

Mercedarian Missionaries of Berriz

100 years

Meaning of the logo
and motto for the centennial
of the first foundations

100.mmberriz.org

A faint, stylized illustration of a sailing ship with a single mast and a large sail, moving from left to right. The ship is depicted in a light blue color, matching the background. The sail is full, and the ship's hull is visible. The overall style is minimalist and elegant.

Motto

As we prepared the image for the centennial, we searched for an expression that could capture something deeply rooted in your identity and, at the same time, convey it today with simplicity, strength, and clarity. It was not just a matter of finding a nice phrase, but of articulating an insight capable of uniting memory, charism, mission, and the future.

At the heart of our reflection, a phrase by Margarita Maria stood out powerfully: “The Redemptive Spirit has made us missionaries.” In it lies the root. Therein lies the origin of a transformation. Therein lies the inner dynamism that has shaped the history of the Institute. Therein lies the Spirit who calls, sends, and sustains. Therein also lies the mission as a concrete way of living out the inspiration received.

At the same time, a question arose: How can we express that truth today in a way that is concise, understandable, and accessible to those who are not familiar with the language of the Congregation or the Church? How can we convey the depth of the charism without diminishing

it? How can we express it in a way that resonates both within and without?

From that search emerged the motto:

**Crossing borders
to give life**

It is a brief phrase, yet rich in meaning. It evokes movement, departure, the border, self-giving, fruitfulness, and hope. It does not seek to replace Margarita Maria’s phrase, but rather to bring it into the present day. The founding phrase names the source; the motto expresses its visible form in the present.

Crossing

“Crossing” is a word in motion. It does not speak of a completed action or a story that has come to a close. It speaks of something that continues to unfold. It places the Congregation on a journey, setting out, and available. It is a word that does not stand still; it crosses, opens up, moves forward, seeks, and exposes itself.



This word touches on a very profound dimension of our own identity as Mercedarians Missionaries of Berriz. Mission has never been merely an external task, but a way of being in the world. Being missionaries has meant allowing ourselves to be sent, leaving the familiar behind, crossing geographical, cultural, human, and spiritual distances. It has meant learning other languages, living in other places, encountering other wounds, welcoming other quests, and allowing ourselves to be transformed by what we encounter along the way.

"Crossing" captures the symbolic power of the outrigger canoe, the missionary boat. A light, simple, adaptable vessel, built to move forward, to be carried by the wind, and to cross open waters. The boat aptly expresses a shared, communal mission, capable of navigating even the roughest seas. It is not an image of a destination, but of a journey. It is not an image of power, but of availability. In this sense, "crossing" speaks of the past, but also of the present and the future. A hundred years later, the movement continues. The mission continues to invite us to cross new borders: those of culture, indifference, loneliness, injustice, fragility, and the distance between peoples, generations, and sensibilities. Crossing remains a way of loving.

Borders

"Borders" is a word immersed in history, mission, and the Gospel. Borders are places of passage, tension, and encounter. They are spaces where what divides us becomes visible, but

also where something new can be born. There we encounter difference, distance, fragility, waiting, and the possibility of a fuller life.

Our missionary history is made up of borders we have crossed. Geographical borders that took us from Bérriz to other countries and continents. Cultural borders that invited us to learn, listen, become enculturated, and allowed us to be shaped by other ways of life. Human borders that brought us face-to-face with situations of vulnerability, poverty, exclusion, captivity, or hopelessness. Spiritual borders where faith is based on trust, on self-giving, and on daily fidelity.

But borders are not just out there. They also exist within us and in our communities. There are borders in fear, in comfort, in resistance, and in the certainties that protect us but can also shut us off. There are borders in the wounds that are hard to look at, in the changes that are hard to embrace, in the languages that are hard to learn, in the new realities that call for a different

presence. Crossing borders also means allowing ourselves to be transformed, allowing ourselves to be shaped anew by the God of Jesus, again and again (MMB General Chapter Document 2024).

From the perspective of our redemptive charism, borders hold a special significance. Where there is a border, there may also be captivity, loneliness, injustice, distance, or a life under threat. And, it is there that our Mercedarian calling resonates most powerfully: to draw near, to remain, to take our place in a spirit of presence and self-giving, and to clear the way for freedom and life. For us, the border is often the place where the Gospel awaits us.

That is why, on this centennial, to speak of borders is to speak of faithfulness and the future. We have crossed many over the course of these hundred years, and we continue to be called to recognize the new borders of our time: migration, poverty, human trafficking, loneliness, violence, the deterioration of our common home, indifference, cultural

and spiritual wounds, and new forms of captivity. Wherever life is threatened, the Spirit calls us once again to be a sign of God's Mercy and Compassion.

To

"To" is a small but decisive word. It gives direction to the entire motto. Without it, "crossing borders" could remain merely a movement, a journey, a displacement. With it, the motto takes on meaning. The "to" introduces a purpose, a direction, a discernment.

The mission is not simply about moving. It is not about crossing for the sake of crossing, nor about leaving for the sake of leaving. The "to" reminds us that every sending arises from a call and is oriented toward a greater good. The mission has a purpose. It has a horizon, an expected fruit. It has a profoundly evangelical reason.

This word helps express one of the most important aspects of the charism: the mission does not spring from activism, but from an inner experience.

It is the Redemptive Spirit who moves, calls, transforms, and sends. The missionary movement springs from a deep source, from a profound experience of Jesus of Nazareth, "known and loved anew" (Margarita Maria). That is why the "to" captures the heart of the motto: it reminds us that the going forth has a soul, that the journey has meaning, and that the crossing of borders is always done in the service of life.

It also introduces a dimension of discernment that is uniquely its own. Not every step forward is fruitful. Not every movement builds up. Not all progress humanizes. The "to" silently asks: toward where? for whom? in service of what kind of life? That question prevents the mission from becoming scattered and keeps it united to its spiritual roots.

In Margarita Maria's phrase—"The Redemptive Spirit has made us missionaries"—there is also an implicit "to." The Spirit transforms in order to send. As a guiding principle for life. The

motto conveys that same logic: there is a driving force that moves us because there is a life waiting to be accompanied, cared for, liberated, and brought to fruition.

To Give

"To give" is a phrase that is deeply rooted in the Gospel and deeply our own. It speaks of gift, of self-giving, of generosity, of service. It speaks of a life offered up, of a mission that is born of love and expressed in concrete availability.

In the context of a missionary Congregation, this word is especially important. Mission can be misunderstood when it is expressed solely as expansion or activity. "To give" places it elsewhere: in the place of self-giving. Mission is not protagonism. It is to be available. It is not possession. It is self-giving. It is not being self-centered. It is reaching out to others.

"To give" also connects with the deepest Christian tradition. God gives of himself. Christ gives of himself.

Christian life is understood through the gift received and shared. In this sense, the word carries within it a eucharistic, redemptive, and paschal dimension: a life that is given so that others may have life.

“To give” can be seen in many concrete stories: education, accompaniment, care, presence, the promotion of dignity, listening, service, and closeness to diverse peoples and realities. So many sisters and laypeople have been writing this story not only with words, but with gestures—gestures of daily self-giving. Small, faithful gestures that have made room for life.

“To give” also expresses a humble way of being on mission. It does not place us above anyone, but alongside those who walk, seek, suffer, or wait. To give life does not mean possessing life or controlling it. It means to place oneself at its service. To accompany its growth. To take care of its environment. To help it to thrive where it seemed threatened or stifled.

But the “giving” of missionary life also implies knowing how to RECEIVE. Over these hundred years, mission has also meant to receive much life from the people and communities with whom we have walked and walk today. They have shaped us, given us new faces, and shown us the Face of God. They have proclaimed the Gospel to us, taught us to be a Church committed to the Kingdom, and helped us recognize its Mystery in other religions. Our “giving” is a grateful “giving.”

Life

“Life” is the word that broadens the motto and makes it universal. Everyone understands it. And yet, there is a great depth within it. Life is hope, dignity, freedom, the future, reconciliation, growth, fruitfulness, and the possibility of a fresh start.

This word connects very directly with the image of the seed that appeared in the framework reflection: the seed that opens, breaks through its shell, and sprouts into new life. That image speaks of transformation, of fruitfulness, of

process, of something small that holds a greater force within.

“Life” also captures, in a way that is understandable today, the redemptive intuition of the charism. The word “redemption” has enormous depth, but it may need explanation for those who are less familiar with ecclesiastical language. “To give life” conveys that intuition without losing its essence. To redeem is to open up life where there is confinement. It is to broaden horizons where there are limits. It is to offer hope where there is pain. It is to make it possible for something new to sprout.

That is why “life” is not a generic term here. It is the fruit of the mission. It is what we seek to care for, accompany, and nurture. Life in persons. Life in the towns and villages. Life in the communities. Life in the cultures. Life in the faith. Life in creation. Life wherever fragility calls for presence, tenderness, and commitment.

In the motto, life appears as the destination of the journey. We cross

over to give life. We cross borders so that something may be born. We step outside ourselves so that others may breathe more freely. We respond to the Spirit so that history may continue to open itself to hope.

To Give Life

In our charism, “to give life” has a very special significance from the perspective of our Mercedarian Fourth Vow. We formulate it today as “to remain in the mission when there would be danger of losing one’s life if the good of our sisters and brothers so demands.” This formulation takes up and rereads the original Fourth Vow of the first Mercedarians, that radical gesture to take the place of the Christians imprisoned when their life or their faith was in danger.

“To give life” evokes total self-giving. It evokes the following of Jesus, one that gives one’s life. It implies a way of loving that remains when mission asks for it, an availability that does not remain in words because it touches the entire life.

For us, this vow is a source of inspiration and strength. It nourishes our spirituality and our experience of God. It expresses the Redemptive Spirit, with which Margarita Maria wanted to see the whole Institute imbued. It is the center from which we are focusing and giving MMB meaning to our vocation and missionary response: as Christ, to love our sisters and brothers to the point of giving one’s life. “To give life” evokes an attitude that identifies us: to give life so that others may have life. This phrase belongs to us in a very profound manner because it captures the heart of our missionary, liberating spirituality. It is not just a matter of offering something of ourselves but of making of one’s own life a gift at the service of the others.

This is why, the motto “to give life” joins Margarita Maria’s phrase directly with our mission today. If the Redemptive Spirit has made us missionaries, this Spirit is concretized in a self-giving life. We cross borders because love moves us. We remain in the mission because the life of our sisters and brothers is important. We give because we have

received a life, which is called to become a gift, MERCY, for each person, for all humanity and creation.

The complete motto

Read as a whole, “Crossing borders to give life” captures a deeply missionary and redemptive identity, in a brief and actual manner,

“**Crossing**” conveys movement, departure, sending forth, and availability.

“**Borders**” concretizes the place of the mission: there where there is limit, distance, wound, differences or a call.

“**To**” introduces meaning, orientation and discernment.

“**Give**” situates mission in the evangelical logic of the gift, self-giving and the Fourth Vow.

“**Life**” embodies the fruitfulness, hope and the liberating force of the charism.

The phrase has a very simple but very profound structure. It begins with a movement and ends with a fruit. It starts with a departure and culminates in life. It unites mission and meaning.

Openness and fruitfulness. Sending forth and hope.

Together with Margarita Maria's phrase, the motto still takes on greater depth:

**The Redemptive Spirit
has made us missionaries.
Crossing borders to give life.**

The first phrase names the source. The second expresses its visible form today.

The first speaks of the Spirit that transforms. The second shows the movement that this Spirit generates. The first tells who has made them missionaries. The second tells where that mission is headed.

And the Fourth Vow sheds light on everything from within: to remain in the mission, even at the risk of losing one's life, if the good our sisters and brothers so demands. Meaning, to cross borders, as Jesus: loving to the point of giving one's life so that others may have life.

In this way, the motto helps us to say with a clear language something profoundly ours. It captures our history, our charism and our mission. It allows us to speak to those who know our spirituality and also to those who approach us from the outside. It has memory, but it looks forward. It is born from the root but it opens path.

"Crossing borders to give life" can accompany well this centennial because it speaks of history but also of a mission that continues to be open. It speaks of a Congregation born of a profound experience of God and sent to the world. It speaks of a life that allows itself to be moved by the Spirit to be presence, service, openness and fruitfulness.

In a few words, it expresses a simple and deep conviction:

**Hundred years later, the Spirit
continues inspiring and encouraging
us to cross borders so that more life
may flourish.**

Logo

As we envisioned the centennial logo, we wanted a visual identity that could express something deeply rooted in our history: a mission born of the Spirit, a life set on a journey, and a call to cross borders so that others might have life.

The image is meant to help us recognize ourselves. It aims to capture the grateful memory of these past hundred years and, at the same time, to open us up to the future. That is why the logo draws on certain insights that we feel are deeply our own: movement, openness, mission, universality, life springing forth, the Spirit that drives us, and the call to remain wherever the good of our brothers and sisters so demands.

At the center of the reflection is the phrase of Margarita María:

**“The Redemptive Spirit
has made us missionaries”.**

This phrase is the root. The logo wants to make this dynamism visible. A Spirit that is not enclosed but who sends; a redemption that does not remain as an

idea but converts into a committed life; a missionary vocation that continues to cross borders.

The outrigger canoe

The central image of the logo is a means of transportation inspired by the outrigger canoe. It is a boat that, in our visual tradition, helps us express the missionary movement. The outrigger canoe is a sign of setting out, journey and mission.



The boat speaks of a concrete way of living out our mission. A boat is not meant to stay still. It is made to move forward, to cross waters, to be guided by the wind, to carry life from one shore to another. It is a simple image and, at the same time, deeply missionary.

The boat also symbolizes community. No one sails alone. The mission is lived

with others, discerned with others, sustained with others. The boat embodies shared life, a common sending, the acceptance of fragility, and the trust of those who set out on the journey because they believe that the Spirit continues to open new paths.

This boat also reminds us of the stories of so many sisters who left behind the familiar, learned other languages, reached out to other peoples, and allowed the mission to expand their hearts. The boat embodies that memory of movement, but it also prompts us to reflect on today's journeys: what seas must we cross, what peoples await us, what borders call to us.

The boat incorporates the outrigger, the lateral element that helps evoke stability. This part is very important, because the mission needs both momentum and balance. It needs to set out, but also community. It needs boldness, but also roots.

This passage can be read as a sign of the community life that sustains the

mission. Community enables us to navigate rough seas. It helps us to discern, to persevere, to stay on course, and to maintain our commitment when the journey becomes demanding.

Here we can also recognize an echo of the MMB Fourth Vow. Our redemptive vocation is expressed not only in going out, but also in remaining in the mission when the good of our brothers and sisters demands it. Remaining is a profound way of crossing borders. Remaining is staying there when the life of another calls for presence, fidelity, and commitment.

That is why the logo does not speak of an individualistic or heroic mission. It speaks of a sustained, communal, and incarnated mission. A mission that moves forward because it is deeply rooted. A mission that can take risks because it knows it has been sent. A mission that gives life because it is sustained by a spirituality of self-giving.

The sail and the wind

The sail occupies a central place in the image. It rises, unfurls, and catches the wind. In the sail, we recognize one of the deepest truths of our spirituality: our mission does not arise solely from our own strength, but from the Spirit who calls, moves, sustains, and sends us forth.



You cannot see the wind directly, but its presence is evident in the movement of the sail. The Spirit acts in the same way. It cannot always be grasped, but it transforms, guides, propels, and opens paths. The sail is, therefore, a symbol of openness: it can only move forward if it opens itself to the wind.

For us, this part of the logo reminds us that our mission begins with listening.

Before crossing borders, there is a profound experience of God. Before setting out, there is a call. Before giving life, there is a life received. The open sail expresses that inner attitude of trust, openness, and response.

The upward shape of the sail also speaks of hope. It is not a heavy or closed sail, but a light, soaring one, pointing forward. It suggests the future, momentum, and the horizon. It reminds us that the centennial does not look only backward, but also toward what the Spirit continues to want to open up within us.

The sea

The sea sustains the boat. It is the open space of our mission. In the visual reflection for the centennial, the sea appeared as an image of the world, of peoples, and of the horizon to which we have been sent.



For us, the sea speaks of vastness: of cultures, paths, encounters, risks, and promises. The sea is never completely safe; that is why it demands trust. To set sail means to accept uncertainty, to acknowledge fragility, and, even so, set out on the journey.

The sea also symbolizes new borders. It is neither a closed nor a controlled space. It is a place of passage. Today, those waters can take many forms: migration, loneliness, poverty, violence, human trafficking, spiritual wounds, cultural shifts, the fragility of our common home, and new searches for meaning. Wherever life is threatened, mission finds its place once again.

The boat on the sea reminds us that crossing borders is not just about going far. It is about drawing near to others with tenderness, learning to see, staying the course when the going becomes difficult, and trusting that God continues to act in the midst of the waters.

The movement

The lines that frame the sail and the boat convey a sense of movement. They are the wind, a path, the horizon, a current, and momentum. They emerge from the background of the image and extend forward, as if the entire history behind them continues to propel the mission forward.



These lines, which appear in colors in the logo, interact with the power of the elements—water, fire, wind, and earth—as an expression of dynamism, fertility, community, and universality.

Visually, these lines help ensure that the logo is not a static image. Everything in it seems to be in motion. The wind propels, the sea sustains, the earth provides fertility, and the light opens up the horizon. The elements do not appear as separate symbols, but are integrated into a single missionary movement.

They also express diversity. Each color brings a distinct tone, yet all move in the same direction. This is a very meaningful image for us: different cultures, peoples, languages, presences, and sensibilities, united by a single mission. Universality does not appear as dispersion, but as communion in motion.

The shield

The logo integrates the MMB identity and the reference to the centennial. This allows us to link our institutional memory with the new image of the celebration. We want to express that these 100



years spring from a concrete history, a charismatic family, and a mission we have received.

The 100th-anniversary seal reminds us that we are celebrating a history filled with names, communities, peoples, sending, work, fatigues, joys, faithfulness, and fruitfulness. These 100 years are a living memory.

At the same time, the way it is integrated into the image helps us view the centennial as a source of inspiration and encouragement, as an opportunity to return to the source, give thanks for the journey, and allow ourselves to be sent out anew.

The image thus unites three dimensions: identity, memory, and mission. We are MMB. We are celebrating 100 years. And we continue to cross borders to give life.

The colors

The color palette for the centennial stems from the intuition that a mission that crosses borders needs to express

depth, movement, diversity, and life. The colors function as a small symbolic language that complements the logo and the motto.



Indigo Blue

It is the color of depth, interior life, and spiritual root. It evokes a mission that does not arise from the surface, but from a profound experience of God. It brings serenity, trust, and meaning.

Deep blue

It reinforces the dimension of journey and crossing. It reminds us of the sea, the horizon, and the unknown that opens up before those who allow themselves to be sent. It is a color of mission, of breadth, and of trust in the midst of the journey.

Sand

It connects us with the land, the people, and the concrete reality. It reminds us that mission is not lived in the abstract, but in real places, with

real persons, on shared paths, and diverse cultures.

Gold

It brings light, inspiration, and warmth. It evokes the Spirit that moves, the life that radiates, and the inner strength that drives us forward. It is not a luxurious gold, but one of energy and luminous presence.

Earth Green

It speaks of fertility, germination, and hope. It connects with the seed that bursts open and with the life that grows. It is the color of the fruit, of that which sprouts when the mission is complete.

As a whole

The logo aims to express an identity in motion. An image filled with direction, wind, water, the horizon, and life. Everything in it speaks of setting out, but also of the root. Everything speaks of movement, but also of meaning. Everything speaks of mission, but also of commitment.



This image can help us celebrate our centennial with a grateful memory and an open gaze. It allows us to acknowledge what we have experienced and, at the same time, to listen to the Spirit's new calls.

The boat reminds us that we are sent.
The sail reminds us that the Spirit drives us forward.
The sea reminds us that the world continues to await life.
The lines remind us that the mission is in motion.

The colors remind us of the richness of the charism.

The motto reminds us of the profound meaning of our commitment.



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