



## NICOLAS BARRE: AN ORDINARY MAN

Nicolas Barre - an ordinary man, born into an upper middle class family and educated by the Jesuits; an intelligent boy, a quick learner. What made him special - 3 things - (i) a deep faith & trust in God, (ii) sensitivity to the poor and (iii) valued being educated.

Based on his first characteristic, he responded when God called him to the religious life - but instead of choosing more recognised religious congregations, this ordinary man chose to join a relatively unknown religious order which focused on living simple lives committed to work & prayer. However it was difficult for him to maintain his desired life-style as his innate talents were being recognised by his superiors.

So, this ordinary man, who wanted only to live for the poor, was now tasked to preach & serve the rich. His desires conflicted with his assigned work. This conflict led him nowhere but to a dead end. It was in this wretched dead end that this ordinary man suffered his darkest moments & harboured real doubts. It was then, that in sheer desperation & despair, did he surrender himself in complete abandonment to his God & to the will of God. Because no matter how altruistic his desires were...they were nevertheless his desires!!

At the moment of complete surrender, he experienced complete freedom!

He was a liberated man!

No more was he bound by his wishes, his wants, his desires!

He was willing to sit it out & see what the good Lord had planned for him!

At this turning point, when this ordinary man was devoid of his own desires...and desired nothing more than to do his God's will, did God show him the way.

Filled with his God's desires, and armed with deep faith & trust in God's providence, did this ordinary man venture forth to create something out of nothing!

Combining his last 2 characteristics of being sensitive to the poor & valuing education, did this ordinary man inspire other like-minded people to come forward to work with him in helping the poor live their lives with dignity by being educated!

From one city to several countries, from 5 women to thousands of teachers, from a handful of street kids to millions of beneficiaries throughout the world - all this over a period of 340+ years - made possible by God's design & an ordinary man's response.

A lay partner's perspective of the Founder  
donne marie aeria