

Blooming of humanity through the virtues of Mother Claudine Echernier

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Introduction

An ultimate woman with countless virtues, dedicated towards the cause of humanity, determined to spread the grace of God. The whole life of Mother Claudine Echernier reflects her zeal to make the good God known and loved. Her ardent and generous love for Lord was manifested in her words and deeds. Like the Lord and for the love of the Lord, Mother practiced poverty, esteemed humility, realized the most essential obligations of religious life with untiring efforts and indomitable spirit.

Love of Jesus Christ

Our Mother foundress loved our Lord unconditionally with the most generous heart. Many times, she exclaimed the good God is not known and loved. Our mother took untiring efforts to know our Lord Jesus. By sharing a part of her daily meal with the shepherdesses of the neighborhood to take care of her flock, she requested a poor girl to teach her catechism. The whole life of our venerated Mother Claudine reflected the passion and desire to make the God known to the needy. At Chavanod, not a single day passed, without our Mother receiving the communion.

Her love of Jesus Christ reflected the following Biblical golden words.

“Listen Israel! The Lord our God is the only Lord. Love the Lord, your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind and with all your strength (MARK 12: 29,30).

Imitations of Jesus Christ

Like the Lord and for the love of the Lord, Mother loved poverty, work, suffering, privations, obscure and hidden life. Mother carried Jesus within herself. Like Jesus, our Mother was born in a poor family. Like the Lord, our Mother led a simple and committed life. Like the Lord, she earnestly felt for the people. Like Jesus, our Mother took tiresome efforts to inculcate the values among her followers. During her visit, by noticing an extra cooking pot, she asked the sisters, whether two cooking pots were not enough. On their answering in an affirmative tone, Mother told that the third one would be taken to Chavanod. Our Mother always stood for humility,

which was manifested in an incident of a lady bringing her daughter to the convent and trying to make her be appreciated. Our Mother calmly replied in an assertive manner, “My dear lady, we open a small door for entering and two big doors for going out”.

Selfless

Our Mother led a selfless life right from her childhood. After her mother’s departure, she took care of her entire family. With her industrious and illustrious activities, our Mother took great efforts to give a shape to the life of her brothers and sisters. Amidst her busy work outside to meet her family’s need, our Mother was ready to render her selfless service to the little home, she found for the children. But our venerated Mother was not content with the services rendered to her family alone. This self-less thought made her to sow the seed for the birth of the Sisters of the Cross.

Our Mother’s fullest dedication to the society is reflected in the following Bible words.

“The greatest love for a person can have for his friends is to give his life for them.”

- JOHN 15: 13.

Obedience

To satisfy the family’s need and as per her parent’s wishes, our Mother was employed as a shepherdess by the vernaz family. One would think that the less one worked, the more one would have the chance to experience happiness. But our Mother had such a great love for work, that her master feared she would over-exhaust herself, by undertaking work that was beyond her strength. Her devotion towards her father was manifested thoroughly, as she herself prepared the wedding clothes for her step-mother. Mother Claudine, a wise and prudent person did not take any decision on her own, without consulting the parish priest. Amidst great inconveniences, our Mother Claudine discharged her duties to the utmost satisfaction of the parish priest. Our Mother was put in very delicate situation, while her search of God was still on. At that time, her noble and difficult mission was not yet revealed to her. During that juncture, the parish priest wanted our Mother to marry his brother, as they were in search of a perfect house-wife. Her obedience to the parish priest knew no bound, as she was about to give her consent to the proposal. But the divine providence had other wonderful plans for her.

This great virtue of our Mother is reflected in the following verses.

“Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him”. (JOHN 14 : 21).

“Jesus said to them all, “My mother and brothers are those who hear the word of God and obey it”. (LUKE 8:21).

Love of Crosses

From the childhood till the end, our Mother had the passion and love for the cross. Because of her poverty, she was put into work in her childhood days. At the age of 15, she lost her mother. Her father was imprisoned because of smugglers. Our Mother faced the ordeals in a courageous manner, because of her love for the cross. She had an innate desire to gain souls for God. Because of debts, the family was in a situation to sell their property. Our Mother never felt for that, as she made it clear, that it was better to have nothing and to owe nothing. Everyone at home unanimously agreed with the Mother’s desire.

Her love of Crosses reflected the following Biblical golden words.

“He said to them all, “If anyone wants to come with me, he must forget self, take up his cross every day, and follow me .” (LUKE 9:23)

Confidence in Jesus Christ

Anxiety and sadness were unknown to our Mother. Amidst all her trials, she remained calm, because she leaned completely on the all powerful hand of God who sustained her. Her love of the Lord made her say that she could not understand, that she could not even believe that anyone could enjoy pleasure apart from the service of God. She was equally not surprised to see that those who neglected their spiritual exercises were dejected, dreamy and lacked in devotion. Our Mother confessed that without perseverance in spiritual exercises, she would never have been able to bear her habitual sufferings.

Faith

Faith was her driving power, her consolation and her hope. She possessed admirably the marvelous art of seeing God in all things; in creatures, in events, in everything and everywhere. Our Mother loved the work of even pulling out the weeds in the garden. She told that, it remained about her poor heart, where there were always useless plants to uproot. This would have certainly made her to experience the divinity to its highest form.

Our Mother's faith in the Lord reminds us of a woman who suffered from hemorrhage for twelve years, and had endured much at the hands of many physicians, and had spent all that she had and was not helped at all, but rather had grown worse. After hearing about Jesus, she came up in the crowd behind Him and touched His cloak. For she thought, "If I just touch His garments, I will get well." Immediately the flow of her blood was dried up; and she felt in her body that she was healed of her affliction.

Our Mother's unparalleled faith in Jesus Christ had driven her to lead a devoted life, as per the following golden words.

I tell you the truth, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you. (MATHEW 17:20)

Poverty

The attraction for the perishable things of this world never allured our mother, not even tempted her generous heart. Our venerated mother was detached from everything and practiced the virtue of poverty in all its perfection. Our mother advocated the daughters of the Cross to practice poverty. Someone gave her a gift of a gilt-edged book: "The Imitation of Christ". She used it only after removing the gilt. This shows that she had practiced the virtue of poverty to its perfection. At death, nothing of hers remained. The Lord, the source of life and ground of existence provided her with what she needed. Her journeys were made on foot and knitting all through the way, because of the spirit of poverty.

The life of Mother Claudine reflected the preaching of Jesus Christ in advocating poverty. As Jesus started on his way, a man ran up to him and fell on his knees before him. "Good teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?". Jesus looked at him and loved him. "One thing you lack," he said. "Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me." (MARK 10:17,21).

Conclusion

The idea of perfection makes one spiritual. In the highest spiritual attainment, there is purest existence, purest consciousness, knowledge and the purest peace or bliss. Morality and spirituality go together. 'Telling truth' is a moral principle; being spontaneously truthful is a spiritual virtue. Our venerated Mother Claudine not only imbibed the virtues, but an embodiment of the same. Mother, not only felt for others, but felt with others, which is the

highest form of humanity. Mother strived to improve the lives of others, so that her own life was elevated into its highest dimensions. Truly enlightened people never seek to be like others. Rather, they seek to be superior to their former selves. Our venerated Mother did not race against others. She raced against herself. Spiritual progress in the footsteps of Mother Claudine ensures wisdom, contentment, peace and joy, which ultimately paves way for the blooming of humanity.