

THE BOND OF CHARITY 3D

A JOURNEY OF FORMATION
FOR THE GUANELLIAN FAMILY

2022 - 2023



I Especially Ask Christians In Communities Throughout The World To Offer A Radiant And Attractive Witness Of Fraternal Communion. Let Everyone Admire How You Care For One Another, And How You Encourage And Accompany One Another: "By This Everyone Will Know That You Are My Disciples, If You Have Love For One Another" (Jr 13:35). (EQ N.99).

POPE FRANCIS

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PRESENTATION

The bond of charity 3 D

It is a beautiful idea coming from the first meeting of the General Councils of the DSMP and SoC and the World Council of the Guanellian Cooperators. The history-making date was October 2nd, 2021. The members of the three Councils of the Guanellian Family, meeting online, wanted to share and get better acquainted. They wanted to face the Family future starting from formation, to lay solid foundations of fraternity and collaboration. All of us were sensing the value of being members of the same Family and of having a common mediator among us and with the Father, don Guanella who surely was rejoicing with us on that beautiful day. Also, thanks to this moment of communication, the bond of charity among us was strengthened.

We felt the need of having a common theme to strengthen our unity starting from Baptism and form the charism: this was the conclusion. The bond of charity was the first theme chosen for this formation journey. Just as the Founder was dreaming: Sisters, priests, lay persons, united by an unbreakable bond, charity that never fails.

The Founder's thought was immediate: *"We are united especially by the bond of charity, as the life of God poured forth into our hearts by the Spirit, and the love of individuals who enjoy living and working together"* (DLG, MM 1889, R. 1899, R. 1905).

Therefore, it is an important duty for all Guanellians to aim high in charity, since it is *the life of God poured forth by the Spirit*. The Founder also reminds us, in his 1910 Regulations: *"We are debtors to one another; the inner richness of each intensifies the unity of all, while each infidelity, even if secret, destroys it"* (DLG, R 1910).

We set up a committee made of DSMP, SoC and GC to prepare these formation guidelines for our Guanellian Family for the coming years 2022.2023 and today we offer you this precious and nutritious fruit for our growth.

The handbook finds its foundation on the Word of God, on the Founder's writings, and the expressions of Pope Francis. With a down-on-earth style, capable to join faith and life, it marks out a precise itinerary. The content will help us to awaken in us the essential value and grow as Guanellians in that charity for which Christ made himself all to all.

Often, we sing that "love is what matters". What makes the difference is the way we establish and carry on our interrelations. It cannot be simply a feeling. According to St. Luigi Guanella we grow inasmuch as we live out the "bond of charity". He was so convinced of this that in 1899 he wrote: *"Religious congregations who sprouted along the centuries, grew inasmuch as they had the good grace to love one another in the Lord"* (SpC. 974, Reg. FSC 1899). It is a matter of survival, and of possible renewal of our mission.

As those in charge of the Guanellian Family, we thank the committee who worked with wisdom to prepare the text, giving us a real example of family spirit.

We welcome this booklet as a means to continue our journey to holiness together, as children of St. Louis Guanella, in the synodal Church. Let us be deeply involved, personally, in groups and communities. We just finished celebrating the tenth anniversary of the Founder's canonization. Living up what this text offers, we will make don Guanella proud of us. May his way, in fidelity to charity, become our way, our holiness, our happiness.

This is our wish for the entire Guanellian Family

Have a blessed journey!

Suor Neuza Giordani

P. Umberto Brugnoli

Sig. Paulo Sivieri

INTRODUCTION TO BEGIN OUR JOURNEY

St. Louis Guanella wants charity to be reigning as a Queen in his Homes. This is the “*bond that binds hearts, simple and noble bond*”, through it, Jesus attracts hearts and keeps them united to build up “*one true family, believing ... loving ... working together*”.

Thus, the Guanellian houses can become “*a warm domestic hearth*”, “*a beacon of light*”, and work in such a way that “*the spirit of charity may be manifested in all hearts*”.

The bond of charity is a founding element of the charism that Daughters of St. Mary of Providence, Servants of Charity, and Guanellian Cooperators are called to live, share, implement, spread. For this reason – even if many studies have already been produced and published (see the Bibliography) – we chose it as the theme of the first handbook of unitary formation for the three Branches of the Guanellian Family.

An Ecclesial horizon

“The bond of charity 3D” is not meant to substitute the formation plans already established in Provinces, Communities, local Groups, and is offered for the two years 2022 – 2023.

We want to offer “home-made bread” to be shared and integrated in proper moments and ways, in the various programs.

It is made of three parts, different and linked one to the other, that will be sent by e-mail every 6/8 months, to gradually give the materials to be use at best in the different situations.

Providence made it so that this proposal comes in perfect accord with the synodal journey promoted by the Church for the coming two years, offering “the grace to move on together, to listen to one another, to start a discernment of our time, becoming in solidarity with the labours and desires of humanity”, as Pope Francis underlined in his opening speech.

“Communion, participation, and mission” are the keywords of the Synod: they can become key-words also for our common journey, because a well accomplished formation journey will ***strengthen communion, generate participation, animate to mission***: these are the three great aims of this initiatives.

A prophetic formation theme

The bond of charity, as charismatic principle is well known, discussed, often quoted together with the “family spirit”, but unfortunately often quoted more to lament its lacking rather than to offer a positive contribution.

Let us acknowledge in sincerity that our daily relations – in our family, at work, in community, among religious and lay men and women, among even the three branches of the Guanellian Family – do not always give a bright witness to the bond of charity.

Yet, Pope Francis in his Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* apparently requires this from all the baptised: “I especially ask Christians in communities throughout the world to offer a radiant and attractive witness of fraternal communion. Let everyone admire how you care for one another, and how you encourage and accompany one another: “By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another” (*Jn 13:35*)” (EG n.99).

Once again, the Pope and don Guanella agree to point to the ideal that can renew our existence, to make us able to contribute to make the Church “house and school of communion” (NMI n. 43).

But, do we have the courage to believe it possible for us? Do we have the imagination to start new procedures? Do we have the humility to do it “looking upwards” to the One for whom nothing is impossible, and “looking around” to the brothers and sisters Providence has put by our side?

“The bond of charity 3D” offers not only hints to pray, meditate, reflect, share, we would like to open paths of sharing for the Communities, the Groups, the three Branches of the Guanellian Family:

- to draw strength “from the Charity” which is God himself;
- to strengthen ways “in the charity” among us;
- to inspire plans “for the charity” in the Guanellian mission.

A journey with three dimensions

The formation path is developed in three parts that look at the same theme from different viewpoints, as in an ideal journey in three big dimensions of the bond of charity.

Don Guanella's thought and words, always highlighted with *italics* along the text, are the texture that carries the whole fabric of our journey, because only when we draw from our holy Founder's heart, we can keep an ever-clearer vision of our identity and mission.

The first chapter – **the FAQ about the bond of charity** – will help to gain awareness of the gift we received in the past, through the experience lived and passed on by our holy Founder. There are questions and answers meant to guide us to specify the origin, the content, the aim of this “bond” in don Guanella's thought and life story.

With the second chapter – **the bond of charity in daily relations** – we give a deeper look at the opportunities offered to us by the present, to transfigure our daily relations. Following the trace of chapter 4 of the letter *Amoris Laetitia* written by Pope Francis, and specifically of his comment of St. Paul's Hymn of Charity, three “Guanellian points of view” (a layman, a consecrated person, an educationist) try to analyse and describe the bond of love in daily life relations.

With the third chapter – **the bond of charity: work in progress** – we contemplate the future horizon, what we are asked to share in mission and for mission. We offer paths of reflection and directions for action to start afresh with renewed passion our journey, aware that the bond of charity, when lived with constancy, is source of light and strength.

At the close of each part, we find a little hint on the bond of charity as it was lived by Blessed Clair Bosatta.

A path that must be shared

What we offer can be used personally and in community in many different ways.

You could read it all through during a program of meetings or choose some passages to build up a program with a specific theme for your Group or Community, or use it as an instrument for meditation and prayer.

A particular way, very much in tune with the aim of this formation proposal, could be to organise in different places some common moments (face-to-face or online) to share about this text among Daughters of St. Mary of Providence, Servants of Charity, and Guanellian Cooperators, to practically strengthen the bond of charity among us.

We are aware of the danger for this handbook to lay forgotten in the dust of the many suggestions we receive, that is why we would like to support ourselves mutually along the way, sharing thoughts, new ideas, doubts, suggestions, witnesses.

From being a written text, this “Bond of charity 3D” could become a virtual space, open to all members of the Guanellian Family, to freely send writeups, photos, songs, ideas, questions ... and any other “fruit of the Spirit” should arise from our facing the bond of charity.

This is another way to strengthen together the ***Guanellian charity network*** that we are spreading together in the Church and in the world.

May our holy Founder and Blessed Clair help us to live the opportunities to meet and share offered by this path in the coming two years, as moments of grace, so that, with the joy of the charism given us, we can start some processes of personal and community renewal.

Pope Francis invites us to be each day “artisans of fraternity and solidarity”. With the Guanellian style, we can become “artisans of the bond of charity”: best wishes for a good work!

We give our holy Founder the last word, before starting this journey. He comforts and encourages us:

I am consoled by the charity that reigns among you

*And wish that you will be more and more united in Jesus Christ's charity
Avoiding all the flaws and dangers that oppose the practice of the same charity.*

At the beginning or at the end of each moment of meeting, we suggest this prayer:

O Lord, love is patient.
Help me learn how to wait for others' pace.
O Lord, love is kind.
Help me desire others' good before mine, even if it pains.
O Lord, love is not jealous.
Teach me how to rejoice for others' success.
O Lord, love is not boastful.
Give me humility so acknowledge your gifts.
O Lord, love is not inflated.
Guide me, to put others at the centre.
O Lord, love is not rude.
Make me see your face in others.
O Lord, love does not seek his own interest.
Make me experience the joy of free-giving.
O Lord, love is not quick-tempered.
Remove from my lips all words who can hurt.
O Lord, love does not brood over injury.
Give me a loving gaze.
O Lord, love does not rejoice over injustice.
Open my heart to my brethren's needs.
O Lord, love rejoices with the truth.
Guide our steps to You.
O Lord, give us the joy of feeling that You love us
With a love that bears all things, believes all things,
Hopes all things, endures all things.
Only then can we desire to give
Your Love to our brethren. Amen

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

MAGISTERIUM

- AL** Francis, Post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris laetitia* (19.03.2016).
NMI John Paul II, Apostolic Letter *Novo millennio ineunte* (06.01.2001).
VC John Paul II, Esortazione apostolica postsinodale *Vita consacrata* (25.03.1996).
VFC Congregation of the Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life, Instruction *Fraternal life in community* (02.02.1994).

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- DB** DSMP-SoC-GC, *Basic Document for Guanellian mission*, Roma, Centro Studi Guanelliani, Nuove Frontiere, Roma 1994.
- CWM** L. Guanella, *Come-with-me for the American Missionary Sisters*, (tr. F. Lain) Abor, VR (Ghana), 2008
- FAC** DSMP-SoC, *With Faith, Love, and Competence – Handbook for Guanellian Staff*, Nuove Frontiere, Roma 2000.
- LDP** Bollettino mensile della Casa Divina Provvidenza in Como (1892 – 1915) *La Divina Provvidenza*, Roma, Nuove Frontiere, Roma 1982.
- MM** L. Guanella, *Maxims of Spirit and Method of Action* (tr. F. Lain), Abor, VR (Ghana), 2008
- OFOM** L. Guanella, *Oh Father! Oh Mother!* (tr. P. Di Tullio), Pious Union of St. Joseph, Grass Lake MI, 2001.
- REG-10** L. Guanella, *1910 Regulations of the Servants of Charity* (tr. P. Di Tullio), Havertown P.Co., Broomall, PA, 1993.
- SAL** L. Guanella, *Scritti per l'anno liturgico*, in Opere edite ed inedite di Luigi Guanella, I, Centro Studi Guanelliani/Nuove Frontiere, Roma 1992.
- SMC** L. Guanella, *Scritti morali e catechistici*, in Opere edite ed inedite di Luigi Guanella, III, Centro Studi Guanelliani/Nuove Frontiere, Roma 1999.
- SpC** L. Guanella, *Scritti per le Congregazioni*, in Opere edite ed inedite di Luigi Guanella, IV, Centro Studi /Nuove Frontiere, Roma 1988.
- SIP** L. Guanella, *Scritti inediti e postumi*, in Opere edite ed inedite di Luigi Guanella, VI, Centro Studi Guanelliani/Nuove Frontiere, Roma 2015.
- SGC** Associazione Guanelliani Cooperatori, *Statuto generale*, Roma 2016.
- WFG3** L. Guanella, *Writings, Vol. 3* (tr. P. Di Tullio), Bristol, RI, 1987.
- WFG5** L. Guanella, *Writings, Vol. 5* (tr. P. Di Tullio), Havertown P.Co., Broomall, PA, 1993.
- Sulla frontiera** M. Carrera-P. Pellegrini, *Luigi Guanella sulla frontiera dell'emarginazione*, Nuove Frontiere, Roma 1986.
- Life** L. Mazzucchi, *The Life, the Spirit and the Works of Father Louis Guanella*, (tr. P. Di Tullio), Springfield, PA, 1985.

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PART ONE

INTRODUCTION

Part 1 of the formation journey proposed to the Guanellian Family for the years 2022-2023, contains two sections:

- a group of questions and answers, as a way to enter deeply in the history and the meaning of the bond of charity in Guanellian spirituality;
- some questions to be pondered – personally at first, then in community – to look at my/our experience in the light of this founding value.

FAQ ABOUT THE BOND OF CHARITY Questions to go into the deep and the thick

Frequently Asked Questions, FAQ, about the issue BOND OF CHARITY.

✓ Why did don Guanella think of the bond of charity?

Don Luigi Guanella “thought that he should closely unite the members of his Institute with the sole bond of charity, in imitation of some other religious society ”.

"There was a moment, we do not know precisely when, he thought that he should closely unite the members of his Institute with the sole bond of charity, in imitation of some other religious society. This could have been either for the purpose of fleeing the dangers of fiscal and political persecutions or for avoiding the danger that the papal approval, by stifling his initiative, might destroy the spirit and the direction of his Institute. But, above all, Father Guanella feared that his own spirit of trust and abandonment to Divine Providence, without depending upon human prudence excessively, might be destroyed, suffocating thus its development” (Life p. 148)

✓ Where did don Guanella draw the bond of charity from? Where did he find it? Where did he take it from?

He found it in the Bible:

Acts 4:32-35 32

³²The community of believers was of one heart and mind, and no one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they had everything in common.

Psalm 132 (often repeated by Don Guanella)

Oh, how good and how sweet it is

When brethren live together!

Hosea 11:1-4

v. 4 I drew them with human cords, with bands of love.

Colossians 3

v. 14 And over all these put-on love, that is, the bond of perfection.

- In the community or in the association a *Lectio Divina* could be prepared and done on the Hymn of Charity (1st letter to the Corinthians) or on a Gospel text as the “priestly prayer” or the “parable of the vine and the branches”.

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✓ **Where did don Guanella learn the bond of charity?**

He learned it at home, in his family where there was a strong bond of love among them and a strong bond of charity for people outside the family; with don Serafino Balestra, «a miracle of activity and ingenuity», who opened the young student Guanella to the interest for culture, arts, science, techniques and industry, but also inspired him love and understanding for the poor, an inspiring figure, a model.

In the Salesian experience (1875-78) spent in Turin with don Bosco; in the parish experience, first at Prosto, then at Savogno; at Pianello and Como don Guanella accomplishes the bond of charity, first with the Sisters at Pianello and then fully at Como

Don Guanella took the bond of charity also from the saints, one among all, St. Therese of Avila

✓ **How did don Guanella understand the bond of charity?**

Don Guanella links the idea of bond of charity also to other ideas. For example: fraternal love, service, fraternity. When he uses the wording “bond of charity”, he points to different concepts according to the context and the circumstances: charity – unity of direction – union – communion – fraternal love.

- One could go deeper (in Italian language) looking for the word “vincolo” on Intratext – Opere Edite e Inedite, there are 49 captions.

Quotations on the bond of charity by don Guanella:

“It is the strength to grow in virtue”.

“It is charity to help one another”.

“It is the strength to carry on the mission”.

“It is an aid for personal sanctification”.

“It is an inaccessible fortress for the enemies of the world and of the devil”.

The bond of charity is *ad intra* (fraternal love) and *ad extra* (service to others).

The true bond of charity:

- Is the charity that respects other people’s times of growth, that allows others to be free, without pressing. It requires fraternal correction.
- Forces us to fraternal correction, which is not criticize or reprimand others, but living with your brother/sister kindly, with sweetness but also saying what is wrong, praying about it first, then approaching the person finding
 - the right way,
 - the right place,
 - and the right time
- it is saying truth in charity.
- It is a love that never lacks mercy
- It is a love that respect the other without prevaricate.
- It is a love that shows understanding and trust.

The bond of charity for St. Louis Guanella

- is an essential element of his Charism;
- is a particular aspect also of our mission.

It is a prophetic aspect, that St. Louis Guanella surprisingly required from his own in the 19th century, when times were not ready to understand, the Church was not approving community life for men and women together. Don Guanella was a charismatic and therefore could look beyond. Prophetic, because now we see practically communities that live fraternity united by the bond of charity.

Don Guanella also told us that:

“we are united principally by the bond of charity” ...

“this dimension of the Charism is the strength of our mission”

“it is the impulse for our life of perfection and holiness”.

The bond of charity is the source, the strength of our vocation and our mission. Therefore, we should foster mutual aid and reciprocal support.

Our relationship should be a reflex of the charity given us by God.

✓ **What should we do to keep this bond of charity among us?**

We need *“above all win it over the faults of likes and dislikes. We ought to beware of the spirit of criticism and never waste time and lose peace in gossip and frivolous conversations”* (SpC p.1153) Pope Francis defines gossip as a “sore”. “The disease of gossiping, grumbling and back-biting. I have already spoken many times about this disease, but never enough. It is a grave illness which begins simply, perhaps even in small talk, and takes over a person, making him become a *“sower of weeds”* (like Satan) and in many cases, a cold-blooded killer of the good name of our colleagues and confrères. It is the disease of cowardly persons who lack the courage to speak out directly, but instead speak behind other people’s backs. Saint Paul admonishes us to *do all things without grumbling or questioning, that you may be blameless and innocent”* (Phil 2:14-15). Brothers, let us be on our guard against the terrorism of gossip!” (Pope Francis – Speech to the Roman Curia, 12/22/2014).

✓ **What does bond of charity mean?**

First of all, it means to make my brother/sister part of the richness of what I have and especially of what I am.

In his Circular Letter of 1910 don Luigi tells us that the fraternity we are talking about is accomplished by making the brother/sister part of all the richness of one’s person *“as among friends, who share every good of body and mind”* (Reg-10 p.158). But this cannot rely simply on personal effort; we need to ask the Lord for the gift of *“a tender charity for our neighbour in general and for our brethren, [those nearer to us] in particular”* SpC p.1031).

How important it is, that all can give their contribution, and all can cooperate to the good management. For this aim there is need to avoid criticism and grumbling and passing judgment and being suspicious.

St. Louis writes: *“we ought to cure our faults with energy and sweetness”* being strong and delicate because faults spoil the bond of charity.

“It is good to suggest, in this, a sense of pity and a humble competition of charity and patience, and always encourage to the bond of charity” (SpC p.979).

Thus, all this means building up good relations, rapports of affection among us and with God.

The health of a community/association is not measured by its works, or the nice initiatives put in place, it is measured by fraternal relationship, how much love is circulating, how the members love one another.

✓ **What is the use of the bond of charity?**

The bond of charity is useful both for a better work, as a strong impulse for mission, and also for each person to grow in holiness.

It is most useful for the service we accomplish, the work we do. All of us, the religious and the laity, are called, united by this bond of love, to serve in a co-responsible manner.

Don Guanella wrote *“They should help one another willingly, in material things as well as by instructing one another in their individual duties.”* (Reg-10 p.140).

This fraternal help does not involve only things to be done, but especially the spiritual aspect.

“The confreres may help each other by praying for one another, giving mutual edification, tolerating one another patiently in the defects always present in any society of men.” (Reg-10 p.158).

“Each one should carry his brother’s load, as each enjoys his brother’s support” (SpC p.1031).

✓ **How can the bond of charity be accomplished today?**

How can we work and try to enlarge the tent of charity?

How can we make choices focusing on the bond of charity?

Don Guanella would answer that we can do it in any possible way ...

“You have no homeland anymore, because the whole world is your homeland. Your homeland is where God is, and God is everywhere” (CWM p.70).

Then, our charity should live out of love for God, for the brethren, should send us forth, should reach the world’s boundaries, should reach the periphery of humanity.

San Luigi wrote to his Sisters: *“The first bond of union is that of charity for which Jesus Christ said that those who love God must also love their neighbour, who is also God’s child; and that charity for which Jesus Christ prayed that all his disciples could be of one mind and one will as Jesus Christ was one with his Eternal Father.”* (SpC p. 213)

“The Lord draws souls to himself and keeps them united especially with the bond of Christian charity ... Charity is a bond that joins hearts ... Charity is a bond that makes hearts noble and great; it is as strong as martyrdom, as death, it is perseverant because it is a fire which, as it catches, consumes” (MM p.11)

What is required to make the bond of charity grow?

1) Create unity with God

If we are united with God, then we shall be more united among us, but this can be taken for granted to the point that it becomes not true: our daily experience tells us that we pray together, but not always are united among us.

St. Luigi wrote for his Sisters: *“the first bond of union is that charity for which Jesus Christ said that those who love God should also love their neighbours who are also children of God; and that charity for which Jesus Christ prayed that all his disciples should be of one thought and one will, as Jesus Christ was one with the Eternal Father”* (SpC p. 213).

2) Create the right environment

This bond, that is part of the original prophecy, must germinate. We have to create a welcoming environment, that fosters interpersonal relations. *“It is right for all those who dwell in the house to have the same trust and the same love they would have in their own house”* (SpC p. 710).

✓ **How can we build up a climate to create unity of purpose, fraternity?**

A group or a community environment can foster the growth of each person if Christ is at the centre. To make the bond of charity grow there is need of preparing a vital environment.

Here are four steps to build the right climate.

- 1) Have large views and open mind – don Guanella wrote: *“your character and the distinctive mark must be a spirit which is most tolerant, open-minded and inclined to mercy rather than justice.”* (Reg-10 p.74).
- 2) Live with joy – happiness – joyous charity. Psalm 132 How good and lovely when brothers live together! –don Leonardo Mazzucchi wrote “may every house become a house full of the genuine spirit of don Guanella, made happy by the joyous charity”. Don Guanella wrote: *“The spirit of joyfulness ought to be fostered ... The Sisters, the DSMP should move with the happiness of loving daughters ... a character that should distinguish you, little martyrs, is happiness”*.
- 3) Attention for prevention. Practice the preventive method that, before being a pedagogic method, is a lifestyle, a spirit to be established in an environment. *“We call preventive system of education and convenience the method of charity, of habit, of being together, by which superiors surround with fatherly affection their brethren and encircle them with prompt care, so that in the daily works no one will encounter any evil (no one should get hurt, sin, make errors – prevent) and along life journey all may reach a happy goal”* (nobody should be left back in life journey) (SpC p. 1029).
- 4) Abound in mercy. Don Guanella said: *“it is much better to abound in understanding and mercy rather than in rigor and justice”* (Reg-10 p.20) ... *“You catch more flies with a spoonful of honey than with one hundred barrels of vinegar”* (SMC p.1941). John Paul II in ‘Dives in misericordia’ wrote: “if you are called to help the poor, all the more you must be equipped with mercy”. Pope Francis at an ‘Angelus’ in September 2013, commented Luke’s parables and said: “if we don’t have mercy in our heart, we are not in communion with God, even if we observe all precepts, because it is love that saves, love, not the practice of precepts”.

PERSONAL QUESTIONS

Questions for personal reflection

Some questions for us.

- What does bond of charity mean for us today?
- How can we focus our life on the principle of the bond of charity?
- Can this prophetic intuition/inspiration of St. Luigi Guanella guide today my journey to holiness? My mission? My action? My charitable service? Or is it just the source of the beginnings? Did we lose this dimension of our charism today?

On the topic of charity don Guanella had some Bible passages very dear (“How good and happy living together”, “They were of one heart and one mind”).

- What are the Bible passages I cherish?
- Which Gospel passage do I take as an inspiration to live merciful charity?

Don Luigi Guanella links the “bond of charity” with the idea of fraternal love, service, solidarity, charity, unity of purpose.

- How do I live the bond of charity within my association/community?
- What effort do I put to live service and mutual help, respect and charity, welcoming and listening attitude, in my relations with others?
- Do I try to grow in virtue by avoiding gossip and criticism, overcoming sentiments of like/dislike, staying away from useless and frivolous conversations?

“Bond of charity” means first of all fraternal love. Fraternal charity grows in a “vital environment” with wide horizons, joy, attention to prevention, rich in mercy.

- Am I able to establish relationships of friendship and fraternity with other members of the Association or with my confreres/Sisters?
- How much do I share of my personal richness?
- How do I pray for unity and fraternal communion?
- Do I avoid grumbling and suspicion? Am I a sower of peace? Am I merciful? Do I foster fraternal love also by talking about God, about don Guanella, about my experience of faith?
- Do I put effort in respecting the time of growth of others?
- Do I welcome the other as she/he is?
- Can I accept fraternal correction? Am I able to show others their mistakes with charity?
- Do I show mercy in my words and joy in my behaviour?

Work on yourself.

How can I direct my life on the bond of charity?

- I will examine my attitudes and behaviours in my community or Association life.
- I will analyse and spot out the persons I don't love enough. I will think to a particular person I want to show more mercy to, in the future.
- I will think on my personal project of life and try to establish my future as cooperator or consecrated person allowing this primary insight of the Founder inspire me. In this way the “bond of charity” can give impulse and direction to my path to holiness.

WORDS AND EXAMPLES OF BLESSE CLAIR BOSATTA

“I will have much charity with my sisters, always offering myself willingly in whatever they will ask me, help them in their needs, pity them for their faults. I will watch out not to be rude, not to displease others, not to prefer one to the other, in short, to love them with holy charity and as a true religious”.
(Suor Chiara Bosatta *Proponimenti fatti nel giorno della mia vestizione*).

“Suor Chiara was the good angel of the house, always softening any sign of discontent, an angel of acceptance that cushioned the inevitable pains of this poor life. She was the angel of charity uniting souls, joining hearts and making the house happy. Even her presence was enough to give good example. The good she was doing in the house is incredible” (p.193).

“She made correction without showing herself angry or upset. Once, sr. Chiara made a reproach, with her usual good manner, to Gervasia Crosta who had trespassed the order of the sister, and Gervasia, maybe upset because some other sister had denounced her, answered harshly. Sr. Chiara lowered her eyes in silence. That silence remained imprinted in the young lady’s mind more than and long speech or reproach” (p. 205).

(Piero Pellegrini-Maria Luisa Oliva *La storia di Chiara* Nuove Frontiere, Roma 1991)

LOOKING FORWARD TO THE NEXT STEP ...

This is the end of the first part of the formation journey for the Guanellian Family proposed for the years 2022-2023. We are given several inputs to start reviewing our personal experience, and our group, community, Guanellian Family life, at the light of the founding value. From **the past** we had the heritage of the bond of charity, thanks to the experience of the Spirit as it was lived and passed on by our holy Founder.

We are encouraged not to let these inputs be lost, waiting to add others in the second part. There, with three “Guanellian” viewpoints, we will see the opportunities offered by **the present** to transfigure our daily relations.