



Mother Teresa – Come Be My Light

The Private Writings of the “Saint of Calcutta”

Team Notes For:

- Chapter Four
- Chapter Five

Reading For Nov. 8th:

- Chapter Six (19 pgs)
- Chapter Seven (26 pgs)

“In your love for Me – they will see Me, know Me, want Me.”

➤ Persistence, Simplicity and Trust

- Mother Teresa believed in her mission despite years of questioning and concern voiced by her spiritual director and archbishop. Their seeming disbelief in her true ability and desire to serve Jesus in a mission involving the slums of India, the poorest of the poor, though disheartening, did not cause her to waiver (with the exception of five days of temptation against her mission – p 72). . *“If Archbishop Périer hoped... would dampen Mother Teresa’s enthusiasm, he was mistaken.”* (p 60). Neither her superiors nor the temptations pulled her away from her calling even though it took years, *decades*, to be approved. She had the interior tenacity to not give up. Her support, her only consistent support, was God.
- She routinely spoke with and corresponded with her spiritual director and archbishop. Each time a damper was put on her, she prayed, she examined her intent and mission. She always responded with patience, a positive attitude and answered their questions. She was even told, or perhaps discouraged, in her mission: *“it may take years [to be approved].”* (p 64). She simply did not take ‘No’ for an answer. She knew God was with her. *“I am ready to do whatever I am told – at any cost. Ready to go now or to wait years. It is for you to use me, to offer me to God for the poor.”* (p 65)
- We were amazed by her enduring commitment to her call even though she was tested many times to ‘throw in the towel’. She even endured Jesus asking her to hurry up! Throughout all, she remained obedient to both her superiors and God. We felt that as challenging and frustrating as this likely was, God was preparing her for the more challenging environment that awaited her in India. Somehow, she knew this too.
- We felt her simplicity of self and in her calling were important to her endurance. She didn’t overcomplicate matters; she accepted God’s plan. *“It is lovely to be poor and free from so many things.”* (p 59). She kept the importance of her mission in the forefront, *“Is it not worth going through every possible suffering for just one single soul?”* (p 65)
- We found her composure stunning. She was relocated based on false allegations about her relationship with her spiritual director: she spent so much time talking with him about the visions she had and the voice she heard. Others saw the amount of time she spent with him as inappropriate. *“On the basis of these ‘uncharitable suggestions and remarks,’ the decision was made to transfer Mother Teresa to the Assansol community.”* (p 55). She didn’t complain and remained loving to all: *“I have never heard her complaining of superiors, or sisters, even when I knew she had been misunderstood. In fact, even in the midst of this unjust situation she remained impressively charitable toward all.”* (p 55). Mother Teresa even reveals how she had to curtail discussion with her spiritual director as a result, *“I used to write him everything– but now I shall keep till I see him in confession”* (p 62). Anyone one of us would have been very frustrated and likely uncharitable in response. Despite even this, she stayed laser-focused on faith in God, hope in the purpose of her mission and charity towards everyone she encountered.
- Mother Teresa steadfastly believed that God’s hand was guiding everything in her life – even the challenges and delays. *“She saw God’s hand in these happenings”* (p 55)
- Everything she is striving for is for God (see p 57) – this gives her purpose and strength throughout. *“Jesus was calling; how could she be indifferent and do nothing?... She could not understand why the archbishop was not acting more quickly.”* (p 63)
- She recognizes she is ill-equipped for the task, for her calling, yet she relies and trusts in Jesus. *“I feel sometimes afraid, for I have nothing, no brains, no learning, no qualities required for such a work, and yet I tell Him that my heart is free from everything and so it belongs completely to Him”* (p 67). Jesus knows this too, but he needs her and he will be there with her. Jesus explained: *“You are, I know, the most incapable person – weak and sinful, but just because you are that – I want to use you for My glory... carry Me into the holes of the poor – Come be my light.–I cannot go alone– they don’t know Me– so they don’t want Me. You come– go amongst them, carry Me with you into them.”* (p 98). These themes are repeated through these chapters. We spoke about other saints – Jesus often uses the most unlikely, perhaps those that seem the least capable – the children of Fatima and, even, his own disciples.
- Mother Teresa trusted Jesus completely: *“Nothing will happen to me, but only whatever He has arranged in His great mercy... I am very sure of God.– I trust His love.”* (p 93). Her confidence in God is evident throughout all of the

correspondence between her and her superiors.

- Perhaps recognizing her weaknesses, the archbishop requires a plan from her: details of what she envisions for her mission. She’s not been taught how to put such a plan together. She must have been disappointed at the continual push back. What does she do? She turns to God, *“My God –give me Your light and Your love to be able to write the things to Thy honor and glory. Don’t let my ignorance prevent me from doing Your Will perfectly. Supply for what is wanting in me.”* (p 71).
- The plan she puts forth (p 73 – 78 – please read) shows clarity of thought and purpose. In response, however, her spiritual director replies, *“drop it [the whole endeavor] for all eternity.”* (p 78). But, Mother Teresa doesn’t give up!
- Her superiors continually want more time to consider her proposal. Jesus, too, remarks on this. Mother Teresa shared, *“How often, how very often He complained of delays– for whenever He asks for something, He says, people get extra careful about many things– but if the world asks the things are done so quickly.”* (p 81). We marveled at this: How true. We hustle for worldly things but not so much for Jesus. How sad.
- We talked about the seeming disconnect between the constant pressure from Jesus to get the mission going yet her spiritual director and archbishop seem to be in slow motion. How does that reconcile? We realized that it’s all part of the mysterious plan. Jesus says this too, *“I brought you here to be under the immediate care of your spiritual father... Obey him in every detail, you shall not be deceived if you obey for he belongs to Me completely.– I shall let you know My will through him.”* (p 83 footnote) This was the case for St. Thérèse of Lisieux and St. Faustina also!

➤ Prayer

- Mother Teresa prayed; it was her strength. Instead of relying on herself, she spent time with Jesus. (Underline added) *“One benefit of her transfer... more time to spend in prayer. This was a providential opportunity to prepare herself for her new mission.”* (p 56). In the quiet of prayer she could hear Jesus: *“Our Lord does not stop calling”* (p 57)
- She reveals her need for prayers: *“Pray for me – that I become a humble, generous religious – so that He will use me according to His pleasure.”* (p 63) What a simple and beautiful prayer request – to do His will.
- Mother Teresa’s attraction to the Eucharist and prayer increased. Much like other saints. Their intensity of purpose increased versus wanting to give up; love supercedes everything. *“...find other avenues of expressing her ardent love. And she had to wait. Through this painful waiting, her thirst for Him only increased.”* (p 84) *“But nothing is difficult to one who loves.”* (p 87)

➤ A Clear Mission; Live As Those You Will Serve

- Mother Teresa understood the power of sacrifice to bring joy to others.
- *“I find that if the work begins – there will be plenty of humiliations, loneliness and suffering for me.”* (p 57)
- *“let me go [to India], and give myself for them, let me offer myself and those who will join me for those unwanted poor, the little street children, the sick, the dying, the beggars, let me go into their very holes and bring in their broken homes the joy and peace of Christ.”* (p 65)
- *“You might think that I am looking only at the joy of giving up all, and bringing joy into the Heart of Jesus. Yes, I look at these most, but I see also what suffering the fulfillment of these two will bring. By nature I am sensitive, love beautiful and nice things, comfort and all the comfort can give– to be loved and love.—I know that the life of a Missionary of Charity– will be minus all these. The complete poverty, the Indian life, the life of the poorest will mean hard toil against my great self love.”* (p 66) *“When our Indian girls [the women who would join her order] enter these orders – they are made to live their life – eat, sleep, dress like them... will go in search, live their days in the slums and streets”* (p76)
- *“We have to be very very poor in every sense of the word to gain the heart of the poor for Christ.”* (p 92) *“There on the Cross He had nothing of His own.”* (p 93)

➤ Unity with God; Sustenance her life

- Her spiritual director came to fully understand the intense power of Mother Teresa’s interactions with Jesus (the visions and the voice). *“Father Van Exem ‘felt urged to change [his] decision’ once more allowed her ‘to dwell on all thoughts inspired by Our Lord’* (p 82). He stated, *“I knew that Our Lord had raised that nun to the sate of higher prayer; ecstasy as such there may not have been but the immediate state before ecstasy has been reached... The state of ecstasy may be reached very soon as the union with Our Lord has been continual and so deep and violent that rapture does not seem very far.”* (p 82)
- Memo – p 83 footnote: *“In the context of the spiritual life, ecstasy is a mystical phenomenon in which the mind is fixed on God or some religious subject and the normal activity of the senses is interrupted; intense joy and visions may accompany the experience. Ecstasy is characteristic of the ‘unitive’ stage of the spiritual life, in which the person reaches union with God, rather than the ‘purgative’ and ‘illuminative’ stages that precede this stage.”*