



Reflections

On

A Common Rule for Monastics: -

Community

(Chapter 4)

“These are the places where we work to bring God’s Kingdom to earth in service to others.” Paragraph 2,
Lines 1 - 3

A community is a place where persons are associated by a common bond. As the verse above suggests, in these spaces we work to bring God’s Kingdom on earth in an atmosphere of service.

What jumps out at me the most regarding Community, is our responsibility within it, and that a community cannot thrive and grow without singlemindedness and love. Therefore, we need a force bigger than ourselves to engender this oneness. In communities which we choose to become a part of, uniting forces may be in the form of a Rule, A Charism, motto, etc. However, there is no greater unifying force than, according to paragraph 2, line 4, and following, the love and wisdom of Our Lord. When we give priority to the love and will of God, rather than our own, we are more apt to serve each other with Kingdom values; remembering that another word for service is love ^{Chapter 10}. ***When we are loved, we sense Heaven on earth.***

A community cannot exist without relationship. Relationship is vital or the community dies. For relationships to flourish, love must provide the nourishment. The love spoken of here must be the Love of God. If the relationships are merely casual and functional, we may assume that the Love of God is not flourishing in the community. ***If it did, we would feel Heaven on earth.***

Service to others is love for others. In other words, we must be of service in such a way that those served would experience God’s love and the glory of His Kingdom on earth. We are to be Christ to others. Gnawing at the back of my head is that, “we” so often have a willingness to deny some into community simply because they are different. I’m not referring to a community with has a particular purpose or goal, to which others do not ascribe. Of course, there ought to be guidelines and standards. What I am talking about is shutting people out just because... So why is this nagging me? Our world, sadly, seems to thrive (not spiritually) when we make it difficult for some to belong; when wealth in the Commonwealth is not common; when we refuse love; when we deny service; when we reject unity; and when we frown on acceptance. ***The contrary though, brings Heaven to earth.***

As Ambassadors of Christ, we must use our energies to show God’s love through service, to build relationship, build community and to be open to the plight of our neighbours. This is a noble goal. One which, if executed with genuine love, would please the Father. Are we there yet? That may not be as important as “are we making an effort; are we trying; have we begun?” ***If the answer is “yes”, then we will begin to see Heaven on Earth***

Community, especially a Christian community, means that what is felt or experienced by one, should have the same effect on all. All share in each other’s joy, happiness, peace, pain and burden. All think of the other above self. All behold the Christ in each other. Love flows in all direction. Is this a

utopia? Can this only happen in Heaven? Bingo! Our aim is to bring Heaven to earth through loving service. We believe that Heaven is where God is. God is King. Wherever He is, His Kingdom ought to be experienced. This is possible when the supreme law of the Kingdom is observed on earth. LOVE: God first of all, then others. If we worship God as King, Lord, Master, why is it so difficult to do His will? The most fitting answer, in my opinion, is “self”. By removing self, we automatically initiate community, because we see each other through the eyes of Christ and experience a oneness kept together with His unbroken circle of love. ***When we are encircled by love, all experience Heaven on earth.***

To some, this is “pie in the sky” thinking. How could humankind, with its huge egos, ever dream of such unity? Another way to look at it is, “how could Christendom, with all its love, living in Grace, ever dream on not having a perfectly, united community serving each other with the love of Christ?” ***What is your thinking on bringing Heaven to earth?”***

In any organization, its direction, whether forward or backward, depends largely on who the leader is. In the Christian community, the Leader is Jesus, the Christ. He is a maximum leader. He is the Supreme Leader. Are we following His edicts to ensure that we build the type of community He told us we should have? Do we love our neighbours as our selves? Are we serving the needs of others as suggested in Act 4? Are we forgiving others? Are we encouraging each other when we assemble together? Are we praying for one another? Our Leader has given us, through His word, many ways in which we must relate to each other and ***bring His Kingdom to earth.***

Several times a day many saints pray, ***“your Kingdom come, your will be done, on earth, (just) as it is in Heaven”***. There is no doubt that we are genuinely desirous of living the joys of the Kingdom while we sojourn on earth. The desire to facilitate and hasten that experience, by loving and serving, must be even greater.

Permit me to add a little bit to the quote:

“These communities are the places where we work, hearts overflowing with love, to bring God’s Kingdom to earth. This, by serving others, thereby fulfilling the mandate of Christ to love.”

To be a servant is not a highly sought after vocation. For many, this “thing” about service is foreign. Then I went and added to the quote, making it even more daunting for a lot of us. Given all that, let us press on, regardless, and do the will, and heed the words of the King - LOVE (serve), ***so that Heaven is brought to earth.***

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