



COMMUNIO IN CHRISTO

*Our Life -
Our Works*

Digital Spiritual Letter No. 24, October 16th 2023

Theme: The Supreme Love SEAT IN LIFE

The reflection of today is taken from the Rule of the Order and is titled “The Supreme Love”. Mother Marie Therese wrote it on 15 January 1985, one month after the foundation of the Ordo Communio in Christo. Two months earlier priests, religious sisters and lay-faithful forming a first community had moved into the new Motherhouse in Mechernich, in order to live in community, to pray, to work and to have meals together.



In the foundation words, the foundress describes this way of living together as ‘contemplative-active’: Faithful and trusting in the strength of your spirit, devoted to you until the end of my life and in obedience to your will I am founding the ‘order’ Communio in Christo, a contemplative-active community of priests, sisters, and lay-members, who – in accordance with your will and in utmost unselfishness – devote themselves to the needs of their neighbours as a community in Christ, as the realization of the resolutions of the Vatican Council, and as a confirmation of your works on earth.

Based on the foundation words and induced by the Holy Spirit, Mother Marie Therese then wrote a series of chapters for the Rule of the Order. The Rule of the Order as an imitation of Christ is meant as a guide and an orientation in life in the spirit of utmost love of God and our fellow brothers and sisters. At the same time, it is both active love of neighbour and a contemplative turning towards and an encounter with God.

Jaison Thazhathil
Superior General



REFLECTION OF MOTHER MARIE THERESE

January 15th 1985

*„The Supreme Love“ - The basis of the Communio in Christo
The great commandment: love your neighbour as you love yourself.*

When we are ready to love God with all our heart and soul, it is also necessary for us to love our neighbour as we love ourselves. In man we approach the living God, who wants us to love him.

What consequences does love demand of us?

We try to help the other person in his sphere and limitations of life.

We share his worries, hopes and sorrows. We gradually reduce his doubts, giving, through the example of our life, the motivation for his opening up to God.

We are not content with drawing closer to him, with solving his problems or giving material help when he is in need, but we become like him. That means:

WE LOVE HIM AS WE LOVE OURSELVES.

That way we forget our self.

We become servants of love.

Thus we live what Christ means by Imitation.

Imitation of Christ demands of us to follow Christ on his way. He says: Take up your cross and follow me. His cross is to be understood in a wide sense. Disappointments are part of it, disappointments that run parallel to unselfishness.

Often people will take advantage of us. It is very important for us to make such experiences, too. We can learn from them with what love we discover the order of the helping love in such encounters. Love wants neither malevolence nor rejection. Love detects the inability of the other person and real distress. Gently it directs us to where real love begins. Love wants to



reveal the misery, the misery of the masses that are starving on all continents.

Love wants to see God and his request in the rich and in the poor and act accordingly. Our love is not only meant for the world in need but for all, without exception.

If we thus meet our brother or sister in our neighbour, we have begun to open our hearts wide to God. We have recognized the limits of our former love. We are ready to go beyond them... And now it has become our neighbour's heart, no longer excluded, turned into mercy.



Our hearts have advanced to the heart of Jesus, becoming like to it, beating with all the hearts of the world, because it is the heart of Jesus beating in our bosom.

When we have reached this point,
defects of character are no longer important;
we are not sensitive if somebody shows a negative reaction;
we are not sulky in the morning;
we do not feel hurt if called to account by our superior.

Jesus, who lives in us, who has become the servant of all mankind, who practises mercy in us with the full power of his love – he is incessantly cheerful and ready to help.

The heart of Jesus that we have taken into us, has adapted to the misery and the joy of this world. It is an example of the proper way of thinking. Its beat leads us onto the way, encouraging and attractive. It does not take the time to think of itself. No, it is always wide open to others.

All of us have taken this heart into us. That was our will, though we did not know how to get really close to Jesus. Undoubtedly, this change cannot take place without hardship.

Do not give way to disheartenment. Disheartenment keeps unselfishness from winning.

Do not wear the cross as a piece of jewellery.

Our community has decided to take it upon their shoulders.

Do not give in to the temptation to reject it.

Rejection is not in conformity with an abandoned self. Do not yield to the temptation to reject the disagreeable person among those who ask for help.

Jesus does not want to stay outside of us, he wants to gain admission into us, to change us so that others may find to him, too.



What responsibility for us to carry! What confidence Jesus has in us!

If we do not reject God in our neighbour, he will form us in such a way that we will be able to endure a bit more every day. The love we have been called to is the very love that turned into total sacrifice up to the death on the cross.

If the utmost love is our aim, the love that exceeds the limits of the humanly possible, then we will escape the danger of relapsing into egoism.

The aim makes us unselfish.

The aim no longer calculates it's profit.

The aim brings about purification.

The aim encourages our hearts to find all those again whom we have met so far.

Our hearts see the perspective, getting to know themselves in the others, listening to the other one, leaning towards him. Our outlook has become similar to Jesus'... and has all-embracing dimensions. He wants to find himself in us again and to be a burning fire.

THEN STOP BEING UNBEARABLE
TO ONE ANOTHER.
DO NOT BE SENSITIVE,
BE CHEERFUL, BECAUSE INTO THIS JOY
THERE FLOWS THE ESSENCE
OF THIS LOVE FOR THE NEIGHBOUR.

*Taken from: Mother Marie Therese, The Imitation of Christ as the Rule, Pelplin, Bernardinum, 2008,
pp. 61 ff*



COMMENTARY

By Rev. Fr. Dr. Clement Kihyo,

a Communio priest from the Diocese of Tanga in Tanzania

In this theme, the basic idea is the love of the neighbour, “love your neighbour as you love yourself”. The question is, what is new in the inspiration of Mother Marie Therese? This command was there from the Old Testament, so why should it be a great commandment in the inspiration of Mother Marie Therese? Yes, “When we are ready to love God with all our heart and soul, it is also necessary for us to love our neighbour as we love ourselves”. Mother Marie Therese sees the command of love as the imitation of Christ. The imitation of Christ is to follow Him in his way: “Take up your cross and follow me”.

But what does it mean to take up my cross and follow Jesus? Does it mean that I should wear my cross like bishops, religious men and women do? Nowadays wearing a cross is becoming a fashion for beauty and decorations. Did Jesus mean that we should decorate ourselves with such kinds of crosses?

When we continue reflecting on this “Supreme Love” as presented by Mother Marie Therese, then we should focus on this sentence: “Do not wear the cross as a piece of jewellery”. The cross has nothing to do with decorations, rather it is responsibility for us to carry. In this context, Mother Marie Therese is directing us to take responsibility for our neighbour. Rejection of the neighbour is the rejection of God: If we do not reject God in our neighbour, he will form us in such a way that we will be able to endure a bit more every day. The love we have been called to is the very love that turned into total sacrifice up to the death on the cross. If the utmost love is aim, the love that exceeds the limits of the humanly possible, then we will escape the danger of relapsing into egoism”.

Responding to this “Supreme Love” to the neighbour, Deacon Manfred Lang, the Deputy Superior General and Sr. Lidwina from 6th September to 20th September 2023 visited Tanzania. Their visit is the manifestation of the responsibility of spreading the cross rather than wearing it. One could think, why should these people travel all the way from Germany to Tanzania just to talk about Communio in Christo? In my realization, it is not just their will to visit Tanzania, but they have been inspired by the foundress. They teach us to escape the danger of egoism. It is also our responsibility to make sure that Communio in Christo crosses



to our neighbours as they have shown in their visit to Tanzania. It is the same spirit which the foundress had. She herself went across the border from the Netherlands to Mechernich in Germany to fulfil God's mission to her.

Fr. Dr. Clement Kihyo

He is a Communio priest from the Diocese of Tanga in Tanzania. He came into contact with Communio in Christo in 2013/14 while studying in Rome. After reading several books of Mother Marie Therese, visitation in the Motherhouse in Germany, and some personal experiences he became a member of Communio in Christo. One of the important realizations of the spirit of Mother Marie Therese is living as one family of all the people of God bound in love as stipulated in the decisions of the Vatican II Council. As the family of God, we are all under one umbrella as religious, priests and lay faithful.



Fr. Clement Kihyo holds a doctoral degree on Catholic Theology with specialization in Liturgical Studies and Sacramentology. He is now serving as the Head of Liturgy Department at the Tanzanian Episcopal Conference – TEC in Dar es Salaam.



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