

## MISSIONARIES OF CHARITY - CONTEMPLATIVE

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



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### *Mother Teresa's Grandchild*

On the birth of a first born child one may well ask, who is the happier: the mother or the grandmother? On the theoretical level the answer will be, the mother; and that is more reasonable and logical. Of course we are speaking here of good mothers and grandmothers.

I have seen many a grandmother who had previously felt useless and who was reawakened and rejuvenated by the arrival of a grandchild. My personal experience with my grandmother (my mother's mother) is still very fresh and vivid in my memory even though half a century has passed. My mother loved me much and her love for us could never be measured in terms of quantity, nor be made the subject of comparisons. However my grandmother, with more time at her disposal, also loved me and took care of my needs in the light of her greater experience. My grandmother's love and care at this stage had reached its peak of maturity and so could offer me so much while my mother needed to be busy with many other household things at the same time as looking after two older children of six and three. I still remember my grandmother teaching me to pray, especially the Sign of the Cross, the Hail Mary etc.: the simple prayers that we learn by heart as soon as we are capable of memorising. While my mother prayed mainly in the morning and evening, I saw my grandmother praying the Rosary frequently during the day until she died: and this is what I later also saw my mother doing when we all grew bigger and became independent.

Home, sweet home, is our first school of learning. It is here that the very basic and fundamental structure of our life begins, upon which the whole of the rest of life is going to depend. Grandparents, especially the grandmother, play a unique and indispensable role in the foundational period of a child's life, and if there is any chance to have their help it should not be refused or blocked.

On the other hand, the presence of the grandchildren make the grandparents' life more useful and meaningful. Their day becomes shorter and their life is filled and enriched. They feel a new purpose in living. In itself this is a therapy for many of the problems of old age: physical, psychological and even moral.

My purpose in thus describing the relationship between parents and grandparents, and the training and formation of children is twofold:

- a. At least the LMCs should encourage grandparents more and more to be around them and their children and family. To respect one's own parents is a divine duty: "*Honour your father and mother*" is one of the ten precepts of God.
- b. The second reason is slightly different and may look a bit farfetched at first sight, although it isn't. I am referring to our M.C. Family founded by Mother Teresa. Mother Teresa is the foundress of the Society of the Missionaries of Charity: active and contemplative Sisters, Brothers active and contemplative, and the Fathers. The Movement of the Lay Missionaries of Charity on the other hand is Mother Teresa's grandchild. Like a loving and caring grandmother, Mother Teresa was present at its birth in Via S. Agapito 8, Rome on 16 April 1984, and took real interest in its growth and development especially after its 'baptism' in the diocese of Rome by His Eminence Ugo Cardinal Poletti on 25 February 1987. She spoke of the LMCs whenever she thought it opportune to do so. She gave copies of the approved Statutes to various persons including to the Catholic kings of Belgium and Spain. She spoke of it in season and out of season.

The child felt happy, secure and comfortable in the arms of its grandma and the grandmother felt proud of the grandchild that she took with her wherever she went. Nobody was jealous but left the child with the grandmother instead of clinging to it and holding it jealously

This love and affection coupled with total freedom caused people to understand its origin, and its affinity and relationship with the Missionaries of Charity Contemplative, incorrectly. In clear and simple terms the Movement of the Lay Missionaries of Charity is an off-shoot of the Missionary Brothers of Charity Contemplative, and so it is Mother Teresa's beloved grandchild. Still being a child the grandmother had extra love, affection and tender care for it, and this was another manifestation of Divine Providence for the LMCs.

Now let us hold on to the lessons the grandmother taught over the years:

- The family that prays together stays together.
- It is not how much you do that is important but how much love you put into the doing.
- Therefore do ordinary things with extraordinary love, simple things with great love.
- When you see that someone is in need, do not ask what others are doing or not doing, but ask yourself: what can I do?, and then do it.
- What you can do now and today do not postpone to tomorrow.
- We are not social workers, even though we do social work. Whatever we do, we do it to Jesus: "You did it to me". All I do is for Jesus. It is Jesus I serve in the poor. It is Jesus I serve twenty-four hours a day.
- Let your family be another Nazareth. I am praying for you that you make your home another Nazareth where prayer and work, love and sacrifice fill your days.
- Abortion is the greatest destroyer of peace. If a mother can kill her own child, what is there left in the world?
- On the other hand, works of love are works of peace and joy. We fight abortion with adoption.
- MCs and LMCs complement each other. It is so beautiful that we MCs and you LMCs complete each other. What we are doing in the slums, maybe you cannot do. What you are doing in your family life - in your home - we cannot do. But you and we are together doing something beautiful for God.

- The humbler you are the easier it will be for you to forgive and to forget. Humility and Charity are the means to resemble God.
- It is easier to understand the greatness of God, but it is harder to grasp the humility of God, especially the whole mystery of the Incarnation.
- It is not success that matters but faithfulness. Many times our efforts can fail vary badly but we should not judge according to this. It is very important to remain faithful.
- Be one heart full of love in the heart of Jesus and Mary.
- Be humble like Mary, holy like Jesus, and be 'only all' for Jesus through Mary.
- Keep the joy of loving Jesus always in your heart and share that joy with all you meet.
- Continue to pray that we may not spoil God's work.
- Fidelity to small things will lead you to Jesus.
- In the silence of the heart God speaks. Like our Lady let us treasure the Word of God in our hearts and ponder over it in the silence of faith.
- Accept whatever He gives and giving whatever he takes with a big smile. For God loves a joyful giver. And joy is the infallible sign of the presence of God.
- Trials and temptations are but the kiss of Jesus – a sign that you have come so close to Him, that He can kiss you.

I could go on with the simple but profound teaching of our beloved Mother Teresa whom we all loved and who loved everyone without exception, even when there was great suffering and pain. She was so willing to make any sacrifice to make a person see his worth and human dignity no matter what religion that person belonged to, what country he or she came from or what colour his or her skin might be. She taught the world that the standard of judging people is not based on economic status, for a man is more important for what he is than what he has. God alone is the most powerful of all beings because God is simply *Love*. And there is nothing stronger than love either in this world or in the world to come.

In the end *Love* triumphs. All knees will bend before the power of Love. It happened at Mother Teresa's funeral on 13 September 1997 when the world leaders and governors came in line to offer homage to the body of an eighty-seven year old woman who embodied *Love* for all without distinction of caste, colour, creed, nationality or status. In the end *Love* alone will triumph.

Till her last breath Mother Teresa prayed: "*Each sigh, each look, each act of mine shall be an act of Love Divine. And everything that I shall do shall be, dear Lord, for Love of you. Take this my heart and keep it true, a fountain sealed to all but you. What is there that I would not do today*".

As this was the prayer of our beloved Mother Teresa's heart, thirsting for God and for souls, let it be our prayer too, so that it may also sustain our thirst for God and for souls. Like our beloved Mother Teresa let us also love and serve Jesus in the poorest of the poor as if He has never been loved or served before.

God bless you

*Fr. Sebastian Vazhakala M.C.*