

Care of the Charism Reflection

Maxim 1

Keep always in mind the aim of your vocation which is sublime; and never do anything which contradicts the commitment to a life full of modesty, gentleness and holiness.

Scripture: Philippians 3: 13-15 (Jerusalem Bible)

All I can say is that I forget the past and I strain ahead for what is still to come; I am racing for the finish, for the prize to which God calls us upwards to receive Christ Jesus. We who are called “perfect” must all think in this way. If there is some point on which you see things differently, God will make it clear to you; meanwhile, let us go forward on the road that has brought us to where we are.

This maxim points to the heart of our vocation. It is the ground of for our entire life journey. It is sublime but sublime is lived out with together with the dear neighbor. It is lived here and now not in “some heaven light years away”; we are encouraged to bring with us our relationship with God and each other in a world that is suffering. God has created each of us for a special purpose.

We are reminded me that our first mission and ministry is to realize and live our vocation. The vocation to which we are called is threefold:

- who God calls us to be
- who God calls us to become for God, for ourselves and for others
- what God call to us to do for God incarnate in the dear neighbor

- How do I keep all the parts of my life in in balance so that I can stay focused on what is central?
- Do I understand my responsibility to all the people of God?
- How am I living into what the Lord is calling me to be for God and the dear neighbor?
- How does my ministry each day reflect my knowledge that God’s is operating in my life?

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Maxim 4

Live, as much as you can, in such a way that your life, in honor of the Holy Spirit, may be a continual act of the most pure and perfect charity that you are able to practice toward God.

Scripture: Ephesians 3: 16-19 (Jerusalem Bible)

Out of his infinite glory, my God give you the power for your hidden self to grow strong, so that Christ may live in your hearts through faith and then, planted in love and built on love, you may with all the saints have strength to grasp the breadth and the length, the height and the depth; until, knowing the love of Christ, which is beyond all knowledge you are filled with the utter fullness of God.

Marcia Allen reminds us, "in seizing love of the holy Spirit, I am caught up in the Trinitarian dynamic of communion and I know myself at one with all that is created and the Creator..." As I am perfected in God the self-centered part of me is changed and I can become all I am meant to be.

The Trinity is all about relationship, Our Trinitarian God is a communion of persons. Three persons in loving conversation, three equal persons in dialogue. A God whose love is not introspective but poured out in "self-emptying" love of God and neighbor without distinction. I find myself in relationship and this relationship places me within the perfect love of God toward all.

- Is love the basis of my life and all I do?
- How open am I open to the work of the Spirit in me?
- How empathic am I to the needs of others? Does this empathy affect how I live?
- God loved me first, am I willing to love first and when that love is not returned?

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Maxim 11

Always speak favorably of others and value highly the good in them, excusing and covering up in the way you can, the deficiencies that they might have.

Scripture: Galatians 5: 15 (Jerusalem Bible)

Serve one another, in works of love, since the whole of the Law is summarized in a single command: "Love your neighbor as yourself." If you go snapping at each other and tearing each other to pieces, you better watch or you will destroy the whole community.

We are called to be encouraging in our words. The first part of encouraging one another is a willingness to be present to the other, to walk beside them. The second part is to hold a positive attitude. Sometimes we are compelled to confront others whose behavior is harmful to themselves or others but that when doing so, we should speak that truth with love. A person can only hear as much truth as they know they are loved. It is a matter of our focus inspire or dampen the other.

- We are called to love of God and love of neighbor without distinction. Do I reflect this in web my words and actions?
- Do I focus on the strengths or weakness of others?
- Do I allow myself to get caught in conversations whose focus is negative?
- Am I loving and positive with my sisters? Do I encourage them to be their best selves?

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Maxim 85

Advance good works until they are almost finished; and then, whenever possible, let them be completed by someone else who will receive the honor.

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 3: 5-6(Jerusalem Bible)

What is Apollos and what is Paul? They are servants who brought the faith to you. Even in the different ways in which they brought it were assigned to them by the Lord. I did the planting, Apollos did the watering, but God made things grow. Neither the planter nor the waterer matters: only God, who makes things grow.

Ronald Regan is quoted as saying: "There is no limit to what can be accomplished if it doesn't matter who gets the credit." We need to be conscious that we stand on the shoulders of giants who advanced good works and passed them to us. We are truly building on another's labor.

It is difficult to let go and let someone else have the credit for a project that you have given you time, talent, and even your treasure to propose and design. It is a challenge allow your ideas to merge with others so that the origin of the idea is lost in the final design. It is the all for the Lord's glory.

- Can I rejoice when others are applauded and given credit?
- Am I happy with the grace of being "hidden?"
- Am I detached from ideas I propose so they may grow with the contributions of others?
- Can I rejoice in the good that others accomplish?
- Can I rejoice when my efforts go unnoticed?

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Maxim 52

Interpret all things from the best possible point of view.

Scripture: Matthew 7: 1-3 (Jerusalem Bible)

Do not judge, and you will not be judged; because the judgements you give are the judgements you will get, and the amount you measure out is the amount you will be given. Why do you observe the splinter in your brother's eye and never notice the plank in your own?

It is easy to misinterpret the intentions and actions of others. When you are misunderstood, you have no defense. Have you noticed that when you are misunderstood, no matter how hard you try to correct the misunderstanding, it usually gets worse? First there is an innocent act, or word spoken which causes the misunderstanding. What makes it so painful is, most of the time this is done innocently.

Very innocently we do something, or say something, or imply something that is misunderstood and mistakenly interpreted. As a result of that word, act or implication, it seems to blow up in your face.

Maxim 52 challenges us to attribute the best intention to actions or words of others. We are invited to see the others in a positive light. It is a challenge when we do not always have the opportunity to explore the "why" of the actions others.

- What is my response when I am misunderstood? Can I interpret it in a positive manner?
- How willing am I to trust the values of others and not make assumptions regarding their intentions?
- Do I trust that God is at work in the actions of others?
- Can I accept that there are many approaches to complete the mission?
- Do I have a personal story about this maxim?

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Maxim 84

Never go ahead of grace by an impudent eagerness, but quietly await its movements and when it comes to you, go along with it with great gentleness, humility, fidelity and courage.

Scripture: Habakkuk 2: 2-3 (Jerusalem Bible)

Then Yahweh answered and said, Write the vision down, inscribe it on tablets to be easily read, since this vision is for its own time only; eager for its own fulfillment, it does not deceive; if it comes slowly, wait for come it will, without fail.

Grace, like yeast, works slowly, I must be patient. Listening to and cooperating to the promptings of the Holy Spirit on a daily basis. I am who I am by the grace of God. It is important that I remain faithful in responding to God's grace. Resisting grace in minor matters can interfere with God's plan for me and for the world. This maxim keeps me praying for a listening heart and the courage to wait on the Lord's time.

This maxim teaches patience and more importantly the need to wait for God's time, for the gift of new light, for the grace to move toward the vision. The movement from dark to light and back to dark is gradual, a few minutes each day. As the light unfolds in my life I need to follow the light with the same gentle simplicity I practice in waiting for the light.

- How do I experience the time of waiting for God's grace each day?
- How do I see myself moving with God's grace?
- Do I respond with "Here I am, send me" to God's daily invitations?

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Maxim 16

In everything and everywhere, have only God, God's will and glory before your eyes and make no account of anything else.

Scripture: John 17: 1-5 (Jerusalem Bible)

After saying this, Jesus raised his eyes to heaven and said: "Father, the hour has come: glorify your Son so that your Son may glorify you; and, through the power over all humankind that you have given him, let him give eternal life to all those you have entrusted to him. And eternal life is this: to know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. I have glorified you on earth and finished the work that you gave me to do. Now, Father, it is time for you to glorify me with the glory I had with you before the world was.

God's ultimate will for us is always to glorify Him and grow in trust and love. Knowing the will of God is the most important thing as grow in our relationship with God. The key to knowing God's will; spending time listening to the voice of heart as it is spoken in or heart. The maxim invites us to a single desire "to love the Lord, your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your mind." (Matthew 22:37) I hold in my heart God's many gifts to me. The recollection of these gifts teaches me to trust in the will of God for me and my future.

- Do I reflect on the foundation of my life?
- Is the Examine a regular part of prayer and reflection?
- Do I remember the presence of God in my life and ask for greater awareness of that presence?

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Maxim 64

Strive to be kind always to everyone and unkind to no one.

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 6: 3, 6-7 (Jerusalem Bible)

We do nothing that people might object to, so as not to bring discredit on our function as God's servants... We prove we are God's servant by our purity, knowledge, patience, and kindness; by a spirit of holiness, by love free from affectation; by the word of truth and by the power of God...

Anyone can do simple acts of kindness. People don't necessarily remember what they are told of God's love, but they never forget what they have experienced of God's love. Kindness comes in all shapes and sizes, yet regardless of how big or small we all appreciate a kind act. Kindness is love serving. Kindness gives; it will share. Kindness provides for others; it supplies what is lacking or needed.

- Do you allow God's Spirit to produce kindness in your life?
- Is your kindness active?
- Are you willing to take a risk to be kind?
- Are your acts of random kindness done without distinction for all the "dear Neighbor?"

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Maxim 51

Give all the happiness you can to those who give you a great deal of unhappiness, and give it willingly.

Scripture: Romans 12: 15-21 (Jerusalem Bible)

Treat everyone with equal kindness; never be condescending but make real friends with the poor. Do not allow yourself to become self-satisfied. Never repay evil with evil but let everyone see that you are interested only in the highest ideals. Do all you can to live at peace with everyone. Never try to get revenge; leave that, my friends, to God's anger. As scripture says; vengeance is mine—I will pay them back, the Lord promises. But there is more; If your enemy is hungry, you should give him food, and if he is thirsty, let him drink. Thus you heap red-hot coals on his head. Resist evil and conquer it with good

God is kind to the unkind and showing mercy to those who are nasty. God's rains on the just and the unjust. God offers grace upon grace to saints and sinners. God loves to turn enemies into friends. When we love our enemies, we show God alive in us and through us to the world proving we are part of God's family. There ought to be a family resemblance that everyone can see. We are invited to practice kindness each day toward those we meet when they are not being difficult. It will help us to develop the integrity to be kind even if the other person is being unkind to us.

- Do I act with kindness to those who upset and annoy me?
- Am I only kind to someone when I want something from them?
- Who are the people who give me the greatest unhappiness? How do I treat them?
- Do I trust that God can bring good from the evil especially when I am the one who is hurt?

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Maxim 53

Keep an ever free heart which clings to nothing terrestrial, whatever might be the appearance of good.

Scripture: Matthew 6: 19-21 (Jerusalem Bible)

Do not store up treasures for yourself on earth, where moths and woodworms destroy them and thieves can break in and steal. But store up treasures for yourselves in heaven, where neither moth or woodworm destroy them and thieves cannot break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

Did you keep a treasure box? The kind of box that holds some of the "treasures" from my life. The things we put in our treasure box remind us of some of the best things that have happened to us. The things we put in our treasure box are priceless but only to us. The eBay value of this box is probably...just the box and only if you use an expensive, ornamental box. No one would pay a huge sum for anything in the box. At one time all these things were so important to us. We treasure them always care about them. But as life goes on, different things became important to us. Maybe this is one of the reasons Jesus said to let go of treasures on earth is because they never stay important to us they remind us of things and times that were important.

- What three things would I save if there was a fire?
- Where is my heart?
- Am I frightened to "Let go and Let God?"