

COMMUNIO IN CHRISTO

*Our Life -
Our Works*

Digital Spiritual Letter No. 21, April 20th 2023

Theme:

The Problem of Modern Society

SEAT IN LIFE

Mother Marie Therese wrote this reflection „The Problem of Modern Society“ in April 1993. Three years earlier, she had opened the first Hospice Stella Maris in May 1990. It was one of the first in the whole of Germany and was part of today’s long-term care facility. Mother Marie Therese’s principle was: We accept all seriously ill and dying people in the Stella Maris



Hospice who cannot find a place elsewhere. At the height of the AIDS hysteria, this was an important signal to these sick people. People were downright afraid of them, of every handshake, of every touch, because they did not know how exactly the virus was transmitted. Some declared the HIV infection, often transmitted through sexual contact, to be „God’s punishment“.

For Mother Marie Therese it was important that this house gave people protection and security. This idea applied to all people - including, of course, the highly infectious sick. For her, human dignity and life were inviolable, given by God. Even the life of a coma patient, which others consider unworthy of life. Experiences with our residents, especially with coma patients, have taught us otherwise. One recognises the face of Christ in them too... Mother Marie Therese’s motto from the beginning was: God is a friend of life. We should be helpful so that the residents and their relatives can experience God as a friend.

Jaison Thazhathil
Superior General



REFLECTION OF MOTHER MARIE THERESE

28.04.1993

Just for fun and to make his two children happy a father takes them out for a drive to town. Suddenly in a curve he sees that there is danger ahead. The car goes into a skid, overturns and finally lands in the opposite lane where it is hit by an oncoming lorry. The father is seriously injured and one of the children is killed instantly. The second child escapes with a fright. Screaming and in a panic, he is running about aimlessly, being finally rescued by the police. The driver was not at fault...

Such an incidence renders us speechless. A remark like "Such an accident can happen any time", arouses our conscience. It happened five years ago and the father is still in a coma. Every day anew his wife and his child are expecting the hoped-for wonder. It is very touching to see how they are looking after him, with words of encouragement and gestures of love trying to make him wake up and strengthening their own hopes for a change for the better.

Many similar cases I can find in my hospice. Healthy young people from one minute to the next experience their own total frailty, people who because of their youth had been under the illusion of an almost endless life ahead of them. Now they are lying in their beds, motionlessly... In meeting these people we experience the immediacy of our faith. We become aware of the reality of a life in which we are nearer to death than to life. We get a new outlook on progress. Until now we were convinced that everything was feasible and that we could have everything. The motorways are congested with traffic and everybody wants to be faster than the next. Nothing can happen to us. The other is the poor driver. We are convinced that all illnesses are curable and if our physician fails, we just change doctors. And if that does not help, we give vent to our disappointment by voicing criticism and demands.

Do we even begin to sense the chaos into which the world has drifted? Do we feel the growing despair of many young people who want to end their short lives by means of the piece of rope or an overdose of tablets? The hospitals are full of people who could be saved the last minute and who will, for the rest of their lives, remain seriously disabled. Homelessness and a lack of relationships are becoming more and more widespread and humanity is racing further and further away from God. News reports in the press or on television leave us no chance to escape the fatal development.

The Church has lost the trust of the faithful. But why? Nobody can tell exactly. If someone voices criticism regarding the state of affairs, it means insulting the founder Jesus Christ. The actual problem of modern society lies much deeper. God has disappeared from our world. He is no longer the giver from whom comes everything. Once again we must make God

the very centre the better to understand the sufferings and hardships of our lives. Or do we really want to believe that everything is to be blamed on a cruel God? The wife of the victim of the accident rightly said: "I did not expect such a blow. It has changed my whole life. Now I thank God for the strength and ability to endure it all. I have always had this faith in him. My husband was also deeply religious. That is an enormous consolation."



The negative criticism of the Church covers up the guilty conscience of our time. This mother, too, experienced the criticism of her piety like many others that were showing a special commitment to their suffering fellow-beings. Modern man thinks he is better off without God. Unemployment and the permanent rat race have made him hard, egoistic and ruthless. People struggle hard for better living conditions. Leisure time activities are determined by a lot of violence. The number of crimes committed against defenceless people increases steadily.

What I particularly notice as a foundress is the importance of this charism and the necessity of my social and charitable institutions in which the spirit is the initiative. Both houses,

House Effata and Hospice Stella Maris, prove what love can accomplish. It ventures the journey into this age which is so determined to reject God. At a fellow-being's sickbed even the hopelessly lost person can re-discover the values. Hopelessness, meaninglessness and death lose their disconcerting effect. Here, the world is in good order because a person can call to mind that his own life, too, is determined by transitoriness and that his redemption is ensured in God.

I would not like to keep from you that many of those who live in this house have found the joy that they previously imagined to find in other things. That alone would justify my efforts to extend House Effata as well as Stella Maris. Here, there is no evidence of a long lost hope. Jesus shows us incessantly how valuable sufferings are and how weighty they are on the scales of our lives.

With our eyes turned to Heaven we can live here on earth as if already in the future world.

We must look up to God; it could be our turn any moment...

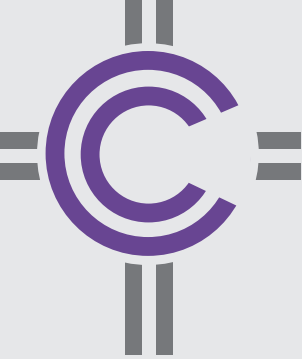
We must look up to God in order to bear any fate.

We must look up to God in order to recognize and live up to the love of God. Thus we will always be prepared to say: "Lord, Your will be done!"



Father

When I think of You
words fail me,
for everything I might say about You
cannot do justice to Your greatness.
And yet You are the initiative for my praying,
You guide my lips in lauding You.
Your guiding hand reaches the impulse of my heart
so that I might live up to Your love.
What I give evidence of
is the experience of Your loving kindness.
You elevate me in order to let me bear witness to You,
whom I got to know as my only asset.
I lay prostrate,
lacking the strength to rise.
Your Son's merits touched my weakness.
I recognized You as the Saviour and Redeemer.
To my delight I heard how precious I am to You,
how my nothingness induces Your love to strengthen me.
You are the Spirit from whom everything derives,
whose kingdom rules the world and furthers it.
You do not allow Your creation
to be conquered by the forces of evil.
In our world You have become visible,
the God who shows himself in everything,
the great light, magnificent in a thousand prisms,
reflecting Your image.
You, o Father, are the message in all things,
the creative Spirit who renews and restores



so that all life is seen as coming from You.
O Father, I saw You in Your omnipotence
as You freed me from certain death.
Ever since You have been the beneficial fragrance of my speech
with which I praise and honour You.
The kindness You show me is so great,
Your love so majestic,
that I must beg You for Your support, o Father,
in bearing witness to You as the Merciful, the Gracious,
as the Giver of life, the One-Who-Brings-Salvation,
as the Just One, the One-Who-Redeems.
I found You in my misery,
recognizing You as You turned to me.
I know that You are near us in the confusion of our time
and that You are the victor over sin and death.
Your will is the fulfilment of love,
the future of the weak and impotent.
I praise Your greatness,
so universal in its simplicity,
so that all may turn into honour and glory in Jesus Christ,
today and in all eternity.

*Taken from: Mother Marie Therese, I implore you, o holy Church - In the name of the Spirit,
Patris Verlag GmbH 2015, pp. 252 ff*



COMMENTARY

By Fr. Cletus Uhinga,

Communio priest from the diocese of Mahenge in Tanzania

Mother Marie Therese, the foundress of the order Communio in Christo (1984), lived about thirty years ago in Mechernich-Germany (1927- 1994). During her times she saw and faced many challenges which in the light of the Holy Spirit guided her to establish the Order with a focus on assisting human kind alleviate the sufferings through attachment to the will of God. The Order is enshrined on the practically lived love of God. During her times Mother Marie Therese saw the way mankind were diverting from doing the will of God to a very different direction that she could endure only by teaching and making mankind know the diversion. The reflection, “The Problem of Modern Society” is one among many reflections she wrote against such kind of digression.

In that reflection Mother Marie Therese shows clearly a number of glitches and diversions of mankind against the human moral life, the teachings of the Church and the will of God. God is given lesser room in their lives as the creator and savior.

In life over and again people take the path of better life, prosperity, happiness, enjoyment to the extent of having no time for God. No time for a sincere prayer, meditation and the practically lived love of God. It seems as if only in times of difficulties they can think of “the hope for wonder”. When challenges face them only then they can turn back and think of God for a while. The question she posed was that “do we even begin to sense the chaos into which the world has drifted?” Mother Marie Therese enlightened a number of hints which show that people have no time for God. She spoke of “the growing despair among many young people with no hope in God, the increasing homelessness and lack of relationships, the Church which has lost the trust of the faithful, and that God has disappeared from the World”. In short she said, “Humanity is racing further and further away from God”.

Words which Mother Marie Therese said, preached and wrote more than thirty years ago are becoming more and more vivid in our societies today. We see Christianity being shaken all over the world; we see trust in the living God as proclaimed by the Church being doubted. In other parts of the world like Japan not only the churches but even Christian schools are being closed for lack of pupils. People are becoming less and less interested on matters of faith. Preaching about fear of God and living a holy life is losing sense. We see today that Mother Marie Therese was an overseer and a true prophetess. She exclaimed that time has come that we must once again turn round and make God the center of our lives.

We should go back to our Christian values. We should go back to the teachings of the Bible and take heed of them. We should go back to living the practically lived love as preached and enshrined in the teaching of the Gospel and those of Mother Marie Therese. In practicing the love of God we will see the needs of the neighbor (Mt 25:35-40). We will see the love of God being manifested in lives of others especially the weak, the incapacitated and the sick.

The establishment of “House Effata” and the hospice “Stella Maris” by Mother Marie Therese aimed at helping the needy human beings see that God loves them through the help they receive from their fellow men. They aimed at encouraging them to see the will of God and feel that life still has a meaning, they shouldn’t lose hope. We are encouraged by the acts, deeds and teachings of Mother Marie Therese to continue preaching the Gospel in this challenging world without fear of criticisms. We should preach that God who is the source of everything still loves the world. The mankind in the modern society should look up to God, reflect on their values and through preaching of the holy books, recognize the value of humanity and turn back to the creator (Joel 2:13). In union with Mother Marie Therese we shouldn’t rest until we are united with our creator. As St. Augustine of Hippo acclaims that God has made us for himself, our hearts are restless until they rest in him.

Father Cletus UHINGA



Fr. Cletus UHINGA (57) is a Communio priest from Tanzania. He was ordained a priest in 1996 in Ifakara Parish in the current Ifakara Diocese. Fr. Cletus belongs to Mahenge Diocese, Tanzania. He took his vows in Mechernich in the hands of the First Superior General, the late Fr. Karl-Heinz Haus in 2012. He happened to visit the Mother House of the Communio in Christo a number of times. He knows the Order very well. Currently he is working in St. Augustine University of Tanzania in Mwanza as the Director of Finance.



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