
SPIRITUAL RETREAT

SEPTEMBER
2026



Orden de la Compañía de María Nuestra Señora
PROVINCIA DEL PACÍFICO
| *Order of the Company of Mary Our Lady*



RETREAT FOR THE MONTH OF SEPTEMBER 2026

Carrying one's cross not only implies suffering, but also the commitment to follow Christ by giving love to one's neighbor and living with hope.

For the apostle Paul, the cross is the ultimate demonstration of God's power and wisdom, in contrast to human logic.



The Good News of the Gospel: the cross is not just a reminder of death, it is a tree of life. It shows us a better and new way of living because it is rooted in love, an unconditional love. Its arms reach out to embrace everyone and everything: people, animals, rivers, forests, the air we breathe. It invites us to live differently. **How do we exalt the cross today?** We exalt the cross when we recognize God not only in the Church, but also in creation: in the singing of birds, in the laughter of children, in the shade of trees, or in separated families who are reunited.

In the Gospel John 15:13: *"Greater love hath no one than this, that he lays down his life for his friends."* From this perspective, the cross ceases to be just an instrument of Roman execution to become the **supreme symbol of God's friendship with humanity**. It is the act where it is demonstrated that a true friend does not abandon the suffering of a friend, but assumes it personally for the good of the other.



Jeanne grew up under the influence of her uncle, the famous philosopher **Michael de Montaigne**, author of the famous *Essays* and a great theorist on friendship. The thought of her family taught her that:

- Sincere and close dialogue is a form of living pedagogy.
- Conversation with friends should be based on **loyalty, courtesy, and trust**.
- Good friends are essential confidants for overcoming doubts and crises of faith.

Strongly influenced by the Jesuits, Jeanne adopted the concept of **"friends in the Lord."** In her communities of religious and laity, she fostered a deep union with a clear purpose:

- Mutual affection sustains and gives strength during moments of missionary difficulty.
- One of her most remembered maxims towards her colleagues is: **"Keep the friendship among you"**.

Saint Jeanne de Lestonnac understood that fraternity and union were vital to sustain the educational mission. In her schools, friendship is defined as an agent that educates, helping students to live together and support one another.

Sharing roots with the spirituality of Saint Ignatius of Loyola, friendship is lived as a path of transparency, authenticity and the search for the common good.

To live marked and sustained by the Lord and his Project of love



"Put me as a seal on your heart, as a seal on your arm, for love is strong as death." Like a seal on your heart: That means being closely united to Jesus, just as the figure is imprinted on the seal.

Ultimately, it is a matter of our allowing that his Face be manifested in us...the face of that Jesus who walked in history, who related to people, who touched and allowed himself to be touched...may He become flesh in our flesh and blood in our blood through the action of the Spirit in us. We count on his help. The text of the Book of Exodus expresses it very well: "Moses went up to the mountain of God, and the Lord called him from the mountain and said to him, 'Speak thus to the house of Jacob, say to the children of Israel, 'You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and I carried you on eagles' wings, and I brought you to me.'" (Ex. 19:3 -4)

It is one of the most beautiful images in the Old Testament to refer to God. The Lord carries us on eagle wings. The eagle is a symbol of power, strength, energy... categories that are usually applied to the masculine, but here the eagle has the figure of a father and mother, because it carries its chicks on its wings and leads them.

"Live in the present and do not desire anything else... enjoy what you have, don't try to change what you can't..."



Today's societies mark the present as a place in which to live, not to think beyond it. But I say to you: **"Open yourselves to the arrival of the amazing God, to the God who is eternal newness."** God bursts into this present not as always, not as the same, but as the God of surprises, of eternal newness. **What have you heard and what does the Lord want to tell us at this moment?**

Being Positive Always
Messages for self-improvement
and to share

**EACH DECISION
THAT WE MAKE
OPENS NEW ROADS FOR US:
ROADS WHICH CAN BECOME
UNCERTAIN
BUT MAY ALSO BE FILLED
WITH POSSIBILITIES**

When a path is opened, there are losses and there are opportunities. Newness is accompanied by losses; something has to be left behind for the new to emerge. **How do you face this new stage?**

- It is time to become aware of the fears, misgivings and resistances that arise when we see that we are less, when we are getting older or sick. Face this moment decisively. Assume and welcome life, the here and now.

Everything that seems to us to be loss and diminishment, can be a way of life; it depends on how we face it. "Learn to boast of our weaknesses." (2 Cor. 8:9)

We have a model, Christ: "He, being rich, became poor for us, that He might enrich us by his poverty." If we understood the

depth of what we are told here, we would experience openness to newness in a radically new way, because losses, nights, poverty... will enrich us because He has enriched us with his poverty.

(Rome, July 2, 2025, Elisa Estévez)

Living friendship in religious communities is a path of spiritual and human growth, based on love of neighbor, mutual support and the example of Jesus with his disciples.

What do the example of the following relationships teach us?

David and Jonathan (1 Samuel 18:1-5; 19:1-7)

Ruth and Naomi (Ruth)

Jesus and his apostles. (John 15:12-17)

End your prayer by praying an Our Father and Hail Mary.



