

# BOOK OF LIFE

*The name "To him who proves victorious, I will give some of the hidden manna; I will also give him a white stone, and on this white stone is written a new name, that no-one knows except he who receives it."*

## **The name of the Community**

"Then one of the elders said to me, 'Do not weep! He has triumphed, the Lion of the Tribe of Juda, the Root of David. He has been found worthy to open the scroll and its seven seals.' Then I saw a lamb as if slain bearing seven horns and seven eyes which are the seven spirits of God on mission throughout the world." "I write to you in His precious Blood with the desire to see you as a humble and gentle lamb, in the image of the Lamb without stain who was so humble and so gentle that He was never heard to utter a single complaint. . .

And I want to see you as a powerful lion that roars within the Holy Church. That your voice and your virtue may be strong enough to bring back to life the children who lie dead in its bosom." From the first moments of the Community's life, the two faces of Jesus imposed themselves upon our meditation; the Lion and the Lamb; strength and weakness, God-Almighty, All-Powerful, and little child; abundant life and annihilation. Death which conquers death to open the gates of eternal life. United to the Lamb of God, our silent oblation triumphs in the victory of the Lion of Juda over all the forces of evil.

And even if it pleases Him to reveal to us one face rather than another, we must never dissociate them in our faith and our adoration. Of if in a certain country where we may be sent, it is possible to keep only part of our name, it is upon the totality of this mystery that our meditation will bear. 117 To this beautiful name is attached the consolation, "Do not weep!", of this call had rung out: "Console, console my people", but no one was found to have compassion and we had searched for consolation but in vain. Yet, even if a mother abandoned her children, the Lord would never abandon us, for He has engraved us on the palms of His hand.

"Heavens, shout for joy! Earth, jubilate! Mountains, burst with joy! For Adonai consoles His people and takes pity upon their afflicted."

Spirit In these times which are the last, the Lord sends forth His consoling Spirit to renew His Church, in order to adorn His Bride and invite Her to the wedding banquet of the Lamb. He rejuvenates and renews Her unceasingly, bringing Her towards perfect union with Her Bridegroom. The spirit and the Bride, in effect, say to the Lord: "Come!" Seized by this eschatological reality fascinated by the perfection of the world to come, the community sighs and groans with the whole of creation in a watchful and unending prayer. It proclaims by its life, in an implicit and explicit declaration, the reality of the Kingdom and the imminence of its coming; it anticipates it through brotherly life, sacramental life, adoration, and through the liturgy which makes us participants in a foretaste of that heavenly liturgy which is celebrated in the Holy City of Jerusalem toward which we journey as pilgrims." Journey without purse or staff, abandoned to Providence, guided by the Immaculate Virgin, the Morning Star who vanquished the Ancient Serpent. Faith of those who pray in silence and silent lips of the Apostles, Mary, Daughter of Zion, Mother of the Church and our Mother, bears us into the contemplation of the mysteries of Her Son in the joining together of our wounded hearts to Her pierced heart. She invites us to follow her on the path of renunciation of our own will and selfishness, for, through her obedience, she has become, both for herself and the whole of

mankind, cause of salvation. Bearer of the One who bears all, Mary initiates us to the riches of the Eucharistic Body of Christ, uniting the earthly praise to the jubilation of the Church or Heaven where the saints and the blessed spirits unceasingly sing the canticle of the Lamb.

The contemplative life is a grace producing fruits which are not to be kept for ourselves: "You anoint my head with oil and my cup overflows." The practice of hospitality and of almsgiving will occupy the first place in our sharing. Nonetheless, the needs of the church, the promptings of grace may push us towards more apostolic work and a more systematic evangelization. The vocation of the Community is one other than a call to be a People of God, aspiring to the Trinitarian life and, like Therese, choosing everything in order to be Love in the heart of the Church.

### **Meditation of the mysteries of Christ, the Pattern of Consecrated Life**

- Incarnation
- Transfiguration
- Passion and Resurrection
- Pentecost

### **INCARNATION - Hospitality, sharing, medical ministry, apostolate**

The people that walked in profound darkness have seen a great light spring forth, for unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given. Light from Light, true God from true God, he is true man. The affirmation, by our whole life, of the humanity and divinity of Christ, is the only answer to the evil and waywardness of our times. The supreme mystery of the Incarnation will be our reference for all things both visible and invisible. He dwelt among us; our hearts are from now on tabernacles of the Living god, our bodies temples of the Spirit, whom we must honour in a special way. We want also to recognize the Emmanuel in every man, in each little one who asks for a glass of water. This is why we will offer food and shelter to whoever should present himself, honouring especially our lords, the poor, those for whom there is no room at the inn of the heart of men. The Community will seek to assume human nature in all its reality, thus nothing that is human should remain alien to it. Close to the Poverello of Assisi, the Community wishes to look upon all the leprosy of the world, all the physical, moral and psychological distresses of a humanity without hope. Thus, the work of comforting the afflicted will be lived out not as a humanitarian obligation, but as a kiss of love in the name of the One who took upon Himself the afflictions of men.

Certain Community members will consecrate themselves particularly to this ministry, allying to the medical practice worship, intercession in faith and the practice of the sacraments. Approaching the miseries which surround us prompts us to become aware of the suffering of entire peoples and continents. We will have at heart to promote sharing and justice through prayer, example or specific actions. We will pray more especially for the suffering or persecuted members.

### **Surrender to Providence**

As God surrendered Himself into the hands of men on Christmas night, likewise we want to surrender ourselves during the night of this life into the hands of God our Father. Having relied upon the One who judges with justice, who clothes the grass of the fields, who feeds the birds of the air, and who provided the sacrificial Lamb, we will not need to fear for either our spiritual or material lives. We will not store up anything out of the concern for the morrow, but we shall pray with faith so that the Lord will come to our aid in financial difficulties, through the

intercession of Saint Joseph, head of the holy Family of Nazareth, who was so zealous in providing for all its needs, and this both for the little things of everyday life, and for the purchase of buildings or land or for any other requirements beyond our ordinary needs. We undertake not to save nor borrow nor lend with interest.

### **Work**

The words of St. Paul, "If a man will not work, he shall not eat," will be a norm for us, for idleness is the enemy of the soul. We shall consider work as a prolongation of the work of the Creator, who laboured for six days. No occupation should be in contradiction with Christian ethics nor with the Community's orientation; on the contrary, we will choose tasks more fulfilling than lucrative, creating, if necessary, our own employments and favouring manual work, which Jesus Himself sanctified in Nazareth, recognizing its special value at the heart of a contemplative life. Saturday afternoons and Sundays will be consecrated to study and prayer, to rest in the Lord. We will take into account, however, the wisdom of Saint Benedict, who said, "It is better to work on Sunday than to indulge in idleness, for our laziness cannot honour God."

### **The Incarnation and the Mystery of the Church**

This Divine mystery of salvation is revealed to us and continued in the Church. All the good that the people of God, while on their earthly pilgrimage, can procure for the human family flows from this reality: that the Church is the universal Sacrament of Salvation.

### **The Holy Father**

As members of the Church of Christ, we submit ourselves entirely to the Roman pontiff, as the successor of Peter, to whom Christ entrusted the Feeding of the His sheep and lambs, who enjoys supreme, full, immediate and universal authority over the care of souls by divine institution. Our prayer for him, our attention to his words, our careful study of his teachings will all manifest our filial affection.

### **Bishops**

The bishops, likewise established by the Holy Spirit, follow the apostles as pastors of souls: they have been sent forth to assure, in union with the sovereign pontiff, and under his authority, the continuation of the work of Christ, the universal pastor. The Community will not decide upon any important orientation without submitting it to the local bishop from whom it expects discernment, teaching, authority and paternal benevolence. The bishop-protector will intervene more specifically in matters concerning the Community as a whole. We will not establish any new foundation without the approval of the local bishop-ordinary, nor without the prospect of benefitting the local Church.

### **Priests, Involvement with Parishes**

Christ the Lord, the High Priest, taken from among men, has made of the new people a royal nation of priests for his God and Father. All brothers and sisters are called to fulfill the vocation of Slain Lamb by offering themselves as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God, thus participating in the Unique Priesthood of Christ.

This vocation will be revealed by the presence of priests, veritable gifts from Christ to the community. This will be realized above all when the priest, who is endowed with sacred power, make, in the role of Christ (in persona Christi), the Eucharistic Sacrifice, and offers it to God in

the name of the whole people, as we read in the following text by John Paul II: "Their priesthood is hierarchical, that is to say, linked to the power to teach and to lead the priestly people, and thereby it is ministerial."

This dimension can only remain of prime importance and touches in depth the *raison d'être* of the cell of the Church which we constitute. We shall thus encourage priestly vocations in our midst and through preaching.

Should the needs of the local church demand, the particular aspects of the Community will have to take second place for our priests in view of the common good of the whole people of God.

However, the bishops of the place where our brother priests are preferred will be mindful, as far as it is possible, of the human and spiritual growth of the latter in the respect of their community vocation.

For this reason they will strive to confer upon them a pastoral ministry, not far from one of our houses, bearing in mind that each person committing himself within the community dedicates himself to contemplative life. It will be necessary to envisage a particular status for some of our priests, according to their aptitudes and charisms, allowing them, by means of a lightening of their pastoral load, to be veritable spiritual animators among their brothers and sisters.

### **Chaplains**

In order to ensure a sufficient regularity in the practice of sacramental life, each house will have recourse, if possible, to the assistance of a chaplain. He will be chosen with care, through applying the following criteria of discernment: That he be a man of peace in total communion with the local bishop and with the entire church.

That he have the piety and the necessary training to understand spiritual paths.

That he subscribe to the Community's choices in the respect of liturgical texts, in the observance of moments of silence in the course of Eucharistic celebrations, in the administration of the sacrament of reconciliation, which he will not confuse with spiritual direction, reserved either to the novice master or to the shepherd or to a spiritual director outside the Community, chosen by a member in accordance with his superiors.

Chaplains will not be a member of the Community, but will be attached to it by a contract, which must be drawn up in each case.

### **Deacons and Instituted Ministries**

Out of the same concern to serve the Church, the Community will rejoice in the call from a bishop of some of its members to the ordained diaconate (or to an instituted ministry). The deacons will be, at the heart of the diocese and within the Community, signs of a servant Church and, "strengthened by sacramental grace they serve the People of God in the diaconate of the liturgy of the Word and of charity." The elected leaders, recognized by the bishop, need not necessarily be ordained ministers. The latter will be subject to them during the time of their mandate in all things, except those relative to the pastoral ministry entrusted to them by the bishop.

### **Ministry within the Community**

The Lord equips and directs his Church with a variety of hierarchical and charismatic gifts, and adorns Her with His fruits. Among His gifts, the grace given to the apostles occupies the first place. The Spirit Himself submits even the beneficiary of charisms to their authority. The same

Spirit, Who is by Himself the principle of unity in the Body wherein His virtue is exercised and where He realizes the internal connection between the members, produces and stimulates among the faithful that charity inspired by the Spirit. The Community, wherein are developed the gifts and fruits, the charisms and fraternal love, recognizes the Bishop by the hierarchical gift with which he is endowed as its pastor.

### **Government of the Community**

Every four years, the superior of each house will be elected or re-elected by the totality of the full members of the province to which he is attached. After having prayed and fasted, the voting members will choose the one in whom they recognize the charism of government and unity. This election, by a majority of two thirds of the votes, effected by secret ballot, will have to be submitted to the discernment of the bishop-protector and approved by him. In the case of difficulty, of contestation or of crisis within a house, the matter will be settled and referred to the bishop-protector by the body of superiors, united in general council around the superior general.

### **General Council**

The local superior will surround himself with elders chosen from the community for their wisdom and for the example they give. These will exercise their function during the term of the superior whom they assist.

### **The Shepherd**

The superior will see to the proper functioning of the house, both in the management of material goods and in the liturgical and fraternal life, seeking in all things the unity of the members and the fidelity of his foundation to the vocation of the entire Community, and to the doctrine of the Church. As the servant of all, he will exercise his function with gentleness and humility, teaching, exhorting, encouraging and always inciting to the Love of God and the service of the brethren. He will take care of the spiritual growth of each of the brothers and sisters entrusted to him, being attentive to the work that God is realizing in them, providing counsel and carrying them in his intercession. He will give fully of his time and of his person, for there is no greater love than to give one's life for one's friends. Out of paternal care, it is he who will preside over liturgical prayers, community meetings and over meals.

### **Provinces**

The considerable increase of the Community and the dispersion of its foundations will justify the establishment of "provinces." These will simply be geographic groupings aimed at promoting communion among different houses and their union around the superior general.

The superiors within each province will elect one of their number to the office of provincial coordinator, for a duration of four years, renewable. The provincial coordinator will be charged mainly with facilitating meetings and exchanges involving the houses pertaining to his particular province, and will organize the elections of their superiors. On no account will he enjoy the right of inspection or exercise any power of decision in a house of which he is not the superior. He will take care not to exert any influence which would tend to interfere with responsibilities proper to local superiors or to the superior general.

### **The Superior General**

The superiors are subject to the superior general, who will be proposed by the general council and elected by an extraordinary general chapter for a term of eight years. As for any responsibility within the community, no limitation of renewal shall be set a priori.

The superior general has authority over all the houses and their members. He must regularly visit them, consult them, encourage them and gather suggestions and remarks from everyone. He will watch over the unity of the Community as a whole, while preserving the distinctive character of each house which corresponds to a specific mission, whether conferred by the bishop or arising from local circumstances or conditions of life. He will be assisted by a general bursar in order to maintain the same standard of living throughout the whole Community, to equally share resources, if necessary, and to administer the common goods such as the allocation to the poor of the tithing of all revenues. The superior general will be the privileged instrument in the relation of the bishop-protector to the Community.

### **Degrees of Integration into the Community**

A period of probation will always be necessary before any degree of integration. We will propose to each candidate a stay in one of our houses to share in all aspects of the Community's life, without any time limit, unless the shepherd and the elders decide otherwise.

This period of probation may lead to an initial degree of integration wherein the candidate will test himself and verify his vocation. Prior to his admission he may be asked to wait in order to complete, as the case may be, a human or spiritual education. At the conclusion of this initial period of commitment, whose duration shall be no less than one year, the Community and the person concerned will discern together the opportuneness of a second degree of commitment of a definitive character. In the course of these next three years, the brother or sister, having severed all attachment to the world, having heard the word, "If you would be perfect, go, sell all that you possess and come, follow me," having been seized by Christ, yet without having attained perfection or having won the prize, will run toward the goal, straining with his whole being toward the Lord.

Except for participation in elections, every domain of Community life will be open to him: prayer, sharing, apostolate and chapter meetings. He will then wear the Community habit and, during the offices, the robes of the choir.

This period of three years shall be a privileged time for study and for doctrinal and spiritual training.

If it happens that the candidate comes to express a desire to withdraw, the Community will uphold him in prayer and will see to his social reintegration by all its financial means.

A third degree of commitment is provided for brothers and sisters whose human and spiritual maturity and the solidity of whose vocation to the Lion of Juda and the Slain Lamb are recognized by all.

These will be selected to establish the basis of new foundations, to share in the decision-making power of the shepherd and to stimulate, by their total consecration, the spiritual growth of the other brothers. The elders will be chosen from their number.

We want to be open to the signs or guidance of the Spirit, especially in these times of foundation in order to accelerate, if necessary, the process of integration.

### **Single members in the Community**

Since the monk is the eschatological being par excellence, the Community cannot but be fortified in its vocation by the presence in its midst of celibate members who have entered into this state of perfection.

The vows of poverty, chastity and obedience will be pronounced into the hands of the bishop-protector according to a particular ritual approved by same. These brethren will constitute a strength for the Community, dedicating their free time to prayer, having no other concern but to please the Lord, consecrating themselves more intimately to divine service. In no case will the taking of vows become an obligation for those members who, for other reasons, would remain single. Monastic vows shall be accessible only to those having persevered in the second degree of Community integration.

### **Admission of Married Couples**

Married couples shall be admitted only on condition that their decision to enter the Community is unanimous. The integration of families must be achieved in a climate of peace, requiring the consent of children at the age of reason. Of course, children shall not be regarded as members of the Community.

## **TRANSFIGURATION**

### **Prayer, the Central Vocation of the Community**

According to the words of the psalmist, Tabor and Hermon rejoiced at His Name. Name fully manifested in the Epiphany of the uncreated light when the Lord showed His glory to His disciples as far as they could see it. Thus it is given to us to rejoice in the contemplation of what we have received as 'deposit' and of all which remains for us to receive of the inheritance the Holy Spirit, who completes His work on earth and who brings us the fullness of grace.

The goal of Christian life is the acquisition of the Holy Spirit, in the active vigil of the wise virgins who filled their lamps with that Holy Oil in order to greet the Bridegroom at His advent.

While He was praying, His face changed. We will consider prayer, in all its innumerable forms, as the means par excellence of acquiring the oil of the Spirit in this commerce of friendship with the Father. It is He who initiates this dialogue, and He is also its end; a dialogue which in the face to face vision, will be uninterrupted, for we shall be with the angels and with the blessed spirits who never interrupt their praise. We who desire to see God will take the means to pray unceasingly in the image of Christ and according to His Word. We will find in the exhortation of St. Paul an encouragement to persevere in thanksgiving, praise, intercession and meditation: "Be happy at all times, pray continuously, and in all things give thanks to God, for this is the Father's will for you in Christ Jesus."

"Rejoice in the Lord always, I say it again, rejoice! Let your moderation be evident to all. The Lord is near. Dismiss all anxiety; present your needs to God, having recourse to meditation and prayer, permeated by thanksgiving."

Let us erect three tents: the disciple pronounce words which go beyond their understanding, plunging into the mystery of the Incarnation of the Word Who has established His tent among us, and responding to the invitation of the eschatological community. They live a Pentecost in advance, forgetting that Jesus is in conversation with Moses and Elijah over his imminent departure for Jerusalem. The gospel account of the Transfiguration is preceded and followed by the announcement of the Passion. The Vision of Glory is given to the disciples who were to be

present at Gethsemane so that they may go through the scandal of the Cross, be witnesses of the Night of God and run to the tomb on Easter morning.

The Glory and the Cross will mark our life of prayer. The superiors will take care to teach detachment from perceptible tastes during mental prayer so that it may only be lived as an act of pure love, of attachment to the person of Christ and of participation in the Trinitarian Life. They will encourage the vocation of intercessors for the world, calling to mind the principal themes of intercession proper to the Community.

### **Parousia**

For the Lord taught us to say: "Thy Will be done on earth as it is in Heaven." He teaches us also that the prayer of the elect can shorten the time of trial for the world. Finally, he invites us to respond to His invitation: "Watch and pray because you do not know the day or the hour." "Happy those servants whom the master finds watching when he comes."

### **Unity**

We cannot believe that the prayer of Christ himself cannot be heard by the Father and granted when, prior to His Passion, He said: "I have given them the Glory that you gave Me, that they may be one as We are One: I in them and You in Me, that they may be perfect in Unity." But the Lord of Ages wisely and patiently follows out the plan of grace on our behalf, sinners that we are. In recent times more than ever before, He has been rousing divided Christians to remorse over their divisions and to a longing for unity.

We shall pray that the scandal within the very Body of Christ may cease, begging the Father to engender dialogue wherever there is obduracy, to inspire the leaders of the churches, and to give the passion for unity to all.

### **Vocations**

The Holy Council affirms that the effective union of the whole people of God in fostering vocations is the proper response to the action of Divine Providence which confers the fitting gifts on those men divinely chosen to participate in the hierarchical priesthood of Christ and helps them by its grace.

Priestly vocations will be foremost in our intercessions, for already the fields are white for the harvest and the workers are few. We will also pray for all those who, in varying degrees, serve the Church of Christ, as well as for all religious families.

### **The Proclamation of the Kingdom of God and the Conversion of Souls**

We will pray for all those who, by whatever right, proclaim the coming of the Kingdom of God. We will pray for the pastors, doctors of the Church, evangelists and for those who complete in their bodies that which is lacking in the Passion of Christ, that God may confirm their preaching by signs, wonders, miracles of all kinds, and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to His Will.

### **The Enlightenment of Israel**

Saint Paul speaks to us of the mystery of Israel as connatural with the mystery of the Church when he says: "I do not wish, brethren, that you be ignorant of this mystery, lest you be conceited. One part of Israel has become hardened until the full number of the Gentiles has come in. And so all Israel will be saved." The full number of Gentiles and all Israel thus find

themselves united in a common destiny. Intercession for the Jews will therefore occupy an important and privileged place in our prayer for the universal Church and for the fulfilling of the times.

We will consecrate the first five nights of the week to these subjects of prayer, whether we are waking or sleeping, since it is written: "I sleep but my heart is awake and all night long on my bed, I sought the one my heart loves." We will take a moment during the night, in community or individually, according to the custom of each house, to pour out our heart to the Lord our God. The nights of Friday to Saturday and of Saturday to Sunday will be reserved for the meditation of the mysteries of the Holy Saturday and for the joyful expectation of the Resurrection.

## **Liturgy**

Longing for the return of the Lord, we already join in with the celestial liturgy of the angels who undeniably celebrate God Most High: "Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord Sabaoth. The whole earth is full of His glory."

In the earthly liturgy, we participate in a foretaste of that heavenly liturgy, which is celebrated in the Holy Community of Jerusalem toward which we journey as pilgrims, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God, a minister of the holies and of the true tabernacle; we sing a hymn to the Lord's glory with all the warriors of the heavenly army; venerating the memory of the saints, we hope for some part and fellowship with them.

As the Spirit of Christ in us cries: "Abba Father," we know that, in the liturgical office, it is Christ Himself who gives worship to God. He makes Himself present each time that the Church prays and sings, thus fulfilling His promise: "Whenever two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I."

Through the holy liturgy we participate in Christ's own ministry, manifesting our election according to the words of St. Peter: "You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people set apart to proclaim the praises of the One who has called you out of the darkness into His wonderful light." Prompted by the testimony of the early Church, "They devoted themselves faithfully to the teaching of the apostles, to the brotherhood, to the breaking of the bread and to the prayers" the Community will give particular importance to the liturgy, "summit towards which the activity of the Church is directed and font from which flows all her power, and all sanctification."

The brothers and sisters of the Community will take care to be one Body and soul, thus manifesting in the liturgy the unity of the People of God.

They will draw from it fresh strength for the practice of charity. They will be predisposed to hospitality in order to be a sign for the nations.

The liturgy, as an irruption of the sacred into time and space, will allow us to participate in the eternity and infinity of God, and will thereby anticipate the coming of the Kingdom. In the freedom of the children of God, we shall be able to celebrate our Lord with songs and dances, remembering David exulting before the Ark.

We could not better express our love for the Lord than by rendering to Him spiritual worship of pleasing fragrance. In order to witness therefore to the beauty of God, we will put special effort into the singing and the ceremonial of the office. Likewise, we will honour the Lord by a

respectful and holy bearing in the places where He dwells. Clothed in the habit of the choir, we will manifest that "baptized in Christ, we have clothed ourselves with Christ."

As the Christians of the primitive Church who "every day with one accord, continued to meet in the temple and broke the bread in their houses," we will be faithful to the loving invitation of the Lord through the offices of the day Lauds, Vespers, Compline and the divine sacrifice of the Eucharist, the summit of our prayers.

May we then, by our hymns and our songs of joy sanctify the Name of God to whom belong "Power, Honour and Glory."

### **Praise**

Our contemplative vocation could not be lived fully without giving thanks at all times and in all places. "I will bless Adonai at all times, His praises will always be on my lips."

Christ makes each one of us a new creature, "a being of praise to the Glory of the Father." Therefore, with Saint Francis, we want to unite ourselves with all of creation and proclaim: "Bless the Lord, all you works of the Lord . . . to Him highest glory and eternal praise be given."

We will find our joy in celebrating His Name for "It is good to sing to our God, sweet is His praise." May it reach the ends of the earth and free the hearts of believers from their chains. Strong in this promise: "The Lord dwells in the praise of His people, "through thanksgiving we will welcome the living presence of God and we will anticipate our calling in the Kingdom."

### **Prayer**

By the transfiguration of Jesus on Mount Tabor, where the Glory of the Father is manifested to us, we receive the testimony that God is superabundance of love.

God, wanting "to raise men to a participation of the divine life," places in us the desire to see Him face to face, in order that, in this vision, our soul may be consumed by the One who is like a devouring fire and may aspire ever more to be united with the bridegroom: "I have found the One whom my heart loves, I held Him and will not let Him go."

In this way mental prayer, pure dialogue of love, will take an essential place in our life, for it is the royal road which leads us to the knowledge of the One who is all Love: "Whoever does not love has not known God, for God is love."

Furthermore, remembering this word of the Lord, "If anyone is thirsty let him come to Me and drink," we want to make our way towards the spring of living water, the source of all grace, that alone can satisfy our thirst. With Saint Teresa of Avila we know that "the soul that drinks of this water will no longer thirst for the things of this life." We will therefore beseech our Lord to cover us, in his infinite goodness, with torrents of this water, "for this is an entirely supernatural favour which does not depend upon our will."

We will also be concerned to link, without fail, the practice of virtues to the exercise of mental prayer. We will thus more especially seek detachment, humility and love of the neighbour: "Anyone who does not love his brother whom he sees cannot love God, whom he does not see." The members of the Community will therefore commit themselves to spending at least one hour a day in mental prayer in simplicity and humility of heart and will exercise their will in fighting all temptations which would undermine this determination. They will learn, according to the spirituality of Carmel, to grow through the sustained exercise of vocal prayer such as the Pater Noster, the Rosary . . . This step should be rapidly overtaken to accede to mental prayer. This will "consist in considering or reflecting upon a subject chosen in advance in order to create within oneself a fruitful conviction or resolution. It is a "kind of discourse by means of images,

forms and figures produced by the senses: such as imagining Christ crucified or bound to the pillar."

This will be superseded by a Prayer of Recollection in which the soul brings together its faculties in an effort of the will and "enters within itself with God." Knowing that the contemplation to which we aspire is purely a gift from God, we shall endeavour to "leave behind those palpable means" in order to enter into an exchange of pure love.

Thus we shall pass from active Recollection, acquired by our own efforts, helped by grace, to a passivity of the soul which is a pure surrender to the loving initiatives of God, "contemplating being nothing other than an infusion of God, secret, peaceful and loving, which, if we allow it, inflames the soul in the Spirit of Love."

The Lord will thus be able to lead us into Prayer of Quiet in which the will is suavely captive. At this point, our soul wishes nothing other than to remain with its God and says with the apostle Peter: "Lord let us put up three tents here."

Strengthened by the promises of Christ, "If anyone loves me he will keep my commandments, my Father will love him, we will come to him and we will make our home in him," we shall aspire to this state of union which mystical marriage is "Thus to the perfect fidelity of love God will respond with a perfect love which will make Him take definitive and complete possession of the soul which will thus become His true resting place."

But we shall also become aware that this path towards the transforming union cannot be brought about without purification through diverse nights. We shall remember these words of Saint Paul: "You must give up your former ways of life; and put aside your old self which gets corrupted by following deceitful desires in order to renew yourselves by a spiritual transformation and put on the new self. . ."

The Spirit, however, blows where He wills and the Lord can permit some souls to pass through the different stages of prayer life more quickly.

The Community therefore recognizes its principal grace as being the life of prayer. In it, "all of us, with faces unveiled, reflecting as in a mirror the Glory of the Lord, we shall be transformed into the same image, from glory to glory." We believe the contemplative life permits us to reach this beatitude which is to see God, to resemble Him, and to actualize the words of the apostle John: "When Jesus appears we shall be like Him because we shall see him as He is."

## **ELIJAH AND PROPHETIC EXISTENCE**

### **Poverty**

Only the man seized by the Spirit of God is truly poor, he is "anaw of Adonai." Fascinated by the Lord, he lives a disappropriation of himself. Poverty should not therefore be sought for its own sake, nor should it be the goal of an aesthetical approach, but the fruit of the life in the Spirit.

We will cherish poverty as the adornment of the bride, as the proof of love and of exclusive belonging to the Bridegroom. Beatitude of the poor for the Spirit, heirs to the still invisible Kingdom, how can the possession of visible things, of natural gifts and even of passing spiritual goods be preferred to it?

Poverty is equally the source of a great freedom, luminous, joyous and beautiful. Contrary to its diabolical counterfeit, destitution and avarice, which deface and shrink the image of God that is within us.

Let those charged with the management of goods and expenditures be fully permeated by the generosity that detachment fosters. May they never forget that the times are short and use the wealth of this world to gain friends in the world to come. Let them regard the gifts bestowed upon us as loans conceded to us until we meet one poorer than ourselves.

We will therefore have to be a living witness for the people of this generation, that our only happiness on earth lies not in the possession of material goods, but in the fact of loving God and of knowing that God loves us.

The example of Elijah takes us even beyond the mere non-possession of material things; he prefigures the man of the new covenant and the son of the Beatitudes, the disciple of Jesus the Messiah. He will do the same works as his master: multiplications, miracles, resurrections. Like him, he ascended into heaven and like him he was stripped of the glory that was his: the fire which he causes to descend from heaven upon Carmel does not belong to Him.

### **Martyrdom**

True poverty, inseparable from the state of discipleship, is, before anything else, of a spiritual nature and finds its fulfillment in the witness par excellence: martyrdom, according to that which is promised to those who have left everything to follow Christ.

"No-one who has left home, brothers or sisters, mother or father, children or fields for My sake and for the Gospel will fail to receive a hundredfold in this present age, homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children and fields--with persecutions, and in the age to come, eternal life."

The Church then considers martyrdom as an exceptional gift and as the fullest proof of love. By martyrdom a disciple is transformed into an image of his master by freely accepting death for salvation of the world - as well as his conformity to Christ in the shedding of his blood. Though few are presented such an opportunity, nevertheless all must be prepared to confess Christ before men. They must be prepared to make this profession of faith even in the midst of persecutions, which will never be lacking to the Church, in following the way of the Cross.

### **Chastity**

Another form of prophetic poverty is chastity, which all the baptized are called upon to live, each one according to his strength, some practicing perfect continence, particularly those who have decided to remain single for the sake of the Kingdom of Heaven.

This eminently eschatological virtue of purity could not remain the privilege of monks and nuns only. Marriage will have to be considered as a means of sanctification, in the practice of conjugal chastity, in the knowledge that human life and the responsibility of transmitting it are not limited to the horizons of this world and find neither their full dimension nor their full meaning here, but that they are always to be seen in reference to the eternal destiny of men.

This poverty of heart and body must be protected, avoiding anything that might disturb the senses, whether in readings, food, entertainments or conversations, so that, as St. Paul said: "it may not even be mentioned among you."

The cell will be like the reflection of this chastity. We will make it a rule that everything there be lived for the glory of God.

The superiors will see to the human equilibrium of couples and of single members, giving them medical and psychological teaching conforming not to the fashion of the world that is passing but rather to the traditional teaching of the Church.

## **Obedience**

Each time we recite the Our Father, we ask that "Thy Will be done." This prayer is incontestably eschatological, a veritable call to anticipate the presence of the Kingdom of Heaven on earth, to bring the world back to obedience to God, to make the will of men conform with that of the Father.

The very nature of obedience is to be found in this concordance, wherein man "offering the full surrender of his own will unites himself permanently and securely to God's salvific will." It is through disobedience that Adam turned away from God, thus losing the communion and intimacy with his Creator and cutting himself off from the unending Fountain of Life Divine. This withdrawal has become inherent to human existence "for God has bound men in disobedience, in order to be merciful to all." This mercy was first exercised towards Abraham, in whom God engendered faith. In order to strengthen his faith, which was to make of Abraham the father of believers, the Lord led him along the path of obedience: "Leave your country . . .," "take your son . . ."

The vocation of Abraham passes through obedience to the Word of God: it is a blind journey during which he is asked to carry out actions whose meaning escapes him. Obedience is thus a test for him, and for God a priceless witness of love, "You have not withheld your son from me, your only son."

Moses, chosen to guide the people of God from slavery to the Promised Land, remains the model par excellence of obedience in the Old Covenant. The episode of the battle against Amalek, told in the 17th chapter of the Book of Exodus, sheds light on several important features: it is Moses' obedience that ensures the victory of Israel (verse 11). From the point of assuming this attitude, Moses does not consider the limits of his own nature, which burdens him with fatigue, but rather he looks to the Omnipotence of his Lord, knowing that "what God promises, He can also bring about." Finally, Aaron and Hur, aware of the grace that rests upon the one whom God has placed at the head of the people, will not seek to supplant him, but, on the contrary, put their own strength at his service. It is through these two complementary dimensions of obedience that the Will of God is realized.

"Jesus Christ, whose state was divine," came into the world to do the will of the Father and "taking upon himself the form of a slave, obedient even unto death upon a cross, he made himself the servant of his brothers and gave his life for the redemption of the many." Following his footsteps, all the baptized, and, a fortiori, all members of the Community are called to make their own the path of obedience, collaborating thereby in the work of salvation.

In this desire to obey God, the brothers and sisters will subject themselves in faith to the superiors whom they will themselves have elected, "using both the forces of their intellect and will, and the gifts of nature and grace to execute the commands and fulfil the duties entrusted to them." The authority of the superior will be exercised particularly to ensure the proper functioning of the house for which he is responsible, the progress in the practice of charity, as well as the human and spiritual growth of each member. The superior, who entered the Community to seek and to carry out the holy will of God, and not to order people about will remind himself constantly that the exercise of authority is but one form, among many others, of obedience, and that it will never constitute an end, but a means to the achievement of something much higher: the spiritual growth of the children of God.

Let him act "out of a spirit of service toward his brethren, expressing in this way the love that the Lord Jesus has for them."

Each one, whatever be his task, will apply to himself this sentence of the Lord: "I have not come to do my will but the Will of the One who sent me."

"Obedience has a nurse who constantly feeds her, that is, true humility, a soul is obedient in proportion to her humility, and humble in proportion to her obedience. This humility is the foster-mother and nurse of charity, and with the same milk she feeds the virtue of obedience. Her raiment given her by this good nurse is self-contempt and desire for opprobrium which brings her to displease herself in order to please Me. Where does she find this virtue? In sweet Christ Jesus, My only begotten Son. For who abused Himself more than He did! He sated Himself with opprobrium, mockings and insults. He renounced Himself, giving His bodily life in order to please Me. And who was more patient than He? Not a complaint, not a murmur passed His lips, but with meekness and patience He embraced His injuries and in loving haste He fulfilled the obedience imposed upon Him by Me, His Eternal Father."

## **PASSION AND RESURRECTION**

### **Maundy Thursday: Institution of the Eucharist**

The encounter and friendship with Marthe Robin have been, without any doubt, determining factors in the revelation to the Community of its own vocation in the heart of the Church. Through her who was so much in His likeness, we have touched the redeeming wounds of the Saviour; through her for whom the only food for fifty years was the Eucharist, we have learned that "His Body is real food;" through her again who sacrificed herself for the priests, we unceasingly deepen our priestly identity.

We will make our own that exhortation which she has left as the strongest reminder of the sacrificial character of our vocation.

EVERY CHRISTIAN LIFE IS A "MASS" AND EVERY SOUL IN THIS WORLD IS A "HOST."

Let us listen to St. Augustine: "Do not seek outside yourself the Host which you need. You will find that host within you." St. Paul shows this further when he says "I beseech you, offer your bodies as living hosts, holy and pleasing to God."

You have heard it: the host of your sacrifice, of your Mass, it is yourself. It is you with all that you are, with all that you have, with all that you do. You therefore have your host within yourself, but it must bear some resemblance to that of the priest, which is made of pure wheat; which is, in addition, an unleavened bread, that is, without yeast. You, too, must be hosts with no leaven. This leaven of which I speak symbolizes all that is not pure, all that is bad, all that is not according to the Christian spirit. You must therefore purify yourself of every trace of this sad leaven, of which even a crumb is enough to contaminate all the dough. Seek within yourself, in your spirit, in your will, in your heart, in your intentions, in your actions, your thoughts, your desires, all that is too much according to human nature, all that is not absolutely worthy of a good and perfect Christian. . . and then root it out, destroy it; every day cast off something of yourself; purify yourself more, sanctify yourself unceasingly . . .

Become each day more supernatural, purer, more saintly, more divine and then, your host will resemble a little better, and always more, that of the priest.

The priest takes the host in his hands and offers it to God. You too have an offering to make to God of your own host, which is all spiritual: it is yourself. Gather your whole self together and, unreservedly, offer yourself to God with Jesus, the Divine victim, unceasingly immolated for the salvation of all. Take your body, with all its senses, your soul with all its thoughts, your will with all its desires, your heart with all its affections; take your entire life, your everyday life, with all your tasks, your sufferings, your pains, your struggles, your efforts, your good deeds, and say to God: "Lord, all this is for you, I offer everything to you, in union with my Jesus, through the Immaculate Heart of my Mother, and with your Priest at the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar."

This offering of yourself, make it totally, with generosity and joy. Do not imitate Cain, who offered to the Lord the least of what he had, but offer to God the best of what you have, the best of your soul, the best of your heart, the best of your life . . . and your whole life.

More than ever, the world is in need of holy and generous souls, living hosts, who will pledge themselves fully to sacrifice, to immolation, to Love. Be you therefore one of those "devoted and fully given" souls, united to Jesus Crucified. We will never know, for God alone knows, the sanctifying and fruitful supernatural action that you will exert, in the secret of your sacrifice, upon those around you.

And again these words on the manner in which to receive the Body of the Lord: "With what haste I opened wide the door of the little tabernacle where my God deigned to descend and lift high on its stalk of love this frail plant. . . my soul, that the adorable Host come into it like a precious substance, a beneficial dew, and give back to me all the freshness and the fragrance which I lost through my own fault, and furnish me with all that I lack and that I wish to obtain. I have the right to hope for much from my beloved Jesus while jealously keeping within me his Eucharistic presence. This intimate life in his love, it is my life."

In order to be intimate in His love, this life, which the Eucharist is, shall be celebrated daily in all our houses. Each one will take care to prepare for it in prayer and by the frequent use of the sacrament of reconciliation. We will see to it that there be no shortening of the time for thanksgiving after Communion.

Each one will contribute according to his own gifts to make the Eucharistic celebration the center and the summit of the communal life.

Considering as a liturgical being, we will encourage artistic creation inasmuch as it is a profound and authentic expression of the "admirable exchange." In the same way we will endeavour to participate "consciously and actively" in the Sunday Mass of the local parish.

## **GETHSEMANE**

### **Monks and nuns in the Community**

It is at Gethsemane that for the first time, the blood of the Lamb is shed, not at the hands of men, but by the sweating of blood, that bloody dew which bears witness to the spiritual struggle that the Son of Man undergoes. To us also this word is addressed, "You have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood." To us also is addressed this word: "You could not watch one hour with me?" The whole Community, by the baptismal consecration of each one of its members, has for its vocation to be "friend of the Bridegroom" and to watch with him. However, in order to accomplish fully this vocation and to remain vigilant in waiting for the Bridegroom, it is necessary that besides married couples, who express this mystery of the Wedding Feast according to the gift which is theirs, proclaiming by their conjugal fidelity the indissoluble love of Christ and of his Church, the Community cultivates in its bosom the

charism of consecrated celibacy, a divine gift that the Church receives from her Lord, and give it an eminent place. In effect, this gift permits the experience of this same mystery of the Wedding of the Lamb in a way that is more immediate, and which expresses more strongly its reality through being alone with the Only One.

Certain brothers and sisters, under the impulsion of the ardent charity that the Spirit pours into their hearts and hearing the call of Christ at Gethsemane: "Stay here and watch with me," will make themselves "eunuchs for the Kingdom," and remain celibate in order to seek to be uniquely and above all the friends of the Bridegroom and those who follow the Lamb wherever He goes.

Rendered more available in their time and their affections by the renunciation of conjugal and family life, they will be able to follow Christ more freely and to imitate him more closely. Sharing more keenly in His solitude at Gethsemane, standing at the foot of the cross with the Virgin Mary, the first to hasten to the tomb on Easter morning, they will manifest visibly the exigencies of the Kingdom, the supremacy of that Kingdom above all the earthly realities, and they will anticipate more explicitly the Resurrection in which there shall be neither wives nor husbands.

Their life shall thus be a luminous sign of the Kingdom of Heaven, where each believer, through the total renunciation which death is, will wholly enter into the mystery of the Wedding Feast of the Lamb and will see the accomplishment for him, in Christ, of the Promise toward which all the history of salvation reaches out: "Your Spouse shall be your Creator."

Since this mystery is realized only through the Cross, the monks and the nuns of the Community will put to good use their greater freedom to engage with a special fervour in the spiritual struggle, uniting themselves ardently with Christ, by a giving of themselves which embraces their whole existence. They will consecrate more of their time to prayer and to a watchful waiting for their Lord; they will especially take to heart that the salt of their communal vocation will not lose its flavour and they will be mindful of proclaiming the folly of God which is wiser than the wisdom of men and of making manifest the fruitfulness of the Cross.

Thus they will contribute to ensuring that the entire Community put itself at the service of the Church towards the enthusiastic accomplishment of the duties of the Christian vocation. The consecration of brothers and sisters called to monastic profession will be carried out by their taking, in the hands of the bishop-protector, the three perpetual vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. They will receive from his hands the habit expressing their consecration. Only those brethren whose calling will have been tested over a sufficiently long time of communal life will be so admitted. This profession will be for them the third degree of commitment in the Community.

In addition to the brothers and sisters living their monastic life within mixed houses, others will do so in houses devoted to a particular vocation and consisting of single people only.

## **GOOD FRIDAY**

"It is fitting that, like our Beloved, we may not be lacking in the Cross, until death out of love. He is the one who disposes our sufferings, in the love of what we love the most, so that we will make greater sacrifices and profit from it all the more. But all is brief; not everything goes to the point of lifting the blade, and so, Isaac remains alive with the promise of a Son multiplied."

With Saint John of the Cross, we recognize that the cross is necessary for our growth in Love, for our identification with the Son. We will love it and we will seek it more, as our knowledge of this folly of God's love increases, He who so loved the world, and also as we come to realize that the Cross is the source of all blessing.

### **To Love Unto Being Transpierced**

We will stand with Mary, at the foot of the Cross, to scrutinize the heart of Jesus and thus to know "the breadth, the length, the depth and the height of the love of God." We will take refuge in his wounds through which we are healed, and more especially his transpierced heart, source of salvation flowing from the side of the new temple. We will encourage devotion to the divine hearts of Jesus and Mary, in order to draw therefrom a veritable theology of Mercy and learn to become truly sons of "the Father of mercies of the God of all consolations" and sons of She who, by the sacrifice of her heart, has taken a specific part in the revelation of Mercy, that is to say in the absolute fidelity of God to his love . . .and has thus deserved the title of Mother of Mercy.

Remembering the words of Christ to Saint Catherine of Siena: "It is love that holds me, not the nails;" we will never lose sight of the fact that the mystery of the Cross is a mystery of love, and that the desire to associate ourselves with it could only spring from a movement of love. We will take care to eliminate from mortification and from the desire for crosses and penance all that is contrary to love.

The testament that Jesus has left us was given upon the Cross, and each one of his words is a proof of love. He has shown us the path so that we may walk in his footsteps:

FATHER, FORGIVE THEM, FOR THEY DO NOT KNOW WHAT THEY ARE DOING: Love your enemies. Bless those who curse you; do good to those who mistreat you.

YOU WILL BE WITH ME IN PARADISE: To love to the point of desiring the salvation of sinners. To love to the point of discerning the presence of God in all men.

WOMAN, THIS IS YOUR SON. SON, THIS IS YOUR MOTHER: To love through the heart of Mary. To love to the point of seeing all men as one family, the daughter of one mother.

I THIRST: To love in order to quench the thirst of God, for Love is so little loved.

IT IS ACCOMPLISHED: To love to the point of desiring the consummation of the sacrifice of our life. To love to the end, unto the night. To love unto the triumph of Love.

FATHER, INTO YOUR HANDS I COMMEND MY SPIRIT . . . MY GOD, WHY HAVE YOU FORSAKEN ME? To love as only a child can love, in total surrender and absolute trust. Saint Therese of the Child Jesus will lead us in the discovery of this way of childhood in this offering of ourselves to Merciful Love.

### **HOLY SATURDAY: The vocation to pray for the Jewish people.**

It is during the central shabbat of history that the dwelling place of the dead echoes with the footsteps of the Saviour and that the righteous of the first Covenant rejoice.

As Saint Bernard teaches, the Jews have opened the heart of Jesus and they thus have access thereto; they have invoked upon their heads the redeeming blood of Christ. Our hope is therefore strong to see them occupy the place which is theirs in the true Israel of God.

We have "great sorrow and unceasing anguish in our heart." Yes, we could wish to be accursed ourselves and cut off from Christ for the sake of our brothers. . . who are Israelites..."

We dare to make our own this cry of Saint Paul in these times when the Church invites us to look at Israel in a new light, to look indeed, but much more. Urged by the Spirit and "searching its own mystery, the Church opens the doors to a real communication with Israel, the kind of communication that reaches the deepest roots of one's own identity and which consequently, overwhelms, transforms and gives birth to a new face." This is why the Community, with the whole Church, awaits "with an indestructible faith and a great desire, the access of this people to the plenitude of the People of God established by Christ."

Inasmuch as it is true that through his Son, "of the two has made but one," we will ask the God of our fathers, living and holy, to manifest this unity. Meanwhile, we perceive with the apostle of the Gentiles, with great pain, the tear which is inscribed in the Body of God. Out of this tear springs forth the pressing call that we have heard: a call to probe the mystery of Israel, and to invest in it our prayers and all our love. In effect, it is first of all in a profound prayer that our vocation for Israel is incarnated and particularly in contemplative prayer, the source of all light and of all action. We will let the splendour of the divine plan for Israel fill us with wonder. Our contemplation will bring us to the gates of this mystery which transcends our intelligence. Like poor ones and beggars, we will strive to listen to what the Spirit is saying to the Churches, knowing that only a revelation communicated to the heart by the Spirit can make us fathom the mystery of Israel, which Saint Paul does not wish to see the Church ignore, "O the inexhaustible depth of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! How unfathomable are his judgments and his ways beyond understanding."

This contemplative prayer will make us espouse as it were the sentiments of God for his people, and thus, we will receive from him that solicitude that still burns in him for the first-born Son of his election, forever "cherished because of his brothers." Each one of us will have at heart therefore to love Israel as God loves her, and because God loves her He "who never takes back his gifts nor revokes his choices," He who so completely incorporated Israel with himself that he "shields her, cares for her and guards her as the apple of His eye." Far from having "forsaken his first love," God does nothing but enlarge her, introducing the children of the New Covenant into the eternally sealed election, as it is written: "I will establish my covenant between Me and you, and your race after you "from generation unto generation, an everlasting covenant to be your God and the God of your descendants after you. . ."

Our contemplative prayer will lead us to desire with ardour this "resurrection from the dead," that will be their reintegration into the Body of Christ Jesus. And even if "it is not for us to know the times and the dates that the Father has set with his own authority," it pertains to us to hasten the outpouring of this grace - we feel it as being decisive for the history of the world - as it pertains to us to say with the Spirit and all Israel, "Come!" The brethren seized by the eschatological tension instilled into their souls by the Holy Spirit, will aspire with all their being to the Paschal Feast in common with Israel, on that day when the Lamb will be "standing on Mount Zion," For if the Lamb is standing it is that he has risen from among the dead; first fruits of Israel, who will also rise from among the dead, after having endured, over long centuries, all sorts of evils, scorn, exiles, persecutions, exterminations, as did the Suffering Servant whom we can contemplate in her. Our prayer will be one of groanings and intercession. We will present to God requests and supplications so that the enlightenment of all Israel in Christ Jesus may be precipitated. We will ask with Jesus that the children of Jerusalem, those of the first and those of the New Covenant, be gathered like chicks under the wings of their mother. We will ask for the peace of Jerusalem and "for the love of the house of the Lord, we will pray for her happiness."

Knowing that to intercede is to give one's blood, we will keep ourselves ready to embrace the destiny of Israel when she is treated like a lamb led to slaughter, for "there is no greater love than to lay down one's life for those whom one loves."

## **PENTECOST**

"When the day of Pentecost came they were all together in one place. Suddenly, a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed like tongues of fire which separated and came to rest on each one of them. They were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them."

This fundamental event in the history of Salvation inaugurates the last times. Peter himself attests to this in his preaching, quoting the Prophet Joel: "In the last days, says God, I shall pour out my Spirit on all flesh. Your sons and your daughters will prophecy. Your young men will see visions and your old men will have dreams. Yes, on my servants and handmaidens, in those days, will I pour out my spirit and they will prophesy.

These times of the end are also the times of the Church that the Spirit throughout all ages "unifies in communion and in works of ministry equipping and directing her with hierarchical and charismatic gifts."

The fruits of this Pentecost were principally the birth of the first Christian community where "the multitude of the faithful was of one heart and of one soul," and the preaching of the Gospel was accompanied by signs and wonders.

Receptive to the Holy Spirit, the Community will have to grow in these two dimensions: Communion and Mission.

### **Communion**

Member of the Body, the Community must always consider as absolutely vital the reinforcement and multiplication of the bonds of filiality which unite it to the Church. In each house, this desire will find expression especially in a spirit of service and devotion towards the bishop of the diocese as well as towards the local church.

As she herself constitutes a body, the Community will not neglect any of the means propitious to its edification, applying herself to welcoming unceasingly the spiritual gifts "distributed by the one and same Spirit to each in particular as He chooses."

"In effect, to one the Spirit gives a word of wisdom, to another a word of knowledge, by means of the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, to another the gift of working miracles, to another prophecy, to another the gift of recognizing spirits, to another the diversity of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues."

The superior will encourage each one to aspire to the higher gifts, ever careful not to "suppress the Spirit, but testing everything and holding on to the good." The Church reminds us in effect that every believer has the right and the duty to exercise these charisms (both within the Church and in the world) in the freedom of the Holy Spirit and in communion with his brethren in Christ, and most particularly with his pastors.

The Community will be open therefore to the reception of charisms, the exercise of which will be carried out with a view to the good of everyone and of the Church, on condition that "everything be done in a fitting and orderly way."

All the same, we shall remember that the path par excellence remains that of charity which will never pass away. To keep up and progress in charity, the brothers and sisters will practice a mutual transparence, a simple approach in humility and light, resolutely freed from any notion of blaming others.

Thus will any germ of division be rooted out to give place to fraternal communion which asks that "if one member suffers all the members suffer with him; if one member is honoured, all the members rejoice with him."

But love goes well beyond this, and each one will have to care for the others, seeing them as a precious gift that God has bestowed upon him, and seeking to be of service to all. This is why we will make our own the advice of St. Benedict: "Let them foster mutual respect and bear with extreme patience with their infirmities, whether physical or affective, let them zealously practice obedience among themselves; let no one pursue that which he judges to be useful for himself, but rather that which may be of benefit to others; let them practice fraternal love with modesty; let them fear God in love; let them love their superior with a humble and sincere charity; let them prefer absolutely nothing to Christ, who leads all of us together to Eternal Life." If a conflict breaks out between two brothers, they will seek to resolve it at once in prayer, particularly in the presence of the Holy Sacrament, for adoration turns us away from ourselves and our passions, and restores us to identity of sons of God. If by misfortune one or the other has so lacked in charity on the occasion of that conflict as to have pronounced hurtful words, the party involved shall take seriously the warning of Jesus in the Gospel of St. Matthew (Ch. 5, v. 21-22), deeming himself liable to judgement and he shall do penance. Fasting is then recommended. If one of the culprits refuses the penance, the one who was offended shall take it upon himself.

## **Mission**

"Then he said to them: Go into all the world and preach the Good News to all creation." Today, more than ever, the world needs to hear the word of Life and the Lord calls us to spread it in various ways. This apostolate cannot bear fruit unless it is an overflowing of our contemplative life, and unceasingly comes back to draw strength from it.

It is in this spirit that each one will feel himself invited to bear witness to the love of Christ in all places and at all times, to be a bearer of the blessed hope of the Kingdom in all circumstances. More particularly, the Community will organize periodic missions of evangelization, intended to proclaim the Good News in places as various as: schools, hospitals, prisons, parishes. These teams, like the "bella brigata" of Saint Catherine of Siena, will be composed as much "of adolescents as of religious, of married people as well as priests; a little branch of the People of God." Always in close connection with the local bishop, they will respond to the numerous requests in a spirit of service and fidelity to the Church, missionary in its very nature.

Some brothers and sisters, according to their abilities and their own charisms, will take part in the propagation of the faith through writing articles or books, through preaching and teaching, artistic events, and spiritual shows.

The authentic apostolate is accompanied by visible and tangible manifestations of the power of the Spirit: signs, wonders, miracles that St. Paul does not hesitate to call "proofs of his apostolate." This is why we shall have at heart to intercede particularly for the sick, the desperate, the dying, calling down upon them graces of conversion and of healing.

Finally, we could not proclaim the Resurrection of Christ and the Beatitude to come without taking an active part in alleviating human suffering. We shall therefore reserve a privileged

place for all those who suffer in soul and body, putting ourselves at their service, giving them hospitality, caring for them, tending to their needs, watchful to restore each wounded human to his dignity.

Such a mission requires special dispositions and special competencies. The Community will confer upon some of its houses this apostolate for the sick, so as to promote the quality of treatment administered there.

Moreover, we shall leave no stone unturned in the deepening of our knowledge of man as much in the medical, physiological, and psychological sphere as in the sphere of philosophy and theology.