

**A REFLECTION ON THE CONCRETE WAY OF LIVING
THE CHRISTIAN VOCATION AS A LAY PERSON
THAT CLAUDINE’S LIFE HAS INSPIRED.**

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I, Sunila Javaid, am writing of my personal experience of a special and incredible journey that began somewhere in my younger days in the 1970s. A journey, which back then, seemed like an elusive impossible dream. In whatever way I was moulded and shaped, in part, was because of the impact this person had in my life, who I’m now sure, was imbued with the spirit of a larger and much greater personality. Here is my part of the testimony.

In life, we come across many inspirational / charismatic personalities who prompt us to do good, but once in a while you encounter Ordinary people who, through their extraordinary works make you experience God in a unique way. They leave such an indelible mark of their honest and simple works of love that the lives touched by them are forever transformed.

As a young Jesus & Mary pupil, I first came into contact with Claudine through an illustrated book on her life. It was placed on a rack along with some other Religious magazines outside the school Chapel. I vividly recall taking it and reading it several times over. I felt an urgency to know, what was it that prompted that young girl to face all of her challenges, head on. It excited me and I began to thirst for more. I read and saw through the mind’s eye – what it felt to have an all-consuming emotion just course through your being and take over the mind, body and soul till you feel as if you’ve transcended to this whole new level of being Human. I guess it was my first experience of a “calling” – to join in the Mission of promoting the Kingdom of God and to be a living testimony of the Word.

This quest pushed me into the path of education – Claudine’s path. It was the need of the hour then, and most certainly, equally valid in today’s world. This was the start of my beautiful journey with Claudine’s inspiration. No doubt Christ is the integral part of our existence, and to see His path being followed by a person who in every sense is just like me - is truly mind blowing. To know and identify that things are bad is one thing, but to get up and not only find possible solutions but also to put those into concrete action, is another. Claudine’s life is all about taking “action,” and is a Practical approach to not only Uplift society but to also promote Peace and Harmony among the people – so form these girls that they are a blessing in every house they enter -

Today I can proudly say that I have completed my 31 years of Educating Youth in the Convent of Jesus and Mary, Lahore this Bicentenary. During these years I've come across hundreds of thousands of children-all from very diverse backgrounds- some very privileged while others belonged to the poorest of the poor. Even though the majority of the children in school are Muslims, and the outside environment is quite hostile, still we continue with the Mission of preparing these children in accordance with the Christian Values so these children become responsible people – ready to take their place in society.

To help keep things in perspective, the iconic image of Claudine holding onto those two raggedly dressed children, always popped in front of my eyes whenever I entered the class – It is quite a powerful embodiment of a maternal mentor, and an indicator of what it means to be a Jesus & Mary Family.

To sow and to nourish in these young tender minds the seeds of empathy, forgiveness, love, compassion, self-respect, confidence and above all hope, is what we as laity continue to endeavour . To lead by example, is so true of St. Claudine. Anyone who has come in contact with Claudine is motivated to follow in her footsteps. All that St. Claudine did in her life, reflected the Love of God and that is what is so beautiful and inspirational about her life – a life that exemplified living the Christian Vocation.

The selflessness of spirit and the diverse socio-economic background of the children, is what is so unique and attractive to Claudine's Mission. In all these years, Living the Christian vocation as laity, in present times is not easy, but then it was never promised to be so.

Pope John Paul II emphasized the role of the Laity – he said, “we need to Rediscover the vocation of the Laity, who play an important part in the New Evangelization. Simply it means, the laity can bring the love of God to all people. Lay people have a real vocation that is an essential mission in the Church. As mentioned in the Lumen Gentium, a principal document from the second Vatican Council, the church says, “the laity by their very vocation, seek the kingdom of God by engaging in temporal affairs and by ordering them according to the plan of God. Lay persons are unique, because they hold a special place in the function of human society. They can affect laws, cultural attitudes and social systems in many places they live and work. Their very engagement in secular activities can transform their ordinary work into apostolic work - work that touches lives and changes hearts.

I believe, the laity alongside the Church can help each other to build bridges and to bring the message of Perseverance and Tolerance to the community and the world at large.

I end my little testimony with St. Claudine's belief in the goodness of her Lord, her dying words, ‘ How good God is’