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1. Before your mission

1.1. Financial Concern

When you chose Heart's Home, you chose to lead a simple life. This means that you will try as much as possible to identify your lifestyle with the one of your neighborhood. Although we will never know what it means to live a life of involuntary poverty - we are rich of all the material goods our families could provide us with, all the books we read, of our education - the act of opting for a simple lifestyle contributes towards our desire to be one with the poor we are going to serve. At the same time by reducing our dependence on all our material goods, we recognize our greater need for God's guidance in our lives and open ourselves up to spiritual fulfillment.

Answering the call to live among the poor does not mean living without possessions – it means *living free from possessions*. This freedom is not easy to attain; we are used to have our own belongings. Living with roommates, or within a family, does not require from us to share our personal belongings.

In order to help you to maintain full commitment to this spirit of poverty during your mission, you are asked to refrain from using personal money. Heart's Home will provide for all your needs, including:

- ✓ Food
- ✓ Clothing
- ✓ Hygiene products: soap, shampoo, including special products if necessary to maintain good health.
- ✓ Expenses related to spiritual retreats.
- ✓ Transportation.
- ✓ Stamps, telephone, email
- ✓ Medicine and health care (see paragraph 1.6 for more details)

All this will be provided by Heart's Home according to the possibilities and customs offered by the country of mission (only the health insurance does not depend on the country, it is a worldwide contract).

Each Heart's Home follows a community budget (see paragraph 1.8 for more details). One community member (usually other than the House Leader (see paragraph 2.4 for more details)) will serve as the bookkeeper (see paragraph 1.7 for more details) for the house, and will be in charge of house expenses. At the same time, please note carefully that Heart's Home does not ask you to take risks by eating unhealthy food or avoiding the doctor! Quite the contrary, we ask that you maintain healthy habits, especially concerning nutrition and cleanliness, during your entire stay. On this point, our neighbors consider cleanliness a great sign of respect, as well as proper attire. Missionaries are asked to act likewise, not only in care of their health, but also in respect to the customs of the neighborhood.

If you have a special need during your mission we encourage you to ask the bookkeeper of your house and/or your visitor prior to making any purchase. This will help you to go further in your commitment to poverty. We encourage you as well to decide together which type of food you are going to eat, what limits on drinking alcohol, watching movies or smoking cigarettes need to be set...

Father Thierry gives us the reasons of such a commitment: *“Live without seeking escape. Live as if you would live in such poor conditions, in such a slum for always! Live as if you would never be given the opportunity any more to go skiing, to go to the theater or to the movies... In order to better understand... To better love...”*



Before your departure Heart's Home assumes financial responsibility for:

- A) The costs of the training session (to be held at Heart's Home John Paul II, in the Bronx, NY)
- B) Transportation costs from site of the training session to the Heart's Home assignment, in addition to transportation to the Missionary's home at the end of the period covered in this agreement. If a Missionary prefers to extend travel on the return home, it will be at the Missionary's personal expense.
- C) Visa costs

1.2. Loan Deferment and Forbearance

Most missionaries accrued student loans. While participating in a period of missionary service, a student loan holder has two options outside of paying the monthly amount: deferment and forbearance. Both choices postpone payment for the period of service; however, there is some variation between the two.

Deferment:

If a loan holder qualifies for deferment, the lender is required to honor the deferment and monthly payments will be temporarily suspended.

If the loan being deferred is subsidized, the government will pay the accrued interest during that period.

If the loan is unsubsidized, the borrower must pay the accrued interest during that period.

Heart's Home is recognized as a 501 (c) (3) tax-exempt organization. Therefore a Public Service Deferment may be obtained for a period of time during which you are serving as a Heart's Home Volunteer.

Forbearance:

A private lender has the option to deny forbearance to the individual. In addition forbearance generates interest and must be paid by the borrower.

In any case the request for Deferment or Forbearance has to be done at your lending Institution. We can provide you with the materials showing that Heart's Home meets the requirements to qualify for a tax exempt organization Volunteer Deferment.

1.3. Financial sponsorships

While at Heart's Home, the missionaries are provided with room and board and all they will need to live their mission. However Heart's Home is a non-profit organization and is completely funded through private donations. The missionaries are asked before leaving for their mission to raise money on their own and to seek sponsorships to help support their mission.

In doing so you will give the opportunity to many who have a great desire to undergo such a mission to be part of your mission of Compassion. The more sponsors you can get the better because it is a way for you to spread the Charism of Compassion around you. Each one of them will be mysteriously present to you during your mission. They will be with you while you encounter the people in our neighborhood. They will become members of the Heart's Home family and therefore try to fight against hate and bring forth tenderness.

Each missionary commits himself to raise at least \$650 per month of mission (you will find below the different expenses included...). We can also provide you with a DVD about the Heart's Home Mission as well as with flyers and sponsor envelopes you can hand over. You can invite the people to sponsor you by



making a monthly gift (\$20-\$50-\$100...) or a one-time gift. They need to fill out our Sponsorship Form and to fax it back to us or mail it (you will find the form on our website under the menu Support us). The amount of money you will raise above \$650 will help finance the mission of some missionaries from South America or India, who are not able to raise enough money because of the economical situation of their country.

<i>Health Insurance</i> (Insurance provided through AGF, a French Company that has a worldwide contract with Heart's Home)	\$190
<i>Travel Expenses and Training Fees</i> (e.g., travel to and from country of mission, training at our Bronx center...)	\$260
<i>Mission General Expenses</i> (e.g., food, housing, clothes)	\$200
<hr/>	
<i>Total Cost to support one missionary, per month of mission</i>	\$650

1.4. Spiritual sponsorship

In addition to financial sponsorship, the Heart's Home missionaries are supported through spiritual sponsorship. A spiritual sponsor may be a friend or a relative or anyone you know who is moved by what you want to live and who commits him/herself to praying one decade of the rosary (one Lord's Prayer and Ten Hail Mary) everyday of your mission.

These prayers will enable people to take part in your mission through the communion of saints. A missionary told us: *"I can continually feel the presence of my sponsors with me. I would never have thought that their presence will bring me so many graces."* And the sponsors, by praying faithfully for you, your community and the people you serve, will receive the grace of a wider and more open heart. They will also experience a change in their way of looking at people and be more compassionate in their families, in their activities, in their work...

1.5. Letter to the sponsors

The generosity of your spiritual and financial sponsors should be recognized by you through your effort to communicate with them throughout your mission. Therefore, missionaries commit to writing a *letter to the sponsors* **every other month** in which they can share their experiences and encounters. The more faithful you are in writing this letter, the more involved your sponsors will be.

You will quickly realize that you will not have enough time to answer personally all the letters you receive from your friends and relatives. Written seriously, the letter to sponsors allows you to communicate with all of them with a single effort. You can expect your spiritual and financial sponsors to be as faithful to their commitment as you are to your own. We are asking you to email us your letter and we are taking care of broadcasting it to all your sponsors.



1.6. Medical Insurance

The medical insurance of the Heart's Home missionaries is provided through AGF, a French company that has a worldwide contract with Heart's Home. Thus, you do not have to look for any medical insurance. The cost of such insurance is covered by the sponsorships you will receive. The health insurance covers the following medical acts:

Inpatient Hospital Services including
Operating and recovery room; 100% of charges
anesthesia, lab, X ray
Semi private room and board 90% of charges*

Dental
Dental care (excluding prostheses and orthodontic) 90% of charges*

Doctor / Physician office visit
Routine preventive care, annual physical exams 90% of charges*
Medical care for illness or injury 90% of charges*
Surgery performed in the physician's office 90% of charges*

Prescription Drugs 90% of charges*

Vision
Eye care (excluding glasses and lenses cost) 90% of charges*

Non dental prostheses 90% of charges*

Laboratory and Radiology Services 90% of charges*

Emergency and urgent care services 90% of charges*

* The 10% co-payment is paid by Heart's Home

In addition, Heart's Home has a contract with Mondial Assistance to ensure your Medical Evacuation back to the US in case of emergency. This covers 100% of the charges; wherever in the world you might be. Medical Evacuation is decided by mutual agreement of the local doctor and the Mondial Assistance representative.

1.7. Placement process

Although we are sensitive to each missionary's preferences concerning site placement, the missionary will not choose the country where he will be sent. His/Her destination will be decided by the Heart's Home staff, after taking into account his/her personality, skills, as well as the needs from the different Heart's Homes.



As said in the Charter, “*the missionaries will mainly be seekers of God, endowed with a real ability to adapt to different languages, cultures and customs*”. The missionary will be given her/his destination shortly after the ‘Come and See’ week-end if both the missionary and the organization discern that he/she is called to become a Heart’s Home missionary

1.8. Sending Forth Mass

Before the departure to his/her country of mission, the missionary will attend a sending forth mass, where he/she will be “officially” send into mission by a representative of Heart’s Home, and where he/she will commit to devote him/herself fully to the mission God gave him/her by sending him/her with Heart’s Home. The time and venue of the sending forth mass will be decided during the training session by the Heart’s Home staff, in agreement with the missionary.

2. During your mission

2.1. Life at Heart’s Home

2.1.1. Language and Culture

As soon as you are notified of your country of mission, your first step will be to start learning the language. In community, you will only speak this language as a sign of respect to your mission, as well as to increase your ability to enter more fully into relationships with your neighbors. *This is key – the earlier you are able to speak the language, the more immediate you will enter into your mission!* Moreover, the language tells us a lot about the culture of the country and therefore is a great help to enter in the way of thinking and living of the people we are sent to.

In some countries where the language is very difficult to learn (especially in Asia) some special classes are already planned with a tutor. In any case, it is not a requirement to be fluent before your departure.

Regarding culture: this document does not provide details about every country of mission. After being notified of your country of mission, you will be given a document (the “country packet”) with all details regarding the country, its culture, traditions... We should simply state that, in general, it is important that you approach each day of your mission with an open spirit – open to the reality of the country, its culture, traditions and mentality. This openness to new culture, language and costumes is a great help for you to also grow spiritually to be open to God who is The Totally Different.

It is important that you also openly approach the functioning of your particular Heart’s Home community. Try to understand the schedule and lifestyle without judging them. Observe other missionaries and ask questions; then, only after you have been able, little by little, to understand the reasons behind their methods, will you be able to appropriately think more critically about the Heart’s Home in which you live.

Remember: In the process of assimilating a culture and language, humility and patience are keywords!



2.1.2. Dress Code and Code of Conduct

The missionary must always be aware of his/her identification as a lay-missionary in association with Heart's Home and the Catholic Church in his country of mission. Mission and relationships with others must be conducted accordingly. In this light, the missionaries are asked to be properly dressed and to keep a simple but adequate upkeep. In certain countries, where the dress code is an important part of the culture (such as India), the missionaries will be asked to wear certain type of clothes during the day, as a respect and a proof of love for their neighbors.

2.1.3. Time of Transition

When you arrive in your Heart's Home you will be welcomed by a Community of missionaries who arrive at the end of their mission. They will be able to show you around and to introduce you to the culture and to all the friends in the neighborhood. This time of transition is very important and is what enables the friendships to continue even if the team of volunteers is new. It usually lasts over two or three months.

This continuity in the mission is of first importance to our friends who are so often left aside or betrayed in their friendships. It is often a challenge for the experienced volunteers to make sure they hand over all they know about the history of the Heart's Home as well as all the friendships established in the past years.

For the new missionaries, this time involves a lot of listening and the ability to learn from the experience of others. When you arrive in your Heart's Home you will have to enter in a way of doing things, a way of praying, and you will receive friendships that you have not chosen yourself. You will receive your mission from the hands of others. Before being able to make changes or improvements, you have to look and try as much as possible to understand the reasons of the Heart's Home customs.

2.1.4. House Duty

As a community member, you will take part in the everyday life of the house, cooking, cleaning, shopping, praying, and welcoming the people who knock at the door.... This daily life at Heart's Home is as important as your times of mission outside the house and is the first place where you can experiment God's Love for you and give it back to others. Your community is actually the first place where you will learn about Compassion. This daily life also helps you to grow in availability to any event, exceptional mission, or tasks you did not expect to do before your departure (such as possible administrative tasks for the Heart's Home organization in your country of mission).

Every day, the missionaries take turns being in charge of the house. This is called *house duty*. The person on house duty leads the prayer, cooks, and does not go on afternoon mission but stays to welcome and play with the children at Heart's Home. If you do not know how to sing or cook, don't worry, all the missionaries had to learn! Hospitality is an important part of your mission. Many children pass by our house just to be listened to or have a time of rest. In the morning, some of them like to help us cooking or cleaning the house. These are privileged times you can share with them. One just needs to be available to all the visits and events during the day.



2.1.5. Day off

As our mission is very demanding, we are taking a day off every week.

It is good for each missionary to reflect on what helps him/her to rest. This day of rest is not a day off our commitment or a day off God! God is the one who will come and renew our strength. Our founder says: *“I have often experienced than nothing is more restful for me than a day of silence and solitude, a day occupied with prayers and walks in quiet areas.”*

2.2. “Management”

2.2.1. The visitor

At the very beginning of Heart’s Home, the founder was visiting every community on a regular basis. But with the expansion of the Organization he was soon unable to follow up and therefore choose to send “ambassadors” who would go and visit the communities on his behalf.

The main mission of the so called *visitor* is to help the community in being more and more faithful to the Charism of Compassion. The visitor is a religious or lay person who belongs to the Heart’s Home family. He/she might live abroad and in this case make a 2-week visit every 3 to 4 months. If she/he lives in the same country (but not on site), the visits are shorter but happen more often. During his/her time of visit, he/she personally meets each of the missionaries, and takes the community on a retreat. This enables the missionaries to have some rest, as well as an opportunity to share about their experience, or their concerns. Together, with the visitor, they try to go deeper in the mission God has given to them. The visitor is also the “memory” of the Heart’s Home as she/he knows the country and the neighborhood.

In order for the visit to be fruitful, it needs to be well prepared by the Community. On a practical point of view, it is important to welcome the visitor in preparing her/his room. You can also email her your questions, or ask him/her in advance to emphasize some particular aspects of the Charism. Most of all, the visitor will only be able to help if you decide to trust him and to speak openly and honestly with him/her. The visitor is not sent to judge, but to help missionaries grow and live their mission to the best of their abilities, in a healthy and responsible manner. The more you are expecting from your visitor the more he will be able to answer your questions and to help you going further in the mission.

If you have issues or questions at any time during your mission, email, write or call your visitor. The Heart’s Home missionaries are asked to take turns, writing every week to their visitor. In this letter, missionaries give him/her news about the life of the community, and communicate to him/her their own feelings about the mission. This enables the visitor to have a good overview of what is going on in the Heart’s Home, and the missionaries to look at the events with more objectivity. This letter is the main tool to avoid or to overcome difficulties.

2.2.2. The letter to the founder of Heart's Home

Missionaries are invited to write to the founder of Heart’s Home, in order to provide him with some news about their Heart’s Home as well as with their own feelings about their mission. The missionaries are free to write as often as they want, knowing that it is very important for the founder to know how they are doing in their mission.



2.2.3. The House Leader

The house leader is any member of the community named by the visitor to serve the specific Heart's Home, typically for a duration of 3 to 12 months. The house leader is attentive to each one in the Community and fosters unity. He makes sure each one can fully exercise his/her gifts.

The house leader is responsible for the organization of the house, is attentive to the community's rhythm and to the well being of each member. The house leader is called to be less of a leader and more of a servant to his or her brothers and sisters of community, to wash their feet as Christ washed those of His disciples. In this respect, house leaders are not CEO's. Any decision taken by the community must be taken by the community as a whole. It is important that each member considers and participates in aspects of the life of the community, including scheduling, shopping and mission. The house leader tries to help the community to remain faithful to the Charism of Compassion by having a close relationship with the visitor, always asking questions to try to go deeper into the mission.

2.2.4. Community Meeting

Once a week every community has a meeting to go through the past week, to share the information, and to see what needs to be improved. This time is also a moment to reflect about the way we try to live the charism of compassion. It is also a time to schedule the coming week, see together which family we need to go and visit, what needs to be done in the house, who is in charge of writing to the visitor...

Key points to help you:

- ✓ Listen to each other and trust in each other.
- ✓ Give the opportunity to each one to speak especially to the ones who are shy.
- ✓ Tell what you think; do not remain silent or closed up.

2.2.5. The Bookkeeper

In every Heart's Home, one member (usually other than the House Leader) will be asked by the visitor to serve as the bookkeeper for the house, and will be in charge of the house expenses. He will also be attentive to the needs of each Missionary as well as to what needs to be fixed in the house. This work has to be done under the guidance of the visitor.

He will be in charge of keeping the books with accuracy and of sending monthly reports to the Headquarters of the Heart's Home in France. He will also prepare a monthly report for his community, in order to help the missionaries to be more responsible in the way they are spending the money, and aware of the expenses needed in their Heart's Home. The bookkeeper is also in charge of preparing the budget of the house.

2.2.6. The Community Budget

The missionaries, with the help of the visitor and the CFO of Heart's Home (in France) decide of a monthly budget. This helps avoid any useless or excessive expenses. It is an invitation to a live a simple life and will help each one in the community to spend the money in a responsible way in accordance, with his/ her commitment.

The preparation of the budget is a good opportunity to discuss your relationship towards money. It is a tool which will help you understand and respect each other, according to your different backgrounds and cultures. The way we spend our money is a witness to the spirit of poverty we want to live. But it can also



become an object of scandal to our neighborhood, if we spend money without counting or, on the other hand, if we live in a meanly way.

The budget is not an end in itself but a useful tool which will help you to manage your daily life in accordance with the Charism.

2.3. Relations with your families and friends

2.3.1. Communication with your family

The missionaries are encouraged to stay in touch with their families and friends by using the phone, regular mail or the internet, depending on the possibilities offered in the country of assignment. However, to remain free to fully live the mission and to be present to the reality of their neighborhood, the missionaries are asked to refrain from an extensive use of the phone or of the internet.

2.3.2. Visit of friends and family during the mission

For many Heart's Home missionaries, a visit from their family during their mission is a firsthand way for share their experience. This is often an important time for both the missionaries and the visiting family members.

After discussing with their community members as well as their visitor, the missionaries are encouraged to welcome their closest family members (parents - brothers and sisters) for a visit to their Heart's Home. However, to avoid having some visitors too often, family visits should be limited to once (maximum length: 2 weeks) during the time of the missionaries' mission.

2.3.3. Relation between Heart's Home and your family

While the missionaries are in mission, their families may want to have some information about their relatives' mission. We are always happy to answer any kind of questions that can help families to live your mission in a better understanding. Each family is also very welcome to email, call or visit us at our location in the Bronx.

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The Three Pillars

1. Prayer Life

1.1. Prayer: The Key to your Mission

The mission with Heart's Home involves centering your time on prayer, the first pillar. The desire to personally encounter Christ, as well as to help others discover His love, can only happen through a strong personal prayer life. Our founder, Fr. Thierry de Roucy often calls the Heart's Home missionaries, "*seekers of God.*"

Every Heart's Home follows a similar prayer schedule. The day begins with *morning prayer*, singing psalms and entrusting the day and mission to God. Missionaries also spend one hour in silent *adoration* of the Blessed Sacrament each morning. Each afternoon begins with the *rosary*. Often, neighbors join in this daily prayer. Following afternoon mission, missionaries gather for *evening prayer* to intercede for the friends they visited and to entrust all they have lived in their day. Before going to sleep, missionaries say *night prayer*. At this time, they ask for forgiveness and give thanks to the other members of the community. Finally, missionaries attend *Mass* daily, often in their local parish.

For many people, so much prayer may seem strange, however, once in your country of mission, you may begin to understand why an active, committed prayer life is important. As instruments of God, building a strong personal relationship with Him is the key to the mission.

But you will also discover that this prayer life is a full part of your mission. It is not only a personal act which will enable you to fulfill your mission; it is also a universal act:

"Praying is far from being a mere private action. It is an act which has a universal effect and which orients the world in one direction or another. To us, praying is more than just a source where you would draw the strength to love and serve. Praying has its own works. It gives an infinite character – in each dimension: depth, width, length- to each finite gesture of mankind. It applies to the soul of each sinner the fruits of Christ's sacrifice, the "summit-act". It attracts the Holy Spirit and enables him to mysteriously comfort those suffering here below, wherever they are." Father Thierry

1.2. Going Further in the Meaning of Prayer

At this point it is important to enter more deeply the meaning of the prayer life at Heart's Home. This path will help you to enter into your mission of presence to the most suffering people.

1.2.1. The Daily Mass

"At Heart's Home, this Eucharistic aspect of our lives is apparent. In front of misery, in front of our neighbors' poverty, each missionary is suddenly aware of his own wealth, from the inner most treasures to the most outer ones, and he deeply feels like he has to give. I have to free myself from this or from that... and eventually, I have to offer my life...

But this offering will extend well beyond the dimensions of the missionary. Before s/he had never had so much to put on the Paten: lives, endless suffering, screams and large smiles... S/He walks down the streets as a priest walks in the rows to collect the bread offering... S/He knows that everything must be offered to create the New World... Nothing must remain here below: neither an ounce of mud, nor a beginning of sin, nor a piece of poverty... Everything has to return to heaven. As if they were divine ragmen, our missionaries seek in the slums and in their friend's hearts what they will offer each day. Their mission is a



priestly one. It is a princely mission. That is why they would never trade it for any other mission.” Father Thierry

Day after day you will understand better this Eucharistic aspect of your mission, and you will enter in a deeper way into the Mystery of this Sacrament. The daily mass will become the Source of your life and mission. Each step of the Eucharistic celebration, each of its gestures, each of its words help us also to enter into a movement of conversion and to let Christ be in us more fully.

You will experience what the pope John Paul II wrote in the encyclical *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*: "The Church draws her life from the Eucharist. This truth does not simply express a daily experience of faith, but recapitulates *the heart of the mystery of the Church.*"

*If you want to read more about the encyclical **ECCLESIA DE EUCHARISTIA** go to:*

http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_17042003_ecclesia-de-eucharistia_en.html

1.2.2. The Holy Hour

To be a presence to the most suffering people is not an easy task. We are used to doing a lot of things, to running everywhere and never stop. At Heart's Home, every missionary wants to learn what it means to be, to be really present. To achieve this goal, the best way is to put oneself at the school of Jesus present in the Eucharist. Because He is really present.

The Holy Hour is the time which allows you to remember, recognize and honor this special presence of Christ. And being in silence before Him, you will learn from Him, in order to become like Him: fully present to every person you encounter.

One of our former missionary shares with us her experience about adoration...

“A time of adoration is very important if we want to rely on God. And this is all the more true as we live in a contemplative community.”

“The more I “contemplate”, the more I meet Him “under the appearance of children”; the more I contemplate, the more I look for Him behind the faces of those I meet, the more He reveals himself in the heart of destitution”

“The more I contemplate, the more I find the people I encounter beautiful, infinitely loved, infinitely sought after, infinitely lovable.”

“The more I contemplate, the more I feel infinitely loved, and only those who know they are infinitely loved can freely give evidence and manifest this infinite love to all.”

“The more I contemplate, the more I become an instrument of mercy, compassion and consolation”

“The people here don't need the presence of such or such Missionary, but of God”

“So, if I can let myself be filled with His presence in contemplating Him, I'll be able to serve the children, as my arms will become His arms, and my look on them will become His look...”

“And, all this is not a matter of having my head in the clouds. It takes place in extremely concrete situations, in very little things”

1.2.3. The Holy Office (the liturgy of the hours)

The Holy Office is also intimately related to the Eucharist. The Church understands it as a preparation for and a continuation of the action of the Eucharist throughout the day. This prayer will help you to remember the presence of Christ at every moment of your daily life. It is also a special time for you to entrust everything to the Lord and to ask Him to send forth His Holy Spirit.

At Heart's Home, we pray three parts of the Holy Office (also named the Liturgy of the Hours): morning prayer (Laudes), evening prayer (Vespers) and night prayer (Complies).



In the morning, Laudes is a time to give thanks to the Lord for the beauty of life and to entrust Him every event that will happen during the new day. During evening prayer the liturgy helps you to entrust to the Lord what you lived, each person you met, each joy you felt. Finally, night prayer will be a time to review your day; giving thanks to your brothers and sisters for what they did good; to ask them forgiveness for what you did wrong; and to entrust you in the hands of the Lord.

1.2.4. The Rosary

The mission of Heart's Home is to live a life of compassion. In this, the Blessed Virgin Mary is our master. Indeed, Heart's Home gives you an opportunity to follow Mary, especially when she is at the foot of the cross of Jesus. At this moment Mary is totally present, she is fully compassionate. To be compassionate is exactly what each missionary is looking for. By praying the rosary you will ask this special grace to be like Mary, to stand fully present at the foot of the cross of your friends.

The rosary is called the prayer of the poor. Not because it is a poor prayer but because it is such a simple and powerful prayer. Most of the people know it and if they do not, it is the easiest prayer to learn. You will discover that you can pray it anywhere at anytime: for a birthday, a funeral novena, in the bus, going through the narrowed streets of your neighborhood, in joy or in pain... It is the prayer that will accompany you throughout your mission.

Remember also that Rev. Thierry de Roucy received the inspiration to found Heart's Home while he was praying the rosary. For you the rosary is the means to recognize the grace that has been given by the Lord through Mary. It is also a way to continually entrust Heart's Home's worldwide mission to the care of our Lady.

The pope John Paul II wrote: "The Rosary, though clearly Marian in character, is at heart a Christocentric prayer. In the sobriety of its elements, it has all the *depth of the Gospel message in its entirety*, of which it can be said to be a compendium. It is an echo of the prayer of Mary, her perennial *Magnificat* for the work of the redemptive Incarnation which began in her virginal womb. With the Rosary, the Christian people *sits at the school of Mary* and is led to contemplate the beauty on the face of Christ and to experience the depths of his love. Through the Rosary the faithful receive abundant grace, as though from the very hands of the Mother of the Redeemer" (**John Paul II, *Rosarium Virginis Mariae* on the Most Holy Rosary, October 16, 2002**)

If you want to read more about the apostolic letter *Rosarium Virginis Mariae* go to:

http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/apost_letters/documents/hf_jp-ii_apl_20021016_rosarium-virginis-mariae_en.html

1.2.5. The Sacrament of Confession

"The best way to reveal mankind's state today is found in God's question to Adam when he sinned: "Where are you?" (Gn 3:9). Through this question, many people understand that they are lost. This question is addressed to the first man but it applies to each one of us too: Where are you? Come back. I cannot bear that you stay so far... so far from me... so far from your happiness... Maybe you have heard this call or you are going to hear it: Where are you? Your life has been purposeless for twenty... thirty... forty years. It does not have enough meaning! Indeed, when you consider the Kingdom of God, life is worth only as much as it contains true and deep love. Outside of this, life is meaningless! The call to give oneself to God, to accept His love, is a call toward the sacrament of confession. Do not postpone reconciliation, this road to salvation, immediately entrust yourself to God, letting God drive." Father Thierry



Besides the fact that confession is the way the Church gives us to always come back to the One who is waiting for us and loves us, to be true with ourselves and accept our limits, confession reminds us that we are sinners and that we are living of the Father's Mercy.

Through our mission we choose to go and eat at the table of sinners, we choose to stand by their side rather than to judge them. Compassion makes us realize that, in a mysterious way, their sins become ours. The more we love humanity, the more their sins are ours. Each time we go to confession we do it not only for ourselves but we do it for the whole world. Confession is the place where we are close to all, the place where sin in its totality is collected and offered to the Father. Thus confession is part of our mission. It is an intense moment of solidarity with humanity, a time where salvation can be given to many!

1.2.6. Spiritual Direction

For most of you, life in a Heart's Home will be a totally new way of living and therefore will bring up a lot of new challenges and questions.

Your prayer life will bring you closer to Jesus; through your mission of Compassion, you will face suffering and the many questions which go with it. Thanks to the community life you will learn a lot more about who you are, your strengths but also your weaknesses and your limits. It will be altogether a strong spiritual experience where God will work deep in your heart.

This is why it is important for you to have someone outside of your community with whom you can regularly share your experiences and find support and guidance if needed. Your spiritual director may be the person to whom you go for the sacrament of confession, or it may be someone else. When you arrive on site, your Heart's Home community members may suggest some people in the greater area. In discerning your spiritual guide, pray for someone who is grounded in the Christian faith, someone you are able to see on a regular basis, and someone with whom you feel comfortable and who will help you to enter fully in your mission of Compassion.



2. Community Life

2.1. Love Begins Here

The second main pillar of the Heart's Home mission is community life. Like in any family, you will live challenging moments (as well as joyful times!). In these moments, you may be tempted to escape from your community, to say that you don't need the help of your community to serve the poor... But true love begins with community forgiveness, praying together and recognizing each other as a chance to grow.

2.2. Forgiveness

Forgiveness is very important to community life. Every evening at night prayer we are asking one another for forgiveness. It is an essential time that helps the community to go forward despite all the tensions there can be.

We are living together first because Another has called us to live as a community. Our unity is in Christ who is greater than all our divisions. We also live together in order to learn to love one another as we are. We are not here to try to change the others or to solve what is broken in him or her. God loves each one of us the way she/ he is and we are called to love the same way as He does. It is important for us to open up to the differences and to accept the limits of the others as well as to recognize ours.

Some keys to help you:

- ✓ To forgive does not mean to justify oneself. It is against humility. Simply recognize your fault without giving many details.
- ✓ To forgive does not mean to deny the offense. Mercy implies being able to look at what went wrong.
- ✓ It is important to talk with one another about what happened.

Most of the time, it is easier to forgive than to ask for forgiveness. But if we are sure to be looked at benevolently it will be easier for us to humbly recognize our faults and to live in truth with one another. When mercy is fully lived in a community it is a source of healing. Each one in the community can truly be him/herself.

2.3. Being a Family for our Friends

The majority of Heart's Home communities are made up of 3 to 5 persons, male and female. The reason for this number is to create a home in which we may live as a family. Our family is not only for ourselves, but for our neighbors who come to our home because they experience love, love from Christ, who is present in our home. Heart's Home is a place where they can rest from violence, tension and hatred, a place where they can find strength in love.



2.4. Chastity

“You are going to live among the poor to witness the Good News. For the sake of God and your brothers and sisters are you ready to:

- lead a very simple life, without seeking escape*
- keep your heart pure, entirely available for God and for the poor you will serve?”*

Why is chastity part of the commitment you are making with Heart’s Home? To answer this question we have to understand what it means to be chaste, because it is much more than just say “I won’t date during my mission.”

Chastity is not first a series of restrictions or of things you are not supposed to do. Being chaste means first of all having an open heart, a heart available for all. When talking about our mission, Father Thierry tells us that *‘to embrace our mission is to embrace one people’*. He doesn’t tell us to embrace only one child or one person but he invites us to be pay attention to all. To be able to do so, you need a chaste heart, a heart opened to everybody and not a heart centered on only one person. Therefore we choose to live in a spirit of chastity, in our community as well as in our neighborhood to be really present, to be able to fill the loneliness of many.

We try as much as possible to build a friendship with each one in the community and not only with one or two and this in order to discover the treasure in the heart of each person God has given us to share the mission with. The friendships in the neighborhood have also to be shared among the different members of the community and not become personal friendships.

Living from this spirit of chastity means also that during your time of mission you refrain from dating with anybody. This will require from you prudence and vigilance as well as being ready to receive advice from the others in the community. You will be in a neighborhood where chastity does not mean anything and where sexuality is often misused or abused. Living together as a community is a living sign of hope in these circumstances. People will see that a pure relationship between a man and a woman is something possible and that it brings happiness. It is a beautiful witness you can bring in the neighborhood.

If you are presently involved in a relationship prior to your departure, as a sign of your commitment to the above-stated, Heart’s Home asks you to refrain from receiving a visit by your significant other during your time of mission. If you become attracted to someone during your mission, do not be concerned that your mission is in jeopardy. These feelings should be addressed with a spiritual director, with the understanding that your primary commitment is to your mission.

2.5. School of Community

In order to help each of the missionaries to go deeper in the Charism of Compassion, the community gathers once a week to share over a text from the founder or from other catholic authors (Giussani, Maurice Zundel, Catherine de Hueck, John Paul II...).

The goal of the school of community is first to wonder together at the gift of the charism and to learn to judge our life and the decisions we have to make in the light of this charism. It is a real work which will lead to a spiritual and community growth, avoiding abstraction (a mere exchange of ideas) and subjectivism (a psychological analysis centered on oneself).



How to prepare the School of Community?

- ✓ Try to read the text several times and to summarize it.
- ✓ Try to examine the past week at the light of the text. What are my joys, my difficulties, my questions, my wonders? What do I need to change in my life?
- ✓ During the School of Community, try as much as possible to share your experiences so as to help each other to make a link between the text and everyday life.

The school of community gives the opportunity to share not about oneself but about God's work in our life. The unity, in the community, does not come from a perfect psychological or emotional harmony but from the acknowledgment of Christ's presence among us and the belonging to His Mission and His body. While sharing our experiences, we discover that we are poor and limited but also loved and welcomed by the others in the community. It is each time a call to look for the ones who need most presence and compassion, and to help each other to go further in our mission.

3. The charism of compassion

3.1. Our mission

3.1.1. Reaching the Poor

The Heart's Home missionaries answer the call to reach the poorest of the world, through the third pillar: *mission*. What does this mean?

Mission means being Christ's presence to those you serve, especially in your neighborhood. You will regularly visit friends in their homes; you may sit with the sick, help cook a meal or accompany a friend to the hospital. Generally, you are called to be available to the particular needs in your neighborhood.

Missionaries are not called to be heroes; the poor is not a problem that needs solving, an inferior group that needs pity. The poor will be your neighbors who ask for your friendship, your love, your presence. A presence that is humble and respectful of their humanity. A presence that remains faithful to the Heart's Home mission both in your particular neighborhood and beyond....

3.1.2. In our Neighborhood

Our first mission takes place in your particular neighborhood. This is a mission of proximity; your neighbors will soon know you and the fact that you belong to Heart's Home. The missionaries are always on a mission of proximity. Stepping out of your house, the friends will meet you on the street, you will meet them on the way to the market or to Mass, children will stop you to play with them, and parents will invite you in for a soda.

3.1.3. External Mission

The second form of mission is the external mission. Missionaries travel outside of their neighborhood to serve in shelters, jails, hospitals, garbage dumps... so that wherever the poor live and work and visit, missionaries may be present at their side. External missions often reflect a great suffering of the particular country of mission. Often, external missions also allow missionaries to witness and work with other organizations and missions working in their country of mission, and to reflect upon and grow from their participation.

3.1.4. Two-by-Two

Just as Jesus sent his apostles two-by-two into this world, to travel and witness together, to encounter and care for the poor together, so the Heart's Home missionaries should also mission in pairs, two-by-two. The goal is that our friends recognize the face of Christ first, rather than the face of a particular missionary. This will also enable you to know your brother or sister in the community better, as you share mission experiences with her/him.



3.2. Spreading Compassion

“To face this omnipresence of suffering, there is a pressing need for more and more compassionate hearts. So many children and elderly, rich and poor, sick and rejected people need to be comforted, supported and loved! We can’t stop dreaming that compassion may be at work everywhere, where people suffer, feel pain, in every place where the Cross stands. We can’t stop dreaming, and, above all, praying, for compassion to fill every heart.” Father Thierry

While you are in mission, you can be asked to go to schools, universities or parishes to talk about your experience with Heart’s Home and thus to spread the Charism of Compassion and give others the opportunity to live from it. Because there is such a need, do not hesitate to talk with your visitor and see how you could make the Organization known in your neighborhood. Keep this desire in your prayers and the Lord will provide with opportunities to talk about your mission. Those events will help you in many ways:

- ✓ You will meet people from other areas
- ✓ You will become closer to the local Church
- ✓ You will learn to bear witness to your mission
- ✓ You will do something together as a community
- ✓ You will give the opportunity to many to join the Heart’s Home family in a way or another