

Spiritual Reflection – November 2014

Mary Frances of the Cross/Amalia Streitl

(Revised version of her letters to Father John Francis Jordan 1883 – 1885)

Letter 17, 1: “**May the Lord be glorified and the creature annihilated!
This is my maxim for the duration of my life...**”

Letter 20, 2: “**... May the will of the Lord be accomplished in us and let us never limit it
by self-love and self-will.**”

Today we live in a society that faces many challenges, i.e.: poverty, climate change, international terrorism, armed conflicts, global economic crisis, etc. More and more people are not able to cope with these problems which affect families as well as individuals. They suffer from pressure to perform, unemployment, depression, etc. They are looking for support and safety and ask whom or what can I trust, what will help me?

Some believe that they can only survive when they strengthen their **self-assurance**, through treatment by a psychotherapist or by practicing **self-confidence, self-assertion, self-love**, etc. I ask myself if that will really help them? When they place all their hope only in therapists (on a human being), will they find what they are really look for to fulfill their innermost self?

I prefer to **focus** on the life of **Mother Frances**. She placed her support and safety on God. She followed Jesus. She looked at HIM **who “emptied himself ... even accepting death on the cross”** (Phil 2:7-8). To follow Him meant for her to follow the way He indicated: “**Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.**” (Mt 10:39); “**deny himself**”, “**take up his cross**”(Mt 16:24), “**If anyone comes to me without hating his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple**” (Lk 14:26-28).

When I spend time with the life and writings of our foundress, I need to say that she answered the call and the invitation to follow Him in a radical and uncompromisingly way. In the early years of my life in the convent I thought that her position, her attitude towards her body and soul was not normal. She would destroy herself. She had a destructive nature.

Soon, though, I realized that what **looked** like a weakness with Mother Frances, **was** actually strength, courage **and** grace. So she became a model for me, and I now appreciate her very much. I am convinced that **Mother Frances was able to put herself aside, keep herself humble because she put her trust completely in God and expected everything from HIM. The GLORY OF GOD** (not her self-love) **and HIS WILL** (not her self-will) took first place in her life.

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