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CHARLES KAYIIRA KABANDA

Prayer and charity in
St. Teresa of Calcutta

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Tesis doctoral dirigida por el Prof. Dr. Pablo Martí

Universidad de Navarra
Facultad de Teología

Charles KAYIIRA KABANDA

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Presentation

Abstract: The purpose of this thesis is to study the relationship between prayer and charity in St. Teresa of Calcutta. Our investigation begins with a consideration of the historical context of the contemporary world in which Teresa of Calcutta has exercised her charitable activity. It is brought to light how prayer and charity have each experienced its own crisis. At the same time, we examine the response of theology and the magisterium to the problem. We carry on the study, presenting the life and charism of St. Teresa of Calcutta in relationship with the topic of our study. Finally, starting from the saint's mystical encounter with the mystery of divine thirst, which reveals the depths of God and the depths of man, we theologially analyse the interconnection between prayer and charity in her spiritual thought. The central thesis of this study is that for St. Teresa of Calcutta, there cannot be charity without prayer, nor can there be authentic prayer without charity.

Keywords: St. Teresa of Calcutta, prayer, charity.

Resumen: La finalidad de esta tesis es estudiar la relación entre la oración y la caridad en santa Teresa de Calcuta. Comienza nuestra investigación con la consideración del contexto histórico del mundo actual en el que Teresa de Calcuta ha ejercido su obra caritativa. Se pone de manifiesto como la oración y la caridad han experimentado cada una su propia crisis. Al mismo tiempo, se examina la respuesta que ha dado la teología y el magisterio a la problemática. A continuación presentamos la vida y carisma de santa Teresa de Calcuta in relación con el tema de nuestro estudio. Finalmente, partiendo del encuentro místico de la santa con el misterio de la sed divina que revela las profundidades de Dios y las profundidades del hombre, se analiza teológicamente la relación entre la oración y la caridad en su pensamiento espiritual. La tesis central de este estudio es que para santa Teresa de Calcuta, no hay caridad sin oración, ni es posible una oración auténtica sin caridad.

Palabras clave: Santa Teresa de Calcuta, oración, caridad.

The relationship, harmonic or dialectic, between action and contemplation, or between spiritual life and charity, is a constant in the christian life from the beginning. Martha and Mary, the sisters of Lazarus, have remained as the models that represent, respectively, the concern for service and immediate attention to God.

In our time, this harmonious relationship – never quite achieved – continues to represent what St. John Paul II, in his apostolic exhortation *Christi-fidelis laici*, n.2, has designated as «two temptations that the faithful have not always (...) known how to avoid: the temptation of being so strongly interested in Church services and tasks that some fail to become actively engaged in their

responsibilities in the professional, social, cultural and political world; and the temptation of legitimizing the unwarranted separation of faith from life, that is, a separation of the Gospel's acceptance from the actual living of the Gospel in various situations in the world».¹

To this, the term «divorce» has been rightly applied. With the divorce between faith and life, today is effected a separation of binomials grounded in the inseparable union between love of God and love of neighbour. In one way or another, this congeals as a separation between the spiritual relationship with God and the moral life; between charity and justice; between personal morality and social morality, and in the case of our study the current separation between the life of prayer and charitable action, to which the Pope emeritus alludes in the encyclical *Deus caritas est*, n.36. In the immense need of others, people who pray are considered to waste time. Piety, it is believed, undermines the struggle against poverty or the misery of our neighbours, especially in desperate situations which seem to call for action alone.

In the end we find ourselves –and I do not think I am abusing the term– in a crisis, whereby life is gradually being reduced to a mere commitment and, therefore, is shattered the nucleus of our being.²

Any reflection that seeks to re-establish unity –which is ultimately the unity of life– between the assiduously cultivated spiritual life and the commitment to charity heroically lived, will be a contribution worthy of being valued. But, as Josef Ratzinger pointed out in 1989, «the work of theologians is always» secondary, «in relation to the real experience of the saints. Without this point of reference, without this intimate anchorage in such experiences, theology loses its character of reality».³ Thus, together with theological-spiritual reflection, we have another path, equally theological, that is worth exploring and that is, in the expression of Jared Wicks and others, the best «theological place»: the life and charism of the saints as the approach and resolution of that unity.⁴

It is so because in the saints we have a «penetrating understanding of the spiritual realities which they experience», which the dogmatic constitution *Dei Verbum*, speaks of in number 8, thanks to the action of the Holy Spirit who introduces them to the fullness of divine truth and makes the word of

1. JOHN PAUL II, *Christifideles laici*, December 3, 1988, n.2.

2. ARTABA GARGALLO, V., *La espiritualidad que nos anima en la acción caritativa y social*, Cáritas Española Editores, Madrid, 2012, 9.

3. RATZINGER, J., *Guardare Cristo. Esercizi di fede, speranza e carità*, Jaca Books, Milán, 1989, 29.

4. Cf. WICKS, J., *Introducción al método teológico*, Verbo Divino, Estella, 1997, 101.

Christ dwell in them. Their deep experience of the christian mysteries constitutes a fundamental element of the progress of Tradition in the knowledge of the revealed things.⁵

What precedes explains the project of our investigation. The study of the figure and writings of St. Teresa of Calcutta has led us to discover the nucleus of the existence of one of the decisive characters of the 20th century, both for the work she carried out and for the symbolic force that her figure attained. By proclaiming «the Gospel with her life totally dedicated to the service of the poor, but at the same time immersed in prayer,»⁶ the founder of the Missionaries of Charity contributed decisively to the renewal of the world of her time. For our purpose, however, the fundamental thing is that in her is manifested in a perfect way the inseparable union that exists between the practice of charity and the interior life. Speaking of this intimate union, the saint says: «Loving must be as normal to us as living and breathing, day after day until our death. To understand this and practice it we need much prayer, the kind that unites us with God and overflows continually upon others».⁷

According to our data, eight doctoral investigations have been carried out on the figure and writings of Mother Teresa; seven of which have been done in the Faculties of theology in Rome, between the years 1999-2016, and one recently carried out in the Faculty of Theology of the Pontifical Catholic University of Argentina, Buenos Aires, in 2018. These previous researches have treated charity, suffering, religious poverty, prayer, apostolate and the thirst of Jesus in St. Teresa of Calcutta. None of them studies the relationship that exists in the saint between her prayer life and her charitable action, which is our specific contribution.

In order to elaborate our work we have considered it necessary to deal with four fundamental aspects, to which correspond the four chapters of the thesis.

The first chapter deals with the historical context of the contemporary world in which Teresa of Calcutta has exercised her charitable activity in service of humanity. We bring to light how prayer and charity have each experienced its own crisis. On the one hand, the difficulty for many people to value prayer. On the other, the deviations and the loss of the true meaning of charity, understood simply as social promotion. We study this crisis because

5. Cf. MORALEJO, G., *Reflexión teológica y experiencia mística*, Tecnovic, Madrid, 1995, 29.

6. JOHN PAUL II, *Homily for the beatification of Mother Teresa of Calcutta*, October 19, 2003.

7. TERESA OF CALCUTTA, *Essential writings*, Orbis Books, Maryknoll, N.Y., 2003, 69.

the secularization that is at the root of this problem is undoubtedly one of the characteristic elements of today's culture, as pointed out by John Paul II in his apostolic exhortation *Christifidelis laici*, number 4. It is to this unfortunate context marked by a sharp dichotomy between the interior life and man's action in history that Teresa of Calcutta offers an adequate response by her teachings and above all by the testimony of her life.

The second chapter presents the life and charism of Teresa of Calcutta in relation to the theme of our research, and the published works of the saint that we have studied.

The third chapter is a presentation of the principal sources from which our saint draws her spiritual doctrine. The chapter ends with a preliminary approximation to the spiritual-doctrinal content of the message of Mother Teresa.

The fourth chapter, which this *excerptum* collates, constitutes the nuclear part of the thesis. In it, we theologially analyse the nexus between prayer and charity in the saint of Calcutta, parting from the core of her vocation and personal charism, that is, the thirst of God for man and man's thirst for God.

The fundamental bibliography for our work consists of the works of the saint already published, thanks to Fr. Dr. Brian Kolodiejchuk, the postulator of the cause for the beatification and canonization of Mother Teresa, and Fr. Joseph Langford, co-founder with Mother Teresa of the Missionary Fathers of charity. The works of the two collate the most important documentation of Mother Teresa, and still more, offer significant contributions of the authors.

* * *

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List of abbreviations

1. *Magisterial Documents*

| | |
|-----|--|
| AA | Decree <i>Apostolicam actuositatem</i> |
| CCC | Catechism of the Catholic Church |
| GS | Pastoral Constitution <i>Gaudium et spes</i> |
| LG | Dogmatic Constitution <i>Lumen gentium</i> |
| PO | Decree <i>Presbyterorum ordinis</i> |

2. *Sacred Scripture*

| | |
|--------|--------------------------------|
| Is. | Isaiah |
| Hos. | Hosea |
| 1 Cor. | First Letter to Corinthians |
| 1 Jn. | First Letter of St. John |
| 2 Cor. | Second Letter to Corinthians |
| Col. | Letter to Colossians |
| Jas. | Letter of St. James |
| Jn. | Gospel according to St. John |
| Mt. | Gospel according to St. Mathew |
| Rom. | Letter to Romans |

3. *Others*

| | |
|----------------|--|
| a. | article |
| arg. | argument |
| cf. | confer |
| CMC | Constitutions of the Missionaries of Charity |
| coord./coords. | Coordinador/Coordinadores |
| CTI | Comisión Teológica Internacional |
| dir./ dirs. | Director/ Directores |

| | |
|--------------|---------------------------------|
| Dr. | Doctor |
| ed./eds. | Editor/ Editores |
| etc. | etcetera |
| Fr. | Father |
| <i>Ibid.</i> | Ibidem |
| MC | Missionaries of Charity |
| MCF | Missionaries of Charity Fathers |
| n. /nos. | number/numbers |
| O.P. | Order of Preachers |
| Prof. | Profesor |
| q. | question |
| St. | Saint |
| Vol. | Volume |

The nexus between prayer and charity in St. Teresa of Calcutta

Our intention is to elaborate a theological reflection on the intimate relationship between prayer and charity in St. Teresa of Calcutta. Our point of departure is Mother Teresa's mystical experience at Darjeeling, which reveals on the one hand God's infinite thirst for man and on the other, man's deepest longing for his creator. The encounter between these two realities gives rise to the union between loved received and love given. This is in itself an ontological binomial from which derives the union between prayer and charity. The last part of our exposition, which is more concrete, deals with practical living of God's love received with the neediest brethren, which is actually our reciprocal response to God's first love.

1. THE THIRST OF GOD AND THE THIRST OF MAN

1.1. *God's thirst for us*

The mystery of God's thirst revealed in Jesus, is at the center of all, and the key to all in saint Teresa of Calcutta. What forged and fuelled her charitable work was an intimate encounter with God's thirst for her, for the poor, and for entire humanity.¹ This event took place on September 10, 1946, on a train ride to her annual retreat in the hill station of Darjeeling. In this mystical experience, she encountered the infinite longing of God for man.

The saint of Calcutta recounts this in an interview with Fr. Joseph Langford, co-founder of the MCF who had been investigating for a long time on whether there was a connection between her experience of Darjeeling and Jesus' words «I thirst» inscribed in every chapel of the MC. We present the nuclear part of the interview as related by the presbyter Langford:

On her next visit to New York, in early 1984, I finally had both reason and opportunity to ask her about the experience of the train. A few days to the visit, when I was alone with her in the front garden outside our house in the Bronx,

I told her of what had been my long search to better understand her «inspiration», and my desire to describe it accurately in our community's constitutions. I explained to her that, for me, the only thing that made sense of her placing «I thirst» in her chapels, was that it grew out of her experience of the thirst of Jesus – and most importantly, that her encounter with the divine thirst had been the heart and essence of September 10. If this were true, I did not want to leave it out of our constitutions; but if it were not, I did not want to continue being in error. I waited in silence for an answer. She lowered her head for a moment, then looked up and said, «Yes, it is true». Then after a pause, she added, «And one day you must tell the others».²

Joseph Langford sums up our saint's experience on September 10, 1984, in the following words: «By Mother Teresa's own account, September 10 was above all an encounter (...) an encounter with the God who thirsts for us».³

St. John the evangelist teaches us – «No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known» (Jn. 1: 18). Jesus Christ is the ultimate and definitive revelation of the mystery of God.⁴ His thirst therefore is the doorway to the comprehension of the mystery of God.⁵

Jesus' thirst, as articulated by Teresa of Calcutta, and in this manner, renewing the faith in the hypostatic union of the mystery of Christ, is the thirst of the eternal Word made flesh: «Jesus is God (...), His thirst is infinite... We are called to quench this infinite thirst of a God made man».⁶

This fact that he who thirsts on the Cross is true God and true man, leads us to the enunciation of the thesis that Jesus' thirst has both divine and human dimensions.⁷ In other words, in Jesus' cry «I thirst» is revealed both the true depths of God and the true depths of man.

As revelation of the true depths of God, the cry of Jesus brings to light God's infinite thirst, his infinite desire for man. What does «divine thirst» which takes precedence over man's thirst signify exactly in Mother Teresa's understanding? It is necessary that we respond to the question by alluding to some texts in which the saint speaks about this mystery:

My children, once you have experienced the thirst, the love of Jesus for you, you will never need, you will never thirst for these things which can only lead you away from Jesus, the true and living Fountain.⁸

That boy and girl who fall in love with each other, that love is «I thirst». You have to experience it. Same thing – we come to that conviction... His love is thirst... Love and thirst are the same word.⁹

Analysis of the above texts reveals that «divine thirst», first and most importantly, is a mystery that leads us to the depths of God's infinite longing to love humanity, to love each one of his children. On the Cross, Jesus in his divinity as the eternal Word reveals his infinite love for us: «When we look at the cross, we know how much Jesus loved us».¹⁰

The humanity of Jesus turns out to be the revelation of God the Father: «Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father» (Jn. 14:9). In this way, Jesus, even while revealing his own love for us, he still becomes the living expression of the Father's love: «God spoke of His infinite thirst for each of us and all His children, especially the Poorest of the Poor, through His beloved Son, Jesus Christ dying on the Cross».¹¹

Christ, Son of God and son of man, reveals to us through his human existence, the face of God, that is, he manifests to us God as He is. The depth of benevolence, liberality, mercy, generosity, in brief, the infinity of divine love, is shown through the acts of the life of Christ.¹² In a special way, through the transcendental event of his death, Jesus reveals the Father as essentially love and mercy.¹³

Being the Son of God the Father, Jesus is the Father's living word. On the Cross, he proclaims the Father's longing for man, speaking the words «I thirst» which are not his, but of the One who sent him: «These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me» (Jn. 14: 24).

In that moment of limitless love on the Cross in which God follows man even unto death, in the cry of Jesus, who is the revelation in the «economy» of the divine intimacy – the unity in the Trinity, is ultimately revealed that fullness of love that dwells in the bosom of the Most Holy Trinity.¹⁴

The quintessence of Mother Teresa's charism is discovering and making known to the world this unfathomable love and mercy of God for humanity revealed in Jesus Christ, both in word and in deed. The principal document in which she pronounces for the first time with all vigour the marvels and fullness of divine love revealed in Jesus, his ardent thirst for mankind is the *Varanasi Letter* which was prompted by John Paul II's message for lent in 1992, in which he highlights the theme of divine thirst: «Look upon Jesus nailed to the Cross, dying, and listen to his faint voice: «I thirst» (Jn. 19:28)».¹⁵

The ardour of this thirst, even before its revelation on the cross is manifested in Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman at the well (cf. Jn. 4: 1-30). For this very reason, this Johannine text, occupies a central place in Mother Teresa's reflections. From the very day of her mystical experience at Darjeeling, she made several meditations on this New Testament passage. She associates Jn. 19: 28 – «I thirst» with John 4: 7 – «Give me to drink».

Referring to Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman at the well (Jn. 4: 7), Teresa of Calcutta says: «The same God who does not need to tell us if he is hungry does not feel abashed at asking the Samaritan woman for some water to drink. He was indeed thirsty». ¹⁶

Jesus asks for a drink not only because of his physical thirst, but to show that he thirsts for men to discover the love of God.¹⁷ This is the exact interpretation given by St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus: «He was thirsty. But when he said: «Give me to drink,» it was the love of His poor creature the Creator of the universe was seeking. He was thirsty for love. Ah! I feel it more than even before, Jesus is parched, for he meets only the ungrateful and indifferent among His disciples in the world and among His own disciples, alas, He finds few hearts who surrender to Him without reservations, who understand the real tenders of His infinite Love». ¹⁸

The thirst to love manifested by Jesus, does not signify at all a necessity on God's part with respect to man. God is all (Sir. 43:27) and thus needs nothing. But God, in his intimate life is love (1 Jn. 4:16) and this love in itself is overabundant, overflowing. His thirst for man is a consequence of this overfullness of love, and this thirst is revealed in a supreme way on the cross in the cry of the Crucified «I thirst». ¹⁹

In the eternal history of love, the Holy Spirit who fills to the brim the hearts of the faithful, is the superabundance of the trinitarian love, the overflowing fulness, the ecstasy of God, the eternal and infinite Love of God. Love constitutes all his being, in as far as He is the third person of the Most Holy Trinity.²⁰ In the Holy Spirit, «the intimate life of the Triune God becomes totally gift, an exchange of mutual love between the divine Persons and that through the Holy Spirit God exists in the mode of gift», of «self-giving». ²¹

On this foundation, the symbol of «thirst» employed by the saint of Calcutta rather than understanding it in the negative sense of lack or absence on the part of God, ought to be comprehended positively as God's freely chosen desire to love out of the overabundance of his love that he has chosen to communicate to men. Unlike the Aristotelean divine power which for every being is an object of desire and of love but in itself it lacks nothing and does not love, the only One God, the Creator of heaven and earth, who is thus the God of all, at the same time loves with the passion of a true love.²²

In brief, we are dealing with a God, in whom there is full and absolute liberality, a consequence not of lack but of love, but is at the same time and inseparably desire.²³ It is a characteristic of love to be expansive and to desire the good of the beloved. The human person has been created exclusively

for love, that he may participate in Christ, through the Holy Spirit in the same life of God, becoming in this way, the place in which God's glory is manifested.²⁴

God's thirst, a symbol for his love, which goes beyond human language's limits, beyond the reach of artistic expression, beyond human understanding is made concrete precisely in his thirst for souls. Our saint is convinced, therefore, that in the cry «I thirst», the crucified Jesus, eternal Word made flesh, beyond his physical thirst, was expressing yet a deeper thirst, his thirst for union with us, his thirst souls: «Jesus' thirst was not purely material, but it was a thirst for love, a thirst for souls».²⁵

On the Cross, his Christological thirst is painfully manifested in order to redeem man wounded by sin.²⁶ The saint of Calcutta calls Jesus' thirst «painful thirst»²⁷ to refer to Jesus' grief for our ignorance, for our rejection and indifference, the pain of our sin. Because of this immense pain, Jesus laments to our saint in the beginnings of her «call within a call» in these words: «(...) they don't know Me – so they don't want Me».²⁸

We actually find ourselves at the very center of Mother Teresa's charism, that is, satiating Jesus' thirst for souls: «What is the reason for our existence? We are here to satiate the thirst of Jesus, to proclaim the love of Christ – the thirst of Jesus for souls».²⁹

Love, whose source is the wellspring of the Father's love for the Son, in the Holy Spirit and comes down to us from the Son, is creative love, through which we have our being. It is redemptive love, through which we are recreated. Hence, Jesus' cry on the cross, «I thirst», is an expression of this redemptive love that seeks the salvation of souls.³⁰

Jesus' thirst to love is for Teresa of Calcutta a fountain of living water that helps her to discover her Spouse's unquenchable desire for souls.³¹ It is because of his deepest thirst for souls that Jesus calls Mother Teresa to be His Light in the dark holes of the poorest of the poor of Calcutta: «Little one give Me souls – give Me the souls of the poor little street children. – If you would only answer My call – and bring Me these souls».³²

Ultimately the charism «I thirst» is for Mother Teresa a vocation of love for Jesus, the incarnate Word of God, abandoned due to man's sin. His thirst for souls is an expression of the salvific will of God who wants to restore the divine likeness disfigured by sin. This thirst is a mystery that flows from the Trinity as its source. The eternal Father, whose plan was to raise men to a participation of the divine life; fallen in Adam, did not leave men to themselves, but ceaselessly offered helps to salvation, in view of Christ, the Redeemer who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature.

As Teresa of Calcutta continues explicating, divine thirst consists also in God's longing to be loved by us. The saint brings out clearly this second dimension of the infinite thirst in the heart of God in her explanation of the origins of the MC: «The strong grace of Divine Light and Love Mother received on the train journey to Darjeeling on 10th September 1946 is where the M.C. [Missionaries of Charity] begins – in the depths of God's infinite longing to love and to be loved».³³

The primacy of God's action who has loved us first (cf. 1 Jn. 4: 10, 19, Rom. 5:5) with his self-donation demands correspondence, a loving response: «God has offered to each one of us, He offers us that lifelong, faithful, personal friendship in tenderness and love. We all experience that in our lives, how God loves us. And it is our turn to give that lifelong, that faithful, that personal friendship to Him».³⁴

Jesus has thirst for our love, a thirst of such a category that St. Thérèse of Lisieux has come to call him «the beggar of love». He thirsts that we thirst for his love; and he in turn begs our love.³⁵

This is the logic of love as also expressed by the mystical doctor, St. John of the Cross: «Love is only paid with love».³⁶ In love, therefore, is united the free gift of God and the passionate desire of reciprocity. In the last part of our exposition, we shall treat this point at great length, expounding how reciprocity of love is realised precisely through concrete living of love with Christ's brethren especially the neediest (cf. Mt. 25:31-46), to whom he has been united in a special way in virtue of his redemptive suffering.

1.2. *Our thirst for God*

In the same Christ, in whom is revealed the profound reality of God and his love, is revealed to us at the same time the mystery of man.³⁷ Consequently, as already commented, in the utterance from the cross, Jesus' cry of thirst also reveals the true depths of man. Speaking in his human nature, Jesus also revealed something about us that might have escaped our attention. We are referring to the truth that man is a living desire for God. As man, Jesus' thirst reflects the creator's footprint, that is, the image and likeness imprinted in the depths of the human being, thirst written therefore in the Heart of God-man as in the heart of men created for God.³⁸

Jesus' thirst permits us to understand the thirst that dwells in the interior of the human heart and at the same time allows us to dispose ourselves to satiate it. This reality is once more brought to the forefront in Jn. 4: 1-30 – Jesus'

encounter with the Samaritan woman at the well, which is Mother Teresa's second fundamental biblical text, as already mentioned.

It is an account which reveals the dynamics both of divine and human thirst. «Give me to drink» – Jesus asks the woman, a sample of solidarity at the most basic level, that of physical necessity, which unites human beings, beyond cultures and all political and religious barriers. In this, Jesus triggers in this woman, who symbolises our human poverty, an inner process that prompts her to manifest the deepest longing in every person – the inherent desire for the gift of God and for salvation that only God can satisfy.³⁹

In a number of texts, Teresa of Calcutta manifests with all clarity this truth. In one of her private letters written during the agonising experience of the dark night, she wrote thus to her spiritual director: «I have such a deep longing for God».⁴⁰

Later on, the saint of Calcutta speaks of this experience as a universal phenomenon: «Every human being has a longing for God».⁴¹

What is the theological foundation of this reality affirmed by our saint? As Teresa of Calcutta intuits it, it is precisely the truth of man's divine origin, his creation as God's image (Gen. 1:27): «Our hunger for God, because we have been created for that love. We have been created in his image».⁴²

From the christian anthropological perspective, the permanent imprint of God's image on man means a constitutive openness, ontological, to his creator, which belongs to the fundamental structure of his being.⁴³ At the same time, this image of God is a dynamism that naturally moves man out of himself towards the «Other»,⁴⁴ towards the Divine. «He cannot live fully according to truth unless he freely acknowledges that love and entrusts himself to his creator».⁴⁵

Man continually experiences absence of sense and truth in his life when closed to his creator. The reason for this is the profound desire to be saved that subsists in every human being, even though it may be hidden or buried by existential rubbles.⁴⁶ This is clearly brought out in Mother Teresa's first symbolic vision: the pain and darkness, the hopelessness and poverty of man separated from God and his profound desire for salvation. Here is our saint's description of what she saw in that vision: «I saw a very big crowd – all kinds of people – very poor and children were there also. They all had their hands lifted towards me – standing in their midst. They called out «Come, come, save us – bring us to Jesus».⁴⁷

This vision enables us to comprehend the profound meaning of the human necessity that the saint of Calcutta speaks about frequently – that's man's need «to love and to be loved». This desire in the interior of each person,

which unfortunately may be perverted, running after creatures, is an imprint put in the heart of man by his Creator, corresponding to the theological virtue of love. It manifests nothing other than man's deepest desire for God who is absolute love, the only love that can fully satiate him.⁴⁸

Man as image and likeness of God, does not thirst for mere human love or natural affection that can never fully satisfy his deepest and most intimate longings. He fundamentally desires pure, authentic, absolute love, which is God himself: «People do not hunger for us, for our works, for our care. People hunger for God, for Jesus Christ».⁴⁹

In the light of this affirmation, real poverty according to Teresa of Calcutta is the absence of God. It is this poverty that the saint is speaking about in her coined term «the poorest of the poor». She is not referring to material indigence as such, but rather, she is alluding to spiritual poverty, the absence of God provoked by sin, which, as revealed in her first symbolic vision was the cause for the most terrible sufferings of the poor not only in time, but also in eternity.

In her letter to the Cardinal Prefect of the Sacred Congregation for the Religious, petitioning the Holy See for permission to set out for the streets of Calcutta, she openly speaks about this poverty in these words: «There are millions who live in Indian cities and villages in ignorance of God and of Christ, in abominable sinfulness».⁵⁰

This kind of spiritual poverty knows no boundaries. Its presence is notable in the less privileged as well as in the most affluent societies as Mother Teresa points it out in her discourses: «And you in the West, more than material indigence, yours is spiritual poverty, and that's why your poor are among the poorest».⁵¹

2. THE ENCOUNTER BETWEEN GOD'S THIRST AND MAN'S THIRST

Man as *imago Dei*, is created by God and for God; and more still, God never ceases to draw him to himself. For that reason, the human person will actively and constantly seek to have contact with the divine, for it is only when he puts into action his openness to God that he is realised as man.

This persistent attraction towards the divine, as affirms Benedict XVI, is the «soul of prayer» and a perfect confirmation that prayer is connatural to man. It is «written on the heart of every person and of every civilization».⁵²

2.1. *Prayer, a reciprocal convergence between God's thirst and our thirst*

As confirmed by Teresa of Calcutta in the interview mentioned at the beginning of our exposition, it was in the silence of contemplation in the training taking her for the annual retreat at Darjeeling, that she heard resounding the cry of Jesus on the cross «I thirst».

What happens in this experience is a perfect confirmation of the essence of christian prayer already highlighted by St. Augustine. We are referring to the truth that prayer is the reciprocal encounter between God's thirst and man's thirst.⁵³

Mother Teresa's prayer experience was conferred as a personal grace and as such, it can never be object of our aspiration nor our imitation. Nevertheless, it must be clarified that there can be a different way of sharing in it without everything having to be exactly the same.⁵⁴ This is owed to the fact that prayer is the «fruit of faith».⁵⁵

Faith as a virtue not only captures the reality of God's presence, but also goes ahead to illuminate his great love for us, hence making it possible for each one of us to perceive the intensity of God's love for him. It is specifically for this reason that prayer is portrayed in our saint as the setting where the christian must be rooted in a lively and personal way in the reality of God and his love for us: «How can we last even one day living our life without hearing Jesus say «I love you» – impossible. Our soul needs that as much as the body needs to breathe the air. If not, prayer is dead – meditation is only thinking. Jesus wants you each to hear Him – speaking in the silence of your heart».⁵⁶

2.2. *In prayer God gives us his love*

The great desire for God in man's heart is actually an icon of God himself who is consumed with the infinite desire for his creature.⁵⁷ Consequently, the mutual encounter between God's thirst for us and our thirst for him in prayer has as its fruit the donation of God's love. Here are the saint's confirming words: «When I pray, God puts His Love into my heart».⁵⁸

These words of the saint make it manifest that God's «thirsting love,» which we meet in prayer, at the same time expresses itself as a gift to us. God is made thirsty, so as to satisfy our thirst, as one made poor so that we might become rich (2 Cor. 8,9).⁵⁹ This truth is laid bare in Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman. As explained by the holy doctor of Hippo, he who asks for a drink from that woman is actually the one who satiates the most profound longing of her soul.⁶⁰

a) God's love is self-donation

God's love is self-giving, that is, he communicates himself to man. This communication of the trinitarian life to the christian takes place in and through the Spirit, the personal expression self-giving, who sent by the Father, together with the Son, transforms the one who receives him up to introducing him in the divine knowledge and love.⁶¹ Mother Teresa draws our attention to the mystery of prayer as the «setting» where this is realised. In prayer, we obtain the most essential Good, the gift of God Himself: «If you face God in prayer and silence (...), God can fill you with himself».⁶²

Here is powerfully illuminated the greatness for which men have been created. We are referring to the truth that the human person has been created to be filled by God himself.⁶³

Besides, is elucidated the miracle of prayer; the miracle of free and supreme love of the Father, which ought to surprise us every day. God, who is eternal and totally distinct, who has no need of created love nor owes his love to any creature, is the one who opens and gives himself to us. He offers himself, inviting us, uplifting us and ennobling us, till making us participants in his divine nature.⁶⁴

This truth is a consequence of the very nature of God, which is total goodness. The essence of that goodness, as explained by the angelic doctor is always self-donation to his creatures.⁶⁵

However, we ought to clarify it that although it is without doubt that God's self-gift to man is radical and for that reason total, we cannot speak of this totality in a metaphysical sense. This, as clarified by John Paul II, stems from the fact that «as a creature man is not capable of receiving the gift of God in the transcendental fullness of his divinity. Such a total gift (uncreated) is shared only by God himself in the triune communion of the Persons».⁶⁶

As the Polish Pope continues elucidating, «God's gift of himself to man, can only have the form of a participation in the divine nature (cf. 2 Pt 1:4). Nevertheless, according to this measure, the gift made to man on the part of God in Christ is a total, that is, a radical gift (...). In a certain sense, it is all that God could give of himself to man, considering the limited faculties of man, a creature».⁶⁷

Contemplating the greatness for which man has been created, that is, to be filled by God himself and the fact that man's heart is too small for such greatness to which it is destined, Teresa of Calcutta, in consonance with the doctrine of St. Augustine⁶⁸, calls for a stretching of the heart to make it more capacious for receiving him. This expansion of the heart takes place in per-

severing prayer: «Prayer enlarges the heart until it is capable of containing God's gift of himself. Ask and seek and your heart will grow big enough to receive him».⁶⁹

Enlargement of the heart goes hand in hand with its purification from sin which impedes God's love: «We must be empty if we want God to fill us with his fullness. Our Lady had to be empty before she could be full of grace. She had to declare that she was the handmaid of the Lord before God could fill her. So also, we must be empty of all pride, all jealousy, of all selfishness before God can fill us with his love».⁷⁰

This ascetic process certainly entails arduous work and is painful. Nevertheless, it is through such purifications that we become open to God and also rendered capable of serving others.⁷¹ In other words, the purification of the soul that prayer demands is a process of movement from the «I» to the transcendental «You» of God and the «you» of others. In this manner is perfectly confirmed the truth emphatically stressed by the saint of Calcutta that: «(...) prayer is not a flight from others, and from the world – but rather, a very authentic search for the true face of others and of God under the impetus of love and faith».⁷²

The purification of love that all prayer entails, makes prayer a school for learning and practising great hope. This virtue, as revealed ahead in the teachings of Teresa of Calcutta, is so fundamental for the practice of love. Hope is practised through the virtue of patience, which continues to do good even in the midst of apparent failure, in seemingly hopeless situations. This virtue is also exercised through humility, which accepting God's mystery, continues to trust in him even during moments of darkness.⁷³

For prayer to bring about this power of purification, it must be on the one hand an encounter between the person's intimate self and God. For this reason, Teresa of Calcutta gives special importance to silence: «Silence is at the root of our union with God».⁷⁴

The «silence», that the saint emphasises here refers to an objective situation of serenity, peace, stillness, which allows the encounter and the hearing. Clarifying it the more, the saint distinguishes between interior and exterior silence: «We cannot place ourselves in the presence of God without committing ourselves to interior and exterior silence».⁷⁵

External silence refers to the environment that surrounds the person praying, and on the other hand, interior silence refers to the interiority of the subject, that tranquillity that frees one from anxieties. Certainly, exterior silence is important, as emphasised by the Lord himself – «But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen»

(Mt. 6:6). Nevertheless, interior silence, that is, attention to God from which stems the stillness of the soul, is the decisive factor. It constitutes the beginning of the dialogue with God, that is prayer⁷⁶, and ultimately it's the condition for the soul's union with God: «When you have listened to the voice of God in the stillness of your heart, then your heart is filled with God».⁷⁷

On the other hand, Teresa of Calcutta puts due emphasis on the necessity of prayer that comes from the heart: «Prayer must come from the heart and must be able to touch the heart of God».⁷⁸ It is not without reason that she stresses the necessity of praying from the heart. It is precisely when prayer comes from the very bottom of the heart that the soul is purified, the desire for God increases and one learns to love.⁷⁹

All this does not mean that the truth of the absolute gratuity of divine love escapes the saint's awareness. She wants rather to make it clear that this gratuity requires our cooperation.

God's love and presence, is always a gift which we can never merit by our own effort. He takes the first step and offers his love (cf. 1 Jn. 4:19), to which the soul has only to freely open itself with the gift of faith. Given God's absolute and infinite transcendence, it would be impossible for man to enter into a relationship of love with him, if he did not take the initiative.

On this foundation, Teresa of Calcutta conceives prayer primarily as opening oneself to the absolutely free gift of God's love: «Let us not read much, or meditate much even, but just allow Jesus to love you. We want to say, «Jesus, I love you,» but we don't allow Jesus to love us. Today say often, «Jesus I am here, love me»».⁸⁰

What hinders this openness to God's love? According to our saint, it is the habitual temptation of feeling unworthy of God's love owing to our miseries, as if its donation were conditional: «The devil may try to use the hurts of life, and sometimes our own mistakes – to make you feel it is impossible that Jesus really loves you, is really cleaving to you. This is a danger for all of us. And so sad, because it is completely opposite of what Jesus is really wanting, waiting to tell you».⁸¹

The problem in the background, as elucidated by the theologian Romani Guardini, is the failure to accept the truth of who we are, the fact that man as God's image has been created out of His love and for His love. This goes accompanied with the failure to acknowledge the reality of the evil, the misery that there is in us, which must be accepted with humility, in a spirit of a sincere desire for conversion.⁸² Openness to God's love is made even more difficult by our incredulity in that love. The repercussion of this is living a self-centred life, preoccupied so much with what we can do for God.

Unfortunately, the greatness of what God wants to do for us ever remains in a shadow.⁸³

Prayer is an act of love of God. To pray is to accept with confidence God's love. Prayer does not signify doing something for God, but rather to receive his love, letting oneself be loved by God.⁸⁴ Against this background, our saint insists all the more that in prayer, God's love is never conquered, but is given as pure grace. We only have to open our hearts to God, leaving him to love us as we are: «We may spend time in chapel – but have you seen with the eyes of your soul how He looks at you with love? (...) only open your heart to be loved by Him as you are. (...) Not only that He loves you, but even more – He longs for you. He misses you when you don't come close. He loves you always, even when you don't feel worthy. When not accepted by others, even by yourself sometimes – He is the one who always accepts you. My children, you don't have to be different for Jesus to love you».⁸⁵

Here, it is made clear that in the understanding of the saint of Calcutta, prayer is essentially all about discovering and accepting the love that God wants to freely give us. It is as natural and simple as putting oneself at God's disposition, letting him lavish his love upon us.⁸⁶ In point of fact, it is on this account that Teresa of Calcutta emphasises oftenly child simplicity as the basic disposition for prayer: «How do you pray? You should go to God like a little child».⁸⁷

In respect to this characteristic of prayer, our saint is inspired by the «spiritual infancy» of St. Thérèse of Lisieux, whom she took on for her patroness at Loreto. Prayer emanates from this spirit of infancy and trust. The more one follows this way, the more one learns abandonment, and the more one abandons himself to this «science of love», the more one opens himself without any reservations to divine love that wants to invade us entirely.⁸⁸ For that reason, Teresa of Calcutta continues emphasising it thus: «Pray with absolute trust in God's loving care for you and let him fill you with joy».⁸⁹

The preceding saint's notion of prayer as essentially letting oneself be filled with God's love is so present in the christian tradition whereby the drama of prayer, beyond all methods has been analogously expressed as placing oneself before God like a canvas before a painter to allow His holy image to be impressed upon us⁹⁰, or as a participation in the «Yes» of the Son become servant and the *Fiat* of Mary, God's lowly handmaid.⁹¹

This truth of christian prayer, basically sheds light on the very being of man. As a creature, he is structurally marked in an original and indelible way by receptivity of love. All has been given to him, starting with his very being, all that he is, he is by pure reception, by grace. On this foundation, he who

can't receive love will never exist in truth; the condition for love and for being is poverty that receives.⁹²

It is here, as articulated by Teresa of Calcutta that is discovered the need for letting oneself be loved in poverty, without being protagonists of God's love: «God cannot fill what is full – He can fill only emptiness, deep poverty. And your «Yes» is the beginning of being or becoming empty. It is not how much we really «have» to give, but how empty we are, so that we can receive [Him] fully in our life and let Him live His life in us».⁹³ Hence, is manifested the importance of the virtue of spiritual poverty, which may be taken to be synonymous with humility.

This interior attitude creates a void in our soul, freeing it from egoism and pride. It is only when we empty ourselves of the self that we make the soul more ready to be inhabited and possessed by God. Humility throws the soul wide open to Him who in turn ardently desires to give Himself to us.⁹⁴

b) Love received is to be shared

Love is a gift and a task. The inexhaustible richness of God's love received is always accompanied with the responsibility of sharing it.⁹⁵ Teresa of Calcutta highlights this in the following manner: «Open your hearts to the love of God which he will give you. He loves you with tenderness. And he will give you not to keep but to share».⁹⁶

This dynamic of love received and given underscored in the preceding texts of our saint is the very nature of God, who as superabundance of love, always thirsts to communicate his love, to diffuse himself as expressed in the Pauline teaching: «God has poured out his love into our hearts by means of the Holy Spirit, who is God's gift to us» (Rom. 5:5).

If this self-effusive love, at any moment ceases to pour out itself, it would no longer be love but egoism. God begets continuously His son; from the Father and the Son proceeds constantly the Holy Spirit, because God is eternal love.

On this basis, the love that is given to us can never kept in our souls. It needs to go back to its origin and it wants to continue through us its movement of diffusion.⁹⁷ Teresa of Calcutta accentuates this thus: «Love is sharing, love is giving the best we have».⁹⁸

The Virgin Mary, who has gone before us, becoming our model in the matter of faith and charity is the perfect expression of love as sharing. Speaking about her perfect example of christian charity, the saint of Calcutta says: «God loved the world so much that He gave His Son as a proof of His love.

And Jesus, coming to Mary, the most beautiful of creatures, so pure, so holy. She, in accepting Him in her life, immediately, she went in haste to give Him to others». ⁹⁹

Here is certainly overcome the present-day distorted conception of love; «love» which is merely private. Authentic love, as well understood by Teresa of Calcutta in consonance with Thomas Aquinas' doctrine on love as *diffusivum sui*¹⁰⁰, that's a self-diffusive good, never remains in oneself. It is a force which moves one towards «the other».

This truth is the testimony of the whole of salvation history; in that, all history is in a sense history of exodus, history of going out of self as recounts St. John the evangelist: «It was just before the Passover Festival. Jesus knew that the hour had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end» (Jn. 13:1).

Authentic and radical love is loving as Christ loves, with self-donation, which implies a total exodus from oneself, a movement out of self to the other until one reaches the radical offering of his own life, if it be necessary.¹⁰¹

3. THE INTIMATE UNION BETWEEN PRAYER AND CHARITY

3.1. *Charity is love received from God and love given to others*

Love as Mother Teresa affirms it, is «a fruit in season at all times and within the reach of every hand. Anyone may gather it and no limit is set». ¹⁰² Wherefrom do we draw this love? The saint of Calcutta replies: «This love must come from within – from our union with Christ». ¹⁰³ In this connection, she writes thus to her lay co-workers during the lenten season of the year 1996: «We need that intimate connection with God in our everyday lives. And how do we get that? By prayer». ¹⁰⁴

Love-charity, therefore, according to Teresa of Calcutta is a grace, a pure gift. It is first and foremost love which is given to us gratuitously by divine intervention and from that perspective of being received, it is in turn offered to others. Put differently, it is only from God's self-communication or self-donation to man that is born his capacity to communicate himself, better said, to open himself to others. Here is the clear text in which our saint manifests this truth: «Give! Give the love we have all received to those around you». ¹⁰⁵

As a matter of fact, here Teresa of Calcutta perfectly resolves the usual false contraposition between prayer and charity. How? Analysing the above text, we see clearly marked the line of union which goes from the love received

from God to love which is shared with others and vice versa. In consequence, for our saint, love-charity is fundamentally a single reality. It is inseparably love received from God – a grace, a gift, and love given to others.¹⁰⁶ This is the truth that the saint wants to convey, when she reiterates it that «we have been created to love and to be loved».¹⁰⁷ In other words, we have been created to give love and to receive love. In this way, prayer and charity become an inseparable binomial. What is the root of this binomial? It is the ontological union between love received and love given. Man is able to give love because he has originally received it from his Creator. Let us seek to unfold this fundamental truth in the next section.

a) The ontological union between love received and love given

It is a known fact that God is the fullness of being and of every perfection, he is without origin and without end, and all creatures receive all that they are and have from him. We are all a gift, not something self-generated, «we all build our own «I» on the basis of a «self» which is given to us».¹⁰⁸ God's love is what «makes our being», is what makes us to exist.

In giving man his being, God further imprints upon him His image. This is the Christian vision of man already clearly pronounced: man is constitutively image of God. As image of God, man reflects his Creator. He, being the source of love, also gives to the human creature in time the «source of love». This means that man is constitutively able to love, because he has received first love from all eternity.¹⁰⁹ Teresa of Calcutta highlights this in these words: «All of us, you and I, should use what God has given us, that for which God created us. For God has created us for greater things: to love and to give love».¹¹⁰

Without this eternal initiative of love, man would never conceive any other temporal source of love. Our love, that which we are able to give and which we believe that we generate, is only a pale reflection of the love of God. As expressed by Joseph Pieper, all love with respect to the human being, is a reproduction of the creative love of God, in virtue of which everything that exists has received its being and goodness. And still being a reproduction, it is also a continuation, a perfecting of what was begun at creation.¹¹¹

The encyclical *Caritas in veritate* condenses the above reflections in these words: «It is the primordial truth of God's love, grace bestowed upon us, that opens our lives to gift and makes it possible to hope for a development of the whole man and of all men, to hope for progress from less human conditions to those which are more human».¹¹² It is from this reality that derives the

inseparable union between prayer and charity. We are able to lavish love on those who surround us if we receive it first from the superabundance of God's generosity.

Hence, we always need God, who makes himself our neighbour so that we can become neighbours.¹¹³ In the measure that divine love unites with God, it capacitates us to love others with His same love. In this is manifested the union and the essential interaction between the two precepts of charity, as exposed in the following paragraphs.

b) The inseparability between love of God and love of neighbour

The principal novelty that christian love brings to men is Jesus Christ, and its expression is the commandment of love – the inseparability of the love of God and love of neighbour, which is precisely the life, the person of Jesus Christ. Teresa of Calcutta frequently highlights the inseparability of the two precepts of the law as portrayed in the following text: «It is not enough for us to say: I love God, but I do not love my neighbour. (...) How can you love God whom you do not see, if you do not love your neighbour whom you see, whom you touch, with whom you live».¹¹⁴

This means in the first place that it is not possible to love God without loving one's neighbour. The above Johannine affirmation referred to by our saint (1 Jn. 4:20) is founded in the fact that every person is an object of God's love. Each one is created by God's love and is constantly preserved by it. Being the object of God's love means that we are to love our neighbour in Him and Him in our neighbour.¹¹⁵

According to Charles Dodd's exegesis, the intimate connection between the two precepts can also be established in another way: «(...) the child of God is a person to be loved, because of his parentage. (...) it is a general principle that if you love the parent you will love the child».¹¹⁶ It is for this reason that God who commands us to love him, also demands of us to love our neighbour as necessary consequence: «And he has given us this command: Anyone who loves God must also love their brother and sister» (1 Jn. 4:21).

It goes without saying that concrete love of neighbour is indispensable for each individual christian, being the means of growing in love with God. Without love of neighbour, even our habitual relationship with God in prayer becomes sterile.¹¹⁷

On the other hand, it is not possible to love one's neighbour without loving God, given that brotherly love is not only from God, but also of God.¹¹⁸ Teresa of Calcutta underlines this truth in these words: «The love of the poor

overflows from your love of God». ¹¹⁹ For this reason, love of God is given chronological and ontological primacy. Everyone who loves has been loved before by God. It is from the love of God that he receives the capacity to love. ¹²⁰

Otherwise stated, the charity with which formally we love our neighbour is a participation of divine charity. ¹²¹ As consequence, if in my life there is no contact with God, I am also incapable of loving my neighbour; I cannot see in him anything more than the other, and I am incapable of seeing in him the face of God. ¹²²

This teaching of the encyclical *Deus caritas est* is strongly emphasised by Teresa of Calcutta. According to her, love of neighbour essentially means discovering the «other» in his eternal value, seeing the face of Christ in each person. ¹²³ This calls for purity of the heart: «If our hearts are not pure we cannot see Jesus in others». ¹²⁴

The seeing of Christ in the «other», as the saint underlines it, is what fundamentally distinguishes christian charity from simple social action: «Did you give the medicine with faith to the sick Christ? This is the difference between you and the social worker». ¹²⁵ How is purity of heart capable of seeing the face of Christ in the «other» attained? The saint of Calcutta responds thus: «(...) a pure heart (...) you will receive as a fruit of your prayer, as a fruit of your oneness with Christ. And a pure heart can see God». ¹²⁶

The consequence of seeing God in others is love that imitates the divine pattern: «When we all see God in each other, we will love one another as he loves us all». ¹²⁷

For this reason, Teresa of Calcutta calls for a living contact with God if we are to love one another in truth: «Loving must be as normal to us as living and breathing, day after day until our death. To understand this and practice it we need much prayer, the kind that unites us with God and overflows continually upon others». ¹²⁸

In theological terms, the saint is expressing the truth that the foundation act for man's openness to others and its ontological status is his openness to God's primal love, that oneness with Christ through prayer. It is man's introduction in divine charity that generates his capacity of being for others.

Therefore, the human person called to love needs before everything else to receive constantly the salvific love that God gives us. As Teresa of Calcutta frequently repeats it, no one can give what one has not: «And you too when you become His priest, (...) go in haste to give Jesus to others. But remember, you cannot give what you do not have. And to be able to give, you need to live that oneness with Christ, and He is there in the Tabernacle». ¹²⁹

As observed from the text that we have just cited, the saint of Calcutta assigns a primordial place to the Eucharist, as the «prayer par excellence», the inexhaustible source from which wells christian charity. We devote the following section to the study of this mystery of God's love in Teresa of Calcutta.

3.2. *The Eucharist and charity*

a) The Eucharist, centre of christian life and prayer

The Holy Eucharist, as the decree *presbyterorum ordinis* teaches us, contains the entire spiritual good of the Church, that is, Christ himself, our Pasch and Living Bread, by the action of the Holy Spirit». ¹³⁰ It is exactly from this that derives the affirmation that the eucharistic sacrifice is «the source and summit of the christian life» ¹³¹, and also of christian prayer.

The Eucharist contains and expresses all forms of prayer. In no prayer is our personal prayer made the prayer of Christ – «through Him, with Him and in Him» as in the Holy Sacrifice of Mass. This prayer rises to the Father through the action of the Holy Spirit, in union with the whole Church. The Eucharist is the pure offering of the whole Body of Christ to the glory of God's name, it is the sacrifice of praise. ¹³²

It is in this theological context that is inserted the teaching of Mother Teresa that «we cannot separate our lives from the Eucharist; the moment we do, something breaks». ¹³³ The saint of Calcutta makes this valid teaching her life. The eucharist is the centre of her whole existence and prayer. In every place where she opened a house for the MC to care for the dying and outcast, the first thing she asked for was the daily celebration of the Eucharist, convinced that it was only from there that would come the strength needed for the service.

In June 1947, in the beginnings of her work among the poor of the poorest, she wrote these words to the Archbishop of Calcutta on the feast of *Corpus Christi*: «One thing I request you, Your Grace, to give us all the spiritual help we need. – If we have Our Lord in the midst of us – with daily Mass and Holy Communion, I fear nothing for the Sisters nor myself. – He will look after us. But without Him I cannot be – I am helpless». ¹³⁴

Again in January 1948, she wrote to the Archbishop of Calcutta the following significant words: «The work that we will have to do will be impossible without His [Jesus'] continual Grace from the tabernacle. He will have to do everything. We have just to follow». ¹³⁵

As noticed from the above texts, when Teresa of Calcutta speaks about the Eucharist, she is referring both to the eucharistic celebration and eucharistic adoration. For her, the two go hand in hand as explicated in the following section.

b) The intimate connection between the Eucharist and love of neighbour

Love of neighbour is not a fruit of mere philanthropy or good will, but is a consequence of the love that God has for us. It flows specifically from the eucharistic celebration, the sacrament of charity that reveals to us God's infinite love for every man and woman. In the eucharistic sacrifice, we are not only made one with Christ, but also inflamed with the fire of love for our brethren.

Teresa of Calcutta expresses this reality thus: «These desires to satiate the longings of Our Lord for souls of the poor for pure victims of his love goes on increasing with every Mass and Holy Communion».¹³⁶

What the saint underlines here corresponds to the fact that the eucharist as a sacramental actualisation of the paschal mystery of Jesus Christ by the Lord's institutional will (1 Cor. 11:23-26), responds to the historical order of salvation effected by the passion, death and resurrection of the Lord.¹³⁷ Absorbed in this paschal mystery, we acquire the capacity of offering totally ourselves, like Christ on the Cross: «Sharing in the Eucharist, the sacrament of the New Covenant, is the culmination of our assimilation to Christ, the source of «eternal life», the source and power of that complete gift of self».¹³⁸

Newly identified with Christ by the Eucharist, the christian is called to imitate the only Priest of the new covenant, offering with himself the part of christian creation already redeemed by Christ, repeating in his life the oblation which he contemplates in Mass: «Christ when He took bread said 'Take and eat, this is my Body delivered for you». By giving Himself, He invites us to grow in the power of His love to do what He has done. (...) «Let the Sisters and the people eat you up». We have no right to refuse».¹³⁹

These words of Teresa of Calcutta echo the teaching of St. Augustine. The eucharist is «the food of grown men; grow, and you shall feed upon me; nor shall you change me, like the food of your flesh, into yourself, but you shall be changed into me».¹⁴⁰ That is to say, the eucharistic food is not changed into us, on the contrary, we are mysteriously transformed into that which we eat. We partake of the Bread of Life, hence we ought to give ourselves as bread.

The Eucharist must be seen as a sacrament of love and sharing lives. The love and the nearness that we receive from Christ allow us to give of ourselves

to others as He gave Himself as a ransom for all. This is the integral living of the eucharist, both in its celebration and life.

As Teresa of Calcutta reminds us, «our Eucharist is incomplete if it does not lead us to service and love for the poor».¹⁴¹ According to our saint, an «intrinsically fragmented Eucharist», is largely responsible for the abundance of suffering that there is in the world today: «Yes, if we relived the Eucharistic life (...) there would not be so much suffering – so much of what we have today».¹⁴²

The eucharist is communion with the Lord, that's, Christ's presence among men, giving rise to the unity of the body of the church. From this eucharistic background, we come to grasp the meaning of the Pauline symbolism of the church as «body of Christ», the symbolism of the vine and the branches (Jn. 15), the figure of the son of man who unites in his person all sons of men (Mt. 25: 31-46). The Eucharist lived in prayer and celebrated as solemn feast of the church, constitutes the privileged expression of the mystery of unity that we all form in Christ. It builds up solidarity and new aspects of a life shared.¹⁴³

This reality according to Teresa of Calcutta, finds the most perfect expression in the Virgin Mary, who ought to be our model and inspiration every time we receive the eucharist: «When communicating with Christ in your heart – the partaking of Living Bread – remember what Our Lady must have felt when the Spirit overpowered her and she, who was full of grace, became full with the body of Jesus. The Spirit in her was so strong that she immediately rose in haste to go and serve. Each Holy Communion, each breaking of the Bread of Life, each sharing should produce in us the same, for it is the same Jesus who came to Mary and was made flesh. We, too, should be in haste to give this life of Jesus to our Sisters and the poor».¹⁴⁴

Deepening more the mission of love intimately linked with the eucharist, Mother Teresa makes it clear that the eucharist is the gift that Jesus Christ makes of himself, to satiate our hunger for love: «The meaning of the Eucharist is comprehensive love. Jesus understands; he understands that we have a terrible hunger for God. He understands that we were created for love. That is why he became the bread of life».¹⁴⁵

Nevertheless, the eucharist also implies satiating Jesus' thirst: «(...) the eucharist involves more than just receiving; it also involves satisfying the hunger of Christ».¹⁴⁶ Jesus satiates our thirst for love, so that we may also in turn satiate his thirst for our love: «Jesus made Himself Bread of Life to satisfy our hunger for His love. And then He makes Himself the Hungry One so that we can satisfy His hunger for our love».¹⁴⁷

This reality, which according to Teresa of Calcutta only faith and love can penetrate that behind the mystery of pain, human misery and the repugnance that accompanies it, is Love, the same Jesus who gives himself to us in the eucharist, means that the Eucharist and the poor are two inseparable realities. The eucharist commits us to the poor: «To receive in truth the Body and Blood of Christ given up for us, we must recognise Christ in the poorest, his brethren».¹⁴⁸

Mother Teresa's life and teachings are all centred on the discovery of the two-fold presence of Jesus – that's, Jesus present in the eucharist and in the poor. But, the prerequisite for seeing Jesus in the poor, is discovering him in the Eucharist: «If we make the Eucharist the central focus of our lives; if we feed our lives with Eucharist, we will not find it difficult to discover Christ, to love him, and to serve him in the poor».¹⁴⁹

The theological foundation for what the saint affirms here is the fact that the path of love leads to union. The fusion of the two means becoming similar to the other, which leads to communion of thought and desire. The Eucharist as a mystery of love is an intimate encounter with God, an encounter which becomes a communion of will, affecting even our feelings. In this way, we learn to look on the other person not simply with our eyes and our feelings, but from the perspective of Jesus Christ.¹⁵⁰

But, without communion with Jesus, we are incapable of recognising his face in the distressing disguise of the poor: «If we are unable to see Christ under the appearance of bread, neither shall we discover him under the humble appearance of the emaciated bodies of the poor».¹⁵¹

For Teresa of Calcutta, the eucharist as a mystery of faith is a school of contemplation. In this regard, eucharistic adoration is a central pillar in the life of the MC: «After the sisters have finished their day – carrying out their service of love in the company of Jesus, and through Jesus – we have an hour of prayer and of eucharistic adoration».¹⁵²

Adoration is simply the natural consequence of the eucharistic celebration. «Receiving the Eucharist means adoring him whom we receive. Only in this way do we become one with him (...) it is precisely this personal encounter with the Lord that then strengthens the social mission contained in the Eucharist, which seeks to break down not only the walls that separate the Lord and ourselves, but also and especially the walls that separate us from one another».¹⁵³

The christian who puts himself before the sacramental species, where he knows that God is really present, although he does not see him, learns to look beyond what his physical senses can experiment. He no longer considers the

world as an obstacle to reaching God. On the contrary, parting from what is created; that's, bread and wine, he enters into contact with God, he becomes one with Him.¹⁵⁴ In this way, a truly eucharist soul learns to discover God in events and persons.

3.3. *Concrete living of charity with the most needy*

In the beginnings of our reflection, Teresa of Calcutta pointed it out that the love that God gives us demands reciprocity. God's thirst is to «love and to be loved».¹⁵⁵ Just as he satiates our thirst for love, we are also called to quench his thirst for our love: «It is very important for us to know that Jesus is thirsting for our love, for the love of the whole world...Ask yourself. Have I heard Jesus say this word to me personally? Did I ever hear that personally? «I thirst» «I want your love».¹⁵⁶

According to our saint, it is precisely in the least of his brethren that Christ lucidly manifests his thirst for our love.

a) Christ and every poor

It is a fundamental christian tenet that in the mystery of the Incarnation, by joining his divinity to our humanity, Jesus, the Son of God, has in a certain way united himself with each man.¹⁵⁷ Henceforth, «in Christ», as expressed by the German theologian Karl Rahner, «the love of God and the neighbour acquires in the person of the one God-man an object, of the highest unity, and as a consequence love for man attains its supreme dignity».¹⁵⁸ This supreme dignity is reiterated by Teresa of Calcutta thus: «Every person is Christ for me».¹⁵⁹

However, the saint firmly believes that in the neediest brethren, we have a special presence of Christ: «I see Jesus in every person, and especially in the poor and suffering».¹⁶⁰ What is the theological foundation for this christian truth expressed here by Teresa of Calcutta?

Christ, in his passion and death on the Cross as God-man, has opened his suffering to man, because he himself in his redemptive suffering has become, in a certain sense, a sharer in all human sufferings.¹⁶¹ On this basis, Teresa of Calcutta visualises the whole world as an open Calvary where Christ continues to be in agony. In of each of the «little ones», is prolonged his passion: «The poor are really going through the passion of Christ. We should treat them with dignity. These poor people are Jesus suffering today. We must find ways

and means of helping them; don't add to their sufferings. Poor people are living Jesus' Calvary today». ¹⁶²

The message conveyed by Mother Teresa is clear: Christ is real, deep in the hearts and bodies of suffering humanity. Jesus Himself is present, His flesh is made visible in the «flesh of the tortured, the crushed, the scourged, the malnourished, and the exiled so as to be acknowledged, touched, and cared for by us». ¹⁶³

The key of this mystery is here: Christ is there behind the poor ones and above them. Mother Teresa's comparison helps us a lot to understand this point. When we participate in the holy sacrifice of Mass, the priest raises with his hands, the body and blood of Jesus Christ, «externally you see just bread, but it is Jesus». ¹⁶⁴ Well then, in a similar way, «externally you see just the poor person, but it is Jesus. Difficult to explain, it's a mystery of love. It is one of those things the human mind cannot reach but we have to bend [and accept]». ¹⁶⁵

Consequently, as Royo Marin articulates it with all audacity, the poor is a «sacrament» in which Jesus Christ conceals Himself; residing in him in a moral way, He truly resides in him. In order that this could take place, it was necessary to institute also for the poor a «consecration». It is the «consecration» whose formula Jesus pronounced on the day, on which, looking at the poor of all ages, said: «whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me» (Mt. 25:40). ¹⁶⁶

In the light of this Matthean text, Teresa of Calcutta considers all the sufferings of the least brethren as «Calcuttas-in-miniature», where Christ, hidden under his distressing disguise, awaits our hands to serve and our hearts to love.

b) Our response to Christ's thirst in the poor

The love that Christ awaits for in the neediest of his brethren, as imitation and participation in divine love, is above all a self-donative love, with concrete works, with sacrifice. It is love that responds to man's deepest need, that is, his thirst for God, for His love, which alone satiates the depth and breadth of his desires. Let us pursue to explore these key elements of love as comprehended by saint Teresa of Calcutta.

i) *A self-giving love*

We know by faith that in the deep mystery of God, in the Trinity, the Spirit is love. It is the Spirit who makes the relationship between the Father

and the Son to be of pure donation, of total reciprocity, of absolute and free love; he makes one to be entirely for the other.¹⁶⁷ In Christ, who is the fullness of the revelation of the Father, is manifested in the gesture of his self-giving up to death on the Cross the full truth of man's vocation of love; namely the fact that man can only be fully realised through a sincere gift of himself.¹⁶⁸

In a world in which we tend to substitute material things for our hearts and the commitment to giving ourselves, Teresa of Calcutta insists: «Let us not be satisfied with just giving money. Money is not enough, for money one can get. I would like more people to give their hands to serve and their hearts to love – to recognise the poor in their own homes, towns and countries and to reach out to them in love and compassion, giving where it is most needed, and share the joy of loving with everyone».¹⁶⁹

This is the true newness and high standard of christian charity – learning to love as God loves us, with a love that is total, faithful and above all a sincere gift of self to the other: «Jesus wants us to give of ourselves every moment».¹⁷⁰

In consequence, the saint of Calcutta is going to define a christian in the following terms: «A christian is someone who gives of himself. (...) To be a christian is nothing other than to give of oneself for the sake of Christ».¹⁷¹

Charity, then, according to our saint never serves from a distance, but always seeks to enter into the very «heart» of other's sufferings. As a participation in divine love, charity truly purifies man's heart so that he becomes increasingly desirous to offer himself to «the other».¹⁷² This deep personal sharing in the needs and sufferings of others becomes a sharing of one's very self with them.

Mother Teresa's teaching on love as self-giving is indeed not a fruit of theological reflection, but derives directly from her life. The interior darkness was for her an experience that drew her into a close contact and a close sharing in the sufferings of those she served, feeling their pain and even their rejection. In May 1962, she wrote thus to her spiritual director: «The physical situation of my poor left in the streets unwanted, unloved, unclaimed – are the true picture of my own spiritual life, of my love for Jesus».¹⁷³

From this time, she would always say again and again that «the greatest poverty is to be unwanted, to have no one to take care of you».¹⁷⁴ It is from this experience that our saint strongly emphasises the need for a self-giving love, that is, entering into and sharing the sufferings of others. What she recounts in the following text speaks it all: «One day an Australian man came and made a substantial donation. But as he did this, he said, «This is something external. Now I want to give something of myself». He now comes regularly to the House of the Dying to shave the sick men and to converse with them. This

man gives not only his money but also his time. He could have spent it on himself, but what he wants is to give himself». ¹⁷⁵

What the saint of Calcutta recounts, may not be treated as a minor narrative. It makes it clear, as articulated by Benedict XVI in explaining the practical consequences of the mystery of the incarnation that «those who cannot manage to give a little of themselves always give too little». ¹⁷⁶ In other words, in our giving, what matters is not how much we give, but how much we are personally present in what we give.

This is the proper way of serving others that leads to humility, for the one serving does not consider himself superior to the one who is served, however wretched this one's situation may be at the moment. It is the example that Christ gives us on the Cross. He takes on the most humble place in the world and it is by this radical act of humility that he redeems us and is also perpetuated this redemption in time. ¹⁷⁷

This humble way of serving others grants us a precious gift – the capacity to recognise that «before God, we are all poor. We are all handicapped in one way or another». ¹⁷⁸ More still, as Teresa of Calcutta emphasises it in consonance with the Pauline teaching expressed in 1 Cor. 4: 7, humility makes us acknowledge that what we do is pure grace. It is from God's possessions that we give, hence no room is left for pride in the practice of charity: «God gives us everything freely (...); Let there be no pride or vanity in the work». ¹⁷⁹

Here, is highlighted the structural relationship between charity and humility. Humility is a precondition to love of neighbour: «the tree of love feeds itself on humility». ¹⁸⁰ If I consider myself superior to the other, I can never give myself to him.

More still, humility as a virtue is really necessary if love is not to be impaired by discouragement, given the immensity of others' needs and our own limitations or by pride that leads to an arrogant contempt for man. This humility that capacitates one to remain on the right course of action, as manifested by the life and teachings of Teresa of Calcutta, is only possible where there is a living contact with Christ, a relationship of prayer.

ii) *Love with concrete works*

The new and incomparably more sublime meaning of our love neighbour which Christ has given us before beginning his Paschal meal, is of particular significance in Teresa of Calcutta. She repeats it oftenly that christian charity must imitate the divine pattern that Christ has left us: «Christ insisted that we love one another as he loves each one of us. And we read that in the Gospel very clearly--love as I have loved you – as I love you». ¹⁸¹

This means loving with truth and depth, with a disposition of the spirit, which starting from the interior nucleus of the will is manifested in concrete works which are historically situated, as reminds us the apostolic preaching (cf. Jas. 2: 14-17), which Teresa of Calcutta cites: «In the scriptures it is written: ‘What will it profit, if a man says he has faith, but does not have works?’ Can faith alone save him? If a brother or a sister is naked and in want of daily food and one of you says to them: ‘God in peace, be warmed and filled,’ yet you do not give them what is necessary for the body, what does it profit? So faith unless it has works is dead in itself».¹⁸²

Faith as a virtue begins in the most intimate depths of man, but it never remains there. According to its dynamic, it finds expression in exterior works flowing from it and configure the believer’s entire life. Without these works, the transforming power of faith does not truly attain its effect.¹⁸³ This is exactly the error of our times observed by the Second Vatican Council – the dichotomy between faith and practice.¹⁸⁴

To believe is to welcome the saving Word of God, the Word which is inseparably united with love. This love can never be just an abstraction, but by its very nature, it indicates something concrete, that is intentions, attitudes, and behaviours shown in daily living: «God proved to us that He loved us. God loved the world so much that He gave His son Jesus. And Jesus loved you, He loved me and He gave Himself on the Cross for us. (...) Love. Not in words». «Love is not talking, love is living. I can talk about love the whole day and love not once – looking everywhere, except looking down when there is a man dying on the street».¹⁸⁵

Loving with works according to Teresa of Calcutta, essentially means service: «Love has to be put into action and that action is service».¹⁸⁶ This service to our needy brethren is actually our response to God’s love for us. To put it in another way, mercy is at the service of God’s thirst, who has loved us first: «Our humble works of love to the poorest of the poor are not just social works, but they are the wonderful means (...) to prove our love for Jesus – to satiate His thirst for love».¹⁸⁷

As the saint frequently stresses it referring to the parable of the Last Judgment (Mt. 25:31-46), love in action is the criterion for the definitive decision about the human life’s worth or lack thereof: «At the moment of our death you and I whoever we might have been and wherever we have lived, christians and non-christians alike, every human being who has been created by the loving hand of God in his own image shall stand in his presence and be judged according to what we have been to the poor, what we have done for them».¹⁸⁸

In what consists the love demanded of us towards the poor? Following the example given to us in the parable of the Good Samaritan, this love is in the first place our simple response to man's immediate needs and specific situations: feeding the hungry, sheltering the homeless, clothing the naked, nursing the sick etc. Through this material help offered to the poor we perpetuate God's love for man in history: «The cup of water you give to the poor, to the sick, the way you lift a dying man, the way you feed a baby, the way in which you teach an ignorant child, the way you give medicine to a leper...your attitude and manners toward them – all this is God's love in the world today. God still loves the world! I want this to be imprinted in your minds: God still loves through you and through me today».¹⁸⁹

During her lifetime, and even after her death, Teresa of Calcutta has received several criticisms from her detractors, principally the Marxists, who reject and attack works of mercy as a means of perpetuating the *status quo* of things by patching up situations of injustice and suffering, and soothing consciences instead of taking up the struggle to build a better world governed by justice.¹⁹⁰ In a Marxist publication entitled «*Saint*” *Teresa of Calcutta: a fanatical stooge of the ruling class*», Mother Teresa is harshly criticised thus:

Mother Teresa's philosophy, which asked the poor to passively accept their fate, was extremely useful for the rich and the powerful to keep the oppressed in chains. What could be better than to teach the exploited to embrace their lot in the hope of an afterlife, not to question worldly injustice, and, when sick, not to demand proper treatment but to seek charity in precarious and overcrowded nursing homes. We (...) Marxists don't believe in heaven – but if heaven did exist, we can be sure Mother Teresa wouldn't be allowed in.¹⁹¹

As observed from the text, charity and justice are put in a conflict. What the poor need, it is argued, is justice and not charity or almsgiving. A collective solution for the poor is called for in place of individual initiatives. What is the response of our saint to this apparent contraposition between the practice of charity and the demands of justice?

The building of a just social and civil order is a responsibility which no generation may sidestep. Nevertheless as a political task, this cannot be the Church's immediate responsibility.¹⁹² The saint of Calcutta is first and foremost convinced that each of Christ's faithful must be dedicated to his particular vocation and mission in the church and in the world: «If there are people who feel that God wants them to change the structures of society, that is something between them and their God. We must serve him in whatever

way we are called. I am called to help the individual; to love each poor person. Not to deal with institutions».¹⁹³

From these words, it is observed that Teresa of Calcutta puts special emphasis on the value of each individual person. Contrary to all proposals of a collective solution for the poor, she calls for love towards each human person in their individuality and uniqueness. Effectively, this is the nature of christian charity. In its facet that looks towards neighbour, it is a twofold reality: it is universal and concrete.

In his short work *«The meaning of christian brotherhood»*, the theologian Joseph Ratzinger insists on this point. He analyses the difference that exists between the fraternity according to the thought of Enlightenment and Stoicism, which is based in nature, and christian fraternity whose foundation is faith in God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. In the first case, the point of departure is the generic consideration of the human nature in order to arrive at the individual.

By contrast, universal christian fraternity parts from the concrete condition of each child of God in Christ in order to arrive at the totality of men, as object, each one of them, of divine predilection. There is a very big difference between parting from the point that in principle we are all brothers, and then one observes if his neighbour complies with the general rule, and parting from the reality of Christ's presence in each person, regardless of what he may have done to me or to others.¹⁹⁴

In christian charity therefore, there is what may be termed as concrete universality. In its universality, it implies to love precisely because God loves, and therefore, to love all that God loves, that is to say, the totality of the beings that God has created (cf. Mt. 5: 43-48). But this cannot be done in a generic way. Grounded in the love of God which attends individually to each human person here and now, christian love of neighbour is called to be a true and authentic love, which is directed to each person as he is, distinguishing and loving each person in his singularity.¹⁹⁵

In this connection, Teresa of Calcutta declares with all audacity: «I never care for a crowd, only for one person. If I visualised a crowd, I would never get started. The important thing is the individual. I believe in a person to person approach».¹⁹⁶

Hence, for our saint, despite overwhelming number of suffering people that there is in the world clamouring for help, there ought to be no discouragement. We are called to serve the needy person who is before us at the moment.

However, all these affirmations of the saint of Calcutta do not mean that she is opposed to the demands of justice or proposing the replacement of jus-

tice with charity. It is enough to read her own words: «I want to state clearly that I do not condemn those who struggle for justice».¹⁹⁷

Mother Teresa's insistence is on the insufficiency of justice alone. It is her basic conviction that the people of the present should not be sacrificed to the future of justice, which in itself is even utopian: «We are in daily and continuous with men who are starving for a piece of bread to put in their mouth and for some affection. Should I devote myself to struggle for the justice of tomorrow even for the justice of today, the most needy people would die right in front of me because they lack a glass of milk».¹⁹⁸

Love, for Teresa of Calcutta has primacy and superiority in relationship with justice: «Love is for today; programs are for the future».¹⁹⁹ The pre-eminence of love over justice is manifested precisely in the practice of mercy. There is no true justice if it is not accompanied with love. Otherwise stated, the presence of love is absolutely necessary in order that interpersonal relationships may be truly just.

It is only love that makes possible justice. This affirmation springs from the very definition of justice as the constant and perpetual will to allot to every person his due. Only love makes it possible for justice to reach its optimum in mercy, the perfection of justice.²⁰⁰

At any rate, the justice and mercy of human persons is only a reflection, an image of divine justice and mercy. Mercy is the beginning and the end of all the divine works, so that, as expressed by the angelic doctor, it is the fullness of his justice.²⁰¹ The reason for this lies in the fact that justice in God is consequences of his love – justice springs completely from love and completely bears fruit in love.²⁰²

Though justice cannot be replaced by charity, nevertheless it needs to be completed by it. It is love that helps justice to breathe better and, by doing so, love-charity fully allows justice to be truly itself without running the risk of replacing it.²⁰³

Ultimately, it must not be forgotten that there is no just ordering of the state that can eliminate the service of love. Man cannot live without experiencing love. «He remains a being that is incomprehensible for himself, his life is senseless, if love is not revealed to him, if he does not encounter love, if he does not experience it and make it his own, if he does not participate intimately in it».²⁰⁴

The contention that just social structures would render superfluous the practice of charity simply masks the false materialist conception of man that he can live by bread alone (cf. Mt. 4:4). In contradiction to such a pretension, Teresa of Calcutta strongly affirms it that man, beyond all and above all lives

by the fact that he's loved and this love is not restricted to the help given to meet a specific need of one's neighbour, but it is a permanent attitude of constructive concern for other: «We have a wrong idea that only hunger for bread is hunger. There is much greater hunger and much more painful hunger: hunger for love, for the feeling of being wanted, to be somebody to somebody».²⁰⁵

Hence, according to Teresa of Calcutta, the greatest poverty that the human being can experience and indeed experiences in the world today is not lack of food but lack of love: «the greatest poverty in the world is not want of food, but the want of love».²⁰⁶

iii) *Love with sacrifice*

Mother Teresa is firmly convinced that «Calcutta» as a place forms part of divine providence. The visible wounds of the inhabitants of that city are a call to discover the greatest inner poverties, the «real spiritual slums» of entire humanity in need of Christ's redemptive love. The saint reports this hidden poverty of our times thus: «There's a tremendous (...) feeling of being unwanted, unloved, shut in, rejected, forgotten. There are people who have forgotten what is a human smile, what is a human touch. I think that is very, very great poverty».²⁰⁷

Considering this widespread contemporary poverty, Teresa of Calcutta deduces: «You will find Calcutta all over the world if you have eyes to see. The streets of Calcutta lead to every man's door».²⁰⁸

This affirmation of our saint certainly highlights the unity of the human race. As the CCC teaches us in nos. 404-405, the whole human race is in Adam «as one body of one man» and by this «unity of the human race» all men are implicated in Adam's sin and its consequences. And as Adam had received original holiness and justice not for himself alone, but for all human nature, by yielding to the tempter, Adam and Eve committed a personal sin, but this sin affected the human nature that they would then transmit in a fallen state.

Though human nature has not been totally corrupted, nevertheless, it is wounded in the natural powers proper to it, subject to ignorance, suffering and the dominion of death, and inclined to sin.

Christ constitutes the response to the evil present in history. In his passion and death he reveals to us the deepest roots from which originate the interior rupture that man experiences in himself and in general terms the presence of evil in history and in the world. Evil is not situated in the peripherals of history, but remits to the very origins of history, precisely the mystery of sin.²⁰⁹

The encyclical *Salvifici doloris*, clarifies it that «even if we must use great caution in judging man's suffering as a consequence of concrete sins, never-

theless suffering cannot be divorced from the sin of the beginnings, from what Saint John calls «the sin of the world», from the sinful background of the personal actions and social processes in human history. Though it is not licit to apply (...) the narrow criterion of direct dependence, it is equally true that one cannot reject the criterion that, at the basis of human suffering, there is a complex involvement with sin». ²¹⁰

This truth is clearly manifested by Mother Teresa's first symbolic vision. In the vision, our saint was shown the painful material indigence of the poor, and above all the deepest cause of their suffering, that is, the inner poverty of man enveloped in the night of sin. It was this most painful poverty that prompted them to call upon Mother Teresa to bring them to Jesus who could save them: «I saw a very big crowd – all kinds of people – very poor and children were there also. They all had their hands lifted towards me – standing in their midst. They called out «Come, come, save us – bring us to Jesus». ²¹¹

Prior to this plea of the poor, Jesus himself had made constant appeals to our saint to offer herself as a victim to rescue the poor from the gravest slavery of sin, the obstacle in man's vocation as son of God and the cause of all forms of human bondage. It is worthwhile reproducing again this significant interior locution in which Jesus speaks intimately to her soul: «Little one give Me souls – give Me the souls of the poor little street children. – How it hurts – if you only knew – to see these poor children soiled with sin. I long for the purity of their love. – If you would only answer My call – and bring Me these souls – draw them away from the hands of the evil one. – If you only knew how many little ones fall into sin every day». ²¹²

The Blessed Virgin Mary, predestined from all eternity to be the Mother of God, is intimately united with the salvific work of her Son Jesus Christ as portrayed by John's concise description (cf. Jn. 19:25-27). This reality is again clearly brought out in the scene of the second vision that followed Mother Teresa's September 10, 1946, mystical experience. In the vision, standing in the midst of the crowd of the poor, was Our Lady who spoke to Teresa of Calcutta these words: «Bring them to Jesus – carry Jesus to them». ²¹³

From this time, Mary's person and presence is going to be a key element in Mother Teresa's charism. She is convinced that only in union with the Virgin Mary can we redeem souls for Christ. ²¹⁴ Mary, places herself between her Son and mankind in the reality of their wants, needs and sufferings. «As a mother she also wishes the messianic power of her Son to be manifested, that salvific power of his which is meant to help man in his misfortunes, to free him from the evil which in various forms and degrees weighs heavily upon his life». ²¹⁵

The work of redemption was consummated by Christ on the cross and in the resurrection. He saves humanity from the very depth of his being by loving. In his passion and death on the Cross, he suffers both as the only-begotten Son of God and at the same time suffers as a man. This implies that every christian inserted in Christ through baptism, is called to be «redeemer» with the Redeemer, accepting in and with Christ, the physical and spiritual pain of entire humanity, raised to the level of Redemption by Christ's passion.²¹⁶ He is called to offer his life, uniting it to Christ's self-giving and sacrifice, thereby completing in his flesh, what we may say with the words of St. Paul, «what is still lacking in regard to Christ's afflictions, for the sake of his body, which is the church» (Col. 1:24).

This is precisely the deepest meaning of Mother Teresa's dark night – a share in body and soul of the great pain and darkness of the poor. In imitation of her Spouse, who on the Cross took upon himself the physical and moral sufferings of the people of all times, it was an integral part of the saint's charism to share not only the material deprivation but also the spiritual poverty of the poor. This essential part of her charism was indicated to her by her Spouse in one of her interior locutions. Jesus said to her: «I want free nuns covered with My poverty of the Cross».²¹⁷

The saint also in turn stresses this integral part of her charism in these words: «Jesus was sent by His Father to the poor and to be able to understand the poor, Jesus had to know and experience that poverty in His own Body and Soul. We too must experience poverty if we want to be true carriers of God's love. To be able to proclaim the Good News to the poor we must know what is poverty».²¹⁸

For Teresa of Calcutta, therefore, «love and poverty go together».²¹⁹ Poverty, both material and spiritual is a precondition for one to be able to enter into the dynamics of love, which by nature means sharing, emptying ourselves and taking on the needs and sufferings of others. Love, by nature leads to the desire to serve, but service requires that we undergo an inner emptying that allows us the freedom to serve. For Jesus, the Cross was the summit of this self-emptying love, the most complete consequence of the Incarnation, the triumphant expression of his inward and outward poverty, in spirit and flesh.²²⁰

Our saint was to participate in the hidden inward cross of the poor, their inner darkness, a metaphor for our modern-day spiritual darkness, and to be consumed by the same interior anguish and pain that Jesus himself had undergone to redeem souls.

In that connection, in the beginnings of her «call within a call», she received several requests from Jesus to loving consent to be a victim, to be im-

molated²²¹, that's, to suffer in union with her Spouse, who though without sin, God made him to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God (cf. 2 Cor. 5:21). In her interior locutions, Jesus spoke to her thus about the suffering that she would have to bear for the spiritual benefit of the poorest of the poor: «My little one – come – come – carry Me into the holes of the poor. (...) Come be their victim. – In your immolation – in your love for Me, they will see me, know Me, want Me. (...) You will suffer – suffer very much – but remember I am with you».²²²

The suffering that awaited Mother Teresa is further alluded to in what she saw in the second vision mentioned earlier, which she designates as the plight of the poorest of the poor. In this scene, she saw a great crowd of the poor bearing great sorrow and suffering in their faces.²²³ This was the Calvary of the poor. At the foot of this Cross was the Virgin Mary, who exhorted her thus: «Take care of them – they are mine. (...) Jesus and I will be with you and your children».²²⁴

With these words, which actually evoke the words that Jesus spoke to our Lady on the Cross – «Woman, here is your son» (Jn. 19: 27), thereby by introducing her in a new way in his salvific work and establishing her spiritual motherhood, Teresa of Calcutta is also called to share in the Virgin Mary's grace of motherhood towards these neediest of her children.

Like Mary, who «faithfully persevered in her union with her Son unto the cross, where she stood, in keeping with the divine plan, grieving exceedingly with her only begotten Son, uniting herself with a maternal heart with His sacrifice, and lovingly consenting to the immolation of this Victim which she herself had brought forth»²²⁵, Mother Teresa's motherhood was also going to be mysterious and sorrowful. She would have to live this vocation by suffering deeply with her Spouse at the Calvaries of this world – that is, in the poor and the suffering.²²⁶

In carrying out this difficult mission, the Virgin Mary would be Mother Teresa's reference, model and support as she writes in July 1996 to the MC: «As preparation for a joyful celebration of this Golden Jubilee of «Inspiration Day»...I cannot think of a better way than to turn to Our Lady...for it was at Her pleading that the Society was born...so that with Her and like Her we learn to stand by the distressing disguise of Jesus in the world today, especially in the lives of the poorest of the poor, both materially and spiritually, and thus satiate His thirst to love and to be loved».²²⁷

Also in the explanation of the original constitutions, she wrote: «Let us always remain with Mary our Mother on Calvary near the crucified Jesus, with our chalice made of the four vows, and fill it with the love of self-sacrifice,

of pure love, always held up close to His suffering Heart, so that He may be pleased to accept our love».²²⁸

The Cross, the suffering, the sacrifice intrinsically united with love is what obtains Redemption. Although the liberation from sin is the primary christian conception of redemption, nonetheless, the grace that liberates from sin contains an expansive energy that tends to eliminate the physical evils that oppress man, as clearly manifested in the actions of Jesus and in the life of the Church. What will be realised fully in the life after is initiated in the present world.²²⁹ In connection with this, Teresa of Calcutta in a general letter to the MC, urges them in these significative words:

Try...to increase your knowledge of this Mystery of Redemption. – This knowledge will lead you to love – and love will make you share through your sacrifices in the Passion of Christ.

My dear children – without our suffering, our work would just be social work, very good and helpful, but it would not be the work of Jesus Christ, not part of the redemption. – Jesus wanted to help us by sharing our life, our loneliness, our agony and death. All that He has taken upon Himself, and has carried it in the darkest night. Only by being one with us He has redeemed us. We are allowed to do the same: all the desolation of the poor people, not only their material poverty, but their spiritual destitution must be redeemed, and we must have our share in it. – Pray thus when you find it hard – «I wish to live in this world which is so far from God, which has turned so much from the light of Jesus, to help them – to take upon me something of their suffering». – Yes, my dear children – let us share the sufferings – of our poor – for only by being one with them – we can redeem them, that is, bringing God into their lives and bringing them to God.²³⁰

Here is made clear the inseparable union between love and the cross. True love cannot exist if it seeks to be detached from sacrifice. Man, as Teresa of Calcutta underscores it, attains his end and comes to possess in fullness the meaning of his existence – that's salvation, through the perfect filial love of Christ realised on the Cross. In consequence, to love authentically is to give oneself: «Jesus loved the world so much, loved you, loved me so much that He gave His life».²³¹ And, a self-giving love is inseparable from pain: «Love is giving. God loved the world so much that He gave His son. And He wants us to love as He loved. And so now we have also to give until it hurts. True love is a giving and giving until it hurts».²³²

Love as self-donation goes accompanied with pain, because for one to give of himself, he has to sacrifice himself, depriving himself of something or the self.²³³ In this way, in a culture in which love is oftenly identified with mere

feelings rather than an act of the will, with superficial emotions and pleasure rather than sacrifice, the life and the teachings of our saint, based on the Gospel rejuvenate the christian ideal of love: love is sacrifice because the gift of self that the one who loves realises, demands being transformed. The transformation naturally produces sacrifice, and this sacrifice, like every sacrifice in general, in turn, always produces suffering.²³⁴

Teresa of Calcutta strongly emphasises it that it is only love that triumphs over violence, the maximum expression of sin: «I think that we in our family don't need bombs and guns, to destroy (...) just get together, love one another, bring that peace, that joy, that strength of presence of each other in the home. And we will be able to overcome all the evil that is in the world».²³⁵

What is the theological foundation for this Teresian affirmation? It is the transformation realised by Christ's loving self-sacrifice on the Cross: «He transforms, from within, the act of violent men against him into an act of giving on behalf of these men – into an act of love. (...) he does not offer violence against violence, as he might have done, but puts an end to violence by transforming it into love. The act of killing, of death, is changed into an act of love; violence is defeated by love».²³⁶

This truth that it is only love in capital letters that triumphs over the mystery of evil in its various forms in the world, means for our saint that union with God must be at the centre of every struggle to transform the world, to move from the culture of death to a civilisation of love. Without a profound union with God, the future of justice and peace, to which the whole humanity aspires remains a delusion: «(...) We do not need bombs and guns to bring peace, we need love and compassion. But we also need that deep union with God, prayer. (...) let us learn, let us understand that unless we are full of God, we cannot give that love, we cannot give that peace to others and we will not have peace in the world».²³⁷

iv) *Love that meets man's thirst for God*

From the preceding affirmation of the saint of Calcutta arises an important task for christian charity: It must not remain in what is material or in the immediate, but must open wider horizons, making known and communicating God, his love, the real force that the world profoundly needs: «I notice that people today have a greater hunger for God than yesterday. Previously there was a great deal of external religiosity, but now there is in many persons a desire to find God in the interior of the heart».²³⁸

As attested to in one of her interior locutions, God's love was the light that Mother Teresa was called to carry as to illuminate a world grown dim by the mystery of evil not only physical, but above all moral: «Come, come, carry

Me into the holes of the poor. Come, be My light».²³⁹ This task became her constant preoccupation. Teresa of Calcutta ardently prays because the world needs God, it needs to experience His Love: «Pray – I must be able to give only Jesus to the world. People are hungry for God. What [a] terrible meeting [it] would be with our neighbour if we give them only ourselves».²⁴⁰

The encyclical *Spe salvi* gives us the theological foundation for the above valuable intuition of our saint that if we give to others only our love we give them too little. A purely human affection, as the Bavarian pope teaches us in the encyclical, can only be a moment of «redemption». But this love cannot by itself resolve the question of man's life. It is a love that always remains fragile and subject to destruction by death. The human being needs unconditional love. He needs the certainty which makes him say «neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord» (Rom. 8:38-39). If this absolute love exists, with its absolute certainty, then – only then – is man «redeemed», whatever should happen to him in his particular circumstances».²⁴¹

On that basis, according to Teresa of Calcutta, a merely philanthropic service to humanity would certainly be deficient. What the world really needs is to encounter God, it needs his absolute love, the only love that can satiate the depth and breadth of man's hunger: «We too – you and I – have to begin by giving Jesus to others. People now days suffer much, but above all they are hungry for God».²⁴²

To arrive at this way of contemplating reality demands faith and discernment. It is this ability to go beyond man's immediate needs as to perceive his deepest need, that the saint of Calcutta is actually calling for in the following text: «People are hungry for God. (...) Are you aware of that? Do you know that? Do you see that? Do you have eyes to see? Quite often we look but don't see. We are all passing through this world. We need to open our eyes and see».²⁴³

This truth of man's deep hunger for God calls for mission: «We have to carry our Lord to places where he has not walked before».²⁴⁴ The christian united with Christ by faith and the sacraments is under the sanctifying power of Christ. He has his life hidden with Christ in God (Col. 3: 3). This ontological – sacramental reality, has ample existential consequences. The identification with Christ that takes place on the sacramental level, in virtue of its dynamic leads to love of Christ, and thereupon to union with Christ, and in Christ, with the Father. More still, given our being in history, the identification with Christ, also implies participation his mission, announcing the message of salvation; that

is, Christ who was crucified, died and is risen, through whom is accomplished man's full and authentic liberation from evil, sin and death.²⁴⁵

Since Christ, sent by the Father, is the source and origin of the whole apostolate of the Church, the success of the redemptive mission will depend upon the vital union with Him.²⁴⁶ Jesus himself emphasises this in one of Mother Teresa's interior locutions: «I want Indian nuns, victims of My love, who would be Mary and Martha, who would be so very united to Me as to radiate My love on souls».²⁴⁷

The saint also makes it clear that: «It is impossible to engage in the apostolate without being a soul of prayer (...) We must be aware of our oneness with Christ, as He was aware of his oneness with his Father».²⁴⁸

Therefore, each christian called to contribute to the salvation and sanctification of the world in the ordinary life, must not separate the union with Christ from his personal life. In order to produce supernatural fruits, he must identify himself with Christ in love, that is, have a deep union, a participation in the same life, not only from the existential, but also from the ontological and theological perspective.

Teresa of Calcutta sees in the Johannine metaphor of the vine and the branches (Jn. 15:5), the most expressive formulation in this regard: «(...) the vine and the branches (...) is the illustration Jesus gives us in the Gospel of John. (...) We need that union to produce good fruit».²⁴⁹

The symbolism of the vine and the branches is for Mother Teresa an icon for the life of prayer, that unites us with Christ: «Real prayer is union with God, a union as vital as that of the vine and the branches, which is the illustration Jesus gives us in the Gospel of John».²⁵⁰ The result of this union is the communication of God's love, which is meant to be shared with all: «If that connection is there then there is love, then joy is there, and we will be the sunshine of God's love, the hope of eternal happiness, the flame of burning love. Why? Because we are one with Jesus».²⁵¹

It becomes clear then, that for Teresa of Calcutta, charity, that is, real and total self-giving to the service of God and neighbour is in the last analysis nothing but the exteriorisation of the interior life of union with Christ: «Our works of charity are nothing but the overflow of our love of God from within».²⁵²

On that account, the practice of charity definitively requires that we first allow Christ to live fully his life in us, precisely through personal prayer. It is only then that we are constituted carriers of his love, which is the only light that can illuminate the darkness of the hidden and painful «Calcuttas» present in every part of the world: «(...) try to act in such a way that Christ will infuse his light and life in us, and through us, into the world of suffering».²⁵³

Notes

1. LANGFORD, J., *Mother Teresa's secret fire*, Indiana: Our Sunday Visitor Inc., 2016, 46, 78.
2. *Ibid.*, 46.
3. *Ibid.*, 169.
4. Cf. GS n. 22.
5. Cf. BENEDICT XVI, *Angelus*, February 24, 2008.
6. TERESA OF CALCUTTA, *Explanation of original Constitutions*, in KOLODIEJCHUK, B., *Come be my light*, London: Rider, 2008, 41.
7. This thesis has been studied in great depth in GASTÓN, L., *La sed de Jesús: Epifanía de la comunicación de idiomas. Un estudio a la luz de la experiencia de Santa Teresa de Calcuta*, Tesis doctoral presentada en la Facultad de Teología de la Pontificia Universidad Católica Argentina, Buenos Aires (2018).
8. TERESA OF CALCUTTA, *Letter to MC*, 1993, in LANGFORD, J., *I thirst: Forty days with Mother Teresa*, Green Village, Colorado: Augustine Institute, 2018, 13.
9. TERESA OF CALCUTTA, *Instructions to the MC*, February 1994, in LANGFORD, J., *Mother Teresa's secret fire*, 92.
10. TERESA OF CALCUTTA, *Essential writings*, Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 2003, 106.
11. TERESA OF CALCUTTA, *Instructions to the MC*, June 30, 1997, in LANGFORD, J., *Mother Teresa's secret fire*, 285.
12. Cf. ILLANES, J.L., *Tratado de Teología Espiritual*, Pamplona: Eunsa, 2007, 222.
13. Cf. JOHN PAUL II, *Dives in misericordia*, November 30, 1980, n.3.
14. Cf. GASTÓN, L., *La sed de Jesús: Epifanía de la comunicación de idiomas. Un estudio a la luz de la experiencia de Santa Teresa de Calcuta*, 229.
15. JOHN PAUL II, *Message for lent*, September 18, 1992.
16. TERESA OF CALCUTTA, *Heart of joy*, Ann Arbor, Mich.: Servant Books, 1987, 96. This relationship between Jn 4:7 and Jn 19:28 is profoundly studied in DE LA POTTERIE, I., *La verdad de Jesús: estudios de cristología joanea*, Madrid: Editorial Católica, 1979, 226-230.
17. Cf. CASCIARO, J.M. u otros, *Sagrada Biblia: comentario*, Universidad de Navarra, Pamplona: Eunsa, 2010, 1122.
18. THÉRÈSE OF LISIEUX, *Story of a soul*, Washington D.C.: ICS Publications, 1997, 189.
19. Cf. AYÁN, J. J., *¡Qué bueno es sentir sed de Dios!*, Burgos: La Aguilera, 2016, 69.
20. Cf. ROYO MARÍN, A., *Teología de la caridad*, Madrid: Editorial Católica, 1963, 512.
21. JOHN PAUL II, *Dominum et vivificantem*, May 18, 1986, n.10.
22. Cf. BENEDICT XVI, *Deus caritas est*, December 25, 2005, n. 9.
23. Cf. ILLANES, J.L., «Amor a Dios y amor al mundo», in PELLITERO, R. (ed.), *Vivir el amor: En torno a la encíclica Deus caritas est*, Madrid: Rialp, 2007, 18.
24. CAFFARRA, C., *Vida en Cristo*, Pamplona: Ediciones Universidad de Navarra, 1988, 47.
25. TERESA OF CALCUTTA, *Instructions*, April 1980. In respect to this affirmation of our saint cf. DE LA POTTERIE, I., *La verdad de Jesús: estudios de cristología joanea*, 226.

26. Cf. GASTÓN L., *La sed de Jesús: Epifanía de la comunicación de idiomas. Un estudio a la luz de la experiencia de Santa Teresa de Calcuta*, 226.
27. See for example TERESA OF CALCUTTA, *Letter to MC*, October 10, 1988, in KOLODIEJCHUK, B., *Come be my light*, 310: «I chose you and called you to be a Missionary of Charity to satiate My painful thirst».
28. TERESA OF CALCUTTA, *Letter to Archbishop Périer*, November 7, 1947, in KOLODIEJCHUK, B., *Come be my light*, 98.
29. TERESA OF CALCUTTA, *Instructions to the MC*, January 1980, in LANGFORD, J., *Mother Teresa's secret fire*, 279.
30. Cf. CASCIARO, J.M. u otros, *Sagrada Biblia: comentario*, 1147.
31. Cf. GASTÓN, L., *La sed de Jesús: Epifanía de la comunicación de idiomas. Un estudio a la luz de la experiencia de Santa Teresa de Calcuta*, 246.
32. TERESA OF CALCUTTA, *Letter to Archbishop Périer*, January 13, 1947, in KOLODIEJCHUK, B., *Come be my light*, 47-52.
33. TERESA OF CALCUTTA, *Instructions to MC*, April 24, 1996, in KOLODIEJCHUK, B., *Come be my light*, 40.
34. TERESA OF CALCUTTA, *Address in Fukuoka*, Japan, April 27, 1982, in KOLODIEJCHUK, B., *A call to mercy*, New York: Crown Publishing Group, 2018, 311.
35. Cf. THÉRÈSE OF LISIEUX, S., *Letter to Céline*, August 2, 1983, in IDEM, *The story of the Soul*, New York: Cosmo Classics, 2007, 238.
36. JUAN DE LA CRUZ, *Cántico espiritual*, 9, 7.
37. Cf. GS n. 22.
38. Cf. GASTÓN, L., *La sed de Jesús: Epifanía de la comunicación de idiomas. Un estudio a la luz de la experiencia de Santa Teresa de Calcuta*, 226.
39. Cf. MATEOS, J., *Juan: texto y comentario*, Córdoba: El Almendro, 2002, 74.
40. TERESA OF CALCUTTA, *Letter to Bishop Picachy*, January 8, 1969, in KOLODIEJCHUK, B., *Come be my light*, 263.
41. TERESA OF CALCUTTA, *Instructions to the MC*, April 16, 1981, in LANGFORD, J., *Mother Teresa's secret fire*, 279.
42. TERESA OF CALCUTTA, *Nobel Peace Prize Speech*, Oslo, December 10, 1979.
43. Cf. IZQUIERDO, C., *Teología Fundamental*, Pamplona: Eunsa, 1998, 372.
44. BENEDICTO XVI, *En el principio creó Dios: consecuencias de la fe en la creación: cuatro sermones de Cuaresma sobre la creación y el pecado*, Valencia: Edicep, 2001, 66.
45. GS n. 19.
46. Cf. MENDONÇA, J.L., *Elogio de la sed*, Santander: Salterrae, D.L., 2018, 80.
47. TERESA OF CALCUTTA, *Letter to Archbishop Périer*, December 3, 1947, in KOLODIEJCHUK, B., *Come be my light*, 95-100.
48. Cf. VANIER, J., *Acceder al misterio de Jesús a través del evangelio de Juan*, Santander: Sal Terra, D.L., 2005, 64-65.
49. TERESA OF CALCUTTA, *Essential writings*, 75.
50. TERESA OF CALCUTTA, *Letter to Cardinal Prefect, Sacred Congregation for the Religious*, February 7, 1948, in KOLODIEJCHUK, B., *Come be my light*, 116.
51. TERESA OF CALCUTTA, in GAUTIER, J., *Tengo sed: Teresa de Lisieux y la Madre Teresa*, Bilbao: Desclée de Brouwer, 2005, 41.
52. BENEDICT XVI, *Escuela de oración: Catequesis del Papa*, Madrid: Ciudad Nueva, 2012, 23.
53. Cf. AUGUSTINE, S., *De diversis quaestionibus octoginta tribus* 64,4:PL 40, 56.
54. In respect to this affirmation cf. the teaching of *Orationis formas*, n. 24.
55. TERESA OF CALCUTTA, *Instructions to the MC*, September 1, 1990, in LANGFORD, J., *Mother Teresa's secret fire*, 176.
56. TERESA OF CALCUTTA, *Varanasi letter*, March 25, 1993.
57. Cf. DEBBASCH, H., *L'homme de désir, icône de Dieu*, Paris: Beauchesne Editeur, 2001, 101.

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58. TERESA OF CALCUTTA, *Conversation with Angelo Comastri*, Archbishop of Loreto, http://www.vatican.va/jubilee_2000/magazine/documents/ju_mag_01091997_p-18_en.html. Consulted on 17.05.2019.
59. Cf. BENEDICT XVI, *Angelus*, February 24, 2008.
60. Cf. AUGUSTINE, S., *On the Gospel of John, Homily XV*, in *The works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21 century*, Vol. 3, Michigan: New City Press, 1990, 281.
61. Cf. JOHN PAUL II, *Dominum et vivificantem*, n.10.
62. TERESA OF CALCUTTA, *Instructions to MC* (undated), in DEVANANDA, A., *Total surrender*; Ann Arbor, Mich.: Servant Publications, 1985, 111.
63. Cf. BENEDICT XVI, *Spe salvi*, November 30, 2007, n. 33.
64. Cf. BALTHASAR, H., *La oración contemplativa*, Madrid: Encuentro, 2007, 26.
65. Cf. THOMAS AQUINAS, *Summa Theologiae*, q. 1, a. 1.
66. JOHN PAUL II, *General Audience*, September 29, 1982.
67. *Ibid.*
68. Cf. AUGUSTINE, S., *Letter to Proba*, Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 1966, 389: «God (...) wishes our desire to be exercised in prayer that we may be able to receive what He is preparing to give. That is something very great, we are too small and straitened to contain it. Therefore it is said to us: 'Be enlarged, bear not the yoke with unbelievers (2 Cor.6.13,14).' Thus we shall receive that which is so great, which eye hath not seen because it is not color, nor ear heard because it is not sound, nor hath it entered in the heart of man (1 Cor. 2.9)».
69. TERESA OF CALCUTTA, *Instructions to MC*, February 18, 1967, in DEVANANDA, A., *Total surrender*; 102.
70. TERESA OF CALCUTTA, *Instructions to MC* (undated), in DEVANANDA, A., *Total surrender*; 50.
71. Cf. BENEDICT XVI, *Spe salvi*, n. 34.
72. TERESA OF CALCUTTA, *Essential writings*, 69.
73. Cf. BENEDICT XVI, *Deus caritas est*, n. 39.
74. TERESA OF CALCUTTA, *Where there is love, there is God*, New York: Doubleday Religion, 2010, 3.
75. TERESA OF CALCUTTA, *Essential writings*, 59.
76. Cf. ILLANES, J.L., *Tratado de Teología Espiritual*, 450.
77. TERESA OF CALCUTTA, *Essential writings*, 60.
78. TERESA OF CALCUTTA, *Instructions to MC*, July 21, 1963 in DEVANANDA, A., *Contemplative in the heart of the world*, Michigan: Servant Publications, 1985, 104.
79. Cf. ILLANES M., J.L., *Cristo, esperanza del mundo: reflexiones sobre la encíclica «Spe salvi»*, Madrid: Rialp, D.L., 2011.
80. TERESA OF CALCUTTA, *Where there is love, there is God*, 54.
81. TERESA OF CALCUTTA, *Varanasi letter*, March 25, 1993.
82. Cf. GUARDINI, R., *La aceptación de sí mismo; Las edades de la vida*, Madrid: Guadarrama, 1964, 23.
83. Cf. PHILIPPE, J., *La oración, camino del amor*; Madrid: Rialp, 2014, 72.
84. Cf. *Ibid.*
85. TERESA OF CALCUTTA, *Varanasi letter*, March 25, 1993.
86. With regard to this notion of prayer cf. PIKAZA, X., *Para vivir la oración cristiana*, Estella: Verbo Divino, 1990, 200.
87. TERESA OF CALCUTTA, *Everything starts from prayer*; Ashland: White Cloud Press, 2018, 38-39.
88. Cf. GAUTIER, J., *Tengo sed: Teresa de Lisieux y la Madre Teresa*, 30.
89. TERESA OF CALCUTTA, *Everything starts from prayer*; 38-39.
90. This was the notion of prayer explained to Margret Mary Alacoque by the venerable Mother Thouvant when she asked her about the secret of making prayer. The actual words of Mother Thouvant to the saint were: «Go place yourself before God like a canvas before a painter».

- BOUGAUD, É., *Life of Saint Margaret Mary Alacoque*, New York, Cincinnati: Benziger brother, 1920, 92.
91. Cf. CCC n.2716.
 92. Cf. FORTE, B., *Trinidad como historia: ensayo sobre el Dios cristiano*, Salamanca: Sígueme, 1988, 163-175.
 93. TERESA OF CALCUTTA, *Letter to a Priest*, February 7, 1974, in KOLODIJCHUK, B., *A call to mercy*, 283.
 94. Cf. TANQUEREY, A., *Compendio de Teología Ascética y Mística*, Madrid: Ediciones Palabra, 1990, 166.
 95. Cf. FRANCIS, *Misericordiae vultus*, April 11, 2015, n. 23.
 96. TERESA OF CALCUTTA, *Everything starts from prayer*, 69.
 97. Cf. GAUTIER, J., *Tengo sed: Teresa de Lisieux y la Madre Teresa*, 17.
 98. TERESA OF CALCUTTA, *The joy in loving*, New York: Arkana, 1996, 71.
 99. TERESA OF CALCUTTA, *Speech at Thomas Aquinas College*, Santa Paula, California, 1982.
 100. THOMAS AQUINAS, *Summa contra gentiles* I, q.37, n.5.
 101. Cf. BENEDICT XVI, *Teoría de los principios teológicos: materiales para una teología fundamental*, Barcelona: Herder, 1985, 226.
 102. TERESA OF CALCUTTA, *Everything starts from prayer*, 77.
 103. TERESA OF CALCUTTA, *Letter to the Co-workers*, Lent, 1996, in KOLODIJCHUK, B., *A call to mercy*, 305.
 104. *Ibid.*
 105. TERESA OF CALCUTTA, *One heart of love*, Cincinnati: Servant Books, 1984, 7-8.
 106. The result of the separation of these two dimensions is «a caricature or at least an impoverished form of love». BENEDICT XVI, *Deus caritas est*, n. 8.
 107. Cf. TERESA OF CALCUTTA, *Nobel Peace Prize Speech*, Oslo, December 10, 1979.
 108. Cf. BENEDICT XVI, *Caritas in veritate*, June 29, 2009, n.68.
 109. Cf. FORTE, B., *Trinidad como historia: ensayo sobre el Dios cristiano*, 174-175.
 110. TERESA OF CALCUTTA, *Essential writings*, 75.
 111. Cf. PIEPER, J., *El amor*, Madrid: Rialp, 1972, 51-52.
 112. BENEDICT XVI, *Caritas in veritate*, n. 8.
 113. Cf. BENEDICT XVI, *Jesus of Nazareth*, Vol. 1, chap. 7 «The message of the Parables», New York: Doubleday, 2007, 201.
 114. TERESA OF CALCUTTA, *Nobel Peace Prize Speech*, Oslo, December 10, 1979.
 115. Cf. DODD, C. H., *The Johannine Epistles*, London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1966, 124.
 116. *Ibid.*
 117. BENEDICT XVI, *Deus caritas est*, n. 18.
 118. Cf. BRUCE VAWTER, C.M., «Epístolas de San Juan», in BROWN, R.E. u otros (dirs.), *Comentario bíblico "San Jerónimo"*, Tomo IV, Nuevo Testamento II, Madrid: Cristiandad, 1972, 391.
 119. TERESA OF CALCUTTA, *Instructions to MC*, in DEVANANDA, A., *Total surrender*, 83.
 120. Cf. GARCÍA-MORENO, A., *Temas teológicos del Evangelio de San Juan. 1, La creación*, Madrid: Rialp, 2007, 74.
 121. Cf. THOMAS AQUINAS, *Summa Theologica*, II-II, 23, 2 ad 1.
 122. Cf. BENEDICT XVI, *Deus caritas est*, n.18.
 123. See for example TERESA OF CALCUTTA, *Essential writings*, 109: «I see Jesus in every person, and especially in the poor and suffering».
 124. TERESA OF CALCUTTA, *Instructions to MC* (undated), in DEVANANDA, A., *Contemplative in the heart of the world*, 102.
 125. TERESA OF CALCUTTA, *Essential writings*, 69.
 126. TERESA OF CALCUTTA, *Speech at Thomas Aquinas College*, Santa Paula, California, 1982. For the theological basis of this teaching of Teresa of Calcutta, see BALTHASAR, H., *Gloria: una estética teológica* 3, Madrid: Encuentro, D.L., 1987, 231.

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127. TERESA OF CALCUTTA, *Essential writings*, 137.
128. TERESA OF CALCUTTA, *Instructions to MC* (undated), in DEVANANDA, A., *Contemplative in the heart of the world*, 102.
129. TERESA OF CALCUTTA, *Admonition to seminarians*. http://www.clerus.org/clerus/dati/2010-04/20-13/Mother_Teresa_to_the_priests.pdf. Consulted on 19.10.2019.
130. PO n. 5.
131. LG n. 11.
132. Cf. CCC n. 2643.
133. TERESA OF CALCUTTA, *Instructions to MC* (undated), in DEVANANDA, A., *Contemplative in the heart of the world*, 49.
134. TERESA OF CALCUTTA, *Letter to Archbishop Périer*, June 5, 1947, in KOLODIEJCHUK, B., *Come be my light*, 47-52.
135. TERESA OF CALCUTTA, *Letter to Archbishop Périer*; January 13, 1948, in KOLODIEJCHUK, B., *Come be my light*, 111.
136. TERESA OF CALCUTTA in VAZHAKALA, S., *The Holy Eucharist in the Life of Blessed Teresa of Calcutta*, in *L'Osservatore Romano* Weekly Edition in English, March 16, 2005, 6.
137. Cf. LÓPEZ, M.J., *La Eucaristía, centro de toda la vida cristiana*, Revista Española, de Derecho Canónico, REDC 61 (2004) 229-256.
138. JOHN PAUL II, *Veritatis splendor*, August 6, 1993, n. 21.
139. TERESA OF CALCUTTA, *Instructions to MC* (undated), in DEVANANDA, A., *Contemplative in the heart of the world*, 48.
140. AUGUSTINE, S., *Confessions*, VII, 10, 18.
141. TERESA OF CALCUTTA, *Essential writings*, 104.
142. TERESA OF CALCUTTA, *Letter to Eileen Egan*, September 2, 1967, in KOLODIEJCHUK, B., *Come be my light*, 261.
143. Cf. PIKAZA, X., *Para vivir la oración cristiana*, 112.
144. TERESA OF CALCUTTA, *Instructions to MC*, September 29, 1980, in DEVANANDA, A., *Contemplative in the heart of the world*, 51.
145. TERESA OF CALCUTTA, *Essential writings*, 101.
146. *Ibid.*, 105.
147. TERESA OF CALCUTTA, *Speech at Thomas Aquinas College*, Santa Paula, California, 1982.
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165. *Ibid.*
166. Cf. ROYO MARÍN, A, *Teología de la caridad*, Madrid: Editorial Católica, 1963, 512.
167. Cf. JOHN PAUL II, *Dominum et vivificantem*, n.10.
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195. Cf. ILLANES, J.L., *Tratado de Teología Espiritual*, 393-394.
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211. TERESA OF CALCUTTA, *Letter to Archbishop Périer*, December 3, 1947, in KOLODIEJCHUK, B., *Come be my light*, 95-100.
212. TERESA OF CALCUTTA, *Letter to Archbishop Périer*, January 13, 1947, in KOLODIEJCHUK, B., *Come be my light*, 47-52.
213. TERESA OF CALCUTTA, *Letter to Archbishop Périer*, December 3, 1947, in KOLODIEJCHUK, B., *Come be my light*, 95-100.
214. See MOTHER TERESA, *Explanation of original Constitutions*, in KOLODIEJCHUK, B., *Come be my light*, 41-42.
215. JOHN PAUL II, *Redemptoris Mater*, March 25, 1987, n.21.
216. Cf. JOHN PAUL II, *Salvifici doloris*, n. 19.
217. TERESA OF CALCUTTA, *Letter to Archbishop Périer*, January 13, 1947, in KOLODIEJCHUK, B., *Come be my light*, 47-52.
218. TERESA OF CALCUTTA, *Charity: Soul of Mission*, January 23, 1991, in KOLODIEJCHUK, B., *Come be my light*, 233-234.
219. TERESA OF CALCUTTA, in LANGFORD J., *I thirst: Forty days with Mother Teresa*, 113.
220. Cf. *Ibid.*, 113-114.
221. As manifested by Christ's passion and death, the motive of the sacrifice springs from mystery of sin which demands a voluntary loving offering of an innocent victim for its expiation. Christians of all times know that they are associated with the sacrifice of the Victim, for by means of baptism they have been incorporated into his suffering mission and his glorious destiny. Cf. GENNARO, C., «Victima», in ANCILLI, E. (dir.), *Diccionario de espiritualidad*, Barcelona: Herder (1987), 575.
222. TERESA OF CALCUTTA, *Letter to Archbishop Périer*, November 7, 1947, in KOLODIEJCHUK, B., *Come be my light*, 98.
223. Cf. TERESA OF CALCUTTA, *Letter to Archbishop Périer*, December 3, 1947, in KOLODIEJCHUK, B., *Come be my light*, 95-100.
224. *Ibid.*
225. LG n. 58.
226. Cf. LANGFORD, J., *Mother Teresa: In the shadow of Our Lady*, Huntington, Indiana: Our Sunday Visitor, 2007, 23.
227. TERESA OF CALCUTTA, *Letter to MC*, July 31, 1996, in LANGFORD, J., *Mother Teresa: In the shadow of Our Lady*, 23.
228. TERESA OF CALCUTTA, *Explanation of original Constitutions*, in KOLODIEJCHUK, B., *Come be my light*, 41-42.
229. Cf. BERZOSA, R., «Salvación», in IZQUIERDO, C. (dir.), *Diccionario de Teología*, 921-922.
230. TERESA OF CALCUTTA, *Letter to the MC*, First Friday, July 1961, in KOLODIEJCHUK, B., *Come be my light*, 220.
231. TERESA OF CALCUTTA, *Where there is love, there is God*, 4.
232. *Ibid.*
233. Cf. JUAN DEL CARMELO, *La sed de Dios*, [Alcobendas]: Dagosola, D.L., 2011, 34.
234. *Ibid.*, 37.
235. TERESA OF CALCUTTA, *Nobel Peace Prize Speech*, Oslo, December 10, 1979.
236. RATZINGER, J., *Lecture at the Bishops' conference of the region of Campania in Benevento, Italy, on the topic "Eucharist, communion and solidarity"*, June 2, 2002.
237. TERESA OF CALCUTTA, *Heart of joy*, 93.
238. TERESA OF CALCUTTA, *Essential writings*, 74.

239. TERESA OF CALCUTTA, in KOLODIEJCHUK, B., *Come be my light*, 220.
240. TERESA OF CALCUTTA, *Letter to Sister Marie of the Trinity*, O.P. (undated), in KOLODIEJCHUK, B., *Come be my light*, 281.
241. BENEDICT XVI, *Spe salvi*, n. 26. In connection with this teaching resonates the impressive sentence of Gabriel Marcel on the meaning of love: «To love someone, is to tell him: you will not die». MARCEL, G., *Le mort de demain, en Trois pièces*, Paris: Plon, 1931, 147.
242. TERESA OF CALCUTTA, *Heart of joy*, 8.
243. TERESA OF CALCUTTA, *Essential writings*, 82. The necessity of discernment in the practice of charity has been given due emphasis in the magisterium of Benedict XVI and Francis. They call for the practice of charity to be guided by an attitude of open-mindedness, a broad outlook, a gaze that begins in the heart and does not stop at the surface, but goes beyond appearances and manages to capture the deepest aspiration of man, precisely the hunger for God. See for example, BENEDICT XVI, *Deus caritas est*, n. 31. BENEDICT XVI, *Address to "Caritas Italiana"*, November 24, 2011. FRANCIS, *Address to participants in the meeting sponsored by Caritas Internationalis*, May 27, 2019.
244. TERESA OF CALCUTTA, *Instructions to MC* (undated), in DEVANANDA, A., *Total surrender*, 141.
245. Cf. JOHN PAUL II, *Redemptoris missio*, December 7, 1990.
246. Cf. AA n. 4.
247. TERESA OF CALCUTTA, *Letter to Archbishop Périer*; January 13, 1947, in KOLODIEJCHUK, B., *Come be my light*, 47-52.
248. TERESA OF CALCUTTA, *Instructions to MC*, July 21, 1963, in DEVANANDA, A., *Contemplative in the heart of the world*, 104.
249. TERESA OF CALCUTTA, *Essential writings*, 70.
250. *Ibid.*
251. TERESA OF CALCUTTA, *Instructions to MC*, February 18, 1967, in DEVANANDA, A., *Total surrender*, 110.
252. TERESA OF CALCUTTA, in KOLODIEJCHUK, B., *Jesus is my all in all*, New York: Double Day, 2008, 43.
253. TERESA OF CALCUTTA, *Essential writings*, 74. Also see CMC n.31: «Christ calls each of us to be His co-worker by allowing Him to (...) live His life in us and through us in the world today».

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