everyone who dealt with her. She earned the trust of her friends and she exercised an enormous influence over them. She was a great friend to the poor.

She enjoyed taking long strolls in solitary places. Nature always spoke to her of God. She would look at the sea wide-eyed, without saying a

word. I respected her silence, since I knew that the sea was screaming God to her. She was discovering His glory as if looking in a mirror.

She would often tell me, “I need to become a nun because I know that I was born to be one.” At that time, I was already thinking about Berriz. We even talked about the possibility of entering together. But then we made an agreement. It was she who said, “The hardest thing for me would be to separate from you. If I would put the whole world on one side of a balance and you on the other, your side would be infinitely heavier.” And she added, “I want to give God everything, and the sacrifice has to be complete. We will separate forever.” Once she made that decision, she never wavered. There was a Jesuit father who tried to dissuade her, but he was unable to do so. I know very well that her heart was bleeding.

The day came when we were to separate. Mom and I accompanied her to the novitiate of the Carmelite Sisters of Charity in Vitoria. She was talkative and happy as usual. Nobody knew how much she was really suffering. She only thought about alleviating our sorrow with her wisecracks, and in this way, almost without us realizing it, our trip continued all the way to Vitoria. Mom wanted us to say goodbye to a brother of hers who lived in a nearby village. We went by foot on this final walk that we would enjoy together. Mom went ahead, understanding that we had a lot to say to each other. We went over the solitary Ali Hill that separates Vitoria from Lermanda. It was a splendid July day. We were in the middle of a forest without anyone nearby. We were walking slowly, as if we wanted to prolong that final secret. We spoke little, but we spoke deeply, very deeply, and with feeling. For me, Leonor's words fell on my soul like pieces that melted from her heart. It was then that I realized that it didn't matter that we would be separated, because I carried all of Leonor's being within me, and that we would always be together as one. We made a solemn promise to each other, better said, we made two. We would never stop communicating in the same manner that we always had and, at least by letter, we would always open our hearts to each other. And we should remember, during

the most difficult times of our lives, that we gave the maximum sacrifice, our separation, to God, and that we could not deny Him any other because everything else pales in comparison. Leonor reminded me of this promise many times, and I never forgot it.

Monday, December 21

We were able to send 17,000 yen from Midland Bank Ltd. of London to the Bank of Cosen in Tokyo, payable to Father Faber. Our intention is to use this amount to pay the interest from September and December of this year to the Ladies of Saint Maur. We also want to pay down 10,000 yen of our debt. And the left over, some 3,000 yen, we will use to pay down part of what we owe Father Faber.

Beginning the first of the year, the general ecclesiastical administrator will be responsible for the administration of the entire institute, relieving Father Faber who has provided us many priceless services in all of the mission houses.

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Love, Fortitude, and freedom

The political situation becomes more critical. The future looks dark. They try to keep up with the latest on the law regarding religious congregations. They feel sad and sorry for the dissolution of the Jesuits. They are cognizant of the fact that there might be more persecution. Mother Margarita and the nuns think that it's possibly a necessary purification and that it all needs to be accepted in an attitude that would befit Jesus. They renew their redeeming spirit and their fourth vow to be happily prepared to give their lives. They are always alert. Leaving all naiveté behind, they prepare to confront and work around any hardships. Mother Margarita continues to be realistic and enterprising. If the religious are prohibited from teaching, they will take advantage of the occasion to better prepare themselves. Perhaps these bitter tests serve to extend the reach of the institute. There is no lack of plans. They live trusting that God will give them strength and will open new paths to them. They believe that God will not let Berriz disappear, but if it were

to occur they are ready to accept that in peace and serenity. Mother Margarita contemplates the stream that is Berriz and, in spite of everything, believes that its waters will rise above all hardships and continue to provide natural spring water to many people. God, with wisdom and love, continues to carry them in His hands.

Mother Margarita's mission is full of responsibilities. She has to continue organizing the newly born missionary institute. She meets frequently with the community and with the young girls. Life in the missionary communities is cause for happiness and hope. She gives presentations inside and outside the convent. She guides herself toward God and feels intense happiness from doing good works, and by encouraging, guiding, and opening horizons for others.

It's an excruciating year full of work and intense circumstances in which the illness that she has been suffering from for so long flares up. She has the same illness that caused Leonor's death. She leaves everything in the hands of God and the community. They decide to operate on her and they save her life, but her illness continues. She works as much as she can while in discomfort and pain, feeling sad and discouraged, and with an enormous feeling of fatigue that her illness produces. She wants to use all her strength to work for the Kingdom of God and for the good of the institute while suffering for Christ's redemption. Her only desire is to live intensely in God and to take advantage of every moment of her life.

She feels a pulsating, enthusiastic, and missionary flame deep inside her that is shared with Father Zameza. It's a flame of a desire that doesn't bring her peace until she transforms it into a reality. She composes a draft plan for missionary instruction. It's something that she examines in detail in conference with the community during which they express their beliefs and wishes for the Institute that was just created. She also wants to know what they think should be the spirit that animates the life of the Mercedarian Missionaries of Berriz. They have a redeeming origin and one that is missionary in nature. For Mother Margarita, it's not about naming this origin but rather knowing what it

actually means, not just to see it evidenced everywhere for its own sake. It's not about a baseless desire, but rather about a deep, fertile spiritual life rooted in God. It's about an active contemplation that gives the fruit of life. It's not about wishful thinking or enthusiasm, but about faithfulness to the Holy Spirit. It's not about novelties or false claims, but about assertions that are genuine and authentic.

During this year, she deepens her knowledge of Christ and the mystery of Redemption. This knowledge increases her gratitude and desire to reveal Christ to others and to be like Him with her love. It's a love that suffers with others, one that suffers the passion that the others do. It's a love that struggles without fear, while risking your own life. It's a love that strives to recuperate and rescue the dignity and value of everyone, starting with the least among them. It's a love that descends into the abyss of disgrace and misfortune in order to rescue and liberate. It's a love that is carried to its ultimate expression that redeems and unites. It's an ardent love that wants to illuminate and act, freeing all from the shadows of death and freeing those lives without light. It's a love that opens to the universal—a horizon without limits—while resting in the dazzling certainty that everything is created by love, beauty, liberty, and happiness.

Once again, Mother Margarita transforms knowledge, love, desires, and attitudes into a program that she wants to follow in order to fine-tune her life and that of the institute. She maintains her union with God during this difficult and rough year. While experiencing this unity, she feels the faith and trust that is above and beyond all doubt growing within her. Being one with Him, she continues to live in the peace, freedom, and love that transcend time and space, transforming every moment into an eternity.

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Friday, January 15

I received letters from Tokyo and the islands. The Lord blesses the community in Pohnpei more each day. I'm pleased with everyone's good

spirits, but I worry about their health. If they don't eat well they will become weaker and, in the long run, won't be able to resist illness. It looks like things couldn't be better in Saipan. The community's spiritual life, mutual love, and dedication to the mission all continue to grow.

The teachers, girls, and nuns are mutually supportive in the school in Tokyo. The principal, the Ladies of Futaba, Father Faber, and the sisters do what they can to face the enormous burden that this school imposes. If things remain as they are, I don't know if we will be able to carry out the plans that we made for this year. The situation in Spain is very critical.

Friday, January 22

In Berriz, we live within the happiness that we always have. We live in peace and with encouragement, very close to God and far away from despair. We are watchful for the will of God, who always gives us so many tests of our love. We are convinced that if the persecution worsens it will be to purify us. And perhaps also so that the institute could expand its reach, since we are not lacking for projects in spite of the circumstances.

This afternoon I met with the community so that we could talk about “the spirit that we should maintain during persecution.” This is what we discussed: 1) Persecution enters into God's plans so many times as proclaimed in the Gospel—“No slave is greater than his master. If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you...” And also— “Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness...” We must travel by means of the Cross if we want to follow Christ and follow the life of the Church. 2) Persecution is necessary to purify the people of God, since we must live in a Christian way like Jesus. The following should be our attitudes: We should accept persecution serenely, with all of its injustices and irritations. We must confront everything with the spirit of Jesus, with happiness and fortitude. We must forgive those who attack us and pray to God for them each day. We should be happy that the

hour has come for us to imitate Christ. We must support the plans of purification that God has for each and every one of us, for the institute and for the Church. We must be convinced that there is no surer way to expand the Kingdom of God than to travel down the roughness of the Cross.

Sunday, January 24

Today the decree of the dissolution of the Jesuits appeared in *The Gazette*. The fathers and the novitiates must cease their communal living. They cannot gather together in the same dwelling place. All of the Jesuits' property now belongs to the State, and is intended to benefit charitable and educational entities. Their churches will be handed over to the respective dioceses on the condition that the Jesuits no longer conduct any type of service in them. It's very sad that things have ended up this way.

Everyone must disperse on February 2 and turn in the keys to their houses. It appears that all religious are now prohibited from teaching. It's not difficult to imagine what the future holds for us. I haven't communicated anything to the missionaries yet. I'll begin telling them as it happens. We are living in the arms of God.

Friday, January 29

I met with the community regarding “How to celebrate the Feast Day of Saint Peter Nolasco.” Togetherness and camaraderie with our Mercedarian family. We reflected on what the first redeemers must have felt when facing dangers, threats, hardships, persecutions, and poverty. We remembered the goal of the Mercedarian Order, which is the love of captives and of the poor. We remembered the fourth vow of being joyfully prepared to give our lives for their redemption. We remembered our love for Mary. We later looked at our attitudes and how we live our redeeming spirit. Then we had a look at the world and the Church of today.

Sunday, January 31

I met with the young sisters today about “Shaping our views.” We need to affirm ourselves with evangelical views in order to be prepared for

anything. Christ is the sole standard of our lives. We chose religious life in order to follow it. We need to accelerate our inner knowledge of Christ the Redeemer in order to integrate ourselves into His being. His views. Alter Christus now, always, and in any circumstance.

Saturday, February 6

Life in the mission communities is exceeding all of my expectations. Today I wrote to the superiors encouraging them to carry out their jobs with happiness and encouragement always.

They should have a compassionate heart as they tackle problems with affection and sincerity. They need to have an inalterable selflessness with everyone, giving up their time and rest congenially, freely, and without being depressed. They need to be convinced that showing affection and care for everyone engenders love, trust, respect, sincerity, spirit of family, and freedom. They should have their eyes cast upon God, in continual prayer, and be faithful to the Holy Spirit who guides and strengthens them. He will help them correct their errors and make the wise choice in each particular situation in accordance to the will of the Father.

Sunday, February 7

We are going through a sad and heartbreaking time because of the dissolution of the Jesuits. I cannot find the words to express such suffering. We are passing through such a bad time. The future looks so dark for the remaining religious. Laws are being proclaimed at an accelerated rate from one day to the next. The decree that will prohibit us from teaching is expected soon. This measure could result in very serious problems for us. However, I do not doubt that the Lord will guide events, as only He knows how to do, with wisdom and love. We are at peace in His arms and are motivated to comply with His will no matter how hard or painful it may appear to us. The Lord will take care of us, like the good Father that He is, and we hope that he does not neglect, even if accompanied by many hardships, to give us “our daily bread.”

Sunday, February 14

I met with the young sisters about the “Necessity of shaping our character.” Our motivation for doing so is for our sense of peace and for the happiness of others. The qualities of good character are simplicity, serenity, and finesse. We should be able to understand the weaknesses of others. We should be natural and not stand out, avoiding what bothers others. We can perfect our character by getting to know ourselves well. We should discover our peculiarities since we all tend to have one or another. We should avoid these peculiarities whenever possible. We must fight against inequality, frigidity, pretense, and thoughtlessness. We should unite kindness and energy with the evangelical spirit. Kindness is compassion and springs from the heart. We should suffer with those who are suffering. We should not be able to stand seeing others suffer. We must fight against injustice. We remedy what we can and we always involve our heart. We always forgive and forget.

Wednesday, February 17

I received letters from Saipan and Pohnpei. The Superior of Saipan advises me not to send people to missions who have few skills. Would that we could count on always having religious who are perfect in every sense, both for missions and for Berriz, but this will never be. The world is imperfect and even those people who we believe have wonderful qualities, in the long run, end up having deficiencies that are hard to bear. The Lord wants us to learn to struggle with love and trust, and He wants us to be humble and patient. The Lord wants us to be detached, happy, and joyful in our dedication to the Kingdom of God. We should be enthusiastic, resilient, and not easily despondent due to hardships because God loves those who give of themselves with happiness. On the other hand, disenchantment and sadness are very contagious and inevitably grow in an unhappy and unpleasant way. These attitudes sour everything.

They are at that time of year in Pohnpei when it's the hottest and when they have the fewest resources. I'm afraid that the missionaries aren't eating well in order to save on expenses. I also worry that they are

taking on more work than they can handle. It's better to start with a bit and then with experience increase to what you can manage.

Saturday, March 19

Work on the school is progressing in Wuhu. Everything will be ready for the next school year. But the requirements by the government are such that I've advised the sisters to proceed slowly, bit by bit, with a minimum of commitments, and without trying to cope with too much. News has reached me that when the sisters move to the new house, the vicariate is thinking of converting the former Seng-Mu-Yuen into a hospital. It's a good opportunity that's being offered us and would allow us to have two communities in China near each other. I've contacted Father Aramburu. At this time, we have a pharmacist among us that would work out well. And we would commit to preparing licensed nurses. What we can't do is contribute any capital. The missionaries will live off their work.

Thursday, March 31

This afternoon I spent all of my free time writing to the missionaries. I asked the superior of Wuhu to try to dispel the feeling of nostalgia that she says some sisters feel after seeing their studies and careers buried. So many missionaries, distinguished in all types of knowledge, have seen their vast knowledge buried for the love of their brothers and sisters! Our careers are the least important of who we are. They will need to be persuaded that missions are not about their careers, but rather about the great love that veteran missionaries feel toward the poorest and humble.

Friday, April 22

Letters from the missionaries continue to arrive. I see their dedication to the missions is growing with a sense of happiness and in the spirit of family. The missionaries in Saipan have told me that they began visiting families in their homes and people stop them on the street in order to speak with them. I totally agree with this conduct. I know very well that greeting the islanders with affection is not enough since they are never in a hurry. Doing anything else may hurt these very unassuming people.

Besides, interacting with them is the best way to assimilate the customs of the island.

Thursday, April 28

I've spent a long month in bed with my usual illnesses, which have been getting worse. The other afternoon, almost by surprise, the sisters of the council came to my room to tell me that the best thing to do would be to get admitted to Dr. Oreja's clinic in San Sebastian for a complete checkup in order to clear up any doubts. Mother Nieves accompanied me the next day. I was diagnosed with a genital lesion for which there is no treatment other than surgery. Dr. Oreja advised that we do not need to hurry with the procedure. He believes we could wait one or two years. I'm calm, at peace, and indifferent. I know very well that I am responsible to the community. Let them decide. I will accept whatever they decide as the will of God. If they ask me what I want, I won't know what to say. Health, illness, life, and death are all the same to me. I leave everything in the hands of God. He is my master. I know that this disposition isn't mine, but rather borrowed from Him. I love health and life. Operations have always terrified me, but it's not hard for strength to descend into weakness. I have the same illness that Leonor had, the same one that they operated on at the last minute. Who knows if they are calling me from Heaven!

Monday, May 16

I've been at the clinic of Dr. Oreja in San Sebastian since Saturday. They will operate on me tomorrow. The doctor says it's serious but that there is a high probability of success. May it be whatever God wants. I only want to do His will.

Monday, July 18

Today I started writing letters to the missionaries again. I couldn't write for a long stretch of time because they are still limiting the time that I can do these sorts of things. But I wanted to thank them for praying for me as much as they did. The successful result of an operation that was this serious, and a trouble-free convalescence like the one I've had, could not be understood if it weren't for their prayers. The fact is, when we had

already decided to put the operation off for two years the sisters of the council decided that I should be admitted immediately. It was a good time to do so, as it turns out. After the procedure, Dr. Oreja assured us that if we had waited, the malady would have resulted in my death, just like what happened to Leonor.

Little by little I'm returning to a normal way of life. I still haven't begun going to recite the Christian Prayer of the *Divine Office* or am I able to go to the dining room. But the pain that I had for so long has disappeared. I sleep well. My appetite is back. And I can say that I've got much better. From now on I want to use all of my strength, my health, and my life to work for the Kingdom of God and for the good of the Institute.

Saturday, July 30

I entered retreat on the 21st with a lot of spirit but little good health. I can hardly meditate and I need to muster great effort just to listen attentively. I feel imprisoned in an impaired body.

I have a great desire to grow in spirit and a life of faith. I want to live inwardly, adjust my judgment to be inline with that of Jesus, and to not have any other goal in life other than the will of God. I want to love it, cherish it, and live to comply with the will of God. I want to rise above human deference and comforts. I want to dismiss the sadness that happens to me as a result of my lack of health. I want to suffer. I want to give of myself without limit and wholeheartedly to my daughters.

Wednesday, August 3

A gloomy day. I've had little serenity in the face of certain attitudes of others that affect me a lot. Deep moral suffering. Desires for God. How quickly I move from one feeling to another!

Saturday, August 6

Hunger for God. Profound joy when dealing with the sisters. Peace and surrender. We've decided to travel to Vitoria to propose two new foundations to the bishop: a school in Bilbao and a rural farm school in order to benefit young girls living at home.

The families of the former students in Berriz are asking for a school in Bilbao. They want a comprehensive Christian and humanities-centered education. And the motherhouse in Berriz needs to expand because at this time the community is comprised of many people. The school can live off the students' tuition, which would correspond to their middle class status.

The rural farm school intends to benefit those girls who stay at home and who have nothing geared for them at this time. Villages are losing population because of this. The farm school would support itself from the products that it produces.

Monday, August 8

I took a trip to Bujeda to meet with the bishop. On my way there, I enjoyed contemplating God within nature. The plans for the two installations were well received. We also took advantage of the time together to exchange views on expanding the scope of studies that the nuns, who now work in the school, take part in so that they can prepare for when they have to stop teaching.

Wednesday, August 10

Monarchical insurrection. Bad political atmosphere. We can only place our trust in God. He takes care of us. I've had this joyous sentiment all day.

Sunday, August 14

A department for the study of missions was created in the Pontifical University in Rome. The Jesuit Father General has convened those Jesuits who are of diverse nationalities and are best prepared in this specialty no matter how far away they are in order to provide support. Father Zameza has already been appointed and he will have to move to Rome. He's been by here to say goodbye. It's hard for me to see him go, but I accept it with pleasure.

Tuesday, August 16

Physical discomfort. Disappointments. Really, life is sorrowful when our ideals are opposed by the despicable philosophy of positivism. I think of Jesus. He roamed this same earth and He wasn't always

surrounded by people who thought the same as He. How heroic his exile was! I, on the other hand, am from the same soil as those who deceive me.

Wednesday, August 17

Day of annoyances and sorrow. Death, the nothingness of everything that happens, and the desire to live intensely in God dominate my thinking.

Monday, August 22

Difficulties and grief. Bitter day due to the worsening state of affairs, burdened with concerns and slow recourse to God. I enjoy giving comfort to others and I enjoy a life in God. No long communication with Him during the entire day.

Thursday, August 25

Feelings of peace and joy, fruit from this morning's prayer. Desires for more faithfulness. Desires to love and to satisfy God even in the little things. He takes care of me as if I were his possession. An increase in trust.

The course of studies for the young ladies has been finalized: teacher education, a degree in the sciences or the arts, and a doctorate for those who are able. Some will graduate as nurses. There are 16 that are entering in this course of study. This will all happen when the religious are prohibited from teaching. We will take advantage of this moment in time to prepare ourselves better.

Thursday, September 1

I keep my desires alive with a firm will and much affection. I see everything to be contemptuous that's not the will of God. It's as if an inner light expands ever outward and I am freed from everything and left only one thing to hold onto: God! I've placed all of my peace, trust, security, and rest in God. A time of testing is approaching and great responsibilities fall upon me. Now more than ever I need an unwavering faith, a profound sense of humility, and a life of prayer.

I feel the desire to be like Jesus. To pass through life with the same disposition as He had: a deep love for the Father and a great desire for His glory. To only act in accordance to the will of God above everything else, heroically complying with His will in all that is big or small until the end. Dedication to our fellow human beings because the Father so wants. Redeeming others with His life and His death. To give of myself at all time, without thinking about myself and to do so with gentleness, protracted patience, and without bitterness for not being understood. Allowing the Holy Spirit to complete His work. To achieve legitimate surrender and self-sacrifice. A complete program with which I want to regulate my life.

Saturday, September 3

I strive to not become sad because of my aches and pains. I endure them in peace, although I am fed up on the days when I become discouraged after seeing how helpless this enormous fatigue leaves me. I want to take advantage of this to redeem with Christ. Only the will of the Father.

Monday, September 19

Fatigue gets the best of me these days. Sadness and discouragement attack me. I feel like I'm losing my optimism, my enthusiasm, and my greatness of spirit. Trivial things bother me and I'm extremely sensitive. I need to be energized because if I withdraw into my problems my personality will sour. With the grace of God I will try to take on my jobs without giving importance to any setbacks and, above all, I will try to not become discouraged if I cannot achieve what I set out to do because a lack of time or strength. With a happy heart, I want to give of myself to God and to my tasks at all times.

Wednesday, September 21

I experienced union with God during the day. It was very special and not sought out. More than a union with God, I would call it God's wisdom gifted to me.

The authorization for the two establishments came from the bishop today. One is for the school in Bilbao. The other is for the rural farm school for the education of girls who stay at home.

Friday, September 30

In spite of the intended law about religious congregations, all of the nuns and I find ourselves in perfect peace. I feel my trust in God, who carries us in the palms of His hands, is growing. I'm sure, no matter how much we have to suffer, He will give us strength and will open new paths for us. Not only about where to live, but also to extend ourselves and to work for His Kingdom. Today I give thanks to God for giving us our brief existence at this difficult time, a time that gives us the opportunity to follow Jesus more closely.

Tuesday, October 25

There's been a big improvement in my health. My condition is such that I can say I'm fine. I don't have any kind of pain or the feeling of heaviness and fatigue that has bothered me so much up to now and that made my work difficult. I get up at five in the morning and I continue in the community until the last thing is done. I'm so happy. It all seems to be a dream. I fear that it won't last long. I appreciate my health because I've experienced so much ill health. I want to use the strength that God gives me for the good of the institute. I ask that the Holy Spirit move and strengthen me.

Friday, October 28

The council has decided to send Ida Manzini and Elizabeth Kuwaori to Japan. We thought about having them leave here in November, but then we decided to postpone the date because Father Guimera has told us that he is preparing an expedition to leave for the Caroline Islands in the middle of December. We changed our plans with pleasure since now the sisters will go accompanied all the way to Tokyo. They will board a Japanese ship in Gibraltar.

I wrote to the community in Koenji. Everyone there knows Elizabeth. She's charming, has a lot of spirit, and a good nature. They need to take

care of her during winter because we've noticed she tends to get many severe colds. Everything that I could say about Ida's missionary spirit, nature, and abilities wouldn't do her justice. Koenji is getting a gem. She's healthy. She's refined and well-mannered with everyone. She's mastered the piano. She's well prepared to give classes. Beginning yesterday, both of them have been attending exercise classes in the school. The teacher is very good and physical education is valued very much in Japan.

Saturday, October 29

I received the plans for the work at Koenji. I could use a few clarifications. The loan that they got at 7% is terrific, but it doesn't stop us from running the risk of becoming more in debt. If we end up having to close the school here, we're really going to have to think hard how we will support this house. This year we will have 113 boarding students.

Tuesday, November 1

Today is All Saints' Day. Peace and surrender in God while at the same time we are threatened with a calamity coming our way. I foresee bitter tests and also special protection from God since we receive guidance by Him through these tests as if He were taking us by the hand. Berriz is perhaps going through the most difficult period of its long existence. But I'm sure that the Lord will help carry us forward and, due to the love of His missionaries, he will not allow the Motherhouse to disappear.

Wednesday, November 2

I've begun work on "Our Spirit." I made the outline some time ago with Father Zameza. It is intended as a complement to missionary training that we will start sifting through during a series of talks with the community.

When pulling information to address missionary theology, I will be primarily using the pastoral letter written by Cardinal Benlloch titled "Foreign Missions, a Pontific Invitation to Burgos". When getting information for our humanities-centered instruction I want to take advantage of the experience gained by male and female missionaries, to whom I mailed a simple questionnaire.

Friday, November 4

A day of deep spiritual joy gifted to me, without my causing it. The Lord wants me to feel that I do well by trusting Him. A Feast Day for the soul. Profound peace and joy, calm, and sound. How different God's gifts are from those of man! Dedication to work through love. Desires to make everyone happy.

This afternoon I began writing a difficult letter to Wuhu. I don't know if I will be able to explain myself clearly no matter how much I try. What I want is for them to be happy. The Constitutions clearly explain how the management of resources of the Institute "must occur." In order for that to happen, we have to know "what the state of the resources is," in other words, the current status of the house. Nothing else. I want them to know that neither our interest nor our affection for their house has diminished here in Berriz. And that we will ensure that each house has the necessary means to survive. They should never doubt that. Of course, our main means of survival is through work. However, we should never feel ashamed for accepting, in some cases, an allowance from the bishop. This would permit the missionaries to work for the mission, which is what they are completely dedicated to.

The situation in Berriz is becoming increasingly difficult day-by-day. Everyone tells us that we will have to go through a lot and suffer poverty, but if this were to occur, we are prepared to accept it peacefully and with serenity for the love of Jesus.

Saturday, November 5

I feel zest and joy from the Christian Prayer of the *Divine Office*. God communicates his graciousness to me. He gives me an intense desire to live in love with happiness for others on the forefront of my mind.

Sunday, November 6

Today I presented the general plan for missionary instruction to the community. Everyone received it with enthusiasm. During this first meeting, we focused on what I desire for the institute in order to fulfill its redeeming missionary charism.

I want this newly born Institute to be big, gigantic in spirit, full of the life of Christ, and completely permeated by its redeeming missionary spirit. I don't want us to be Mercedarian Missionaries in name only. I want us to understand what this name means. I want us to be enamored with our vocation, and that we fix our eyes on the sublime ideal that it brings forth within us. I want us to not stop in our persistence until we have completely brought this all about. Each one can do so commensurate with the gifts that the Lord wants to give us.

Our Institute is a composite of times past and of the present at the same time. It has its origin in the ancient and aged Mercedarian trunk, born in the thirteenth century in the most clearly heroic manner that had even been seen in the course of centuries. It carries a redeeming yearning deep within its core, which is the sap of this tree and the sole reason for its existence. It appears to me that those ancient fathers, when fulfilling their fourth vow of dying by giving their lives for the captives, wanted to bequeath the same spirit to us. In a hidden and quiet manner, they planted the fertile seed of their redeeming zeal into our hearts that, with the passage of time, would induce us to follow in their footsteps. And where did this missionary flame begin if not in this remote cloistered convent in 1919 that was so isolated from everyone? How else could the swiftness with which it grew throughout the school and the convent be explained, enflaming our hearts with the desire to work for the Church with such a sense of urgency?

We had to be redeemers! The blood that our fathers transmitted to us boiled upon seeing locked Berber jail cells without the hope of our zeal. We looked to Rome and they saw us! The glance from Christ's representative was fixed on millions of men and women who, as the apostle said, were seated in the shadow of death. And upon saying to us that these were the modern day slaves that the Church wanted to redeem, we looked toward our Virgin Mother, foundress of the Order, and she pointed us to Jesus who wants the Cross to save all men. It could be said that his lips emphasized this earnest request, "My Mercedarian daughters, be redeemers with me." And from these three

glances, at Christ, at His mother, and at the Church, the irresistible desire to become missionaries was born.

In order to accomplish this, it was vital that we be transformed into a congregation within the same order. And with the approval of Rome, that is how our Institute was born within the Church. A promising and tender offshoot from the tree seven times secular than the Mercedarian order. An offshoot that knows how to nurture itself from the redeeming sap of the trunk. Like the first redeemers, a fourth vow is the insignia of our Institute, “to go to missions where there are unbelievers, if our superiors so order, and to give our lives if necessary for them.” This is the characteristic that distinguishes us from other religious orders and congregations. From this characteristic springs an inescapable and urgent obligation: that of training ourselves in a proper way for missionary life complete with a redeeming missionary spirit.

Friday, November 18

Those that are going to Tokyo leave Gibraltar on December 20. I intend to accompany them to the boat to see what the conditions are like since they are going with a Japanese shipping company that is new to us. In all of the previous expeditions, they embarked in Marseille onto a French ship. Now we can make comparisons.

Sunday, November 20

I conferred with the young sisters and with the community. I have inner joy for our resolve to delve into the redeeming mystery and into “Our Spirit.”

Today I attempted to delve into our attitudes in the presence of humanity without God. We cannot be indifferent in the presence of humanity without God. Avoiding this obligation involves an injustice and an enormous selfishness on our part. The rich would forget about the poor. The rich, full and satisfied from abundance, would avert their glance from wretched dwellings where so many people die of hunger. This appears more than unjust to us, it is monstrous, and gives rise to a wave of indignation within us.

In the spiritual order of things, we Catholics are the rich ones, the millionaires. If we appreciate the gift of faith, if the light of the Gospel moves us to be grateful, then we cannot forget those who cannot see this light, those who do not enjoy Christian hope and live hungry for true love. Jesus Christ lived among humanity that was separated from God, and he placed himself in that black cloud of religious and moral darkness in order to illuminate and transform them. This exile of Jesus the Redeemer is the motive for our apostolic vocation. Jesus exiled himself voluntarily. The missionary, with eyes locked on Him, similarly goes into exile. But He came back from his exile so that we could be joyful. With eyes fixed on Jesus, the great missionary, who wanted to live among the sinners, the ignorant, and the insignificant—He will help us to liken ourselves unto Him.

A true apostle ponders everything about his mission. His work doesn't seem considerable. He doesn't talk about it nor does he exaggerate. He thinks that the differences in mentality are natural and he adjusts to it. He loves everyone and he studies, appreciates, and cherishes their qualities. This characteristic is very evident in those people who are missionaries by nature. So much so that I dare say that by observing this quality you can tell that someone has an authentic vocation.

There are some people who always seem like they are going uphill. People irritate and aggravate them. They don't adjust to their surroundings, climate, customs, or changes in their lives. They lack understanding, detachment, and adaptability. In other words, they lack understanding of the missionary's situation and lack a maternal heart like those who dedicate themselves without reservation to the most needy. With these attitudes they end up being a hindrance in the mission.

A true apostle displays his beautiful, profoundly spiritual, hopeful, and happy soul. The others are like a continuous wail, feeling sorry for themselves and would like all of humanity to take care of their enormous sacrifice. They are failed heroes. I don't know what they

determined to do when they embraced missionary life. Everyone knows it is a second vocation with double the amount of renunciations and sacrifices.

In summary, our attitude needs to be of deep gratitude for the gift of faith and profound, conscious, and well thought-out compassion. We need to have the desire to heal as many maladies as there are brothers and sisters, with self-sacrifice, optimism, without complaining, without laments, and without a lack of understanding that reveals a lack of basic missionary formation.

Wednesday, November 23

A day of faithfulness and surrender. A day of little annoyances and sorrows that do me good. A day of a very intense, never-ending desire to make everyone happy. I am full of strength and feel renewed. I never thought that I would recover totally.

Thursday, November 24

We anticipate that in the next few days parliament will begin debating the Law of Religious Congregations bill. And since, once it is approved, the prohibition against the religious from teaching will be imminent, we have already “transferred” the school in Berriz to Doña Dolores Lopez de Maturana, who is ready to carry on in the same pedagogic direction and will continue with the school's internal regulations.

While we are able to do so, the nuns will continue to act as teachers and administrative assistants. The school has already obtained official authorization to teach primary as well as secondary education. It has already passed the government inspection that was needed to confirm that the reality of our situation fits the plan that we presented them.

The social and political situation is tense and worrisome. This is mainly due to the severe unemployment crisis that is affecting all of Europe and even America. Today I received the news that in Catalonia the Esquerra Party won the elections by a landslide. This win will have repercussions in other regions and throughout Spain. We are in the hands of God and we can only place our trust in Him. Perhaps that's why we keep ourselves from being disheartened.

Friday, November 25

A full day. Faithful to the responsibilities of my position. I wholeheartedly assisted those who needed me. I provided guidance that led toward God. I feel intense joy for having done good work, for encouraging, directing, motivating, and opening horizons to others. My awareness of Christ the Redeemer absorbs and touches me. I love Jesus more each time. I want to love him without limits and to live continually in the action of grace. I want to use my whole life to glorify Christ, the Redeemer of humanity.

Saturday, November 26

Father Guimera has already purchased the tickets for the sisters who are traveling to Japan and will welcome us when we pass through Seville. I've already sent him a check for 134 pounds sterling through a bank in London. I understand that there is a 15% discount that they are giving us. That would be about 20 pounds. That will be a great help to the sisters with trip expenses.

It looks like it would be good for us to be in Seville on the 16th, before the weekend, just in case we need to put in any sort of claim. About my wanting to give a public presentation, it has been ruled out since even here they balk. It's best that we continue along undetected—the more, the better.

Sunday, November 27

I gave a presentation to the community titled “Prayer and Contemplation—The Key to Missionary Life.”

Before anything else, I wanted to dispel the belief that some have that those who are not inclined to prayer or inner life are the ones who are most fit for the life of a missionary. It would be as if an apostolic vocation didn't require anything more than outward activity, a fondness for social interaction, and even some sort of a whimsical fickleness. How wrong they are!

I am one of those who firmly believe that in order for someone to be a true missionary, she must be ingrained with a deep fondness to prayer. It must be a prayer that is lofty, long, profound, and close to

contemplation. It must be a prayer in which she can enter into the mysteries of the divine to discover the secrets of redemption.

A missionary vocation for someone who doesn't have a relationship with God, who is not enamored with Jesus Christ to the core, who doesn't know His likes, manners, and tendencies so that she can imitate them bit by bit? A missionary vocation for someone who doesn't like the solemnity of the Divine Office—the heart of the Liturgy of the Hours, someone who is scared by the solitude of the cloister and becomes weary with silence and retreat?

Deceit, great deceit! Deplorable deception! In order for the sprout of a missionary calling to reap the fruit of God's glory, it has to come from inside of someone where it is well rooted, fertile, and concealed in God. We have to know how to turn our simple life into an intense life of prayer. And we have to really understand that the effectiveness of missionary life is dependent upon our faithfulness to the Holy Spirit. This is because He rarely communicates except through apostles who are filled with the Holy Spirit.

If a missionary is attempting to create a new, powerful, and life giving light, and if she does not reflect Christ, how will she create this new environment of awareness in Christ, of cloaking humanity in Him without God? It can't be done any way that she wants, nor is superficial training enough to understand and fuse with these divine mysteries. I don't know where I read it, but God rarely chooses people to perform great works who are not inclined to contemplation. I firmly believe this is true. That's why, when someone who claims to have a missionary vocation is nominated for the novitiate and I hear that she may be good for missions because she is not drawn to prayer, or the Divine Office, or solitude—I'm surprised by such a mistaken, false, and damaging concept. I do not want these types of vocations, at least not for our Institute.

Our state of prayer and contemplation should be such that after completing them we leave excited and wanting to yield the fruit of an active apostleship. The fruit is the work and dedication to the mission.

The root of all of our activities lies in the conviction that we are living members of the Church with a mission of proclaiming Christ, of taking the image of Christ the Redeemer to as many nations and races as we can.

And when during the performance of our missionary duties we go out into the streets or into the jungles and we come across so many people who come and go, who are agitated, who work and suffer, who are weighted down in severe poverty, unable to grasp onto Christian hope, let us remember that these brothers and sisters of ours are the chosen ones of Jesus. He came to save them.

Our apostolic zeal must extend to the whole world. We see the harvest with a universal glance and we ask the Father of the entire human family to send workers to his extensive field. And, situated in a specific mission, we dedicate ourselves with an intense zeal, conscious of the fact that we are only instruments in the hands of God. We are far from our homes. We aspire to a spiritual motherhood, the most fertile type of motherhood, and one that achieves the expansion of the great family of fraternity and love.

Monday, November 28

I received news from the missions. The sisters in Wuhu are making final preparations for their move to the new house, which will be very roomy. They have two new aspirants in the novitiate. In Tokyo, the school continues to make robust progress. The principal wants the nuns to little by little start facilitating classes from the official program. The sisters who are leaving here in December will do a good job. The missionaries in the islands appear to be very energetic, happy, acclimated to their mission, and working hard and well.

Tuesday, November 29

I feel far removed, so very far, from the self-forgetting that I ask of God. Intense sensitivity. I feel frustrated due to my lack of focus and

attention. It's my "me" that sprouts when I don't live in observant of Jesus.

Wednesday, November 30

I received a letter from the superior of the mission in Wuhu, Father Aramburu. The letter is full of good news about the very spacious school building. It also talks about their anxiety about the economic future of the construction. I understand the difficulties that this mission is experiencing, and I certainly know that the world crisis, which affects us all, is worse in China due to the floods and the depreciation of their currency. The entire council would love to be able to tell the bishop that he stop worrying about the allowance for the missionaries and that Berriz will take charge of all their expenses until the school is self-supporting. But for now, this is impossible. This Institute, which was just founded, is supporting very heavy burdens precisely because of its fast missionary expansion. Having said this, I don't mean to say that we are going to avoid helping this house. Proof of this is the fund that we've decided to create to aid that mission. The first donations have started coming in.

Now more than ever we need to have trust in God, because if things are going poorly in China, in Spain they are not going much better. We don't know if they will close the school in B erriz, or if they will make us leave the country, which would be worse. If they close our school, we also don't know how we will support the novitiate. These are very heated questions. The Lord is in charge of everything. The selfless dedication of the missionaries preserves my trust.

Friday, December 9

We said goodbye to the missionaries who are off to Japan. The farewell took place in Bilbao, in the Church of San Vicente. Maria Javier Elordui from Munguia joined the American Ida Mancini and the Japanese Elizabeth Kuwaori. Father Chalbaud spoke during the morning farewell Mass. Once the Mass had finished, the missionaries kissed their crucifixes. In the afternoon, I gave a talk in the hall. They say around nine hundred people attended. I've lost all fear of speaking in public.

Monday, December 12

The advanced pedagogical studies courses, organized in Bilbao by the Cultural Association for the Education of Girls (Asociación cultural para la Educación Femenina), are moving ahead. Sister Maria Ines, who is facilitating the general pedagogy class, is the only woman in the entire faculty. The suitability and competence that is evident in her program is getting noticed. It takes place three days per week and she comes and goes each day. It's very tiring, but once you start something like this you need to finish. There are 35 lessons in all. Sister Maria Ines is also the only religious. All of the other teachers are laymen.

Wednesday, December 21, Gibraltar

I'm going back a little before this date so that I can write about some of the more salient points of my trip. At ten in the morning on the 14th, we left Berriz in Pilar Arratia's car. Pilar accompanied us to Vitoria. There, we took the train for Madrid. When we arrived, Father Delgado and Brother Nolasco were waiting for us. They accompanied us to the Convent of the Sisters of Hope (Religiosas de la Esperanza). The next morning we went to greet the sisters in Alarcon.

Father Guimera welcomed us in Seville. Also welcoming us was a group of young ladies from the Association of Missions. The family car of one of the young ladies was used to take us to Sacred Heart School, where we lodged. They were so kind. The welcome that they gave us couldn't have been more friendly or caring. We are moved by the reception the Sevillians gave us and the exquisite treatment that we were given by the religious.

We've been in Algeciras since the 19th. Since we are staying in a hotel, our stay during these past few days has been very uneventful. This morning a little ship took us to Gibraltar and directly to the *Fushimi-Maru*. After helping the three voyagers settle in their cabins, the moment to say our goodbyes came. It's impossible to explain what you feel in your heart during these moments. After the moorings were freed, the *Fushimi-Maru* went on its way and the two ships began to separate.

We were also inevitably separating and distancing ourselves from them. How different it is to say goodbye in the middle of the sea!

Thursday, December 22, Madrid

Yesterday, when we disembarked, in order to save time we took a train directly to Madrid. We stayed at the same convent as we did on our trip out, but this time we stayed in Madrid the whole day because we wanted to be with our sisters in Alarcon. They invited us to eat lunch and in the afternoon I gave a talk in the school.

Friday, December 23, Bériz

We are now at home. The welcome was indescribable. Alegria, a very pleasant, well-mannered, and nice young Sevillian girl came with us to stay in the novitiate. She joined our trip in Seville. We had been writing to her for some time now. I'm sure that she is going to get along quite well in Berriz.

Thursday, December 29

I received a letter from Father Zameza. I'm happy that he is enjoying the lofty environment that surrounds him. I give thanks to God because he is performing a job that fulfills his desire for true knowledge and making great, deep, and sincere friendships. He deserves it. When he comes we will all participate in the abundance of life that he knows how to communicate so magnificently. Before, only I participated in his exchanges, in his teachings and in his extended opinions. Now, the whole community knows him. They miss him and want to have him near. That which is well communicated is always best.

Friday, December 30

The festivities of Christmas are happy and serene. Father Sancho, as spiritual, unassuming, and humble as always, is teaching some good theology classes to us. He knows how to put the most profound topics before us. Tomorrow Sisters Cecilia, Ines, and Celina leave for Madrid. They are going to a short pedagogical course that was organized by the FAE (Federación de Amigos de la Enseñanza [Federation of the Friends of Education]) from January 1 to 6. I don't want them to miss any opportunity to gain information and to expand their knowledge.

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Spiritual Teacher

Dedicated to the management and formation of the institute, she feels pushed by God by an irresistible force. It's an intense year of great satisfaction with her job as an instructor. It's a year of deep experiences of abundance and communication with God, and of a transforming union with Christ the Redeemer. It's an experience in which she is shown how she is, how she lives what she says and says how she lives with simplicity and sincerity, and with a consistency and deepness that transform her into the spiritual teacher for the entire institute.

She's learned from the breadth of her experience through reflection, deep examination, and practice. She always focused on the most essential of life. She's sought to live in truth. She has become humble and free, conscious of the fact that being humble before God is not humiliation nor is it submission to man. She knows that freedom and love go hand in hand. She understood that sainthood does not mean perfection. She knows that union with God is an experience of awareness and love. It is an openness without limit that leads to a new type of consciousness, to an understanding, to an irresistible clarity and liberty that become apparent in daily life in the manner that one lives and relates with the world. Her honesty and consistency help her clarify her thoughts, emotions, motives, and attitudes. She demonstrates clarity in the face of self-deceit, arrogance, attachment, and dishonesty.

Based on her experience, she guides and instructs each nun thereby making them equally knowledgeable, and at that same time, she enriches their differences. She knows how to look deeply and see each nun's positive and negative traits. She trusts in their possibilities. She respects their limits and encourages them to transcend them. She knows how to bring people together and promote harmony. She instructs with patience and depth, with respect and understanding and, at the same time, with strength and conviction. She knows how to see high

and low, far and wide, and always has her feet planted firmly on the ground.

She wants to delve more into the great mystery of redemption, penetrating the life and death of the crucified Jesus Christ, obscured on the Cross. The talks that Father Zameza gives them about Jesus Christ and the redemption have her delight and relish in divine wisdom. She has a vision in which her eyes of understanding and her heart open to her, the veil of faith tears and she contemplates Christ working the miracles of redemption. It's a vision in which she leans over the bottomless abyss of the loving divinity and feels the vertigo of its irresistible attraction. It's a new, complete, and profound joy. It's a certainty that gives her stability and affirms her belief in God and in the mission that God wants for the institute.

She renews her appreciation of a life of intense work, without rest or complaints, and with unlimited dedication to everyone. Struggling daily, she's brimming with optimism and trust in God. She becomes sweet and soft before the sanctity of the light of Christ the Redeemer. With Him, united in God, she transmits the flame and the light of this love that is capable of changing the life, history, and direction of people and nations.

While on her path, and during her flight of love toward God, she experiences a love that is life transforming. It's a life that gives meaning to all of the little deaths. It's a life in which the ability to love has to do with the ability to suffer, and in which happiness does not let her forget those who suffer. She also understands that there is nothing that can thwart death except love. As part of her transforms into infinite love, she leaves her fears behind. Her ego decreases in size thereby freeing her to total surrender and death.

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Sunday, January 15

Meeting with young nuns on “Rectitude of Spirit.” Internal discernment of good and evil. Consciousness like the voice of God, just and upright. Extremes to avoid: stubbornness, subtleness, and closing yourself off from all paths. Fruit from the rectitude of spirit: leads to lasting happiness, continued peace, unchangeable joy, and the intimate union with God—the source of all good. The evidence of this life draws you to it.

Monday, January 16

We've felt a lot of tension these past few days. Extremist activity of a social revolutionary character erupted on Sunday the 8th in different parts of Spain, principally Madrid, Barcelona, and Valencia. Although it was put out quickly, given the amount of arms and explosives that were found, it appears to have been well prepared. We do not discount the fact that this could happen again at any moment. And on Saturday the 14th, all the newspapers reported about what happened in Andalusia. There, the revolution erupted a little later, but with more violence. There were more than twenty deaths.

Sunday, January 29

New meeting with the young nuns. We spoke about “the importance of delving into the motivations of our vocation.” We expressed them. We kept the ideal alive. Deep-seated motivations keep us above trivialities. They ennoble us from within. They maintain us when we are encouraged and when we are discouraged, when we work and when we are at rest, and in health and in sickness. They revive us when we fall. They always propel us forward.

Thursday, February 2

My spirits are up, and I noticed a real advance in the discharge of my duties. I feel propelled by an irresistible force of God. He urges and spurs me to give of myself to others, and he enlightens me so that I might see my tasks in the light of His glory.

I'm dedicated, like never before, to the formation and direction of the Institute. And this is how I want to continue because God asks me to. I am very careful about the personal direction of each sister, and I make use of the weekly meetings and talks in order to take care of the spiritual progress and the complete instruction of the community. Very good, in regard to writing calmly to the missionaries. Likewise, regarding the writing task I gave myself about the spirit of the Institute. I want to continue with the young nuns as I have up to now. This is my mission—to instruct missionaries enamored with their vocation so that they give much glory to God. I've discovered a wide field for apostolic zeal. It's a life that requires continual prayer, sacrifice, and self-forgetfulness from me.

Sunday, February 5

I continue with the program of instruction. In the morning, I met with the young nuns, and we talked about the will of God. We talked about looking for God's will in everything. "I always do what is pleasing to Him." To live listening. To not depend on anything or anyone.

In the afternoon, I felt very comfortable with the community. We began the series about *The Missionary Church*. Like Christ, the apostle continues the work of redemption, which is owed to all of humanity. No one has ever expressed it as well as Saint Paul, "God was reconciling the world to Himself in Christ, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation."

Christ loved and glorified the Church, and the Church proclaimed Christ thereby letting all people and races discover the image of Christ, the Redeemer of humanity, obscured on the Cross. This is our mission: to proclaim Jesus, making Him be known and loved. Always looking upward! Otherwise, in the long run, name and profit might get in the mix.

Saturday, February 11

From prayer, I understand in a new light that God is both a good and just Father at the same time. His justice is the touchstone of his goodness.

Sunday, February 12

A new meeting with the young nuns. We delved into “The Motivations of Jesus.”

My desire is that Christ the Redeemer be at the center of our lives and of our prayers.

May Jesus be our study, our path, our life, and our love. When He wants to, he will give us access to the secrets of the Father and the mysteries of the divine. It's important for us to delve into His life and death, into his experiences, attitudes, and motivations of love for the Father, love for His brothers and sisters, and dedication to His mission. Love, goodness, and dedication. That's what Jesus displayed all His life. The life of Jesus was that of the Good Shepherd dedicated to His sheep, always prepared to risk His life. Jesus never lost sight of His mission as the Redeemer of humanity.

Wednesday, February 15

Fatigue, boredom. Monotony in my individual dealings with the sisters. Stomach problems that have been happening since December.

Cable from Wuhu announcing the inauguration of the house. I hope the two checks that we sent them got there on time. I also hope they were able to cash them without any problems.

Thursday, February 23

Pushing myself when carrying out my commitments and in my dealings with others. “Keep going, don't stop,” says Saint Paul. Great faith and blind trust in that God carries us in the palms of His hands. If only I could have the fire of love from God so that everyone could enjoy! I pray for it insistently and joyfully from God.

Sunday, February 26

I continue working quickly. An address to the community. A new attempt at delving into the redeeming mystery.

Jesus Christ. Saying this, I don't know what else to say. I wish Jesus Christ were all the words for us. His name contains all feelings and includes all programs. It summarizes all types of love and encapsulates all aspirations. It sheds light on all our paths and guides our steps. May Jesus Christ be our beginning, middle, and end of our entire life.

What the Pope wants this year, I want for all of our life. He wants us to live loving, living in gratitude, and participating in Redemption! He wants us to accept his gifts to glorify the Father and proclaim Christ, showering them over all of humanity.

Monday, February 27

February went by so fast. I was very attentive to everything that I intended to do and to my work. I was able to surrender myself to God and others only a few times. I think I noticed the latter a bit more. I feel being strongly propelled toward the task of organizing and sanctifying the Institute. I feel this is coming from above. God is increasingly giving me time, health, ability, and eagerness in order to do this. I not only feel the satisfaction of a job well done deep down inside me, but also the approval from God that translates into a greater knowledge of Jesus Christ and of a desire for His Kingdom.

Sunday, March 12

In the afternoon, I met with the community again. Today we talked about “The Recapitulation of All Things in Christ.” Jesus Christ, the beginning and end of all things. Jesus Christ, the recapitulation of all things. Jesus Christ, the purpose of all things. Christ, the eldest of all things created. Christ, the “Alpha and Omega” of all creation, like the Word. Christ, the redeeming essence of the supernatural order. Christ, the zenith of all people and of all time. In Christ all events from every age converge, “And when I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw everyone to myself.”

Sunday, March 26

I gave a talk at the Philharmonic of Bilbao. It was completely full. Everything was very well organized. The public was respectful and well mannered. They say that they liked it very much. I held my own without

getting too tired. I simply related my experiences that I had during my trips. I focused on our missions in the Marianas and the Caroline Islands.

The Marianas and the Caroline Islands are beautiful and poor missions that are isolated and hidden. They are the ones from which we barely get an echo from so far away. They are also the missions of great works and of hidden and silent sacrifices. They are poetry in silence where something that I cannot describe is enjoyed. There you can find a distinct sense of an end. These oceanic islands of the south seas are, or appear to be, the end of the earth. This is not something that is known, it is sensed. Silence is felt and lived there. There is solitude and isolation from the rest of the world that can only be experienced there. It's impossible to explain. These islands are at the end of the world. They are at the end of noises and ambitions, of knowledge and news. They are at the end of everything that is mutable. There you can find absolute rest and profound peace. You can find all ideas, worries, and forms erased. And you can find yourself renewed and experience the feeling of plenitude that overwhelmed the first man after seeing himself as the King of Creation.

The difficulties are also big. Long distances, discomfort, and insecurity when traveling. Lack of communication and a lack of resources. And besides all of this, there is solitude and island fever. It's an isolation that is completely voluntary, but nevertheless is isolation. It's a solitude that is embraced willingly and forever.

I know that there are some mission specialists that believe these imperceptible islands aren't important when compared with China or Japan. But immense regions and small territories contain the same wealth for the apostle—children of God that hunger for Him. That's why missionaries embrace everything, the big and the small. And with their sights high, very high, looking toward Jesus Christ, sacrifice disappears completely. Because without Jesus Christ, and without Jesus Christ crucified for the love of us, who would be crazy enough to risk everything, just to benefit some unknown people, like missionaries do?

Saint Paul expressed it convincingly, “If Christ died for us, so we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers.”

Thursday, April 6

Debate on the Law about Religious Congregations continues in parliament. Thirteen articles are now approved, and there are rumors that the one pertaining to teaching is also approved, which is Article 26, although the press doesn't mention it. Whatever is to happen, will happen, either now or later. May God watch over us. May He protect and illuminate our journey.

Wednesday, April 12

Monsignor Mateo Mugica entered the diocese after having been duly authorized. Father Zameza also arrived from Rome. He's in Berriz writing a new book that completely takes all of his time and attention. It is going to be something very good about Jesus Christ, and very appropriate to be published this year, the anniversary year of the redemption. I am joyful thinking that in reading his book it will undoubtedly be profound and gentle at the same time. It's a work that covers a very heartfelt desire of mine—delving into the mystery of the redemption.

Friday, April 28

The school in Koen. They've begun the school year with full enrollment. It appears to be a dream, but it's true. God has taken this school in His hands and wants it to be the “Light and Salt” of Japanese society. He takes care of it like a little girl that's the apple of His eyes. The community bears the hallmark of maturity, harmony, and good spirit that completely meets my expectations of the ideal missionary house. I see them growing in inner life and in their intimate relationship with God.

We keep hearing rumors from the islands that they will ask us for a new establishment in Yap or Palau. The nuns in Pohnpei tell me about their differences of opinion respecting the education of the girls there. I like that they are talking about their differences and then discussing them in an unassuming way because this allows them to find a happy

medium in everything. I'm convinced that unity grows with frequent conversation. It also increases trust and guarantees a spirit of family.

The sisters in Wuhu have already left their former house. It holds so many memories of the arrival in China of the first Mercedarian Missionaries of Berriz. The novitiate is already established in the new *Seng-Mu-Yuen*. What a grand mission it is educating these young ladies to be the apostles of tomorrow in their own districts!

In Berriz, we continue to enjoy Father Zameza's company. The law concerning congregations has been approved and shuts the door on having the religious in education beginning in October. During these next few months, we'll need to come up with new plans, with trust placed in God, Father of this small Institute. And we won't just work for the Kingdom of God as much as before, but rather much more. We are not lacking in plans.

Sunday, May 14

I met with the young nuns and spoke about "Prayer and Union with God." Prayer supports our inner life. During those discouraging times, it is the first thing that is stopped. We need prayer in order to persevere in our dedication to the mission. We must favor the goal of union with God. It's a union of affection and of will. It is living in freedom as the children of God. "I always do what is pleasing to Him." Faith, hope, and love grow in prayer. Union with God allows us to penetrate the secrets of the Father and leads to transformation. My glory, desires, and interests are those of God. Those who live like this are able to change the direction of people and nations.

Saturday, July 1

I haven't written a single letter since the end of April. I haven't even made an entry in my diary since the middle of May. I've been sick in bed or too busy with getting the school up in Bilbao all this time. Trips, meetings, times for reflection—a veritable conundrum. All this without even knowing if they will let us continue on with the school in spite of all of the legal formalities that we have gone through.

In Berriz, we moved summer vacation up 15 days this year. All the boarding school students left in the afternoon of June 29. The students' parents and family attended the end-of-year event as usual and I took advantage of that by letting them know about the new direction that our school will be taking as of October. I also told them that it has been transferred to Doña Dolores Maturana and that she will be in charge.

Thursday, July 6

I'm really overwhelmed by the amount of work that I have let accumulate, and I'm afraid that this is how it will continue to be for the next few months. It's now a done deal and the school in Bilbao will open at the beginning of October. Having to organize everything secretly complicates many things. I trust that God will help us move all our plans forward, which were made despite the situation that our government leaders have created for the religious.

Sunday, July 9

I met with the young nuns and we talked about the “Traits of a True Superior.”

To me, a true superior is not someone who looks for obedience as much as someone who looks to see that his dictate is appropriate and correct. A true superior knows how to respect the liberty of others and never restricts it. Instead, he helps them in everything. I want the superiors of the Institute to be unassuming, humble, prudent, uncomplaining, and pragmatic. I want them to take charge of the sisters' difficulties and have a heart that treats everyone equally. I want them to be happy, kind, and understanding. I would want them to be open, conversant, and not only listen to the opinions of everyone, but to act upon them when they are correct.

There are dangers that must be avoided. When a superior stays in the same position for a long time, he runs the risk of thinking that he is actually superior in many things, and that he will always be so. He believes he is superior in religious spirit, ability, and in everything. He runs the risk of needlessly having contempt for the views of others. He

also runs the risk of making it difficult for him to submit to others. All of this makes him far removed from true humility whose absence he tends to conceal by a public show of humble phrases and deeds to persuade others that he is humble. Just like it's hard for a subordinate to show obedience if he's not very spiritual, so it is that no matter how long a superior is in his position when he acts this way, the more it will be difficult for him to have the virtue of humility. It's also easy for a superior who is very good in one area to be inclined to act like he is superior in all areas. If he is the superior of a house, especially if it's been for a long time, he will judge and work as if he were superior in everything if he's not very careful. He'll think he's superior in knowledge, in dealing with people, and in organization. He will believe this deep inside. This belief will not allow him to let anyone have preference over him or be equal to him.

Friday, July 21

I feel joy because I am of God and for God. My faith tells me so and the character of my soul makes me feel it. I live in gratitude for my Creator and Lord, with peace and repose in Him. I want to affirm my deep desire to serve God in everything, come what may, by taking on the attitudes of Christ: "I always do what is pleasing to Him." This has been a very strong inspiration during these past few months. I plan to fully take advantage of the time that I have left in life. I happily accept the physical and moral work inherent in my position. I joyfully accept it and I carry it out with a redeeming spirit.

Tuesday, July 25

This morning's prayer left a deep impression upon me. I affirmed the new sentiments that I have this year: a knowledge of Christ the Redeemer and his divine life, in which I want to participate. Everything in Him, with Him, and like Him.

Thursday, July 27

I have a new appreciation for a life of intense, tiring work and quiet self-sacrifice with Jesus as a witness. I will not permit myself a single complaint. I want to love the Cross and act accordingly. I want to bear

this body that so often overwhelms me, without relief and with a spirit of humility. I don't want to surrender to fatigue, which so often attacks me. I will attempt to have my physical and moral troubles disappear, as well as the weight of my grave worries and innumerable concerns. I will not let myself be sad for even a moment. I will shower my optimism and trust in God.

Friday, July 28

I received a very kind letter from the bishop of the diocese. In it he talks about some notes that were delivered to him in support of the Sisters of the Sacred Heart, as if our going to Bilbao could bother them.

The bishop knows very well that we've had permission by the Nuncio to open a school in Bilbao ever since September of last year. Of course, at the time that this important decision was made, we were unaware—and we still are today—what posture the religious who have schools in Bilbao would adopt respecting article 26 in the *Law of Congregations*. We thought, and we continue to think, that an unknown institute such as ours possesses excellent conditions for legal concealment. This would be a very difficult thing for the Sisters of the Sacred Heart to do since they are located on the main street of Gran Vía. In fact, a secular association that is apart from us will give the school legal cover. The faculty will be comprised of secular teachers. Although it won't appear that the school is run by nuns, some of the female teachers, the administration, and methods will be ours. We already have permission to dispense with the habit.

Our school will be teaching secondary school curriculum. For the moment, the only schools authorized to do so in Bilbao are those that belong to the Teresians. We will carry on with preschool by a completely new method. And we will provide primary education as a preparation for secondary. There will also be night school classes focusing on different complementary subjects. But we never thought about competing with the Sisters of the Sacred Heart, who are considered to be first-rate as is rightly stated in that note. Besides, we will not be very large. We intend to provide a personalized education with a

maximum of 25 students per class. Therefore, I believe, given the difference in style and methods of our school, there will not be any kind of competition with Sacred Heart School.

Monday, July 31

These past few days we've been receiving little rumors from Bilbao that we haven't been giving much importance to, thinking they were just remarks made by poorly informed people. Now these rumors have turned into coarse accusations that we are getting involved in politics. This confirms that it is not true that these complaints are coming from the Sisters of the Sacred Heart; rather they are coming from other people who dare to use their name as a pretext. We continue believing that these accusations aren't worth denying.

Saturday, August 5

On the 2nd, I had a meeting with the bishop in Vitoria about the matter of the school in Bilbao. And this morning, I communicated the bishop's view to Mr. Federico Zabala, secretary of the Board of Families. He believes it best that we do not announce the school as being Catholic, and that both the school of Bilbao and the school of Berriz be recognized, defended, and protected by an Association of Catholic Families. I've asked Mr. Federico to take care of the necessary formalities.

Friday, August 11

Meditation on the infinite generosity of God. The Father has me discover what I call His secrets. Joy, expansion, and a widening of spirit. I feel like I am participating in the infinitude of God.

Tuesday, August 15

This afternoon the sisters of the council met with Father Aramburu. It was a very frank and affectionate visit. I didn't expect it to be like this to this extent. We spoke a long time about the mission in Wuhu. He expressed his concerns and fears to us in a very unassuming way. He's very happy how the building is turning out, but at the same time, he's worried about the future of the school. Also, he fears that the nuns don't agree with his view. He understands very well that the school is intended

for girls from the upper classes and that they must be few in numbers and well selected so that the school might acquire prestige.

The nuns, on the other hand, prefer that the school be open to all social classes and that it be free. The father superior argues that if they open the door to a lot of people, the level of education will drop, and it will be difficult to raise later on. In addition, free education is offered at the *Nui-so*, where sisters can continue admitting those girls who don't have the means. I understand the father superior's reasons and I suppose that the nuns must be suffering due to this diversity of opinion. In any event, we are not ultimately responsible for the school. That belongs to the vicariate.

Wednesday, August 16

This morning I traveled to Bilbao to meet with the secondary school inspector. It all boils down to an exchange of views that results in fears and hopes. “Jakin-Bide,” the name of the school, rubbed some the wrong way and is causing a rumpus. In the afternoon, the bishop of the diocese came to Berriz from Vitoria. He mentioned the struggle he's been having with the enemies of Jakin-Bide. It still seems all so incredible to me.

Tuesday, August 22

I thanked Julia and Carmen Torrontegui, who came here to personally inform me of the atmosphere that was created in Bilbao against Jakin-Bide. They've attributed a political content to the name of the school and that is why it appears that this has rubbed them the wrong way. It's a pity that this wasn't known in time. Now the only thing we can do is wait until tempers subside.

Wednesday, August 23

Full day. I feel God at work inside me.

Saturday, August 26

I'm thinking about visiting the missionaries again. It's a difficult decision. The government has us against the wall with its laws, and we have to be very alert. For now, I think it is risky to leave and, if things

don't change, the most prudent thing to do would be to not leave the country.

Tuesday, August 29

A day of sorrow, worries, and fear.

Friday, September 1

Month of inner gifts, knowledge, and joy in Jesus Christ, of renewal of desires and of an extraordinary experience of the action of God upon me and upon the entire Institute. I find joy in God, in His praise, in His being, in His nature, and in complying with His will. My desire to unite with Christ is very intense, clear, and concrete. I try to imitate His nature, and in all my activities I seek the expansion of the Kingdom of God within me and within everyone that is under my care.

Saturday, September 2

Doña Victorina is seriously ill. The doctors say she is terminally ill. Yesterday, Sisters Nieves, Cecilia, and I were in Elorrio. We found her up and about, but emaciated. She's suffering with terrible pain. Everyone who comes near her admires her profound faith, her strength, and her trust in God. How saintly she is leaving this life! During this visit we wanted to express to her, our great benefactress, the gratitude from the entire institute. I think that this visit will also be serving as our goodbye.

Monday, September 4

I received letters from the sisters in Tokyo. I would like to express to them the immense joy that these letters brought me. I see that they are dedicated to their mission. Their inner life is growing in maturity and harmony. This community has no other problems besides monetary ones, and these, from what I understand, matter little since all of them are seeking the Kingdom of God. I'm sure that the Lord will keep His word and all the rest will come as well. They tell me that they're trying to economize and are looking to see how to extend the use of their habits. Certainly a habit that is not overly mended suits poor nuns, but I would not like it if they were unrepresentable.

Thursday, September 7

A wonderful meditation on the Blessed Trinity. Joy, abundance, and profound peace.

Tuesday, September 12

Establishment of the house in Bilbao. Beginning today, Cecilia, Rita, Descension, and Ignacio will remain there. After blessing them and seeing them off I can feel their absence, but I'm happy that this small seed from Berriz is extending. I've asked the Lord to shower the spirit of love upon them. And I asked that they, who love God very much, seek His glory and love one another thereby forming a single heart.

Wednesday, September 13

A feeling of hesitation about my trip to Rome. I see that Mother Nieves is not happy that I'm going, nor does she think it advantageous for the Institute that I present myself at the Propagation of the Faith. Father Zameza, who is usually right on, judges it to be very opportune. Father Chalbaud sees it favorably, although he doesn't push me to do it. And I just tire thinking about leaving Berriz. Finally, after considering the pros and cons I presented the plan to the council of the motherhouse, who received it with indifference. I suffered. I entrust a lot unto God.

Friday, September 15

Father Zameza's talks on "Lights of the Redemption" begin. Sublime discoveries of Jesus Christ. This is the greatest gift that God could bestow upon me according to what my spirit yearns for and what I want for the formation of the Institute.

Thursday, September 28

I'm happy when someone says they enjoy reading Saint Teresa. She is my saint. She has taught me much and I also owe her a lot. Her writings allow me to discover the delight of her spirit. I like the love of God that they leave me with and how well it fits in with reality. The will of God, as she understands it, prayer, and love for the Church are fruits that are enjoyed and absorbed within.

Saturday, September 30

The Lord has allowed me to enjoy and savor His divine knowledge. My soul is breathing in the atmosphere of God, of Jesus Christ the Redeemer newly known. I'm enjoying a very lofty inner life, like during the best times of my life. I would not change any of this.

The talks on "Lights of the Redemption" have been celestial for me. It's like tearing the veil of faith and seeing Christ performing marvels of redemption within the divine plan. It's like peering over the bottomless abyss of our loving divinity and feeling the vertigo of its irresistible attraction. I have been left with the desire to live in continual adoration and love for Jesus Christ. I desire to share him with others and study Him more and more. I want to delve into this depth of endless riches and to be like Him in every way. I feel the same as that Apostle who said, "For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified." When I look back, the gifts from God appear innumerable.

Sunday, October 1

I live in continuous celebration with God, and Jesus Christ. Sanctity appears to me to be sweet and very soft in Christ the Redeemer.

Tuesday, October 3

I feel peace and joy for the good spirit that encourages the entire institute, and for the many gifts that the Lord lavishes upon us.

Thursday, October 12

My travel date to Rome has been finalized. On Wednesday of next week, I will leave Bériz accompanied by two young nuns who are going to China. We will board ship in Marseille on the 20th. If there are no last-minute changes on the morning of the 21st I will take the train to Rome. As soon as I get there, the first thing I would like to do is talk about my plans with Father Vidal.

Friday, October 20, Marseille

Just a few hours ago, Sisters Agnes and Fermina boarded the ship headed for China. They are traveling on the famous André Lebon, the same ship that took the first missionaries to Saipan. They were traveling

accompanied by the superior of the mission, Father Aramburu, who is returning to Wuhu.

Saturday, October 21, Rome

We left Marseille in the morning, and after traveling all day and changing trains in Genoa, we arrived in Rome at ten at night. Four extremely nice Mercedarian fathers were waiting for us. And thanks to them, we are now comfortably lodged with the Sisters of Reparation to the Most Sacred Heart (Madres Reparadoras del Sagrado Corazon), who are very near the Generalate of the Mercedarian Fathers.

Sunday, October 22

Today was our first day in Rome. The first outing that we made was to greet our father general, who received us warmly. He spent a long while with us. We spoke about the missions of the order at length, of my desire to work together, and the steps I've been taking along these lines. He was interested in the present and future of the institute, and in each one of the houses. We had a nice conversation and I was able to touch on each of the points that I had prepared. He is very kind and spiritual. We thank him on behalf of the institute, and for the support that the order has always given us. In appreciation, we gave him a painting of the motherhouse in Berriz, painted in oil, which he liked a lot. We also gave him an album of photographs from each one of the houses, which he went through with great interest.

Thursday, October 26

We went to the Propagation of the Faith. They listened to us well and liked the brochure about the institute that we had published in Italian very much. I was able to speak at length with Monsignor Zanin and Monsignor Salotti about our plans for an association in the Marianas and the Caroline Islands. We made a good impression.

Friday, October 27

This afternoon we were able to greet the mother superior of the Slaves of the Sacred Heart and her council. I've always appreciated these nuns quite a bit, but today they have captivated me with their unassuming

nature and humility. They mentioned to us that they would like to establish a mission in Japan and we offered to help them, in every way that we can, and to welcome them in our house in Tokyo for as long as is needed.

Saturday, October 28

Private audience with the pope about the missions. The Father General of the order accompanied us. The Holy Father welcomed us in a little room adjacent to his office. We presented him with a beautiful album of the Institute bound in white leather, with the papal coat of arms in the center carefully worked in gold, and with an engraving of Eibar. He was very interested in the contents, and while he leafed through it, the father general began carefully explaining to him, in Italian, the mission that we are performing in each of our houses. Later, we thanked him for the blessing that he sent us through our former father general, and for those good predictions that he sent to encourage us when we made the decision to become missionaries. He listened to us attentively, and then he said he wanted to renew his blessing. He then he proceeded to say, "I bless you and all the religious Mercedarian Missionaries of Berriz, your schools and all your works, your benefactors..." We left enraptured in joy.

The father general then had the kindness to invite us to eat with him, which according to him is something he is not accustomed to do with anyone. Based on the conversation that we had during the meal, I could appreciate that, besides being spiritual, he is a very well-mannered person.

Sunday, October 29

This afternoon we visited the Father General of the Jesuits. He's a venerable and bright older man, kind, and understanding. Even though I had heard about him quite a bit, the impression that he left me with was above and beyond all praise. I was amazed at the attention that he gave us while he listened. The ability to listen is something that I've always appreciated very much because it shows greatness of soul.

Before we said goodbye, in recognition of the innumerable favors that we owe the Jesuits, we gave them the Institute's Letter of Fraternity. During our entire visit, Father Errandonea accompanied us. His presence and that of the assistant father help me express myself with a greater presence of mind.

Monday, October 30

This morning Monsignor Marella welcomed us at the Seminary of San Juan de Letran. After mass, we went to a little room and right away struck up a conversation. He was very interested in our school in Koenji and he repeatedly asked me to write to the sisters so that they would know about his arrival in Tokyo around December 20 or 22. He wants them to greet him as soon as they can. In Japan there are very few religious and his wish is that they all become close. Monsignor Marella is Italian, very young, and gives the impression of being an affectionate and communicative person. We were able to understand each other well speaking slowly in our own languages. He'll be able to speak English with the sisters of the school in Tokyo, a language that he has a good command of. It's been fortunate to be able to personally greet him. We also spoke about the Marianas and Caroline Islands since that vicariate lies within his jurisdiction.

Thursday, November 2, Berriz

We're now in Berriz after a tranquil and relatively restful trip. The encounter with the community was indescribable. I've spent the whole afternoon telling and retelling everything that we did, saw, and heard since we left Berriz 15 days ago. Considering the kindnesses that we encountered, the great treatment that we received in the Propagation of the Faith and, above all, the impression that we bring back from this trip will redound to the institute's benefit. In addition to the important meetings that we had, it was a unique opportunity for letting them know about the missionary work of Berriz and to tighten the bonds of union and friendship.

Friday, November 3

Doña Victorina passed away last night. They gave me the news this morning before mass was over. I asked God, very emotionally, that he welcome her with much love. I feel that few people know how to love the Church as much as she. Tomorrow we will hold a solemn funeral in Berriz and we will send our two chaplains to the one that will be held in Elorrio. During my absence the very good Carmen also died. People that we love a lot are advancing ahead of us along the path.

Saturday, November 4

I'm waiting for Father Chalbaud to exchange views with him about the Basque Statute of Autonomy. I believe that there are great expectations and also great disdain that grows each day. I've been presented with a conflict in the motherhouse in regard to voting that I need to confront. I hope that the Lord guides me in order to explain the matter correctly. During my absence, fearing that I would not arrive on time, Mother Nieves wrote to the bishop of the diocese asking for guidance and he answered, "We should not fear voting. He said that if we did not vote we would invite objections. Those who do not want to vote, of course, they are free not to do so."

Monday, November 6

Yesterday, November 5, they held the referendum on the Basque Statute of Autonomy. The entire community voted. We all did so peaceably and unanimously, without friction. They welcomed us with the uttermost respect at the city hall. We went down in groups of twelve in two cars. Some were coming back while others were going. It took us almost two hours to make this unique pilgrimage. Now we just need to wait for the results.

Tuesday, November 7

Next Friday at Jakin-Bide a series of talks by Sister Maria Ines will be given to the parents of students. I hope there is a good turnout for her well-prepared program.

I think a lot about this small community in Bilbao. I want to see them, embrace them, and personally check how each one's health and mood is. But since I cannot go, I'm happy to write them. I'm asking the Lord that he gives them an abundance of His Spirit so that they may be one with Christ, and so that when performing their work they only seek the glory of the Father.

Friday, November 10

There is great excitement in view of the upcoming elections on the 19th. They still haven't published the list of candidates from Bilbao and the provinces, and it's still unknown if an agreement with the Catholic leadership was reached. The referendum on the Basque Statute of Autonomy was victorious, and it happened without any disturbances. But, what will happen on the 19th? Excitement is very high.

Friday, November 24

Father Faber has died. I received the news in a casual manner from Holland. I'm very moved and sad, not wanting to accept this as being true. In order to check, I called Father Chalbaud who confirmed it to me. He was also very surprised. We have lost a friend and a great person. Father Faber was a very generous person who was always ready to lend a hand. The institute owes much to him, since without him our school in Tokyo would not exist, and without his support we may have never went to Japan. He warmly took to that mission and he was able to clearly explain to me why there was a need for a house in Tokyo. Moved by his letters, I took my first voyage to Japan in 1928.

Sunday, November 26

Our very dear Akika is greatly ill. Such painful and unexpected news has affected me greatly. All of the letters that are arriving from Tokyo talk about the evolution of her illness. In Japan, tuberculosis patients have to remain hospitalized and in isolation. And we don't know for how long, since it's very difficult to cure. How hard this must be for Akiko and for everyone! Also, the expense is going to be very large. I would like to help them, but it appears that the Lord wants to take us into to almost absolute poverty, perhaps so that we could live from His providence.

We're thinking about the possibility of her returning to Berriz. Here we could take care of her with all of the goodness that we can give, and she would enjoy the closeness and caring of her sisters.

Monday, November 27

Every day it's becoming clearer to me that Sister Begoña Dochoa, superior of the house in Tokyo, should be the one who visits the houses on my behalf. I've asked her to think it over carefully because I need to consider two things. First, I find it absurd that she would have to come here so that I can tell her the current state of each house. Second, I think it would be very good if before she takes her trip she were to spend a while in Berriz getting to know us within the spirit of the new constitutions. I'm going to wait until she tells me what she thinks before I make a decision with the counsel.

Wednesday, November 29

This afternoon I wrote the community in Bilbao. I want them to know that I pray a lot for them and that, even though they don't tell me, I'm sure that the Holy Spirit is guiding and strengthening them. I'm also sure that the happiness of God lives in their hearts. He unites them and makes everything important to all of them. He has them help each other carry out their duties with sweet, loving, and sacrificed benevolence.

I'm also greatly enjoying the good spirit that motivates all missionaries. I'm convinced that a great gift from the Holy Spirit is needed in order that inner life and dedication to the mission can be desired and sought with such determination.

Thursday, November 30

Little by little I'm catching up with my letter writing. Today I've dedicated the entire morning to writing the superiors of the houses. I thanked them for the trust they placed in me when they opened their hearts and told me their concerns, especially when there are concerns caused by inevitable misunderstandings for which encouragement and comfort are needed.

I've encouraged them to confront their difficulties with bravery and to preserve freedom above all fear. I believe it is good that they are conscious of their limitations because, even if they don't want to, they are bound to make mistakes often. All of us make mistakes sometimes and it's not always easy to ascertain what is in each person's best interest. But this experience should not discourage them from fulfilling their duties. Instead, it should help them continue to purify their actions until they get to the point where their governance is pure of intention and, as much as possible, a continual exercise of benevolent goodwill, serene justice, and absolute impartiality.

Their task is to use all the resources that are at their reach so that the good mood of the community doesn't decline. I've recommended that they maintain personal dialogue with the sisters about everything that has to do with the life of the community and with the way in which they carry out their tasks and responsibilities, but absolutely without touching upon their consciousness. I'm convinced that frequent individual contact secures the spirit of family and the unity of hearts. Another method that I consider important is the reading of literary works that open horizons and help the community focus its heart upon Christ.

Friday, December 1

During the past few months, I've received exquisite graces from the Lord. One of them has been my trip to Rome with all the feelings of love and gratitude that those places awaken. And, above all, an increase in strength in order to work and suffer for the Church as the apostles and the first Christians did. I recall a very spiritual and intimate memory, mysteriously united with the "Lights of Redemption," that allows me to see people and events across the "great mystery."

For some time now, everything appears to help clarify the mystery of redemption with all of its derivations for my spirit and for the Church. The knowledge of Christ the Redeemer consumes me and fills me with joy. It's a new, complete, and deep joy that gives me stability and allows me to become established in the very loving God the Father, who sent

us His Son to redeem us and to make us His adopted children through Him.

Contemplating Christ the Redeemer has increased my love for the Church. How the concept of the Church increases upon seeing it born at Jesus' death, thereby receiving complete life, benefit, and potency from Jesus Christ! We must have desires to be worthy members of the Church and to integrate new people who still do not reside in it! I want to see the entire Institute trained in this spirit.

Saturday, December 2

During yesterday's retreat, I dedicated some time to review what I've been attempting to accomplish. I've got better at not complaining, but I'm still far away from my goal. I'm gaining on not needing comforts and periods of rest. I'm also getting better at not giving into fatigue. I've been firm and content when completing my tasks. I've been very faithful to the spiritual direction of the community. Also, in writing thoroughly to the missionaries. I have to continue working on my intent to shower optimism and trust in God. I also have to work on not letting anyone perceive my physical and moral impediments, or concerns about feeling overwhelmed by tasks. I offer myself up silently and with a cheerful face, with Jesus as my witness.

Wednesday, December 6

Election results for parliamentary representatives are coming in after people in some districts needed to return to the polls last Sunday, December 3. Even though not all votes have been tallied, the right appears to have at least 210 representatives. In second place is a coalition of the center—comprised by more or less conservative republican parties—and the Radical Republican Party with Lerroux leading them, followers of Maura, the Catalan League, and a few others. Among all of these parties, the coalition has about 100 representatives. In third place is the extreme left, comprised of socialists, the Radical Socialist Republican Party, communists, followers of Azaña, and the Republican Left of Catalonia Party. It's rumored that Lerroux will head the government.

Saturday, December 9

Disappointment and sorrow for friendship that moves away and then turns against me. It touches me deep inside me but I will not allow myself to “caress” the sorrow. I want to live with a big heart.

Wednesday, December 13

Monsignor Mario Zanin was named apostolic delegate in China. Until now, he had been the secretary of labor for indigenous clergy. The monsignor was the one who appeared to be the most interested in our institute during my visit to the Propagation of Faith. He's a person who treats everyone exquisitely. I have an impression of him that could not be better. What a coincidence that, during the few days I was in Rome, I had the occasion to deal with those who today are the delegates in China and Japan. I wrote to Monsignor Zanin to congratulate him and to the sisters in Wuhu so that they would contact him as soon as he arrived. I'm sure that he will support them with everything that they may need.

Thursday, December 14

The school in Bilbao continues to get a good reputation. And the series of lectures is going strong. Inés is very popular, as always. Her piety won the audience. Vicenta appears erudite and in full control of her topic, but she lacks people skills even though she enjoys it. And now it's Celina's turn and I think she will do very well. We've received great praise about the program and about the ability that this motherhouse has for organization.

Friday, December 15

We are in a period of communist revolution, although it's not as evident here as it is in Catalonia, Zaragoza, and Logroño. The movement is strong and it might expand even more. Rumors continue that Lerroux will head the government and that radicals will be assigned to the ministers without portfolio positions. It's also not known what will happen to the Basque Statute of Autonomy.

Tuesday, December 19

With the opening of parliament, the political situation in Spain has a better outlook. According to the latest calculations, there are 222

representatives from the right, 120 from the center, and 97 from the extreme left. With these results, it won't be easy to form a government.

Wednesday, December 20

We keep reading and commenting upon Father Zameza's book in the community, which is providing us with true "Lights of Redemption." I don't let it out of my hands and I'm going to end up knowing it by memory.

Saturday, December 23

Today the nuns from Bilbao arrived. The Spirit of God lives there just like I feel it lives here in Berriz, instructing, guiding, and impels us to lofty deeds. The school's reputation gets better day-by-day. All of the hostile elements in the environment that existed in the beginning against Jakin-Bide have changed to admiration and geniality. They speak a lot about the school and they speak about it well. It's incredible how the Lord favors us. I enjoy seeing how happy everyone is.

Wednesday, December 27

Yesterday, Fr. Pedro Anitua was here and made me a gratifying proposal that fulfills the desires that God gives me of rendering social work among working people. As soon as the holiday season is over, I will approach the council.

Thursday, December 28

Overflowing happiness in the community. Family spirit. This morning Cecilia, Inés, and Celina left for Madrid. They are going to attend a pedagogical course organized by the Federation of the Friends of Education (Federación de Amigos de la Enseñanza). You always learn something new and it's good to be up-to-date with the latest in modern instructional methodologies. They are going very happily. With the way everything is working so well, in Berriz as well as in Bilbao, it seems to me I'm almost obliged to let them go.

Friday, December 29

I received a letter from Father Zameza. He tells me that he enjoys seeing us in the lap of God. It's a very apt and true sentiment. It appears that I can feel the help of the Holy Spirit and the push that He gives us to grow

in the knowledge of Christ, in love for the Church, and in yearning for the Kingdom.

During this Christmas season, I feel overwhelmed by gratitude for the many gifts that the Lord has favored us. In the community, there is such a desire to work to make society Christian that I believe the Lord is preparing us for something. The proposal that Fr. Pedro Anitua made us on the 26th to do social work will fulfill this desire. I've asked him for a concrete plan in writing. I believe that the Lord, having gifted us the spirit of redemption, wants to prepare us to work a lot for His Church.

1934

God's Light and Strength at Work in the Small Things

At the beginning of this year, her heart overflows with gratitude for redemption. Her desire is now a hunger and burning thirst to identify with Jesus who is completely free and full of love, and to transform into Jesus Christ, divine Redeemer obscured on the Cross.

The beats of her passionate heart vibrate with her desire. She wants to engender Christ, to tirelessly make her entire being, the institute, and the whole world like Christ. The Holy Spirit is the encouragement, light, and strength that guides and supports her. He now urges, impels, and pushes her to work with a new sense of purity and ardor.

Under this new impetus, she produces a plan of work for the year. It includes the spiritual direction of the entire community, the instruction of the young nuns, and the preparation of weekly meetings and lectures. It also contains the missionary formation of the motherhouse, the explanation of the constitutions, the writing of a small treatise on the function of superiors and on the inner life of the missionaries. It also talks about studying, in conjunction with the council, a plan for a school for workers' daughters in Vitoria. Amid her suffering, tribulations, and painful difficulties, she experiences God's light and strength working within, filling her with profound happiness.

Her stomach disorders continue. Her now mortally wounded body, and her spirit that is full of love and desire, proceeds toward a quick end that, although unforeseen, has been accepted for some time now. She writes letters and answers them from bed. Nothing is unfamiliar to her. She's alert and understanding of everything that happens to her. She doesn't complain. She's full of affection and desires happiness for everyone.

She's very mindful of her friends. She wants to see Father Zameza more than ever. She wants him to return to Berriz and to continue writing. She remembers him with peace and gratitude. She feels that she owes him a new life full of light, truth, and joy in God and in Jesus

Christ. In her heart, she also finds Father Sancho and the Mercedarian Order. She enjoys remembering his goal and that heroic benevolence that led the nuns to commit themselves to a vow to give their lives. She wants the nuns to continue to drink in that redeeming spirit and be able to give their lives to their brothers and sisters. And she wants Mary, co-redeemer with Christ, to accompany them along their path.

She glances toward Berriz. God takes care of them like a small and weak plant that He wants to have grown. She's convinced that as long as they recognize their smallness and do not place obstacles in front of His action, He will continue to carry them forward in their work.

She's aware of the risk of dying from the operation that she will have done. It's a time of bright luminosity in which her usual profound desires and feelings shine with a new light—her lifeline. Also evident is her openness to the mystery of God and to Life. Her faith has been converted into trust and surrender to the loving hands of God. She has an unshakeable determination of converting the will and desires of God into action. She's determined not to place obstacles before Him. She has a hunger and thirst for true love. She has an insatiable desire to live God and live in God. And now, once again, whatever might happen, she's ready to cast herself into the arms of Him who has always been her joy and happiness. She does so in peace and greatness of heart, in a free, unassuming, confident, and loving manner.

At the start of her religious life, she wanted to live in truth and to achieve the sense of calmness and freedom of spirit that the saints possess. She wanted to live the life of Christ and penetrate the immensity of God to discover the secrets and riches that he presented. She wanted to live in love and transform herself into that which she loved. She wanted to live in an infinitely compassionate love as a liberator, someone who enlivens others while embracing and saving the entire world. She wanted to be bold in her trust and grab Heaven through her love. All of her desires were granted her.

❧ 1934 ❧

Jubilee Year of 1934, I greet you!

On behalf of all those who have been redeemed, I want to glorify Jesus Christ daily. He has redeemed, sanctified, and enriched us with the most precious gifts of his divine riches.

I want to reveal Jesus—the Divine Redeemer obscured on the Cross—and take Him to every nation, to all people, and to the ends of the earth.

I would want all of the beats of my poor and human heart to sing a gentle and heartfelt hymn of expression of thanks to Jesus Christ for lifting us up toward the Father who came down toward us.

I would like to die transformed and nailed to the same Cross as our Redeemer, with no other feelings than He has, glorifying the Father and conquering humanity for Him.

Jubilee Year of 1934, I greet you!

Dear Jesus, is there a redeemed person who, during this commemoration of your redemption, hasn't lifted his heart and eyes up to You, watchful of the Cross, to give you filial thanks and recognition? Has there been a single Christian who, having been reborn through your blood and elevated through You to the excellence of a child of God, hasn't kissed your wounds, the source of our health? Will you find in this family redeemed and ennobled by You, a single Christian who, calling himself a child of your spouse the Church, hasn't thought, even once, to extend this Church?

Well Jesus, I want to offer you the following in the Jubilee Year: My heart, which needs to beat only for You, singing a constant hymn of gratitude for your redemption in the secrecy of its sanctuary. From now on my work will have but one goal: to Christianize myself, my family, and to the best of my ability, all of society. My sorrows, difficulties, setbacks, and pains brought about from striving to get all of humanity to come to your lap, are united every morning in the same chalice where your precious blood is deposited. *Adveniat regnum tuum!*

Monday, January 1

My life is Christ. I find everything in Christ. My life is to engender Christ in everyone that I deal with. It is continuing to bring others to Christianity without tiring, without becoming discouraged. To Christianize each one “commensurate with the gifts God gives me.” I see that there is much that I can do if I spare no effort. I want to give myself unto Him. Full, hard work, as if I were trying to redeem the days and years that were lived in emptiness. I feel hungry and thirsty to fill my brief days with this great work.

Tuesday, January 2

I made a plan for this year's work. I will be giving more of myself than ever to the spiritual direction of the entire community and to the formation of the young nuns who are preparing for their definitive commitment. I'll carefully prepare the weekly meetings and lectures. I'll impel the missionary education of this motherhouse. I will write with care to the missionaries and conduct lectures on the constitutions. I'll write a small treatise about the instruction of superiors. I'll write something about the inner life of missionaries.

If I'm not able to do it all, I'll attempt to go as far as I can with the help of God. I want to give myself up to hard, intense work without feeling sorry for myself, without waiting for comfort or gratitude, or bragging about my work. I want to become more like Christ in order to carry out what is needed for the Passion of my Lord Jesus!

Wednesday, January 3

I am humiliated by incomprehension and I suffer because of whom it comes from. Drifting friendships. How much it hurts! Stress from my activities. Inner impatience.

Saturday, January 6

I received an epiphany in my soul with a new light from Christ and new encouragement to collaborate in his redemption. I renew my “program” that I made for this jubilee year.

Sunday, January 7

It's a stormy day full of suffering. I'm humiliated by the treatment from X. I think I'm handling it well. It's hard to engender Christ and it's good to feel pain. I surrender myself to work according to what was proposed.

Monday, January 8

I would like to have gone to Bilbao to see the nuns, embrace them and meet with them if even for a few hours. It couldn't happen. I wrote them because I want them to know that I am well and that all of their prayers are enjoining God, our Father, to give me good health.

I'm following the plan that I proposed. I work for short periods at a time without getting tired. I want to use my health and all my life to love Jesus Christ and in having others love Him. I want all the nuns to surrender themselves to Him unconditionally and ask Him for His Spirit so that they understand and can make manifest the plan of God in the education of the girls: to instruct Christian girls, offshoots of the true vine that is Christ. What a sublime vocation!

Tuesday, January 9

Letters from the sisters in Tokyo arrived. We read them to the community. We liked them very much. And the best thing of all is that they help maintain the missionary spirit alive of our motherhouse. The bazaar that they prepared in Koen, besides the material help that it could bring them, I believe is a means for the school to be known and for the sisters to connect with a wider circle in Japanese society. The idea proposed by Mr. Yamasaki also appears to be a good one. He thinks that the funds from the next bazaar should be allocated to set up a nursery school. Given everything that they talk about, it appears that the storm facing Catholic schools is passing in Japan. In Spain, there have been

moments of calm and hope, but nothing beyond that. The situation continues to be critical and the outlook very bleak.

Thursday, January 11

We just received news of the arrival of Agnes and Maria de San Jose in Wuhu. They've been in their mission since November 26. Their last letters, which were very interesting, were sent from Saigon and Shanghai. I was beginning to wonder if they had arrived all right, since I was worried about them being so young on such a long voyage and without anyone else they could turn to except Father Aramburu, who I'm afraid would have not approached them very often given the strict guidelines that he follows when dealing with nuns. They don't say anything about this but I'd like to know if I'm mistaken. I think that both of them will get along very well in this mission. Agnes is humble in spite of her strong character. She throws herself into a job to matter how difficult it may be. And I like Maria de San Jose more each day. She has an enviable character, like all of them. She's very unassuming and doesn't try to outdo others. She knows how to take joy in the good that others do.

Friday, January 12

I wrote to the mother superior of the community in Bilbao. I want her to be filled with unlimited love for all the nuns there, and follow the program, to the letter, that I outlined for me during this jubilee year. Let's see if we can follow it so well that Jesus recreates gratitude for His redemption in our lives, so that we work hard to make us more Christian, and to Christianize others with loving self-sacrifice with Him and through Him.

Saturday, January 13

In China, the “presentandinas” of each vicariate have become autonomous. This is great news. This deed will mark a new era in the life of the mission in Wuhu and also in the work of our missionaries. I've asked the sisters to send me as much information as possible regarding this great deed. I've also asked for a small study on how they evolved since their beginnings. I'm very interested if their approval comes from Rome or the diocese and, even more so, if there is a

rescript. These details are important because they can guide the plan for the Association of Youth of the Marianas and Caroline Islands that we are studying.

Tuesday, January 16

I have desires to grow in generosity. I have certain hope that I will achieve it by the grace of Christ, and I will fill myself with his abundance.

Tonight, in the council meeting, we decided to begin the study and interpretation of the new Constitutions as soon as possible. We will meet for an hour each day. Beforehand, each nun will take the time that she needs to become well prepared for the chapter that was assigned to her. I would like to complete this work by the first part of April.

Wednesday, January 17

In front of me, I have a very stirring letter from Fr. Pedro Anitua. In it, he appears to be in accord with everything that we are doing. In regard to the offer that he made us to be in charge of a school in Vitoria for the children of workers, I've asked that he clarify a few points that I think are important to know before presenting the plan to the council for their study and subsequent approval.

Personally, I'm leaning favorably toward the project since it deals with the lives of workers. And I think that the sisters of the council will be inclined to feel the same way. But there are difficulties that may be impossible to resolve. I see that the remodeling of the building is essential. We can't think about having a school if we don't have suitable buildings. And then there's the economic question. Our communities cannot be formed with less than four or five members. And, even if we dispensed with this formality, no matter how small the community might be or how poorly it might live, it cannot support itself on less than 3,000 pesetas annually, which is what it appears they are offering us. It's unreasonable to think that the sisters are going to dedicate themselves to other activities at the same time, because a well-run school during the day and the administration of a night school would take up all their time.

In any event, I will propose it to the council. I've already let Fr. Pedro Anitua know that if for any reason we cannot accept his proposal, I would personally be very disappointed.

Saturday, January 20

The Holy Spirit impels, urges, and presses me to work with a purity and devotion that are yet unknown to me. I understand and savor the *Caritas Christi urget nos*. A new impetus for selfless and hard work. I give thanks to God for my Lord Jesus Christ, since I clearly see that everything is a gift and offering from God, nothing from me.

Sunday, January 21

Abundant, intimate, and very revered thanks. Light of God, strength of God, His motivation at work in me. A profound happiness that also involves God. A palpable renewal, gifted by Him, and urgency for the organizational work of the Institute that I feel is coming from above.

Tuesday, January 30

Huge and serious concern about the institute. I pray for light and wisdom from the Holy Spirit. I'm again confined to bed. I'm dealing with it well. A lot of fatigue. We decided to travel to San Sebastian so that Dr. Bergareche can see me.

Wednesday, January 31

Feast Day of Saint Peter Nolasco. I celebrate it with a lot of discomfort. I pray to God that He blesses the Order and that the Order may guide the missions. And that He makes our Institute holy, in accordance with Jesus Christ, and that He helps me to continue working, until my death, with improving the Institute.

More internal examinations of my stomach, x-rays, tests, and the rest. The result: I have a chronic duodenal ulcer. The doctor recommends surgery. *Fiat*. I feel that God is giving me a sense of peace and trusting surrender. I still can't even get rid of this natural fear when facing the distress of the operation or the possibility of dying while being operated on. Inasmuch as He lifts His hand I will find strength within me. Thank you, Lord, do with my life and my health, as you wish! Give me your love and grace, and with that I am satisfied!

Thursday, February 1

In bed, experiencing pain and fatigue. A very strict diet. Only milk. Grievous feelings about X. I pray to the Holy Spirit for perfect love and fullness of heart.

Tuesday, February 6

I'm in Bilbao for another checkup from Diaz Empanza.

X-rays in Zarza Clinic. Continuous pain throughout the morning.

Sunday, February 11

I'm very calm in spirit and very much in the hands of God. I suffer a lot physically, but only at night.

Monday, February 12

The pain continues, although not so virulently. *Fiat.*

My soul is full of joy for Jesus Christ.

Saturday, March 3

I've remained in Bilbao until today, Saturday, and then returned to Berriz. I'm following a plan of medication and rest that Dr. Empanza prescribed. It's going well. I don't have pain, but I am very fatigued.

I've arranged it so that I can work a bit. I begin my day at six thirty in the morning. I take communion and then spend an hour in prayer. I rest until eight. From eight until nine, I continue with my written explanation of the Constitutions. At nine, I divide up work with Sister Gloria. I get out of bed at nine thirty. After ten: letters, meeting with the council about the work on the Constitutions. Checkup. Letters. Diary. Prayer in the chapel. Meeting with the community. Lunch and rest. My afternoon starts at three with an internal visitation. Then a stroll. Prayer in the chapel. Letters. Meeting with Mother Nieves. Preparation for morning prayer. At eight at night, dinner.

Sunday, March 4

I'm having a good day, no pain, in spite of the fact that I've begun eating some things. The night wasn't as good, without a doubt, due to the tiredness that the trip produced. But everyone will see how the Lord will listen to their prayers and will give me good health, if it's for the best.

At noon the mothers of the council came and the sisters came in the afternoon. I made them laugh telling them anecdotes from my stay in Bilbao. I want us to always live happily, especially now. I carry all of them deep in my heart.

Wednesday, March 14

I'm writing to the Mother Superior of Bilbao. I open up my heart to her and I talk about my desires. I want her to selflessly surrender to the love of Jesus Christ, so that He might teach her how to carry out the will of the Father with the same faithfulness that Jesus does. I want her to identify with Him, with his desires, intentions, and disposition so that she may become, as I strongly hope she does, a pillar of the Institute and a great saint. I want her to be very motivated, extremely so, and that she always sees herself as small so that the Lord might carry her in His arms.

Friday, March 23

Meeting with the community: "Celebration of the Centennial of the Redemption".

During this Holy Year, we are asked for fullness of inner life and to omit everything that is not Christ and His Redemption. I hope and wish that as an Institute we completely understand that Christ is our source and origin of divine life, always open to us, and that we hope for everything from Christ with full trust in the Redemption. We fear nothing with Christ and we only live in order to continue His life.

Thursday, March 29

I'm better, but they only let me work a bit. I'm writing the missionaries from bed. God is so good! I am so happy for the desires that they feel to work and suffer for Christ. More than anything, I like hearing them say that everyone in the community loves each other so much. Because without this goodwill or love, I would not give credence to the desires they have to love and suffer for the Kingdom because deceit cannot coexist with the love for our sisters because it will eventually be found out. On the other hand, love for God can exist without works. Their attitudes give me profound joy and I encourage them to keep working so that their love for Christ and their love for the sisters might always

grow in unison. I want them to love Christ without measure, to fill themselves with Him, and to forget their selves. I want them to be self-forgetting and to love their sisters with an affectionate and humble love, as if they were dealing with Jesus Christ Himself.

Saturday, March 31

I've always appreciated and wanted to communicate with Father Zameza, but now I want it infinitely more. During the entire year, my memory of him is united with that of God, full of peace, gratitude, and enveloped in "Lights of Redemption" that allow me to discover a new world. What happens to me is that when God allows me to understand His truths in a new light I cannot rest until I've lived them as deeply as I can.

I owe a new life to my friendship with Father Zameza, full of truth and joy in God through Jesus Christ. I've discovered treasures that were almost hidden from me and that now I have at my disposal. Hopefully, this year he feels as inspired as last year and writes something along the same lines. If the rector grants our wishes and gives him permission, soon we will have him in Berriz.

Sunday, April 1

My health continues to get better. No pain. It's not that I'm cured, but at least I saved myself from an imminent operation. I want to thank everyone who prayed for me. I feel especially grateful to the Sister Servant of the Sacred Heart. I also want to tell them that the offer I made them of our house in Tokyo was very sincere and I hope that they accept it. I would very much like to help them with their intent to establish a mission in Japan.

Monday, April 2

Bad news arrives from Tokyo. Akiko's illness is advancing quickly. They believe she will die. She's the first missionary from Berriz that the Lord chooses. How good she is! She has a hard life, isolated in the sanitarium. I don't stop thinking about her.

Monday, April 12

I'm writing to the community in Bilbao. I wish that the Holy Spirit be at work in each and every one of them, making them hungry and thirsty to know and love Jesus Christ, to glorify Him like He does the Father, to extend His Kingdom and to faithfully fulfill His will. I hope that they do not place obstacles that hinder the work of the Holy Spirit. I feel that God is taking care of the institute like a small and weak plant that He wants to have grown. I'm sure that, if we are conscious of this smallness of ours, He will continue carrying His work forward.

Monday, April 23

I received a thoughtful and lengthy letter from Fr. Pedro Anitua. I will respond to him right away because I do not want him to think that I've forgotten his proposal. I asked him to come by here as soon as he is able in order to renew our conversation. I'm very happy that he has talked about it with the bishop because, since this deals with a social project, I'm sure that he will support it when we get to the point of getting it underway.

Friday, May 4

During this month of May, my wish is that we all try to live in Mary, so that She might teach us to live in Christ. In order to do that there is nothing better than to imitate Her hidden life in Nazareth. It is an unassuming life, lived with so much love and absorption, and with a continual forgetting of self in order that we only think of the glory of God. And what does the glory of God consist of? It's my understanding that it lifts and transforms everyone once we allow the fullness of His divine life to enter us. In Mary, everything glorified God: thoughts, desires, memories, and love.

Saturday, May 12

We now have concrete news about Sister Begoña Dochoa's trip. She arrives June 10. Sister Inocencia and Akiko are coming with her. We wait for them with affection! May God grant them a good voyage. It was so hard for us, given the practice in Japan that had Akiko remain in isolation in a sanatorium without hope of a cure, so we've decided to bring her to Berriz. Here we will be able to care for her without any

difficulty. Perhaps she will get better just from the change. According to the doctors, her disease is worsening, but her situation could remain this way for years. For her, and for everyone else, it would be hard to remain longer in the sanatorium all alone, possibly falling into depression. Here, she will live for as long as God wishes surrounded by the affection and assistance of her sisters.

Friday, June 8

Meeting with the community. “Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.”

Purpose of this feast and origin of this devotion. It is not new. It is in the Gospel of John. “And the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.” This is the seed of a devotion that leads us to discover Christ's impetus in all of His activities, love. Saint Paul tells us, “The love of Christ surpasses all knowledge.” And my wish is that we all delve into this contemplation and grow in that love. If we truly loved Jesus Christ, we would not only find joy in His glory and sing His perfections, but we would also try to follow His footsteps and extend His Kingdom, consuming ourselves if necessary.

Saturday, June 30

I was sick this whole month. I didn't go on retreat, and it would be very easy to sum up everything that I did. This illness, I believe, has helped me. It allowed me to prove to God, our Father, that I love Him as a Father of my soul, living ever mindful of His will, and that this will of His is the only thing that is great and gracious to me. It's also been a constant exercise of placing myself in His hands and, as if I lived in them, of kissing them lovingly, surrendering to him my entire soul with its faculties, my body with its senses, my health, my life, and my whole being. Without wanting anything that He does not want, and accepting with love and joy whatever he wants to provide me from His hand.

They had to decide if they would operate on me or if they would subject me to long-term, absolute bed rest. I left this up to my Father, telling Him that my soul was kept in perfect indifference as long as it was what He wanted. And now that it has been decided, I want to take advantage of the annoyances of this barely useful life that I must tend to

by maintaining my soul in constant communication with God, while being happy, loving, and full of gratitude.

I will not permit myself to have desires that lay outside the will of God, whether they have to do with better health, more hours for work, or a greater variety in my diet. I intend to not complain, not even in jest, about anything, whether it be insomnia, being tired of drinking just milk, my medicine, or the countless hours I am in bed. No matter how things are brought to me, I also won't ask that they bring me things that I like better, prepared in a different way, or a different quantity, a particular quality, or presented in another way.

Wednesday, July 4

In the middle of August a new missionary expedition will leave this Motherhouse of Berriz comprised of Sisters Maria Teresa de la Heras, who's going to Tokyo; Augustina Vitores, Joaquina Revuelta and Genoveva Garate, who are going to Saipan; and Maria Josefa Iraola, who will stay in Wuhu.

Also going in this expedition are Sister Maria Begoña Dochao, who has been named visitor for the houses in Saipan and Pohnpei, and Sister Maria Nieves Urizar, Vicar of the Institute, who is commissioned by me and the council to visit the houses of Tokyo and Wuhu. The principal objective of these visits is to explain the spirit of the new Constitutions to the sisters.

Sister Maria Nieves will first go to Japan, where an eight or ten days' stay should be enough to conduct her visit. Then she will travel to Wuhu and remain in that mission for a long time. We haven't settled on how long. She also has a very special task to accomplish: address the vicar apostolic about the fathers of the Order going to China. When Sister Maria Begoña completes her visit to Saipan and Pohnpei, she will return to her mission in Tokyo. If the attempt to found this new mission in China fails, she already knows what she needs to propose to the Archbishop of Tokyo.

We're praying a lot in Berriz. I take pleasure in imagining the indescribable feeling that they are going to enjoy in all the houses with

this unexpected news. I also need to offer to God the sacrifice of it not being me who goes to visit them and rejoicing in the affection of such good daughters.

Monday, July 9

I finished writing the commentary to the Constitutions. I enjoyed recalling the purpose of our order and how important it is to be cognizant of it. To understand the revealed plans of God that our Blessed Mother passed on to Saint Peter Nolasco. And the fulfillment of those plans by creating a new religious family in the Church. But, above all, it's important that we experience the redeeming spirit by which the first Mercedarians lived. That heroic charity that led them to give their lives in order to redeem captives. And not only knowing it... today we partake of the same spirit so that we also are capable to die for our brothers and sisters!

Another very Mercedarian subject that I wanted to mention in my explanation of the constitutions is the presence of Mary—Mother and Foundress of the Order—in our Institute. We contemplate the greatness of Mary within the salvific plan of God. We contemplate in “Mary, the co-redeemer with Christ” and “Mary, Mother of Christianity.” I understand that, as Mercedarian Missionaries, this is principally how we must see her and love her. May she always accompany us in our journey!

Saturday, July 14

Sister Gloria has already told Father Sancho about the decision we made respecting my operation, which will occur in San Sebastian on the 23rd. I have faith in everyone's prayers that I will bear well whatever God, through His mercy, has me endure. I find that I have little physical strength. I know that this contributes to my falling morale. Although I'm breathing well, I hardly recognize myself due to my thinness. I'm very calm, waiting for what God wills for me. I have a little fear of the operation because of what will need to be endured, but I trust that I will not lack in abundant grace because they are praying a lot for me. This operation is a precious occasion presented to me so that I might atone for my sins.

If my Father wants me to leave this life, I will do so happily and trust in His mercy. My inner task is to embrace the will of the living God with love and joy, and to not desire either more or less than what He wants to give me. This attitude is my continual prayer and keeps me at peace. God gives me a great appreciation for his provisions. I offer myself to God in the hands of Jesus Christ, wanting to emulate Christ's feeling, "I always do what is pleasing to Him." Nothing more.

I want to peacefully bear my shortcomings and this decline in spirits that this illness causes. I want to live cheerfully inside and out. I want to make good use of the time God gives me and be ready when He finally calls me to cast myself into His arms forever—in an act of supreme abandonment. What joy! So be it.

Afterword

She was admitted to San Ignacio Clinic in San Sebastian on July 15. She was very weak. The sisters of the council visited with her on the 17th. Dr. Bergareche began the operation at eleven thirty on the 21st. It lasted two hours. She could hardly speak after the operation. Her sister Lola, Sister Cecilia, and her friend Nina Power were at her side. She was thirsty and nauseous, but she didn't complain. She gave thanks for anything they did for her... She could only be heard saying, "Whatever God wills, whatever God wills." The sisters of the general council arrived at midnight. She was already dying, but she was completely aware. She looked at Mother Nieves, who was at the head of her bed and, in a loving voice choked with emotion told her, "Mother, all of you have a lot to consider, but I will help you all from heaven. Yes." This "yes" of love, said with her last remaining strength, was her last word. Afterward, she took one final deep breath and she surrendered. It was July 23, 1934.

After she was gone, messages and items of respect, admiration, and consternation over her death came pouring in. She left, but the "Yes" of her intense, merciful, and bold love remained alive. Seeing her alive was always an aid to believing and trusting. And from that time on, it was an aid to keeping her dreams and wishes alive in the nuns, and continued inciting new missionary commitments.

Situations of conflict accompanied the nascent institute. They did not enjoy stability and they had to carry out their missionary work amid problems and difficulties, getting rid of some things and struggling, drawing strength against fears and insecurities, learning to resist and beginning anew what wars were taking down.

In Wuhu, they endured the occupation of their house, public trials by the communist authorities, slander, and prison. Serene and resolute, they refuted false accusations and lies, and were prepared to stay in their mission performing any kind of work or remain among the prisoners. They were always happy, ready to accompany and share the sorrowful

situations that the people had to bear. They remained happy in their dealings with others, without losing encouragement, with bravery, happiness, and greatness of heart. When the government expelled them in 1952, and they went off toward the border, it was said that their example was a silent preaching for everyone. And that upon seeing them, God was seen. No one ever heard them say anything bad about the Chinese people.

In Japan, they had economic difficulties from the outset. The knowledge that they were poor and the huge economic burden that Bériz had placed upon this mission made them lead an austere life of considerable work in order to carry on with the tasks that they had at hand. With the onset of the Second World War, and the bombing that Tokyo endured, they saw their school disappear in an instant, turned into smoldering rubble. They had to disperse, seek refuge, nourish themselves however they could, take on sewing jobs, and work in the fields. During the postwar period, with encouragement and enthusiasm, with the necessities of life, dedication, and perseverance, they worked selflessly amid many difficulties to raise and construct a new school.

In Saipan and Pohnpei, the war of the Pacific brought them hostilities, prohibitions, isolation, bombardments, and continual displacement, making them seek refuge in fields and caves along with the islanders. Amid danger and crossfire, wounds and illnesses, both the natives and missionaries experienced the care and providence of God who looks out for the meek and supports them mysteriously and silently in situations that have no way out. Compelled by the war to be continuously on the move, they worked tending fields, raising animals, performing sewing jobs, taught classes, and gave catechism instruction. With exceptional spirit, happiness, humor, affection, simplicity, and dedication, they won the love of the people.

There were new missions founded later. Bériz transformed into a focal point of missionary activity and into a center of mission studies for the religious until they graduated to the Foreign Missions Institute of Burgos. Within a few years, they spread to all five continents. Nothing kept

them from carrying out their mission—not obstacles, distances, or borders. They not only went to distant and unknown countries, but they were wherever there was a cry for life and where the fate of man was in play. They went to where God wanted to take them. There they sank to the depths of suffering, to the aspirations and dreams of humanity, to the bottom of that reality where love and freedom are intertwined, united and then disconnected in harmonious epiphanies that break the darkness of death and proclaim the fullness of life. And they did this out of simplicity, smallness, and poverty, which conceal the great treasure of God's infinite love for all. Like a small seed that hides the transformative force of authentic, new creation.

In these pages, aided by the memory and wisdom of her writings, we've attempted to bring Mother Margarita back to life by shining a light on her important adventure and on the beauty that irradiates from her heart and her elusive soul. In this work, Mother Margarita has been thought of and appealed to in order that we might improve the present and open up the future, and in order to declare that life was difficult and beautiful numerous times before now and will continue to be so. May love, freedom, and joy that come from what is discovered compel us to live the future that we dream of, and permit ourselves the audacities that lull in oblivion.

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