



Mother Teresa – Come Be My Light

The Private Writings of the “Saint of Calcutta”

Team Notes For:

- Chapter Twelve
- Chapter Thirteen
- Conclusion

**Our next book will be
announced in January.
Reading will begin early
February!**

“The personal love Christ has for you is infinite.”

“You and I must let Him live in us & through us in the world.”

- **Love in Action: so many are in need of God; we must be a Mother Teresa to others – starting in our own homes**
- Mother Teresa came to experience the depths of poverty that have pervaded society. She came to understand the ‘poor’ as those with material, social and spiritual poverty. She saw first-hand that some of the most well-off were indeed the most poor. Their homes full of things but absent of love: *“I saw in that home they had everything... but everybody was looking towards the door... ‘This is nearly every day... They are hoping that a son or daughter will come to visit them. They are hurt because they are forgotten’...”* *“This is where love comes... Maybe in our own family we have somebody who is feeling lonely, who is feeling sick, who is feeling worried... Are we there to receive them?”* (p 291) We could identify with this glimpse of poverty that Mother Teresa saw. It is all around us: everyone is ‘busy’, everyone has stuff, but the scourge of loneliness is reaching record levels in our country. Perhaps we’re searching for love in the wrong places. We discussed that Calcutta is everywhere – people in our own community, church and homes are hanging on by a thread. We need to step up our efforts to support those around us. A smile, a kind gesture, some of our time.
 - (Underline added): *“We picked up [a man] from the drain, half eaten with worms, and we brought him to the home: ‘I have lived like an animal in the street, but I am going to die like an angel, loved and cared for. And it was so wonderful to see the greatness of that man who could speak like that, who could die like that without blaming anybody, without cursing anybody, without comparing anything. Like an angel – this is the greatness of our people.”* *“Mother Teresa had great sympathy for those who felt rejected and unwanted: the forgotten parents left in an old people home, the lonely youth whose family did not care for him or her, and very especially, the unborn child.”* (p 292)
 - Mother Teresa also showed tremendous humility in the work she and her Sisters did – it was God’s work. It was an honor for her to serve God. She made this very clear, again and again. We found this to be true: no one would be able to accomplish the magnitude of what she did, with so little and yet so quickly, by plan or design: her work grew organically (from within) – she didn’t need to take over another Order or take over another organization’s care operations. Her work grew quickly on it’s own through love. Love moved her work, not money, not accolades. She did her work just one person at a time. God’s hand is evident – she trusted in God, she followed his will and the global results are truly staggering. Inconceivable in fact. *“The work is God’s work and not our work, that is why we must do it well. How often we spoil God’s work and try to get the glory for ourselves.”* (p 293)
 - *“She, a docile instrument in God’s hand, was letting Him use her nothingness to show His greatness. ...To be His radiance, His light, and to be ‘only Jesus’ to each person she met. In all this, she was satiating His thirst for love and souls.”* (p 299)
- **Jesus has lived our pains and loneliness; We are not alone**
- *“The Will of the Father was that terrible loneliness in the Garden[of Gethsemane], on the Cross. —He was completely alone. If we are true followers of Jesus, we too must experience the loneliness of Christ. —He perspired blood. —It was so difficult for Him to go through the humiliation of His Passion.”* (p 290) We noted that God didn’t have to live our world nor experience first-hand what we are capable of doing to each other, but he did. He used that suffering to show us the way and redeem us; it was his love for us and his Father that saw him through the humiliation and pain to bring us to God for eternity. He showed that we can be part of his work, we can help bring great consolation through our suffering – bear it, use it just as he did. We have the great opportunity to unite our pain and suffering to his for the salvation of souls.
 - Mother Teresa used her hardships, her suffering in that same way. (Underline added) *“It was not the suffering she endured that made her a saint, but the love with which she lived her life through all the suffering. She knew that everyone can, with God’s grace and one’s own resoluteness, reach holiness, not in spite of the mystery of suffering that accompanies every human life, but through it.”* (p 337) Some of our group noted how they had shared with others who are suffering that their suffering could be united to Jesus’ to help with his work of salvation – that brightened their appreciation of the value of their suffering. It seems so foreign at first, but how often have we said, “if I could only do something to help” – well, we can. We might not know where the offering of our suffering may help someone else, but we must trust that it will. Our group felt that the love that can come out of suffering is something to embrace rather than fear.

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- Mother Teresa’s comments to a friend on suffering were enlightening and beautiful: *“Sorrow. Suffering, Eileen, is but a kiss of Jesus – a sign that you have come so close to Jesus that He can kiss you. –I think this is the most beautiful definition of suffering.–So let us be happy when Jesus stoops down to kiss us. –I hope we are close enough that He can do it.”* (p 281) (Underline added): *“If I am the spouse of Jesus crucified, He has to kiss me. Naturally, the nails will hurt me. If I come close to the crown of thorns it will hurt me.”* (p 282) Imagine that: we get so close to Jesus’ embrace that his thorns pierce us. Wow.
- *“True love is surrender. The more we love the more we surrender. If we really love souls we must be ready to take their place, to take their sins upon us and face the anger of God. It is only thus that we make ourselves their means and them our end. We must be living holocausts, for the world needs us as such. For by giving the little we possess, we give all.”* (p 331)
- And we thought this pretty much said it all: *“No greater love not even God could give than in giving Himself as Bread of Life –to be broken, to be eaten so that you & I may eat & live and so satisfy our hunger for love.—So He made Himself the Hungry One, the Thirsty One, the Naked One, the Homeless [One] and kept on calling– I was hungry, naked, homeless. You did it to Me.– The Bread of Life and the Hungry One– but one love—only Jesus. His humility is so wonderful. I can understand His majesty, His greatness because He is God – but His humility is beyond my understanding, because He makes Himself Bread of Life so that even a child as small as I can eat Him and live.”* (p 283)

➤ Longing for God

- Mother Teresa spent her whole life seeking total union with Christ. She had an unquenchable thirst to serve God. She sought to totally let go of her own wishes, her own comforts, her own ego so that she could radiate Jesus to others. We had a lot of discussion about this – too much to go through. We recognized that we are each called to something different and that’s OK. Each must strive to fulfill God’s plan for himself, as the unique creation that he made each one of us. We were reminded that St. Thérèse of Lisieux’s sister described each soul, each person its own ‘size’ – some the size of a thimble and some much larger – it’s all good – our goal is to fill-up with God ‘our thimble’ and not worry that someone else’s was designed larger or smaller than ours. *If we fill ours, we’ve done what God has created us to do.* To fill up, we have to let go of the not-so-nice pieces of our human tendencies, just like Mother Teresa did. We felt Mary, the Blessed Virgin, was her model. Mary emptied herself completely to become the handmaid of the Lord.
- Mother Teresa started her mission, having heard the voice of Jesus directly then spent the rest of her life without the consolation of hearing from him or feeling his presence. She longed to hear from him again. She didn’t, but she didn’t lose faith. Not only was she rewarded with the incredible results of her work, she was rewarded with the identical message of her initial calling, through a priest, decades later, *“Tell Mother Teresa, ‘I thirst’. He didn’t understand the message, but he gave it to her. She understood, His message was clear: He was still thirsting and looking for one to console Him. And she was ever aflame ‘to be the one’.”* (p 310/11)
- *“I make my holy hour with Jesus straight after Mass – so that I get the 2 hours with Jesus before people & Sisters start using me.—I let Him use me first.”* (p 270) Personal time with Jesus matters. It’s great to spend quiet time with the Lord any time – before Mass, after Mass, stopping by church for a short time or participating in Adoration. We should give Jesus some quiet time to talk to us and let go of the world around us.
- About Communion: *“...suddenly I realized I was holding God between my 2 fingers. The greatness of [the] humility of God. Really no greater love than the love of Christ.”* (p 283) We discussed the total amazing concept that WE hold Jesus in our hands – he comes to us, we embrace him. We hold Jesus each time we take Communion! Something we easily lose sight of...
- Near the end of her life, while gravely ill, her Hindu doctor noted the change in Mother Teresa, her calmness and peacefulness, when Jesus was near: *“‘Father, go home and bring that box to Mother.’ For a second I wondered, ‘what box – shoe box?’ He said, ‘That box, that temple they bring’... I realized he meant the tabernacle with the Blessed Sacrament. He said to me, ‘When that box is there, in the room, she is just looking and looking and looking at that box.’ The Hindu doctor was an unknowing witness to the power of the Eucharist over our Mother.”* (p 328)

➤ Satan tries to interfere with Jesus’ work

- We noted that we must remain strong for Jesus and deny the temptations of Satan. He tried to get at Mother Teresa too – we must be ever vigilant: *“... the breakdown of her health came to a climax... She looked sad and downcast. It was clear for those who had known her for years that her spirit was passing through thick clouds and the devil was trying to take*

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advantage of this opportune moment. So much so that one December morning, after Holy Mass in her room, as I was taking leave of her she told me in a very low voice, ‘Jesus is asking a bit too much.’ It seemed to me as if her beloved Jesus was reliving His agony in her in order to redeem the world anew from the darkness of sin... there she was, a woman of sorrows, familiar with suffering, bearing the sufferings and burdens of the Society and of the poorest of the poor.” “but she still accepted all He requested from her. She belonged to Him and He was her only desire.” (p 328-29) Mother Teresa never thought Jesus was asking too much. In fact, she always asked for more. Her perseverance, even through these ‘thick clouds’ shows her ability to have faith and stay true to Jesus.

- **Litanies from Mother Teresa – worth reading and praying (p 301 – 304).** This particular section spoke to us as Christmas is soon to arrive. The section that follows in the book is great for Advent and Lent.

You were born in Bethlehem.

You were wrapped in swaddling clothes by Mary and put in the manger full of straw.

You were kept warm by the breath of the donkey that carried Your mother with You in her womb.

You are the Son of Joseph, the Carpenter, as known by the People of Nazareth.

You are an ordinary man without much learning, as judged by the learned people of Israel.

- **Called home: and finally, Mother Teresa’s work is done; she knew it. She’s called home. And no one was going to get in the way of Jesus meeting his beloved Mother Teresa:**

- *“When Mother Teresa returned to Calcutta in July, after a hectic and exhausting journey, she quietly told a friend, ‘My work is done.’” (p 331) – this after decades of always feeling there was more work to do to satiate Jesus’ thirst.*
- *“After her return from Rome... Mother had been extremely happy, joyful, optimistic, and talkative. Her face was always radiant, full of fun. The Lord must have revealed to her the impending end of her life.” (p 331). Her whole life, she had sought union with Jesus, we agreed, she must have learned that this time of union was at hand. This too, reminded us of the premonition that St. Thérèse had of her own death and her joy in it.*
- *“On September 5, 1997, after 8 P.M. Mother Teresa complained of severe back pain; soon her condition was aggravated by the inability to breathe. The sisters at the motherhouse were alarmed. All was done to help her; a doctor and a priest were called in. Unexpectedly the electricity failed and the whole house was in darkness. Foreseeing an emergency, the sisters had secured two independent electric supplies. But both lines went out at the same time; such a thing never happened before.. Prompt and expert medical aid could not help, as the breathing machine could not be started. It was 9:30 P.M. While Calcutta was in darkness, the earthly life of the one who had brought so much light to this city and to the whole world was extinguished.” (p 333)*