



COMMUNIO IN CHRISTO

*Our Life -
Our Works*

Digital Spiritual Letter No. 34, June 16 2025

Theme:

The Imitation of Christ SEAT IN LIFE

Dear readers,

In this summer edition of our Digital Spiritual Letter, we would like to share with you a special reflection from the Rule of the Communio in Christo, written by our foundress, Mother Marie Therese, on 13 January 1985. The chapter speaks about joy as the basis of spiritual life.



Joy is not just a feeling. It rather develops from a deep trust in God and a life in love, and particularly in community. The life of many Saints is proof of this truth. They didn't have an easy life, but they found lasting joy through their faith. An inspiring example is St. John Bosco, a holy man known for his work with young people. A well-known saying of his is: *"Be cheerful, do good and let the sparrows whistle"*. He also believed that *"the devil is afraid of cheerful people"*.

Now, in summer, many people are traveling or taking time out to rest and recharge their batteries. It's a good time to pause and reflect. Wherever you are - at home or on the road - we wish you peaceful days, joyful moments and new strength for months ahead.

May this reflection brighten your heart and help you live joy more deeply, while being connected with God and others.

Yours

Jaison Thazhathil, Superior General



REFLECTION OF MOTHER MARIE THERESE

JOY

January 13 1985

The basis of spiritual life

The testimony of one who hopes

Life of the Communio

Let us remember that joy does not set up any borderlines within the community.

We don't make any difference between poor and rich or members that come from other parts of the world.

The basic rules for the attainment of true joy are:

1. Remove all limits, separating us from others.
2. Acknowledge and love everybody as our brother or sister.

The perfect joy consists in unselfish and quiet love. It permeates the whole person, breaking through in word and deed. The joy of a loving soul can be recognized by the way it deals with its brother and sister.

It is not offensive,

it knows no patriotism,

it makes no derisive remarks in the community,

it is not insincere,

practicing great self-discipline it strives not to hurt others.

Our world must never be dominated by limitations. For the truth is that in our activities we bring in our love especially where other people set their limits.



It is our joy to serve our brother or sister.



This is how we realize joy:
striving together to realize our aims,
practicing charity together,
praying together,
finding to God together.

Joy realizes the will of God.

It derives from love .

As long as the will is missing to lead a communal life, to share one's possessions, no joy is possible.

In order to realize the kingdom of God,
in order to open up the way of salvation,
in order to bear witness for God, we must

live as Christ lived.

„Behold how they love one another.“

We contemplate Jesus' life with his disciples.

We note the friendship between one another and with Christ, a cordial and natural friendship.

He let them partake in his joyful experiences.

What belonged to him, belonged to his disciples as well.

He surrounded them with his tender affection.

He was solicitous about their health.

In order to give them a rest, he occasionally led them out of town.



He kept taking pains to assure that they lacked for nothing.

It was he who brought the joy, helping them to let heavenly joy prevail among one another.

And the disciples, too, were concerned about him and loved him as well.

Let us look at Christ and his life to find the nourishment for our community life.

Why should we not recognize our duty and fulfil it in us, too?

We are on the way to perfection. We want perfection,
in order to glorify God.

Then, the law applies to us:

We must learn to show initiative and responsibility for one another;

we must have patience with one another;

we must avoid differences of opinion in our community life.

The crucial test for our love to God is charity.

Christ lived the joy of self-sacrifice and passed it on to us.

Joy is the sign of our will's being focussed on God.

Joy is the evidence of a life that is being spent in love, in communion with Christ.

Christ gave his disciples plenty of time. He understands our groping steps and our weaknesses. And he gives us time to make our decision in his favour.

In the community we get to know Christ. We learn from conversations what motives are the basis of charity. Thus we get to know Christ.

In order to understand him, we have to say yes to an extent that outreaches the human sphere.



The simpler, humbler and more sincere we are, the deeper, more concrete and joyful our concept of Christ will become.

Then love will turn into joy, and the joy in Christ becomes the centre of our life.

The happiness involved in the Imitation of Christ confirms the kingdom of God that wishes to be fulfilled in us.

The joy wants to bear witness to Jesus' being alive and triumphant in us.

Joy is the life in our community. Jesus said (Mt 5:44-48):

Love your enemies,
do good to those who hate you,
be merciful
as your Father in heaven is merciful,
do not judge!
If someone needs your coat, give it away!
Love one another.

Inconvenient to egoistic persons!

Let us be anxious to live as Jesus wants us to. And that means:

*Overcoming the limitations of our selves
and offering our willingness to serve where all human thinking ends.*

Do you want genuine joy?

It is the devotion to the fellow-being without compensation.

It is the considerate loving devotion.

It does not offend in word or deed.

It is the confirmation of love.

JOY IS THE SIGN OF DISCIPLESHIP!

Taken from: Mother Marie Therese, *The Imitation of Christ as the Rule*, Pelplin, Bernardinum, 2008, pp. 97 ff



COMMENTARY

By Sister Lidwina, Motherhouse of the Communio in Christo in Germany

A week ago, we celebrated Pentecost. One of the fruits of the Holy Spirit is joy.

Many times, in our community, we have meditated on the chapters of the Rule of the Order during our morning reflection after breakfast. One never reaches the end of its content and always discovers something new that speaks to the heart.

It is particularly striking that Mother Marie Therese dedicated two chapters of this book to “Joy” and “Cheerfulness”.

She also gives very practical advice on how to find true joy:

“1. Remove all limits, separating us from others.

2. Acknowledge and love everyone as our brother or sister.”

It goes without saying that this doesn't happen at the push of a button. It's a lifelong process - like the growth and maturing of love for God and our fellow human beings. However, our foundress did not merely talk about joy. She radiated and lived it - despite serious illnesses and many experiences of suffering.

Already when she arrived for the morning prayer and later at the breakfast table, there was an atmosphere of joy, friendship, and security. No chance for morning grumps. In one chapter, she even says: “Don't be grumpy in the morning.”

She lived the joy that came from the certainty of our salvation and thus she enriched our community - encouraging, nourishing, and strengthening it like a mother who lovingly cares for her family.

With her, we could feel it, and her smile showed it: God must be just as loving.

In this chapter on joy, she draws us into the life of Jesus and his disciples. She writes:

“We note the friendship between one another and with Christ, a cordial



and natural friendship. He let them partake in his joyful experiences. What belonged to him, belonged to his disciples as well. He surrounded them with his tender affection. ... Christ gave his disciples plenty of time.”

This means: He also gives us plenty of time and helps us to get back up after every fall - if we ask him.

These experiences with Mother Marie Therese continue to live on and are still tangible today. They are a source of motivation for friends and members of the *Communio in Christo*, both locally and worldwide.

Even outside the community - for example, in our care facilities - we feel how valuable a smile, a kind word, or a gentle hug can be for the residents and everyone else.

Especially in our time, when many people are weighed down by their worries and have lost their joy, we are invited to share our joy with those around us.

If it is true that all people are beloved children of God, then we all are for sure brothers and sisters - not strangers.

At the end of the reflection, Mother Marie Therese addresses us directly and asks:

“Do you want genuine joy?”

And this is her answer:

“It is the devotion to the fellow-being without compensation.

It is the considerate loving devotion.

It does not offend in word or deed.

It is the confirmation of love.”

Communio Sister Lidwina



Sister Lidwina, born on May 22, 1961, in Kassel, came to Mother Marie Therese in 1982 in a time of great distress, when no one else could help her. With her love and motherly care, Mother Marie Therese gave her a new home.

Little by little, she discovered the unique calling of the foundress and felt the inner call to herself to dedicate her life to God as a religious sister in the Communio in Christo, where she took her vows on December 8, 1987. Since then, she has been working in various fields within the community. Currently, she focuses on liturgy, the care of guests, and, she supports the pastoral care in the Mechernich nursing facilities. Along with others in the Communio she is very active in maintaining contact with friends and members.



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