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22 January

Blessed LAURA VICUÑA adolescent

Optional Memorial
(For the Institute of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians: *Memorial*)

Laura Vicuña was born at Santiago, Chile, on 5 April 1891, and was educated in line with the *preventive system* of St John Bosco at the "Mary Help of Christians" College in the Argentinean Andes. As a happy and joyful adolescent she soon became a model of friendship with Jesus, of apostolic charity among her companions, and of fidelity to her daily duties.

In complete trust she endured with heroic fortitude physical and moral sufferings well beyond her age. Faithful to the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, she did not hesitate to offer herself as a victim to bring her mother back to the way of salvation. She died on 22 January 1904 at Junín de los Andes, Argentina. John Paul II beatified her on 3 September 1988 at Castelnuovo Don Bosco, Asti, on the *Hill of the youthful beatitudes*.

From the Common of Women Saints. *Psalms of the day, from the psalter.*

Office of Readings

SECOND READING

From the "Life of Laura Vicuña" written by Fr Augusto Crestanello

(*Sacra pro causis sanctorum Congregatio, Beatificationis et Canonizationis Servae Dei Laurae Vicunia, Summarium, Roma 1969, 227ss passim*)

The will of God is the best prayer

From her entrance to the College, says the Sister Superior, there was evident in Laura a degree of common sense above her age and a true inclination to piety. Her innocent heart found no peace or rest except in the things of God. Even though still a young child, her devotion was profound without any affectation or exaggeration.

In everything she was simple and natural. While praying it was clear that her mind was fixed on what she was doing. Rarely was she aware of what might be going on around her, and it was frequently necessary to tell her that someone was calling her or that it was time to leave the chapel.

The same attention she showed in fulfilling all her other duties. She had well understood and she applied to herself the saying: "Age quod agis" ("Do well whatever you are doing"), and with a holy freedom of spirit she moved joyfully and willingly from church to classroom, and from there to workshop or any other activity, or to recreation.

"For me", she used to say, "praying or working is the same thing; it is all the same to me whether I am praying or playing, praying or sleeping. By doing as I am told I am doing what God wants me to do, and that is what I too want to do; this is my best way of praying".

"After she had got to know what piety really means", wrote her Sister Superior, "she loved it and attained so high and constant a gift of prayer that even in recreation she was evidently absorbed in God".

"It seems to me", she used to say, "that it is God himself who keeps alive in me the awareness of his divine Presence. Wherever I am, in class or in the playground, this knowledge is with me, and it helps me and strengthens me".

"But", objected her confessor, "will it not happen that if you have such thoughts always in your mind it will lead you to neglect your duties?"

"Ah no, Father", she replied. "I know that this thought helps me to do everything better and does not disturb me at all, because it is not that I am always thinking of it but that without thinking of it directly at all, the memory makes me happy".

RESPONSORY

Cf. Ps 70,17; 74,2; 88,1; Is 49,2

R/. O God, you have taught me from my youth: * I proclaim your wonders still.

V/. I held me safe in the shelter of his hand:

R/. I proclaim your wonders still.

The concluding prayer as at Morning Prayer.

Morning Prayer

SCRIPTURE READING

Rm 12, 1-2

My brothers, I implore you by God's mercy to offer your very selves to him: a living sacrifice, dedicated and fit for his acceptance; the worship offered by mind and heart. Adapt yourselves no longer to the pattern of this present world, but let your minds be remade, and your whole nature thus transformed. Then you will be able to discern the will of God, what is good, acceptable and perfect.

SHORT RESPONSORY

R/. God is her support * with the light of his face.

God is her support with the light of his face.

V/. She can never waver: God is with her,

* with the light of his face.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.

God is her support with the light of his face.

Ant. al Ben. God has revealed to little ones the mysteries of the Kingdom

INTERCESSIONS

Let us make our prayer in filial exultation to God our Father, the source of all holiness, and let us say:

You are our life, O Lord

Father, in every age you enrich the Church with ever new models of youthful holiness:

– grant that we may be faithful to our baptismal promises, and so experience the joy of following Christ.

You inspire the making of courageous decisions in imitation of your Son:

– accept the offering of our life that we may grow in communion with you and with our neighbour.

You willed that the Christian family should be an image of your love:

- grant that parents may live their self-donation with faithful generosity.

By the gift of your Spirit you rendered the young Laura strong in faith, pure in heart, and heroic in love:

- stir up in adolescents and young people the will to serve you through joyful dedication to their companions.

You who nourish and renew us with your word and sacraments:

- make us a sign of your loving kindness for those we meet today on our path through life.

Our Father.

PRAYER

Father, in your infinite tenderness, you united strength of spirit and purity of innocence in the young girl Laura Vicuña; through her intercession give us courage to overcome the trials of life and to show the world the happiness of the pure of heart. Through Our Lord

Evening Prayer

SCRIPTURE READING

Rm 8, 28-30

We are well assured that everything helps to secure the good of those who love God, those whom he has called in fulfilment of his design. All those who from the first were known to him, he has destined from the first to be moulded into the image of his Son, who is thus to become the eldest-born among many brethren. So predestined, he called them; so called, he justified them; so justified, he glorified them.

SHORT RESPONSORY

R/. God has chosen her * He chose her before she was born.

God has chosen her. He chose her before she was born.

V/. He brought her to live in his own dwelling place,

* He chose her before she was born.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.

God has chosen her. He chose her before she was born.

Ant. At the Magn Greater love has no man than this,;
that a man lay down his life for his friends.

INTERCESSIONS

Let us give thanks with joy to God our Father for the wonders he has worked in his saints, and let us say:

Father, hear our prayer.

Raise up in your Church wise and enlightened leaders:

- that they may help young people to know and courageously embrace your plan of life.

Protect the young who live amidst the difficulties and temptations of the present day:

- that they may not be overcome by selfishness, loneliness and confusion.

Give to those who are suffering in body and spirit the wisdom of the cross:

- that following the example of Blessed Laura they may come to know the purifying and redeeming value of affliction.

Strengthen and sustain the missionaries of the Gospel:

- that they may foster authentic human and Christian values for the progress of peoples.

Remember those who have today closed their eyes to this earthly life:

- admit them to your heavenly dwelling with the angels and saints.

Our Father.

PRAYER

Father, in your infinite tenderness, you united strength of spirit and purity of innocence in the young girl Laura Vicuña; through her intercession give us courage to overcome the trials of life and to show the world the happiness of the pure of heart. Through Our Lord