

# All through love

Marie Rivier



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# All through Love

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From love comes faith,  
from faith the miracle,  
and within the miracle, our story is born.



# Foreword

Can I tell you something?

I can't stand the clichés about love, I can't stand cotton-candy love, not even the romantic version in the movies.

Do you know why?

Because hollow words don't touch the heart, because sentimentality is ephemeral, capricious and distorts reality. Because if love is idealized, it becomes unattainable, unreal and superficial. And above all because to confuse love with all of that is to deprive ourselves of the greatness that is found when we live from the heart.

To love is to accept your history with all its events, it is to know who you are, to know yourself, to listen and to respect yourself.

As a little girl I fell out of bed and everything changed. I had to learn to trust before walking, to play with solitude and to grow through pain. My circumstances were not easy and I'm sure yours were not easy either, they never are.

You may have heard that history is written by the brave. I tell you that to love is an act of bravery because it means to come out of yourself, with your gifts and your fears and to give of yourself generously.

To love is to put the other person at the center, it is an encounter, a dialogue. It is integration and plurality. To love is openness, in love nothing is taken for granted, nothing is conclusive, and nothing is finished nor firmly established.

To love is to be with others, it is to be incarnated, and it is to put God at the heart of everything.

That is why I tell you that history is written by those who love and that it is within everyone's reach. We are all capable of loving ... you too.

Without empty words, without sentimentality, without romanticism, true love transforms, revolutionizes us interiorly and exteriorly and makes the miracle possible.

**Marie Rivier**



***Fire produces fire!  
A flaming torch ignites others,  
and those who have found Jesus Christ  
want nothing more than to make him known to the  
world.***

(Marie Rivier)



***Heal me!***

***And after three years, before the Pietà, the miracle took place.***

Marie Rivier lived a faith that stood firm, against all odds, in the face of the seemingly impossible.

A faith born of a firm decision to love and to live for God.

She was not satisfied with what she could see, she believed before seeing. Faith was her only guarantee and on this faith she built her hope. And from this faith her vocation was born.

The faith of a child who trusts because she feels loved. This experience transformed her and became a promise: ***“I will bring all the children to you so that they might learn to love you”.***

The miracle of faith is to believe that it is possible. It is a gratuitous love, one that believes before seeing.

Heb 11: 1-3

Jer 1: 4-8





**I am small in stature and sickness has been with me since childhood.** But to trust in Jesus is to know that what seems impossible is possible, that what is small can be transformed into greatness and fragility can become strength.

Without magic, without trickery, because it is God who moves your heart.

To know yourself, to know who you are, is to know where your strength lies, one that has nothing to do with your physical capacity. Your strength and your greatness reside in your heart, in your authenticity, in your capacity for infinite love for yourself and for others.

Do not let stereotypes or prejudices decide your life. Sometimes we don't fit into the ways others see the world, but that's just the way they see it. Don't let that become a judgment, don't let that hold you back.

**Marie Rivier received many "NO's" because people were wary about her physical form, her small size. They did not know how to see the strength of her inner self, but she demonstrated it to them.**

Offer new ways of looking at life and you will be hope for others.

Trust, love and everything will be different.

Lk 10: 21  
1 Cor 2: 1-5





**Marie Rivier encountered many social difficulties. She moved forward in spite of hatred, persecutions and the fear brought about by the French Revolution.**

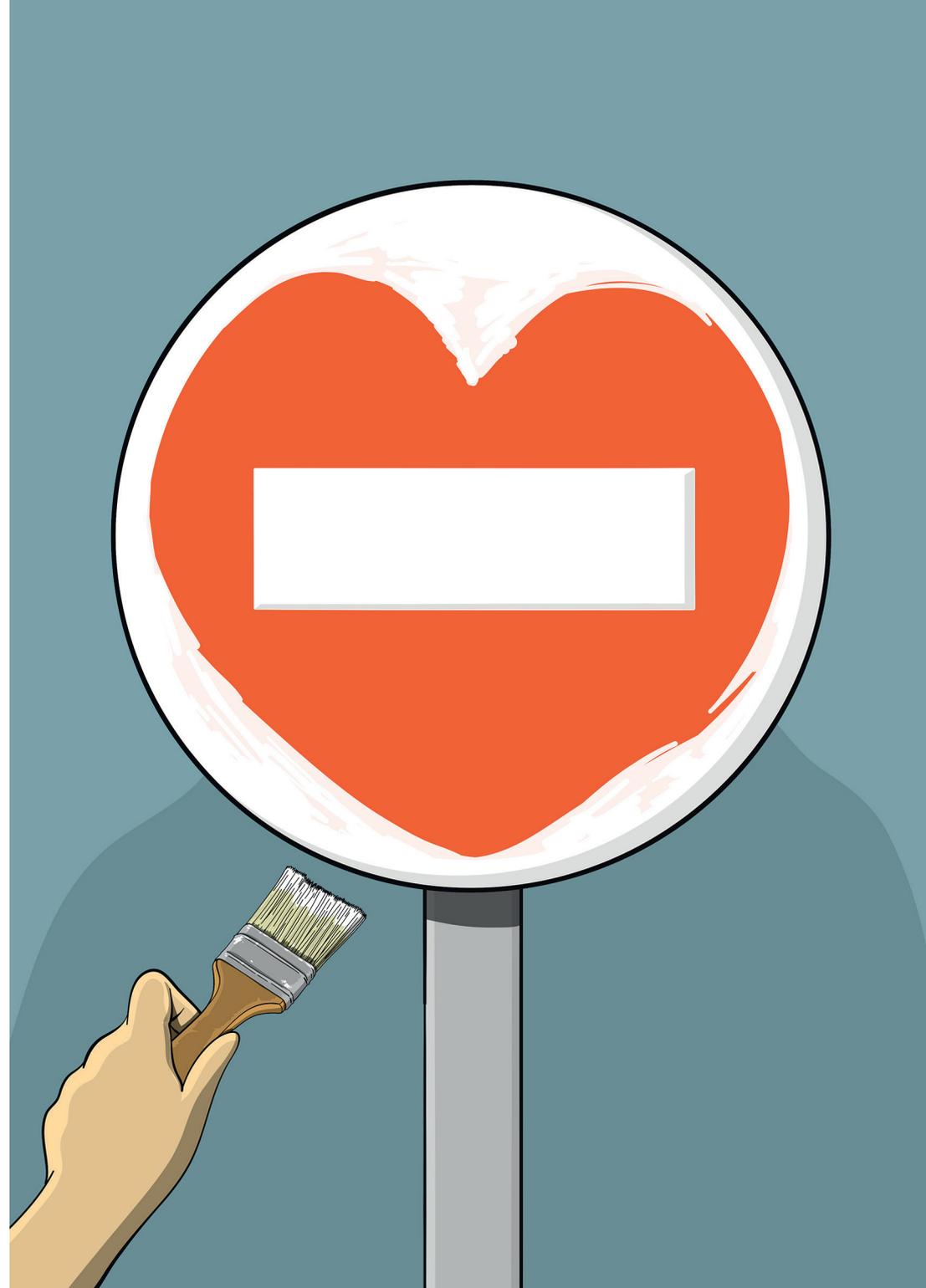
**At that time in history, religious education was forbidden, convents were closed and congregations were denied freedom.**

She was a courageous woman, determined to give the best of herself at every moment and ready to face difficulties without fear. She saw in these difficulties the opportunity to love, to transform, to create a new reality, that is why nothing stopped her.

As we journey there will always be difficulties because they are part of life. But it is up to us to decide how we want to face them, how we want to live them and overcome them.

Everything is within you.

Dt 30: 11-16  
Eph 6: 14-17





Marie Rivier was fascinated by the greatness of God and by the mission to which she felt she was called. There is no mission too great or project that cannot be realized when it is God who places it in your heart.

**She did great things with nothing**, often feeling that she was not capable, with everything and everyone against her. She managed to fly while barely being able to walk.

She saw herself as small, with fears, and she recognized her limitations. But she trusted and she felt that it was the hand of God that carried her.

Faced with so many impossibilities and so few means, ***“how can we doubt that it is God who brought us this far?”***

Recognizing our weakness is an act of courage that allows us to love with all of our heart. It is rooted in these sentiments that Marie Rivier gave her whole life without reserve.

Rom 8: 28-31  
Is 40: 31





**ALL** is the word that defines consecration, a life lived and fully given from the heart.

I love you with all that I am and with all that I know today and now I give you everything, today and forever.

And because there are days with so many different colors, some days the "ALL" will be tinged with joy, other days with doubts, others with fear, illusion, generosity, darkness, hope, with whatever is there - it doesn't matter. The important thing is to love with all your being, with all your soul, with all your heart.

Loving changes your life. Nothing will ever be the same again because you will no longer be the same. To love is to be part of, to be with the other person, to be a revolution

To love is everything and everything is God.

1 Cor 13  
Mt 7: 24-27





**On November 21, 1796, Marie Rivier, with her four companions, consecrated herself in secret because of the persecution suffered by religious congregations during the French Revolution. Thus, on this day, the Congregation of the Presentation of Mary was founded.**

It was a very important and joyful day, the beginning of a new journey that would change the lives of many people.

**The Congregation takes its name from the feast of the day. Marie Rivier saw a great resemblance with the deep meaning of the feast and her dream for the sisters.**

A very ancient tradition recounts that when the Virgin Mary was a very young girl, her parents, St. Joachim and St. Anne, took her to the Temple in Jerusalem and presented her to God in thanksgiving for her birth and as an offering for her consecration.

Marie Rivier dreamt of living the joy of self-giving with a deep gratitude for life. She dreamt of serving God wholeheartedly and of loving to the fullest.

Protoevangelium of James  
Acts 4: 32-35





I will invite everyone to love you.



***“Have a big heart and you will experience true joy”.***  
***(Marie Rivier)***

Generosity spreads life, because it is a gesture that touches the hearts of people. It connects us and enriches us by its gratuitousness.

To be generous is to open wide one's heart, it is to give of oneself without flourish, going beyond what is material.

The gestures that are born from the heart are founding experiences for other people because they transform us, change our way of seeing things and unite us in the very depths of our being.

Opening wide our heart brings us closer and erases differences. It makes true love and true joy possible, a love and a joy that do not depend on everything going well.

Open wide your heart so that everyone can have a place, so that all might live in joy.

1 Thes 5: 14-21  
Jn 15: 9-11





To pray is to encounter God in a totally gratuitous way; it is to enjoy God's love. This experience transforms our whole life.

Prayer is not only talking to God, it is also listening. It is an intimate meeting with God. Since the main purpose of prayer is to seek God's will, it is the sincere opening of your heart to his presence.

For these reasons, prayer was vital for Marie Rivier. It was the pillar of her life, from which her union with God was born. She felt the call to the desert, to silence, to leave everything aside and seek that space for intimacy, for encounter.

Silence taught her everything; in solitude she found her vocation.

And she considered that it was the best thing she could leave us:

***"I leave you as an inheritance the spirit of prayer"***  
***(Marie Rivier).***

Seek silence and calm, and you will be surprised.

Mt 6: 5-13  
Hos 2: 16





Is it possible to pray and not love?

Is it possible to live looking only at the sky?

God incarnates himself in life, lives with his feet on the ground, face to face, looking into our eyes and that is our call: to love as God loves us, you and I.

Prayer is a dialogue with God, not a monologue. That is why we must be two or more in order to pray. It is being together, it is to be in a state of wholeness, it is sharing life, it is accompanying one another and it is silence.

Bring prayer to what you do and bring what you do to your prayer. That is what living our faith is all about.

Mt 18: 19-20  
2 Tm 4: 2





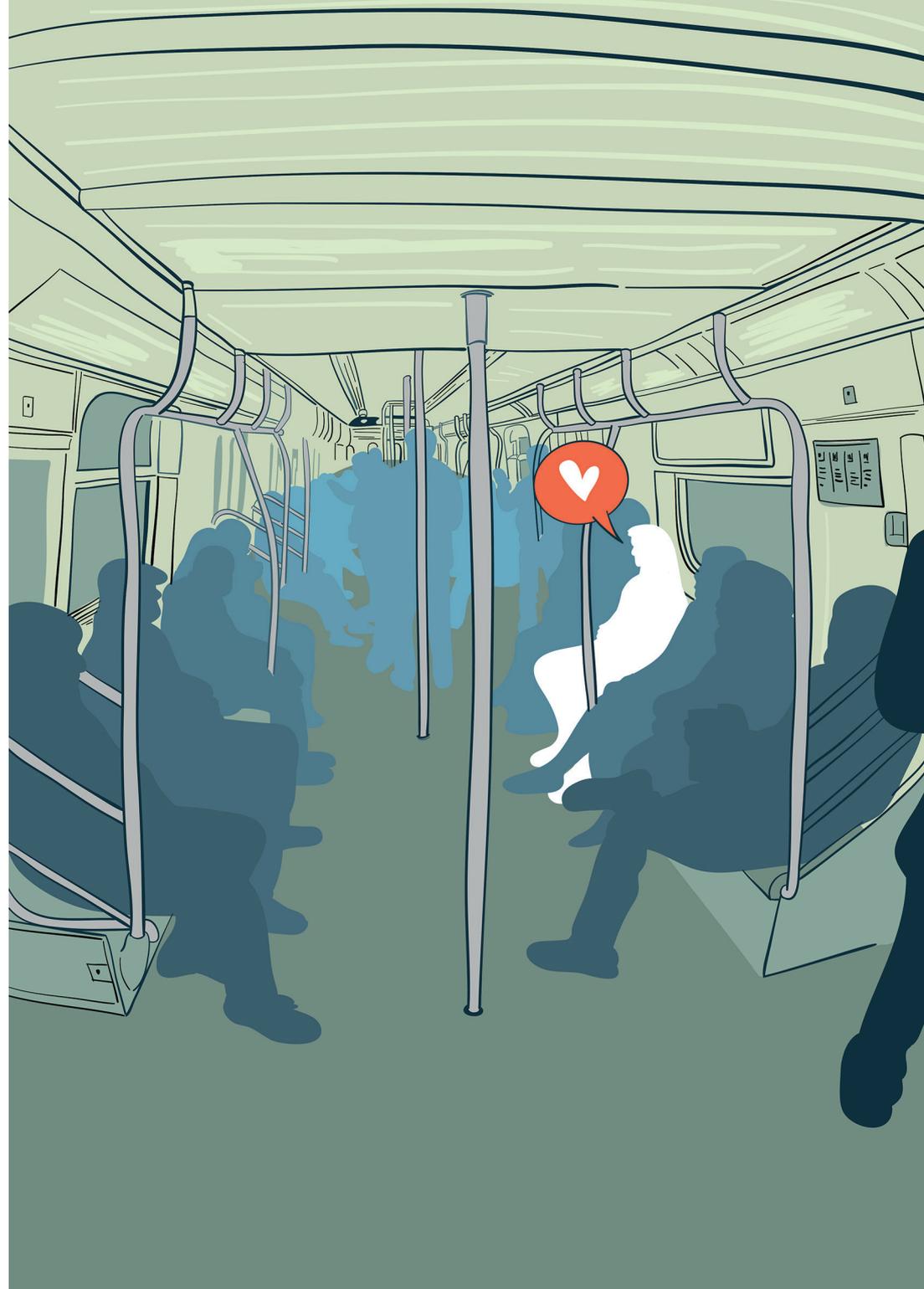
***“Learn to converse with God in the depths of your heart” (Marie Rivier).***

Pray at all times, when you are alone and in the midst of a crowd.

To limit our relationship with God to specific moments, to concrete spaces, to liturgies, is to detach God from our life, it is to separate ourselves from him in such a way that we transform him into a God made to measure for us and thus his message loses its meaning.

God dwells in all peoples. Live that presence of God intensely, recognize the presence of God in every minute and in every circumstance. **We are the presence of Jesus Christ.**

Lk 11: 1-4  
Eph 3: 14-21





To be grateful without having anything extraordinary happening, to be grateful for everything and for nothing in particular, is to know how to look with the heart.

It means enjoying every moment we live; it means opening our eyes, looking at the world, at the outside world and being aware of what we need. It is to broaden our perspective beyond the present moment, beyond our small universe.

To stop, to contemplate and to transcend as to become involved in the world, to feel that we are all a part of one another. To be aware of every detail, of every gesture and to see God in everything, to see His hand that accompanies us.

There are always reasons to say THANK YOU from the heart.

Col 3: 15-17  
Phil 4: 6-9





**To trust in Providence** is to transform one's gaze, it is a continuous search. It is synonymous with freedom since it is to live always knowing where to find what is important, what gives life.

Marie Rivier teaches us that the meaning of things and events is not only found in what they are in themselves, but in the discovery of what they have to offer us, and that is why she says:

***"Always be open to what God wants."***

God waits for us in everything we encounter, the challenge is to abandon ourselves and listen to the beating of his heart.

We are providence for each other, open your eyes, look and trust.

Mt 6: 33-34  
Mt 6: 19-21





***When someone asks you how many of you there are, say: "We are ONE!"***

With these words, Marie Rivier reminds us that we are with others, that we are called to be of one heart and of one spirit.

Living unity in diversity and differences brings us closer and empowers us. Our strength is in feeling that we belong to a family or to a tribe, call it what you will, in the feeling that, together, we have but one heart.

***Our first task is that of the heart.*** This task will lead us to love one another, to simply love because if this is not so, life is not life.

To love is a risk because it is to give life, but not to love is to lose life itself.

Jn 17: 21  
1 Cor 12: 12-27

# WE ARE ONE!





To love God means to embrace the world in its totality.

We love God in each and every creature because they are all expressions of his love. Is it possible to love God with our eyes closed, with our backs turned away from reality?

Our faith implies keeping our eyes and our hearts open, it is a declaration of love for life and a commitment to build a common future.

Care and respect for our common home is everyone's task and everyone's responsibility. Every gesture, every action defines the life we want to live. If we say we love, we cannot live in disregard for the planet, ignoring ecological disasters and thinking that it is someone else's responsibility.

Loving builds and rebuilds the world both inside and around us.

Gn 1  
Ps 148





Humility is the charm that makes us happy in our vocation because it comes from the heart and knows no artificiality, because it values what is simple and keeps us grounded in reality.

Humility is the key that opens the heart and allows us to see ourselves as we are, to acknowledge our weaknesses and know how to recognize them, to understand what is important, what is truly essential.

To be humble is to act with authenticity, to be close to others, to know how to listen, to connect with people. To be supportive and to be sincere is to be committed to what we do with honesty and simplicity.

**Marie Rivier tells us that the more humble we are in what we do, the more good we will do**, because only from humility can unity, encounter and life, in capital letters emerge. Humility reminds us that we can do nothing alone.

Phil 2: 3-11  
Lk 9: 48





To live fraternity is to be a family beyond blood ties, it is to feel that we are brothers and sisters and to care for one another out of a deep love. This is everyone's task, but it is also the responsibility of each one of us.

Gestures, tenderness, service, gratuitous love, little by little fashion in us a true community heart, a true fraternity.

To love and accept one another in our differences enriches us and helps us to grow. Judgments and misunderstandings alienate us, wound us and make us unhappy.

When we accept our limitations, our defects, our fears, it is easier to accept and understand those of others and that is what allows us to meet and live together.

Fraternity implies putting yourself in the other's shoes, but don't forget that for that to be possible you must first take off your shoes.

Rom 12: 15-16  
Lk 10: 25-37





**Marie Rivier shared what she had, whether it was much, little or nothing, because she shared who she was.**

**She never had anything, economic poverty marked her entire life, but that did not prevent her from being generous and doing great things.**

Sharing multiplies in all directions and not only on the material level.

We live in a time when we have everything and all types of possibilities are within our reach, yet we live in scarcity because nothing is enough for us.

It seems that it would be better to put an end to this in order to make sense of it all..

We live in fear of losing what we have, who we are, and we give with reluctance, with mistrust.

Living in fear, far from multiplying, subtracts because it is not born of freedom, a freedom which means to share, to give oneself so that all may have life and life in abundance.

Mt 19: 16-30  
Mk 12: 41-44





***“May our life be an open Gospel where people can read Jesus Christ”. (Marie Rivier)***

It is a precious task to live the Gospel, to make it possible to live on earth as in heaven. To be Gospel is to be the living word of God, to be Good News made flesh and to set hearts on fire.

Marie Rivier reminds us of what is important, what gives reason to the vocation of the Presentation of Mary. It is the message of Jesus, a message of love in which people are the center.

We are called to be, to live from our very essence, from who we are: the image and likeness of God.

Jn 15: 13-17  
Jn 20: 19-22





**Marie Rivier felt the fire of the Spirit within her, and it was this fire that moved her to do unthinkable things, that illuminated her entire mission.**

**She knew that a flaming torch can ignite many others, that only life can spread life.** She had this engraved in her heart.

We are light and no one lights a light to put it in a drawer, to keep it hidden. We are called to proclaim what we have seen and heard, to share with all hearts the light we have received.

And even if at times you feel that you are living in moments of darkness, do not be afraid to face these moments because darkness is what defines light, it does not extinguish it. Look at the light of others, look for guidance and keep on walking. Light illuminates us, guides us, and accompanies us.

Mt 5: 14-16  
Acts 2: 1-11





Have you ever had something or someone set you on fire or fill you up in such a way that you can't hide it?

That folly that doesn't let you think about anything else, that doesn't let you sit still, that stirs you up inside and lifts you off the couch, well, that's what happened to Marie Rivier with Jesus.

**Passion, enthusiasm, dedication, ardor, all these elements led her to overcome all difficulties in order to bring her message to the most remote corners of the world.** An unbridled passion that knows no difficulties, no barriers, that sees only opportunities in uncertainty, commitment in disappointments and love in disenchantment.

This folly of love is your best gift, because when you truly love you are unstoppable, you feel alive, you take the risk of living with authenticity, from what is in your heart. That is our faith and our joy.

Ps 16: 5-11  
Jn 20: 11-18





**Without Mary nothing would have been possible, everything was born at her feet, in her lap.**

**Her smile strengthens our steps** and her eyes confirm our missionary vocation, our dream to love as God loves us.

**We are daughters of Mary.** She is our support, our pathway and our hope.

With her everything is possible, with her we move forward, we grow and we give life.

***IARO RIS!***

Rev 12:1  
Lk 1:46-55





**The passion to proclaim, to announce the Good News of Jesus.**

The spirit of the Gospel that burned in Marie Rivier impelled her to announce Jesus everywhere, at all times and to everyone.

She spoke from the heart, of the life that moved her from within. Her proclamation was clear, with words that were simple and accessible, words that everyone could understand, because that was her greatest challenge: to reach out to everyone without exception.

She did not talk about what she did not know. Everything she said had passed through her heart beforehand, she had prayed with it and let it pass into her life. That is the difference between talking about a theory or sharing an experience.

Marie Rivier touched people's hearts because she transmitted life and this always transforms, makes people think, and invites them to walk.

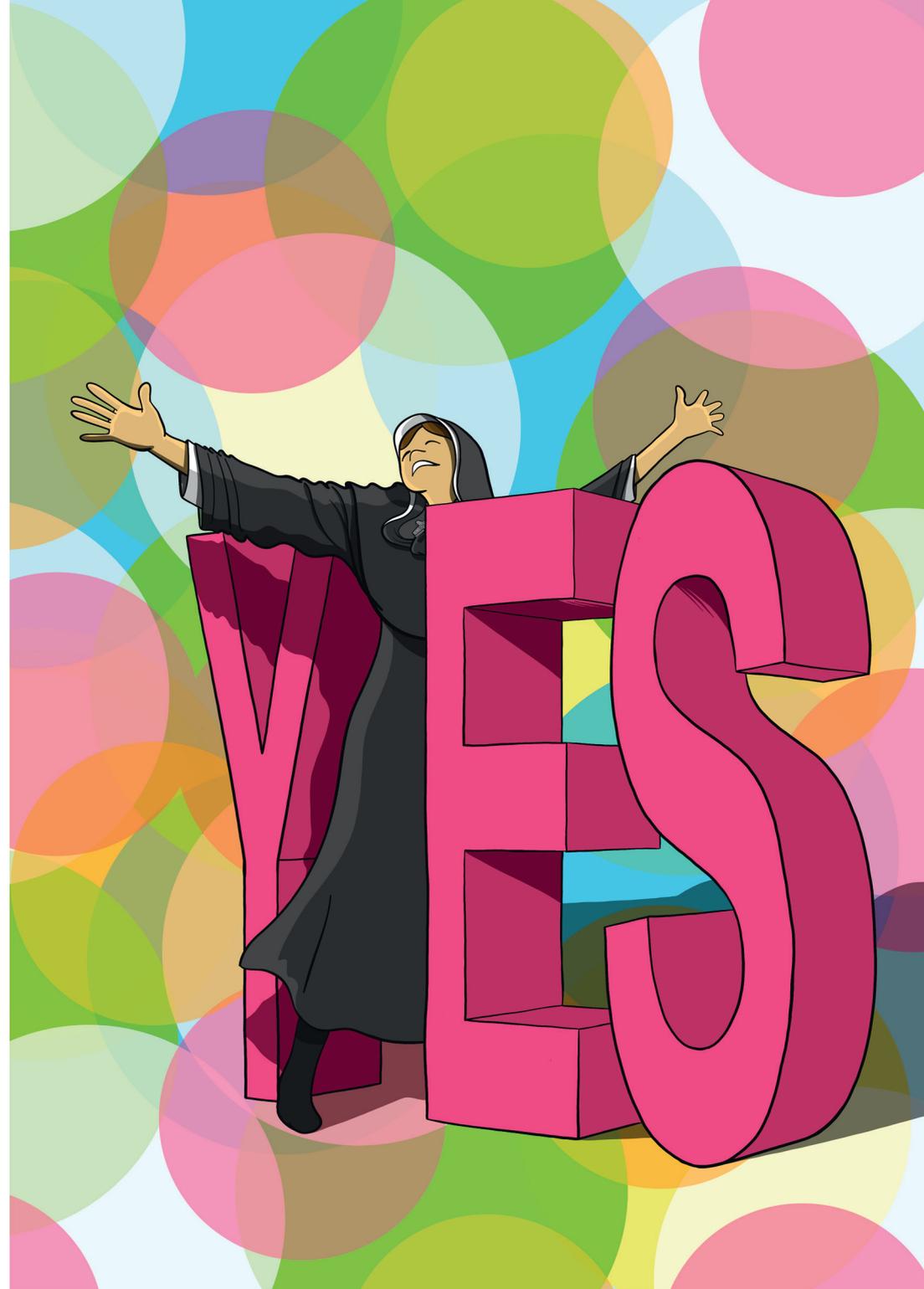
Lk 4: 14-21  
Eph 3: 8-21





***Everything that God wants of me, I want.  
(Marie Rivier)***

Lk 1: 26-38  
Jn 1: 35-51





***“You have at your disposal neither the past nor the future, you can only live in the present moment”.  
(Marie Rivier)***

Open your eyes to everything that is happening in order to live in the present, to enjoy the here and now. We live most of our time with our minds elsewhere. Routine makes us live in an automatic mode, too busy remembering the past and worrying about the future.

We waste our lives between the past and the future when all we really have is the present.

Living in the present is about making life happen, appreciating the details, giving life to what each day brings.

Life is a gift, discover God in everything and you will find happiness.

Mk 8: 36-37  
Eccl 3: 1-8



**LIVE**  
**THE PRESENT,**  
**THE NOW**



**To know Jesus, to live Jesus, to reveal Jesus with our life: that is our vocation.**

When life flows in you, it cannot be hidden, it cannot be concealed. We feel called to live and give life, to transmit what we have received from God.

**Marie Rivier fell in love with young people**, with their enthusiasm, with their desire to dream with open eyes, with their hearts open to love in capital letters. And she walked with them to show them the essence of life, the joy of the Gospel, the revolution of love.

Young people committed to life, with their feet on the ground, standing beside the little ones.

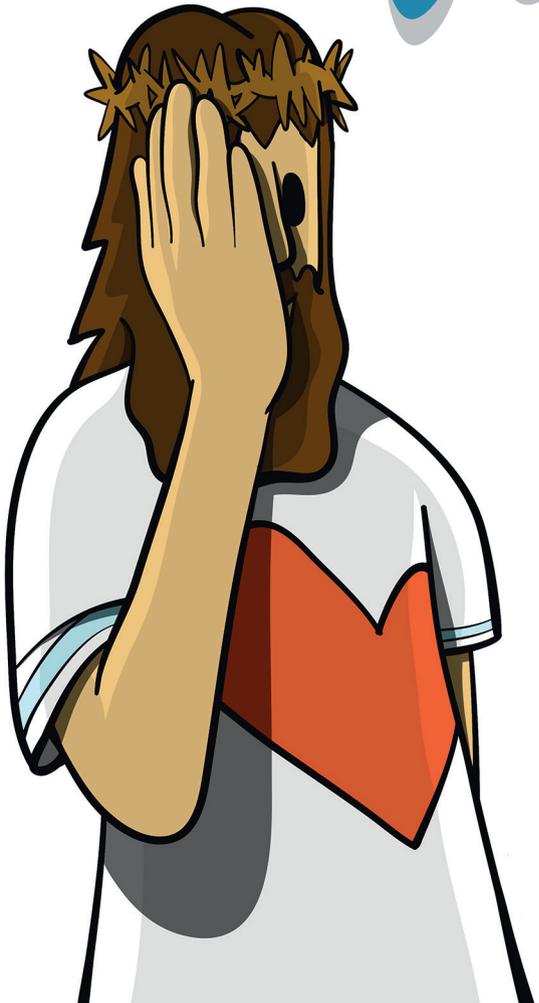
**We are PRESENTATION.**

Gal 5: 13-14  
1 Tim 4: 12



# Woman apostle

*This work is not mine, it is God's.*





**Marie Rivier felt an impulse in her heart to tirelessly bring Jesus to the whole world.** From within, she learned to look beyond, to see the needs of the world, to listen to the people.

She does not give up, she always kept her smile. **She was a woman who, despite her doubts and fears, walked with confidence because she knew that God strengthened her in her weaknesses.**

Everywhere, in the most hidden corner, in a sad look, in a heart of stone, in tired hands, she multiplied herself to speak about Jesus and bring his love, to bring light and hope to all those who did not know him yet.

She wanted to share all that she had seen and heard since she was a little girl, to recount what the Lord had done with her, to bring this life to all, so that all might live.

Mk 10: 27  
2 Cor 12: 9-10





**Commitment to the poor marked the life of Marie Rivier and she went so far as to say that if at any time the Congregation forgot about them, she would prefer that it disappear.**

Caring for the needs of people was her priority. Giving every person what they needed meant stopping, listening and looking them in the eye.

Being attentive to the desires and hopes of others, to their fears and their needs makes us all richer because it unites us beyond the material things that we can share.

Marie Rivier never refused to help anyone, because when you look into the heart, it is difficult to turn your face away.

Mt 5:1-12  
Mt 25:31-46





To love Jesus with all one's heart, with all one's soul, with all one's strength.

To love him requires a heart full of love, a heart where calm, authenticity and silence dwell. ***Our first task is that of the heart,*** to take care of it, to listen to it, to love it. To love oneself in order to be able to give love, that is the revolution.

God manifests himself in the simple hearts that seek him sincerely. Being open to life, being honest with what is in our heart, will allow us to approach others and share life.

Do not be afraid to show yourself as you are, because that is what will make you great.

Do not be afraid of the moments of silence, of solitude, because you will be able to listen to your heart, to encounter yourself and God and this will make you strong.

Do not be afraid to be faithful to your heart because this will bring you closer to others and make you happy.

Mk 12: 28-30  
Rom 8: 35-39





Our Foundress said: ***Let us come together and begin a school!***

Education is at the heart of our mission. **Our charism is to proclaim the Gospel and the love of Jesus.** In schools we grow together on the basis of these values: love, freedom, family spirit.

Teaching, accompanying, supporting, welcoming, forming and loving each and every person who passes through our centers is undoubtedly the best legacy that Marie Rivier has left us.

This means putting the person at the center, seeing their hopes, their dreams, their strengths, their difficulties, their needs and responding to them as Jesus would. Only in this way will each person feel loved and be able to grow.

Lk 13: 20-21  
Lk 2: 41-52





**Marie Rivier showed us the face of Jesus in the humble, in simple people, in the little ones.**

Poverty calls us to hope, not only to provide for the basic needs of the poor. To give what we have left over is to accept injustice and inequality as something normal and this is certainly not the case.

Wealth is what we are, not what we have; our poverty lies in living for and in the pursuit of things.

Reach out to people, even if they have nothing, open your eyes to reality, let yourself be touched.

To make this world a better place where we can all live with dignity, we must change our way of seeing things.

1 Jn 4: 20-21  
Is 58: 1-12







Totally open to the world and to life, **this is how Marie Rivier died on February 3, 1838.**

Her life was a window open to the world; she knew how to be attentive to all things, from the most insignificant to the greatest needs of people. She took care of the details because she knew that God lived there. Everything she did was a breath of fresh air that transformed life at a time when difficulties were many and the resources were few.

An open window to contemplate the greatness of God in nature, to meet Him everywhere, in every person.

Marie Rivier left us the legacy of this openness to life in capital letters. She invites us to go out to meet others, to open wide our windows and to embrace the world.

Jn 14: 26  
1 Cor 1: 26-31





**Marie Rivier, a courageous woman who lived love to the fullest.** A love that transformed her life and that of many people.

It is in the encounter with people, in this one-on-one encounter, that Marie Rivier revealed to us **the sacrament of Mercy**, which is nothing other than a call to look at life, to bring people closer to the face of God. It is a commitment to others, it is the creation of relationships and community.

To look sincerely into the eyes of the other entails courage, it is to be willing to let life transform us, it is to live with intensity.

Accepting our differences and from there building a big **family**, sharing life and faith in order to be a sign of the Kingdom of God, walking hand in hand, that is the adventure we are called to live.

1 P 3: 15  
1 Cor 13: 1-13





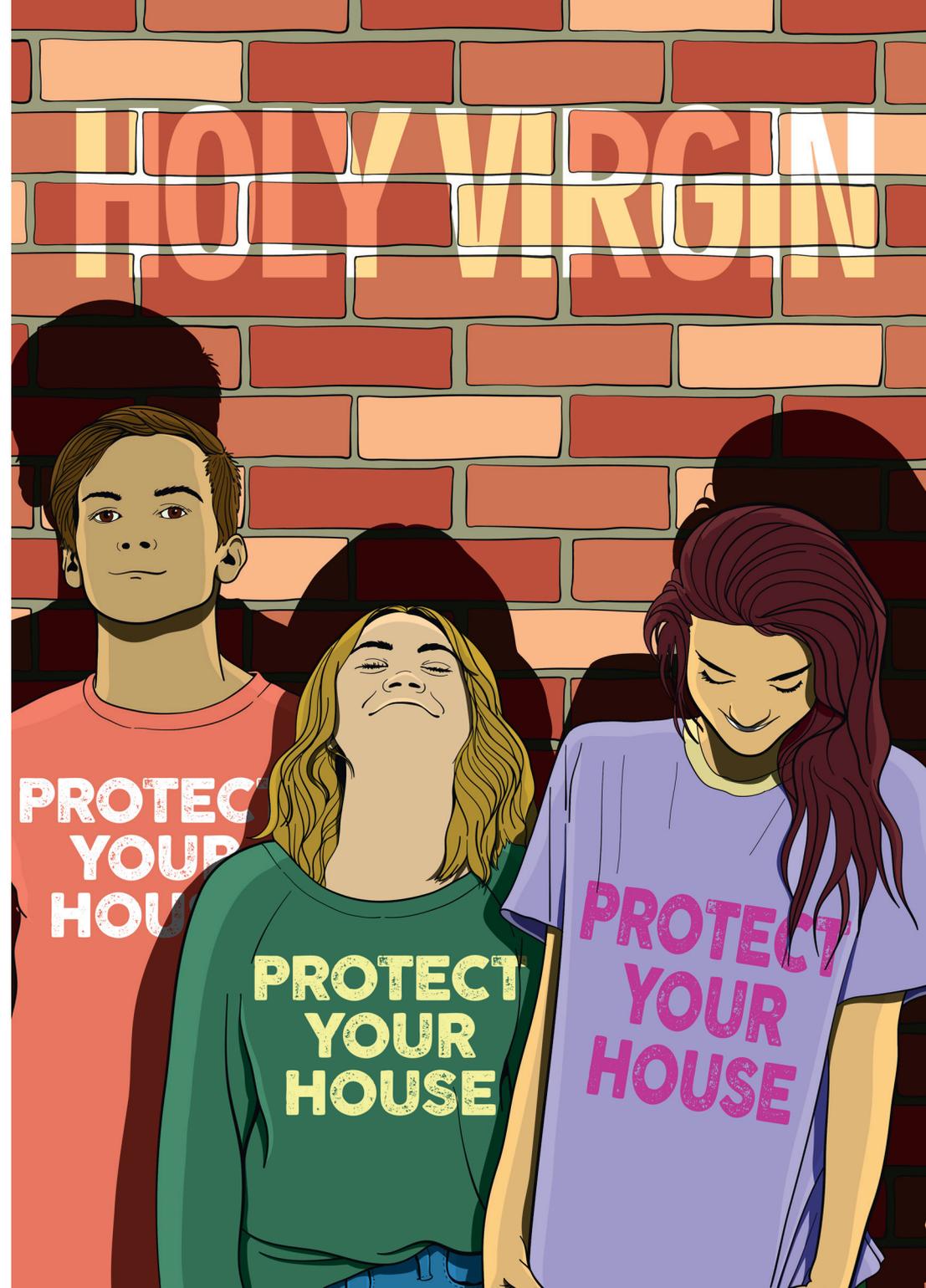
Marie Rivier felt the need to express her absolute trust in Mary in a visible and permanent way, and for this reason she had this phrase engraved on the doors of her communities: **"Holy Virgin, protect your house"**, which reminds us that we are her children and that she is our protective Mother.

We are a house that welcomes, protects and cares, beyond stones and buildings. It is the hearts that create a home, that give life, that dedicate themselves.

Today we engrave in our souls in a visible way that Mary is everything for us, that we walk hand in hand with her and that everything is possible when she is the one who guards our heart.

Mary, protect your house.

Jn 19: 25-27  
1 Cor 3: 16-17





The Foundress had many projects, many dreams that soon began to come true.

***"One day my daughters will cross the seas."***

***(Marie Rivier)***

The Presentation of Mary is missionary and travels the world announcing the Gospel, opening houses, serving the poor, giving answers from the heart, being a fire that enlightens and enkindles other fires.

Today we are present in many parts of the world, we continue to be this fire that purifies, enlightens and gives warmth. With Jesus we are fire and he is the one who sends us and who gives meaning to our mission.

Today we are all part of this task, we are an important part of bringing the Good News to all hearts.

We are the protagonists of this story.

Mk 16: 15-20

Gn 12: 1-2

# We are Missionaries



LET US COME TOGETHER!



Let us walk confidently.





**We carry the love of God.**







CONGREGATION OF THE SISTERS OF THE PRESENTATION OF MARY