



COMMUNIO IN CHRISTO

*Our Life -
Our Works*

Digital Spiritual Letter No. 22, June 15th 2023

Theme:

The glory of the Holy Church

SEAT IN LIFE

Mother Marie Therese on her way to Amsterdam: She wants to visit a seriously ill old lady. She encounters people who can no longer find any meaning in life; she experiences an unspeakable lovelessness, shopping streets full of unnecessary luxury articles. Teenagers sit down on the ground on a place and waste their time with drinking. Two people get in a heavy fight. "Though not being able to understand much from what they were discussing I felt that this was serious! A circle of onlookers had gathered around them. But no one intervened or talked them down..." Cars, slot machines, money and addiction are what makes the sense of their lives. "„Where do I find God here?" asks Mother Marie Therese in the reflection written in July 1985 from her 16th book, „The Passion of Jesus in the Year 2000." Mother Marie Therese encounters people in the city – and God in the holy Eucharist. Her impressions are the inspiration for this meditation.



Jaison Thazhathil
Superior General



REFLECTION OF MOTHER MARIE THERESE

July 10th 1985

“...but among you stands one you do not know.” (compare John 1:26)

My way led me to a big city that morning. I wanted to visit an old lady who lay down seriously ill and who probably had but a few days more to live. From the train station to her apartment, it would only take 15 minutes by foot. The weather was an invitation for a walk and so I walked. A crowd of nervous people characterize the daily life of this big city. You feel the hectic pace, the unavoidable chaos of a mass of people of whom many went to work while others were forced by unemployment to kill their time hanging out in the street or in a bar. Here the bustle of the city could be felt from dawn to dusk. I thought to myself: Where is God still to be found here?

Teenagers lay down on a place in the middle of the city and wasted their time lazing around and drinking. I continued my way and passed a shopping street. One store next to the other aroused curiosity. What a luxury and what a variety of desires. Again, my question: Where do I find God here?

Suddenly my thoughts were interrupted. Two persons were having a heated argument. Though not being able to understand much from what they were discussing I felt that this was serious. But no one intervened or talked them down. A circle of onlookers had gathered around them. Again, my question: Do I find God here?

I felt pity for a world so alienated from God. And my meditation went on. There is less praying in the families. The silence before God is increasing alarmingly and the unbearable emptiness leads to an even greater egoism. Cars, slot machines, money and addictions have become the content of people's life. And St. Paul says: Christ is my life. The respect for our neighbours, for the human being has left us. People want to get paid for services to their neighbours. Here, too, God has been eliminated. We deliberately locked him out because he wants to see this commandment fulfilled. And again, my question: Where after all do I find God?

And then I stand in midst this busy street in front of a poster saying: “Come in and take some



time to meditate. Enter, you are welcome here.” I opened a door that reminded me of a church. And when I had closed it, all noise was gone. My curiosity grew, and when I entered further, I discovered about 20 people kneeling down in front of the exposed Eucharist. Here my question was answered. God was here and, in a way, fathomable, so that praying came easy.

But who would find this house of God except for those who know about it? And in my praying, it was like I could hear many teenagers complaining: I cannot do anything with God, or: Where is he then ...? So many people want nothing more to do with that existence. As a girl recently said to me after first having asked two questions:



Then, where is God after all, and what is the Church? I went to a fortune teller and asked her whether a better life would follow death and how this would happen... I asked a counter question: Are you naive enough to entrust your unknowingness to parapsychology? And my thoughts went to a theologian-to-be who stated his conviction when he said that his biggest problem was to believe in God. I could not

tell him anything but this: If you are preparing for the sacrament of ordination, it is important for you to talk about God, to believe in him and to love him... The incredible emptiness felt by this man who on behalf of Christ must bring salvation made my meditation grow into a testimony about how I recognize God for my life and how I love him. ...

To me he is no dream or phantasy. I encountered him in my sufferings, in the injustice done to me, in meeting sinners, in fraud and in false piousness. In him I found the trust that I put in him.

Out of grace I was allowed to know about him far beyond of what we learn from the bible. He led me into his life and death, in his love for me and for the world. I got to know his tireless commitment for all of us so that no one gets lost. I recognized him in the perfect truth and his proclamation entered my soul like an arrow of light. I was allowed to know: he is everywhere, he is in my neighbour, he is in the matter and he is actually so alive that we cannot miss his existence. He is right among us; he is closer to me than I am to myself. He showed me how I can learn the love from him and how I can make my life eternal and everlasting.

In her proclamation the Church says words that let my heart glow. The pain of my daily



sufferings gave me the seal of conviction that God is close. Believing was no longer necessary, instead love gave assurance. The Church is continuing Christ. She is the community that fills me. In her I have found Christ, alive in word and sacrament. God's power is vigilantly present, not like a police officer but in the unlimited love, so that we do not escape his view, a view of salvation.

God is among us, and he is there were we least think of his presence. Life is dangerous here but still: What does love do? It is where we deny it. Our wealth has taken us God. He reveals in Christ as the serving power, as the authority of love, as the justice against the Pharisees and as the redeemer in his death on the cross. His mind is far from extinguishing the love in the world. The Church bears in her center the mystery of Christ; she is the place where Jesus gives away himself to us and where we give us away to him.

“The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.” (John 1:9-12)

O glory of the Holy Church,
 holy city of God,
 how you have been desecrated!
 Your mission has been taken away from you,
 because contradiction was ingrained in you.
 Your pureness was stained with sin,
 your love, pure as Christ, was dispelled,
 your limbs got sick through earthly pleasures,
 you were removed from the center through unbelief.

The pure gold of grace,
 of which your gifts bear witness,
 the divine life that gives us a future in God
 has been taken from you,
 because we doubt your almightiness, because we doubt God.



We have humbled your cross
meant as security for our salvation.

The redemption of which your life tells us,
has been eliminated by our laxity
that does not take seriously your word.
Your representatives, absorbed into you,
endowed with gifts of divine power,
they fail to teach your truth.

They ignore your holiness
so that they can escape the consequence.

In your name they kill what is holy,
and fight against the Spirit and your chosen ones.
The Mystical Body, so precious in its stem,
is doomed to rot.

And yet, your pureness does not lose its contours.

Your Spirit, ignited by the blood of Christ,
makes yourself so holy in our sins.

As your love desires to flow,
You share yourself with the poor
you suffer in the sacrificial souls the bitter misery,
that makes our time so sluggish.

The world and its temptation, the pleasure,
and the ego all depart from you.

And you, o noble bride,
do not stop lavishing love,
giving away gifts
to bring back home the limb



And when your heart feels many a pain
and graces do not bring healing,
you enter human beings
to put the pure into them unrecognized.

And should your divinity once more approach the cross,
and your blood wet our earth,
grace granted to our time,
you still will never be defeated,
because your holiness, achieved through blood, does not end.
Heaven embraces your life, endures in the divine.
Therefore, everyone should kneel down for what
you give to man:
God himself in merciful love
he, who is our life for now and forever.
Amen.

Taken from: Mother Marie Therese, Die Passion Jesu im Jahre 2000 – Um der Liebe willen (The passion of Christ in the year 2000 – For the sake of love), pp. 139-143, Pattloch 1986)



COMMENTARY

**By Fr Mikoyezu John Gbemboyo,
Catholic priest from the Catholic Diocese of Tombura-Yambio in
South Sudan**

Mother Marie Therese was born in the Netherlands in 1927. She received baptism with the name Josephina Theresia. By baptism she became incorporated into the body of Christ which is the Church. The grace of becoming a Christian through the sacrament of baptism is real and is freely given by himself. Her spiritual growth met her stature as she was able to mature physically and spiritually. The model of Mother Therese growth towards holiness can be seen in the fruits of the sacrament of initiation which is the baptism she received and in her call to found a community.

Being from a family that cared for her spiritual wellbeing, she grew up having desire to live according to the words that helped her to know the will of God for her life. The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World speaks of this when it says, "Christby the revelation of the mystery of the Father and His love, fully reveals man to man himself and makes his supreme calling clear. It is not surprising, then, that in Him all the aforementioned truths find their root and attain their crown (Gaudium et Spes 22). At early life, Mother Marie Therese started her mystical experience of God's revelation. One of this instances occurred during the Holy Mass celebration when she experienced a deep insight into the relationship between the Holy Eucharist and the priesthood. Some of these early experiences in her childhood, led her later to the need to live according to the calling to live love in word and action up to the moment she would have the inspiration of having a foundation.

The other moment in Mother Marie Therese' life came when she received the call to live in a concrete way the love of God. She had hard times from series of sicknesses and despite that reality her passion to be united with Christ became more ardent than ever. Her passion and mystical experiences stirred her of founding communities and charitable institutions. Through prayers she was empowered to understand her vocation of living a life of concrete love and to work for the renewal of the Church in the light of the Second Vatican Council. The imitation of Christ became the core of our mission and that of the foundation. This gave the inspiration to start a foundation which became the first to live the decrees of the Second Vatican Council in



practice. The charism of Communio in Christo has been that of caring for the people who suffer in different ways from ailments and to bring Christ's love into their lives.

It is the role of the families and communities today to remain dedicated to the care of children. The grace of God is always present in the life of people who receive the sacraments and continue to be faithful to their call to holiness. The inner call to us always is geared towards our holiness, love of God and our neighbour. The foundation of Communio in Christo has been born out of this Divine Revelation of God in the life of Mother Marie Therese. She remains a model for all who are called to live an authentic Christian life in the world today. Taking our call to holiness and living the love of Christ in word and deed is a way to overcome occasions of sin and any form of discord among us.

Fr. Mikoyezu John Gbemboyo



Fr Mikoyezu John Gbemboyo is a Catholic priest from the Catholic Diocese of Tombura-Yambio in South Sudan. He is a member of Communio in Christo. He was ordained in October 1999 after finishing his theological studies in Khartoum. He has worked in various offices in his Diocese until in 2016 he went to Rome for further studies at Salesian Pontifical University and graduated with Licentiate in Social Communication. While in Rome he came into contact with Communio in Christo members and later he was able to visit Communio in Christo Mother House in Mechernich, Germany.

After his studies he returned to South Sudan and was appointed Pastoral Coordinator and Social Communication Coordinator for the Sudan Catholic Bishops Conference (for South Sudan and Sudan) where he is currently working.



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