

## MISSIONARIES OF CHARITY - CONTEMPLATIVE

**" To do ordinary things with  
extraordinary love for the  
greater glory of God "**



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*Laudetur Sacra Familia*

*"LMCs: become what you are and bloom where you are"*

Dearly beloved Brothers and Sisters,

On 2<sup>nd</sup> August 1987 Blessed Teresa wrote in one of her general letters:

*"My dearest children...As the Lay Missionaries of Charity (LMC) and the Co-workers are part of our Society that belongs in a very special way to our Lady, we will, in future burn eight lights (candles) before the Blessed Sacrament (exposed) during adoration."*

She then spoke of burning one light for each of the five branches. Immediately after that she spoke of

*"One light to represent the Lay Missionaries of Charity who are the Holy Face of Jesus", "One light to represent the Co-workers..." etc. and she concludes:*

*"It will be a wonderful gift to Jesus to have us together in adoration before Him."*

Our Mother had a very special love for the LMCs. Thanks be to God, we now have the LMCS on all the five continents. Many people come to know the existence of the Lay Missionaries of Charity through Sr. Nirmala M.C. and her sisters, and also through the other branches of the M.C. family. Let us continue to pray for the lay people and encourage them to live a holier way of life, as families are meant to be the domestic sanctuaries of the Church. The following points may help you to start the LMC groups:

- 1) Before the candidates' decision to start a group or join the already existing group, they may be given the information letter. Let them read it very attentively and reflect on it for a few months. During this "come and see" period, they could consult one of the M.C. Sisters and a priest, if possible, and participate in the LMC group meetings, if the group exists already.
- 2) Once decided to begin or join the existing group, they could be given a small crucifix, but NOT during the Holy Mass (please read Rule n. 6). The period of formation lasts for two full years. During this period they must meet together to pray, to have adoration, liturgy of the hours and rosary on a weekly basis or at least once in two weeks. They must read, study and meditate on the Statutes very thoroughly before they make their vows, as the vows are made according to the Statutes of the Lay Missionaries of Charity. They also must read and study the document "Christifideles Laici"-Vocation and mission of the lay people in the Church and in the contemporary world.
- 3) The group may organize to serve the poor, beginning with the members of their own families. In other words, they must begin to give whole-hearted free service to the members of their own families. They must be taught to do ordinary things with extraordinary love. And then individually

or as a group, if possible, they should visit the sick, the lonely, the elderly, etc. or work with our Sisters or Brothers. This form of life and apostolate can help them to discern their LMC vocation.

- 4) At the end of two years of serious and proper formation, the candidates may be admitted to vows for one year, if they are found ready. The vows are juridically private, which means they do not make their vows in the hands of a superior or in the name of the Church, which make the vows juridically public.
- 5) The LMCs do not make their vows for life; they renew their vows every year.
- 6) Every group must have a spiritual director who knows the M.C. Spirit, even if he may not be living it, and a group link who can be appointed by the Sister or spiritual director for a term of three years as a rule (see the Statutes - The LMC Link).
- 7) The vow formula should be written in one's own hand. It will not be valid if the vows are written on a computer or a typewriter. The vow formula must be signed by the one who makes it. It should also be signed by the spiritual director or one of the M.C. Sisters. It can be kept in the Regional House of the M.C. Sisters.
- 8) The married couple make the vow of conjugal chastity, which means they learn to love and respect more and more each other and remain faithful to their marriage bond.
  - The vow of Chastity means to love God above everyone, everyone in God and God in everyone.
  - The vow of poverty means to have inner detachment from things so that one can love God above everything, everything in God and God in everything.
  - The vow of obedience means to love God above oneself, oneself in God and God in oneself.
- 9) Rule N. 36 of the Statutes speaks of the "Spiritual exercises" recommended to the Movement for the sanctification and for the apostolic work of its members. Here it is important to note the word RECOMMENDED and not demanded. It means do what you can, but maintain the spirit of prayer throughout the day. As our Blessed Teresa used to say: *"We pray for twenty-four hours of the day. We must learn to pray our work."*

Once we are able to do this, it is easier to give wholehearted free service to anyone in need...to one's own family members or outside people who are in need. This form of love is invincible; no matter how others are and what they do, the LMC will continue to love and serve those in need and persevere in their vocation. In an LMC everything is consecrated: body, mind and soul. All what they are and all what they do. They do not have to waste their precious time gossiping, finding fault or criticizing.

A careful reading and study of the Statutes and the related documents that deal with the vocation and mission of lay people in the Church and in the world can help one to understand one's own LMC vocation and will enable him/her to live it more perfectly and more faithfully.

I hope that these few lines can help you to help the lay people to start the LMC group or to join the existing group so that they can grow in holiness and increase in number. To this end I pray and ask the prayers of all.

Love and prayers. God bless you.

*Fr. Sebastian Vazhakala M.C.*