

INSTITUTE ID OF CHRIST THE REDEEMER IDENTE MISSIONARIES

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"Go throughout the whole world and proclaim the Gospel to all creatures!" (Mk 16:15)

June 29, 2009 was the Golden Jubilee of the Foundation of the Institute Id of Christ the Redeemer, Identé Missionaries, a new form of Consecrated Life in the Catholic Church.

1. Fernando Rielo: Founder

He was born in Madrid on August 28, 1923 into a very religious family. He spent his childhood surrounded by the affection of his parents and under the impression of being protected by our Heavenly Father, whose constant, close presence governed his whole life, and later marked the lifestyle of his spiritual sons and daughters. The Spanish Civil War jolted him directly from a happy childhood to a youth filled with suffering. At the age of sixteen, at Valsain (Segovia, Spain), an intimate experience marked him forever. It was the call of our Heavenly Father: "Be holy, my son, as I am holy." He himself stated, "And I promised Him that I would always repent of whatever displeased Him and would spend my whole existence seeking his will..., and I began to wish ardently that these words of the Father would enter into the hearts of all men."

Fernando Rielo's intense spirituality reached its highest expression in founding the Institute Id of Christ the Redeemer (Identé Missionaries)

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in 1959, enthusiastically received by the Bishop of the Diocese of Tenerife, the Most Rev. Domingo Pérez Cáceres. On January 23, 1994 it was recognized as a Public Association of the Faithful, and on October 22, 2004 it was raised to the status of an Institute of Consecrated Life. On July 11, 2009, Pope Benedict XVI raised it to Pontifical Right. Fernando Rielo, our founder, died on December 6, 2004.

2. Charism

"Identé" is a neologism created by our Founder, based on the imperative in Spanish of "Go", the first word of the Apostolic command (Mt 28:19), extended to tell us "how" we must walk: "identifying ourselves constantly with Christ Crucified." It means, then, two things: to walk in this earthly life, following Christ, and to strive to identify ourselves with Him, as Son of our Heavenly Father, in communion with the Holy Spirit. Three verses of the Gospel articulate the Identé charism: the imperative "Be holy as your Heavenly Father is holy" (Mt 5:48); the promise "For when two or three are gathered together in my name, there I am in the midst of them" (Mt 18:20); and the mission "Go into the whole world and proclaim the gospel to every creature" (Mk 16:15).

The *Identé charism* is manifest in following and identifying with Christ, under the action of the Holy Spirit, living out and bearing witness to a filial consciousness whose model of holiness is the Father.

The specific domains of the charism are *to promote and fortify the Catholic faith*, especially among young people who have drifted away from Christ, and *apologetic dialogue with intellectuals* for the propagation and defense of revealed truth, wherever the Church or society needs it most.

The motto of the Institute is "Believe and Hope," pointing to a faith and hope that are alive and active, always grounded in living charity, and this is how they nourish the apostolic life of its members. This *spirituality*, according to the Founder, is also distinguished by: *Veneration of the Most Blessed Virgin* with a new title: *Our Lady of the Mystical Life*, Mother and Teacher of spiritual life, to whom a chapel in Madrid's Almudena Cathedral is dedicated; and also by *Veneration of St. Joseph*.

The Identé Missionaries aspire to holiness with firm dedication to the apostolate and preparation for defending the Faith. This aspiration is grounded in the Gospel:

- *Through the imperative of holiness:* “Be perfect as your Heavenly Father is perfect” (Mt 5:48) and its *structuring indication:* “If you want to be perfect, go, sell all you possess, and give it to the poor, and you will have a treasure in heaven; then come and follow me” (Mt 19:21).
- *Through the promise of the presence of Christ:* “Wherever two or three are gathered in my name, I am present in their midst” (Mt 18:29), and its *family spirit:* “May they all be one, as You, Father, are in me and I in you, may all of them also be one in us” (Jn 17:21).
- *Through the mission of evangelizing:* “Go throughout the world and proclaim the Good News to all creation” (Mk 16:15), and its *form of charity,* because all apostolic communication must have the living oblation of charity to an ever-growing “maximum” in order to receive the blessing of our Heavenly Father: “By this they will know that you are my disciples: if you show charity towards one another” (Jn 13:35).

Holiness is for everyone, but not everyone is called to embrace a celibate life. The Founder follows St. Paul’s counsel given in 1 Cor 7:17. The heart of the Idente charism is in the aspiration to share a life of holiness. This is done by means of a spiritual direction in common, with the public profession of vows, and two special promises regarding the apostolate and study for defending the Magisterium of the Church. We strive to convey the Gospel message to everyone so that all may know our Heavenly Father and turn towards Him with a personal consciousness of being His children. There are two branches, one for men and one for women. We all live the very same spirituality, since we are called to live this same life of holiness, either through celibacy in community life or as married persons in one’s own family. Our Founding Father preferred to call us “an adorable family of brothers and sisters.”

We have always had many friends and collaborators who wish to share our charism and characteristic spiritual direction, participating in our many activities, projects and services, but who do not feel called to profess vows. Very early in our foundation as an Institute of Consecrated Life, our Founder established *Idente Youth* as an ecumenical, international association, to bring all youth to a humanistic formation and personal commitment to strive for living the highest human ideals in their relationship with God, Nature and Society. Later on, as a long-term goal of *Idente Youth*, he established the *World Youth Parliament* to provide a platform within the existing international forum for youth to give voice to authentic peace-making and intercultural respect and celebration of life and beauty. The first

international sessions began in 2009 (during our Golden Jubilee celebrations in Rome), and just recently in August, 2010, the WYP presented the Magna Carta of Values for a New Civilization at the United Nations in New York City. The expansion of this mammoth task among youth worldwide has also been taken up by the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India's Catholic Youth Commission who is sincerely working on its development in India.

Our Founding Father has always been concerned that we be able to walk throughout the world doing good to all, in following Christ's footsteps. For this reason, he has created still other foundations to promote the highest possible values and to work for restoring a Humanity that has been wounded by evil, pain, injustice and death. These deal with different fields: in the world of thought, the *Identé School*, to develop Christian humanism; in the world of culture, the *Fernando Rielo Foundation*, to foment transcendental values of culture; in the world of science, the *Biomedical School*, to train medical professionals, mainly in physician-patient relationships and in new developments in treatments for tropical diseases; the *Fernando Rielo Association of Healthcare and Research* to create social volunteer corps for giving medical assistance to those who are most in need.

In 23 nations, we currently number about 500 of consecrated life, 1000 external members, 20,000 in Identé Youth and World Youth Parliament, 30,000 in our Identé Family.

3. Our Missions

The evangelizing action of the members of the Institute is carried out in a variety of missions in Europe, Africa, America and Asia, according to the requests of local churches and the needs of each historical epoch. The missions concretely involve social action and cooperation with associations or foundations pursuing humanitarian aims. "The social sensitivity of the Institute," the Founder states, "takes into account the frustrations prompted by human indigence under all aspects: illness, superstition and ignorance, injustice, and the sadness of life in general. Your purpose, dear sons and daughters, is the same as Christ's: to go through this life doing good to everyone." Accordingly, this social projection embraces all human dimensions: education, health, teaching, administration, art, and literature. The care of abandoned children, suffering from physical, economic, cultural, and spiritual deprivation are received in residences, monastic dwellings, or "Cities of the Child Jesus" for their integral human advancement. The missions thereby foster international cooperation with the poorest countries.

The goal is a *new evangelization* which, with true vitality and commitment, seeks the spiritual and cultural restoration of persons, mentalities, and environments that, as happens in contemporary society, may be immersed in materialism, hedonism, and meaninglessness.

3.1. Europe

After a decade of consolidation in Spain, foundations were begun in Italy, France, Turkey, Germany, Belgium, and the Czech Republic. The charism of holiness in common, through friendship and a family spirit, is lived by way of cultural, study and research foundations, and agreements with universities, associations, and cultural centers. Also activity in parishes, monasteries, university centers, and secondary schools is significant.

3.2. America

For over thirty years missions have been founded in Brazil, Peru, Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Chile, Mexico, and the United States. The apostolate in these countries is particularly aimed at liberation from spiritual, moral, and social poverty by administering universities, schools, hospitals, and parishes and creating Monastic Cities of the Child Jesus, such as those in La Paz, Santa Cruz de la Sierra, and Abancay.

3.3. Asia

Missions have been founded in Thailand, India, the Philippines, and Japan. Answering the needs according to the characteristics of each culture, our apostolic activity looks especially to answer to children and adolescents in difficulty, mainly in parishes, universities, and schools, including significant ecumenical relations, with rich intercultural dialogue based on love and friendship.

3.4. Africa

In Yaoundé (Cameroon), activity in evangelization, teaching and health care is carried out, especially focused on preventing AIDS and treating the sick. The spiritual and human education of children and young people takes place in parishes, youth centers, and schools for professional training, especially for young women. A contribution is thus made to developing the ideal of holiness embodied in the highest values defining the human person in all integrity.

"I ask God that the members of the institution may be characterized by joy, a joy in all things that is not like the fleeting happiness of this world."

Fernando Rielo