

COMMUNIO IN CHRISTO

*Our Life -
Our Works*

Digital Spiritual Letter No. 18, October 14th 2022

Theme:

A Conversation with a former Priest

SEAT IN LIFE

To Mother Marie Therese, the priesthood was holy. At age twelve during transubstantiation in a Holy mass she experienced a spiritual vision that changed her life radically. "I experienced both sacraments, the priesthood and the Eucharist, the vitality of both symbols, and I realized that they are of the same kind. I was allowed to see the act of entering God and I experienced to be taken by God. I saw with my soul how life came into these symbols and how they rose as sacrifices, flooded with vitality, and how total love was devotedly fulfilled. I felt how the sacrifice and the person offering it became one in such sublime way that I could sense the amalgamation with my heart" (Mother Marie Therese, Tagebuch (Diary), Paderborn 1989, p. 133).



The described experience, considered as her first mystic experience, was the cause for her love of both the Eucharist and the priesthood to grow ever deeper and induced her on 15 August 1946 at age 19 to take the vow of chastity before the image of the Mother of God Star of the Sea in Maastricht and to sacrifice her life to God for „the repentance of the sinners, but for the sanctification for the priests in the first place" (Mother Marie Therese, Der Weg nach Golgota (The road to Calvary), Würzburg, 2021, p. 18). When founding the „Unio für Kranke und Leidende" (Society for the Sick and Suffering) on 1 September 1979 in the parish church of Mechernich-Holzheim, she invited the sick one day a week to sacrifice their sufferings for

the sanctification of the priests (ref. Mother Marie Therese, Die Zukunft der Gnade (The future of grace), Aschaffenburg, 1980, p. 120). In an exemplary way she held on to this life sacrifice till she died.

In the following reflection Mother Marie Therese speaks about her encounter with a former priest and reflects once again on her view of the priesthood.

May this meditation be an impulse for you to discover the significance of the priesthood in the Church and to pray for all priests.

Jaison Thazhathil, Superior General

REFLECTION OF MOTHER MARIE THERESE

28.10.1992

Events are the reason for a permanent meeting with God. They are concrete signs that are proof of God's omnipotence and loving kindness. This divine goodness is the challenge for my thanksgiving in which I personally respond to the love of God. It is too early to testify to the God I have experienced, founding on actual facts, because it is to be feared that they might meet with unbelief. Therefore it will have to suffice that I attempt to reach your hearts with my praise and profound gratitude.

My words possess neither the force nor the depth to properly express my thanks, which should be particularly strong as the whole world owes him glorification. Divine grace permitted me to make these experiences in which God was very close to me and I got a very clear view of his loving kindness; such experiences are so valuable for the profession of one's faith that here again, in this hour of reflection, I fully surrender the impressions and experiences of my soul to the love of God, so that this hour may serve to testify to his reality. The impulse comes from God. Driven by enormous energies, I am absolutely committed to God who has asked me to make contact with him.

My reflection today is based on an experience, a conversation with a priest who – ten years ago -had resigned his ministry because he did not feel destined for it. He said he felt comfortable in his job as an office employee and had no regrets at having freed himself from his ecclesiastical office. When I first met him, I was very young and he acted as our retreat leader. At that time I was greatly moved by his deep sermons. It was by pure chance that I met him again a few years ago. His initial enthusiasm had given way to total rejection and

disapproval, not – as he said – of a religious foundation as such but regarding the attitude of the Church towards every single vocation, having personally experienced, so he continued, her mercilessness once he had made up his mind to take the step into the worldly life.

I replied that a true vocation becomes apparent in the trials. A true vocation becomes apparent in the community of the Church, because it bears testimony to the service to the Church. He wanted to know my motives and said of himself: “From my early youth I lived with a view to and in preparation for my life as a priest. During my student days I was full of fears and had no-one to tell me: Put an end to your doubts! So, I worried myself all the way to my priesthood and finally found enjoyment in receiving honours and living my priesthood in an entirely human manner. Fifteen years later I finally yielded to those doubts and chose the worldly and independent life. Since then I have felt like a free person...”



Today that experience will be the content of my conversation with God. So much has changed in this respect since then. Nowadays in a priest's calling the concrete personal experience is missing.. It is no longer opportune to talk about the invitation to serve both Christ and his Church, or else a discussion on celibacy would be superfluous. There are so many good reasons for thanking God. Having given my word of consent to God, I can clearly see my task, which is sacred to me, the more so since it involves a promise. A person, inspired by the grace of God, is entirely imbued with his mission that he fulfils it, making his calling radiantly shine in his whole existence.

The calling of a priest represents a friendship with God. Thus the priest lives from God Himself in order to bear witness to the invisible God. It is difficult to understand that a person – blessed with the priesthood – could give up this very special union for the mere reason of being unwilling to bow to a certain power structure.

In our time a new way of thinking is necessary. The grace of God has been depreciated. The calling has become a mere job or profession.

My calling is based on the experience of a loving kindness which moved me so deeply that I could not leave it unanswered. I want to tell the world what happened to me, the more so as everything we personally experience obliges us to bear testimony. Lovingly and full of mercy Christ looked upon me. He saw what was hidden and found in what He discovered the hope for all.

Once again the love of God will have to break up the depth of our unbelief in order to overcome all egoism and mercilessness. This is what God calls certain people for: to bear witness to the love they have met with. The fact that their voices go unheard is a sign of our

distance to God. The troubles and hardships of our time make demands on us. A heart that confides in God discerns that distress. It overcomes all fear. It totally dedicates itself so that its gift may testify to love. It shares God's longing and bears witness to it in human fellowship and charity. It convincingly speaks to every one of those who have been called, it counters all doubts and fears with the presence of God: Keep God in your heart, and you will feel his presence and recognize your calling.

Our world has become blind and man has remained as weak and aggressive as ever. Whoever strives for nearness to Christ, being aware of His love, will remain in faith and willing to give his heart. Someone who realizes that his life's centre is Christ becomes a witness. We, all of us, have been called upon to bear witness to Him.

Father!

*I strive for the kind of adoration
in which I can praise Your greatness.*

*Your name be glorified –
in which love reveals boundlessness.*

Your majesty be exalted.

Your presence is apparent in power and omnipotence.

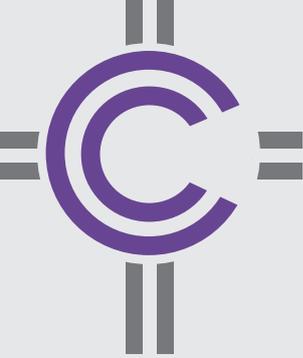
*I am longing for Your grace
in which Your mercy is discernible,
the benevolence towards us humans.*

*Your incarnation may fill us with unspeakable gratitude
the more so as You disclose Your nature in the human "You".*

*I adore Your loving kindness
that captured my heart,
challenging me to do Your will.*

*Thanks shall be given You
who showed Himself in Christ to the lost world as the Saviour.*

*In nature we experience You as the Creating One,
who – in everlasting energy – brings forth and perpetrates life.*



*Every day and in many ways You prove Your infinite fidelity
in which love determines the depth
of our meetings with You, o God.*

*In gifts and talents, signs of Your wisdom,
You are the inexhaustible multifariousness of imagination.*

*Your selflessness becomes apparent
in cooperating with Your creatures.*

*Many You have called upon to accept Your mandate
so that faith may turn into love.*

*You have commissioned Your elect
to bear witness to Your loving kindness.*

*You have bestowed Your strength upon them
so that they may manifest Your presence amidst the world.*

*O Father, great is Your power,
security for my eternal life.*

I found You in my suffering and entrusted myself to You.

*You made clear who I am
and what a gift my impotence.*

*You protect all life,
redeeming all evil in Your beloved Son's death on the Cross.*

*In my soul You are the eternal guest
in the glory of three persons.*

*Every step I take
is accompanied by Your reassuring hand.*

*Father, my praise is for Your love,
embracing the world.*

In communion with all those who love You

*I implore You to protect our inner life
from what is called the spirit of the time, dominated by unbelief.
You live in our midst, not concealed but visible
in those who gathered in Your love
in order to offer honours and glory to You, o Father,
who will live and reign in all eternity.*

*Mother Marie Therese, I implore You, o holy Church – In the name of the Spirit,
Vallendar/Rhein, 2015, pp 54.*

COMMENTARY

**By Fr. Tenace Aristides Ndzebe,
Chaplain in Vienna, originating from Cameroon (Obala Diocese)**

As Pope John Paul II once wrote, each vocation is both “a gift and a mystery”. There are many examples in the bible to illustrate this. “A gift” as we get it without deserving it, and “a mystery” as it is a story of the Lord, the unfathomable God, who calls a person and the person who is called. Sometimes that call is clear and distinct. You know where you go, and you have an idea of the dimension of that mission. Then there are situations where there are lingering doubts. However, always, it is an experience of an encounter with God that exceeds all discourses and concepts.

Mother Marie Therese’s reflection „A Conversation with a former priest” is as moving as educational. I note that the “calling of a priest means friendship with God” and some kind of experience of one’s relationship with God. But also, I want to point out – and this is my personal modest opinion – that there are moments and situations along the way of this “adventure” with the Lord where one cannot be 100 % sure whether it is a true calling. There are always difficult times, some of which are more difficult than others. Not to be understood is the worst. It is within the Church that a calling is being realized. However, over and again one is confronted with a lack of mercy and affection causing a deep sadness at times.

We all are humans with “unclean lips” (Is 6,5) as the prophet Isaiah proclaimed. That means that we are not worthy to proclaim the miracles of the Lord or the Lord himself. To say it with



Peter in the Gospel according to Luke: “Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!” (Lk 5,8) And it is the very weakness that the Lord relies on. It is exactly that fragility that the Lord seizes to turn it into a messenger for himself. Everything is based on God’s grace.

Paul says: “But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect” (1 Cor 15,10). And precisely one of the reproaches against modern man is the ignorance, or rather the rejection, of this grace.

As baptized, no matter what our position in life (whether clergy, religious or lay-faithful) we are constantly guided and supported by God’s grace – it is what we live off. Those who allow themselves to be touched or hit by that grace are equally able to bear difficulties, traps, tests, and persecutions of all kinds. But one is for sure: In the name of the Lord and together with him we are great winners.

As a baptized and a priest, I always have in mind the beautiful words of the Eucharistic Prayer II of the Apostles: We are chosen to proclaim the Kingdom of God. When I fall and get up again, in the moments of doubts and in the moment of hope I keep looking to the one who calls me from the darkness into his wonderful light.

Mother Marie Therese’s concern and her commitment for a true life in following Christ are remarkable. She has left a spiritual richness we should offer to the Church and pass on to the younger generation.

„LORD, TO WHOM SHALL WE GO? YOU HAVE THE WORDS OF ETERNAL LIFE. WE HAVE COME TO BELIEVE AND TO KNOW THAT YOU ARE THE HOLY ONE OF GOD”.
(John 6,68b-69).

Fr. Tenace Aristides Ndzebe



I was born on 12 April 1985 as the fifth child out of seven. I grew up in a farmer’s family rich in children and deeply religious. Already as a child I dreamed of becoming a priest. On 8 December 2014 on the feast day of Mary’s Immaculate Conception I was ordained a priest in the Diocese of Obala in Cameroon. Having ministered for six years as the vice chancellor and chancellor in my diocese I was sent to Vienna where I am staying now to study Spirituality at the Faculty of Theologian of the University of Vienna.

In the Communio in Christo that I got to know through Sr. Lidwina in Vienna this February, I have come to experience ecclesial communion and I feel supported by the prayers of its members. Also, I appreciate their mission.



Imprint

Publisher: Ordo Communio in Christo
Address: Bruchgasse 14, 53894 Mechernich, Germany
Website: www.communio.nrw
E-Mail: info@communio.nrw
Phone: +49-2443 9814823
Fax: +49-2443 9814824

Responsible in the sense of the German press law: P. Rudolf Ammann ISch, Mechernich/
Germany
Editorial: Ronald Larmann and Manfred Lang, Agentur ProfiPress, Mechernich/Germany
Layout: Ronald Larmann, Agentur ProfiPress, Mechernich/Germany
Coworkers: Sr. Lidwina, Mechernich/Germany
Tilj Puthenveettil, Mechernich/Germany
Hilde Bouschery, Mechernich/Germany
Ewa Bochynek, Mechernich/Germany