



Mother Teresa – Come Be My Light

The Private Writings of the “Saint of Calcutta”

Team Notes For:

- Chapter Two
- Chapter Three

Reading For Nov. 1st:

- Chapter Four (15 pgs)
- Chapter Five (26 pgs)

NOTE! Oct 25th's meeting will be postponed one week to Nov 1st.

“Come, be my light”

➤ God is our closest, dearest friend

- Our closest friend is someone we can share anything with; we can go to in times of need; we will do anything for, regardless of the situation. Some are blessed to have that relationship in a friend or a spouse. *“One of the paradoxes of genuine love is that the lover freely wishes to bind him or herself irrevocably to the beloved.” ... “But the one who truly loves seeks to realize the desire of the beloved, to fulfill his expectations even to the least detail.”* (p 30)
- *“Why must we give ourselves fully to God? Because God has given Himself to us. If God who owes nothing to us is ready to impart to us no less than Himself, shall we answer with just a fraction of ourselves?”* (p 29) Have we considered that God offered his only child to us? He permitted the betrayals, injuries, mockery and even death to his Son so that we would know his complete love for us. Do we really comprehend his love for us? Jesus *actually* experienced betrayals, injuries, mockery and death... for us – his best friends. He shared everything with us. Yet, do we embrace and rejoice in that amazing relationship he extends to us? Mother Teresa, she got it. For her, God and Jesus were her closest friends. She shared everything with them. She shared her fears, her successes. She confided in them. She had a truly deep and meaningful relationship that nourished her. Perhaps we should confide in them too, seek their guidance and offer small, loving gestures for them – they are our truest friends that ask nothing of us but love in return. God and Jesus appreciate the smallest of our gestures that express love to our fellow man – this reflects our love for them.
- *“Mother Teresa’s passionate love for Jesus continued to prompt her to seek new and hidden ways of expressing her love.”* (p 28) *“I wanted to give God something very beautiful and without reserve”* (p 29). *“I made a vow to God, binding under [pain of] mortal sin, to give to God anything that He may ask, ‘Not to refuse Him anything’”* (p 28). This was a huge act of love, if she purposefully did not follow any piece of God’s will that it be taken as an act of mortal sin: the impact? *“...if unrepented, the loss of friendship with Him for all eternity.”* (p 32) Wow. Yet, *“...that God never failed her assured her that she could take the risk once again.”* (p 33).

➤ Things are tough? Jesus has been there. Talk to him. He’s waiting for you – no matter what.

- Jesus experienced the worst of humanity: from people who tried to trick him into saying things against the Jewish faith, to betrayal by his friends and experiencing raw mockery and hate by others. He does understand what we’re going through; we really should treat him like the best friend he is. He will bestow on us the best a best friend offers.
- We reflected that Jesus loves us no matter what: (underline added) *“He longs for you. He misses you when you don’t come close. He thirsts for you. He loves you always, even when you don’t feel worthy”* (p 42).
- We know that St Thérèse, St. Teresa and many others like St. Thomas Aquinas pondered and learned from Christ’s Passion and death on a cross – that there is much to be gained by understanding all this encompassed:
“‘I thirst,’ Jesus said on the Cross when Jesus was deprived of every consolation, dying in absolute poverty, left alone, despised and broken in body and soul. He spoke of His thirst – not for water – but for love, for sacrifice... Our aim is to quench this infinite thirst of a God made man.” (p 41)
“Mother Teresa knew that only by being united with Mary, the first one to hear Jesus’ cry of thirst, could she fulfill her mission. Thus she exhorted her followers: Let us always remain with Mary our Mother on Calvary near the crucified Jesus...” (p 41-42). This is fitting in this month of October, a Marian month, as we celebrate Our Lady of the Rosary.
- We noted the words spoken in the Divine Mercy chaplet: “unfathomable Divine Mercy”, “the treasury of compassion inexhaustible”, “Your mercy shield us from the darts of our salvation’s enemies” ...
- Just as Jesus is our aid, we are also called to help those in need – even those that we don’t feel like helping. Mother Teresa recalled the Gospel of Matthew [Matthew 25:36-41]: *“As you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me.”* We talked about the Good Samaritan and how easy it was for the first passerbys to do nothing to help the person in need, but the Samaritan helped someone outside his ‘clan’. *He knew the right thing to do; he acted.*

- We read a timely excerpt from the October Magnificat:

The Gospels are rich in examples of Jesus approaching others in friendship. Saint Luke shows a compassionate Jesus who approaches the lepers, paralytics, sinners, tax collectors, centurions, widows, those possessed by demons, epileptics— the list is long... He extends his merciful hand of friendship generously and spontaneously.

Friendship with Christ means growing in intimacy with the Master, as well as an existence in Christ. Friendship with Christ, even in sickness and frailty, offers us a strength that prevails over bitterness, the fatigue of life, and all despair. Friendship is a “matter of the heart,” in which one reveals to the other what is in the depths of one’s heart, with trust and reciprocity. Growth in friendship happens through mutual self-revelation. In this process, we find ourselves involved in a deeper relationship with God and our neighbor. People will be encouraged to follow Christ when they see how his friendship has personally transformed the missionary disciple.

Prayer, if authentic, opens the relationship of friendship with God towards the neighbor and pushes us to mission. We ask for our own needs as well as for those of others, through the Church that we become through the Spirit of the Father and the Eucharistic bread that we share.”

➤ How do we know God’s will?

- (underline added) “...to discern carefully and obey the slightest manifestations of God’s will. This habitual and loving attentiveness to the present moment called for inner silence and recollection. ‘In the silence of the heart God speaks,’ Mother Teresa would often say, with a conviction that sprang from being constantly attuned to His voice.” (p 32)
- We discussed that we need to slow down. We agreed that when we make time to pray** – to step away from our busy schedules and find silence to talk to God, and to listen – not just once (when we have an urgent need to hear from God), but routinely – that’s when we open the opportunity to truly hear from God. We need to give God some air time to talk with us.
- “Jesus was revealing His Heart to her... He also revealed His plan to send her to them as a carrier of His love.” (p 44)
- “Yet the ‘Voice’ kept pleading, ‘Come, come, carry Me into the holes of the poor. Come, be My light.’” (p 44)
- “So in obedience to her spiritual director, Mother Teresa remained silent and in prayer, not knowing what the outcome would be.” (p 46)
- It is that simple and that hard (given our full lives), but we discussed the need to build a new habit to take time to talk to and listen to God. We need to take responsibility to cultivate an interior disposition that allows us to slow down, be still, ponder and listen. We discussed the role we play in creating an environment to do this – for ourselves and to even help others to do this – our spouses, children, friends. We noted that both St. Thérèse and St. Teresa had families and environments that supported and facilitated their faith. They were also careful to make time each day to reflect and pray – probably the most essential part of their day; of our day.
- We dug into what it means to ‘live in the present moment’: not to live in the past, it is over. Not in the future, it isn’t here yet. But the present is the only moment in which we can take action. But we felt that Mother Teresa didn’t mean the modern day view of ‘live in the present’ – to do whatever pleases us because we want to ‘feel good’ in that moment, but rather to live each moment with an eye towards God’s will and striving for an eternity of joy with him. (Underline added) “Her joy was not just a matter of temperament; it was, rather, the fruit of the blessedness of submission that she lived. ‘When I see someone sad,’ she would say, ‘I always think, she is refusing something to Jesus.’” (p 33). This really had an impact on us – we thought it was worth thinking about further.
- We marveled that God really does have a plan for each of us – each plan will be different from another’s but not less important. Following his plan will bring us, our souls, and others’ to an eternity with him. We recalled Msgr. Matz’s appeal to all of us to ‘plant seeds and save souls’; there is a real need to do this.
- Jesus spoke to Mother Teresa and encouraged her to follow his plan for her, recalling his Passion and death and his mother’s integral connection to it (underlined): “Are you afraid to take one more step for your Spouse – for Me– for souls? –Is your generosity grown cold–am I a second to you? You did not die for souls–that is why you don’t care what happens to them.–Your heart was never drowned in sorrow as it was My Mother’s. We both gave our all for souls – and you? You are afraid that you will lose your vocation– you will become secular...” And his plan for her: “My Heart’s desire for you.” His reassurance: “Do not fear– I shall be with you always” “Little one give Me souls –

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give Me the souls of the poor little children soiled with sin... ..If you would only answer My call—and bring Me these souls – draw them away from the hands of the evil one.” (p 48, 49)

- (Underline added): “*Mother Teresa’s vow was a providential preparation for the mission that lay ahead of her.” (p 38) “His call evoked at one and the same time joy, because she was being taken at her word, and pain because she felt challenged seemingly beyond her capacity.” (p 53)*
- “*Mother Teresa never lost the keen awareness of her own weakness, limitation, and poverty.” “Hence Mother*
- *Teresa would always ask others for the support of prayers.” (p 38).* We asked ourselves: are we listening to learn what God’s plan for us really is? Silence is necessary. Ponder.
- “*The vow was indeed hiding the depth of her love for God, which motivated all her actions, especially her unconditional surrender to His will.” (p 29)* We noted the importance of praying the Our Father in earnest, ‘...Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven’.

➤ The smallest things – given and received – can truly change a life and save a soul

- We discussed how the smallest of actions or non-actions can point a person towards virtue or sin – even if that virtue or sin is very small in nature, it becomes a seed for growth. Are we helping ourselves and others grow in virtue or sin? Like a snowball growing when rolling downhill, almost unnoticeably, it grows larger and larger, inch by inch... which snowballs are we cultivating in ourselves and others – virtue or sin?
- Sometimes the smallest things are very hard: I should keep my mouth closed, but I don’t. I should be kinder, but I’m not. I should be more patient, but I’m not. Why is this? Is it because we wrongly say to ourselves, “this is small in the scheme of things, it’s not that big of a deal, so I’m going to do it”? Maybe. But if it’s that small, why don’t we just do what’s right? Because it’s hard. But we discussed that these tiny moments in life are actually the opportunity to build good habits and help others in big ways... one little thought or act at a time. We should rejoice in doing the right thing, even if it seems incredibly small. St Thérèse and St. Teresa had it right: the smallest of things really matter a lot. We need to pay attention to them.
- One of our group shared that he had helped someone in a small way: the person was in the hospital and had just been diagnosed with the same type of cancer that he had. She was depressed. He was a physician in the same hospital. He was asked to visit her, but delayed doing so. What could he do to help her? Did he do a grand, heroic act for her in her hour of need? You decide: in that person’s time of distress he *showed up* and he *smiled*. That’s ‘all’ he did. Living with the same cancer he was proof-positive that she would be able to move forward in life. *What exactly did he do?* Quite literally, he stopped by her hospital room (he showed up) and he offered what he could (a genuine smile). This led to an ever-so-brief exchange. This totally changed her perspective. He was a walking, talking example of living life despite having that same cancer. He didn’t have to ‘do’ much. He was a witness to the future possibilities for this woman. *That seemingly small act for a stranger was life changing.* Probably for them both.
- Mother Teresa often echoed her patron saint, St. Thérèse, “*She would again insist: ‘Don’t look for big things, just do small things with great love... The smaller the thing, the greater must be our love’” “...everything she did was an opportunity for love.” (p 34)*
- “*...He calls me also to join the few to start the work, to fight the devil and deprive him of the thousand little souls which he is destroying every day.” (p 51)* Again we recalled Msgr. Matz’s appeal to ‘plant seeds and save souls’.

**Forms and means of prayer

- We talked about prayer given that it is an essential way that we build our relationship with God, with Jesus. We found it helpful to routinely avail ourselves of the many ways to pray:
 - **Formal prayers** – the Hail Mary, the Our Father, the Memorare, the Anima Christi...
 - **Devotional prayer** – the Rosary, the Divine Mercy Chaplet...
 - **Scripture** – reading and listening to Scripture, not only as a perspective on the origins and history of our faith but to place ourselves in the message: what is God trying to tell ‘me’ today? Many in the group said it was helpful to arrive a few minutes early to Mass, read the scripture readings in advance, try to absorb their message and then listen to the lectors and priest. This helped them take in and understand what God was trying to say *to them*.
 - **Meditation** – we talked about Mary who often pondered that which God put in her life. While we don’t know much of what Mary may have spoken, we know that the fruits of her meditation were enormous. Her final words are vitally important: [Mark 2:1-9] ‘Do whatever he tells you’.