

REFLECTIONS ON THE VIRTUES OF MOTHER FRANCES STREITEL

CHASTITY



Chastity



DEFINITION

The virtue of chastity blossoms in friendship. It shows the disciple how to follow and imitate him who has chosen us as his friends, who has given himself totally to us and allows us to participate in his divine estate. Chastity is a promise of immortality.

(Catechism of the Catholic Church #2347)

She loved the Lord compassionately and unconditionally. She said that pride and sensuality are the sources for all other sins. This is the reason why our senses and touch need to be under control. She fostered chastity through prayer and protected it through discretion, always paying attention to her behavior. She asked her sisters to maintain a lifestyle and a language that makes chastity shine through. Her interior beauty showed itself exteriorly in her noble attitude. Even in death, she had the colors of life, as some witnesses confirm, and in this way the connection between virginity and unspoiled nature was remembered.



TESTIMONIALS ... of the past ...

She was simple in her dress, in her words, and in her gestures. Her presence invited respect, veneration and raised our hearts to God. When she explained the Rule teaching me about the virtue and vow of chastity, her words invoked in me the love to exercise this virtue.

(Sr. M. Regina Galletti)



SOURCES

SACRED SCRIPTURE: Gal. 5:22

OUR WAY OF LIFE: Articles: : #10 -14

WRITINGS OF MOTHER FRANCES

Letter 1 to Sr. M. Scholastica Demer, #4

Constitution 1885,

Chapter VII: # 47, 48 – 53



REFLECTIONS

COMMUNITY QUESTION:

Reflect on your lifestyle and name how it truly reflects Mother Frances' vision of living the vow of chastity.

PERSONAL QUESTION:

How do I live the vow of chastity?



TESTIMONIALS... of today ...

AN ASPECT OF SPIRITUAL LIFE IN COMMON WITH THE JOURNEY OF M. FRANCES

*"In my eyes she is a soul the Lord has set aside for His new work in order to glorify it and surround it with the radiance of virtue. This statement of mine is free from any special affection for this Sister, **Dio mi ha for God has given me the grace to be impartial.** I love the other two Sisters as intimately as the one I mentioned, and I entreat the Lord for this Sister. I believe I would willingly bring any sacrifice if I could thereby succeed in making the way of virtue easier for any one of them. All three are striving for higher perfection. All show signs of "God's predilection." One of them just has a keener stamp, which must not be misunderstood." (Letter to Fr. Jordan 31, #4).*

If I listened only to my human nature, I would be inclined to distance myself from the Lord of life day after day, but God's grace continues to work in me to lead me in His ways.

One of my deepest wishes has always been to be fair and just towards those I live and work with. It's easy to get caught up in "I like him/her", "I don't like him/her", "I find him/her nice", "I don't find him/her nice" ... but if Jesus had acted like that towards me, I don't know what would have become of me. Therefore, I ask myself how I want to be seen and treated by others, trying also to accept the teachings of the Word of God and of those who have passed on to me a profound wisdom about life, including our Foundress. Sometimes I'd rather force myself to live in Christ than to act according to my preferences and only appear to have a "fuller" life.

In all these years of religious life, I have come to appreciate the value of relationships "without preferences", even though daily life can be quite different, because of purely human dynamics. What always attracts me is the reliability of people – testing, first of all in myself, whether what I say matches my actions or not.

I have often heard it said in catechesis that God is impartial: it is not important to be beautiful, good-looking, very intelligent, capable... because God chooses the humble, the excluded, the

marginalized... and then we see in practice how these same people often prove the opposite with their actions, even in our pastoral work.

I admire M. Frances' honesty, her humanity, and her willingness to constantly challenge herself. She is rational and doesn't confuse impartiality with ascribing personal characteristics to individual sisters. Each sister can best serve in the various ministries, but with her own unique gifts. Being assigned a specific role doesn't necessarily mean that it's a service each of us can provide.

There are different personal characteristics, skills, and educational backgrounds, so not everyone can do everything. To be impartial in this matter means to understand how each one can bear more fruit, expressing her talents in a dialoguing obedience to the Kingdom of God.

For example, in our meetings, sitting next to the same sisters for meals or choosing someone I like more to share commitments with does not always

encourage impartiality, except that sometimes it's nice to be able to share more with those with whom you have a closer bond because of significant experiences or events lived together when you rarely see each other.

This is where I dig a little deeper into myself, wondering about the reason behind some of my small choices. I often find that it is my ego that is searching for itself, struggling to give up something or someone, to remain open to everything and everyone. Therefore, impartiality clashes with a self-centered side of me that limits and constrains me rather than encouraging greater freedom.

The Word that has accompanied my vocational journey from the very beginning, "No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends" (Jn 15:13), is a constant inspiration for me to keep looking up and not retreat into myself, to learn to grow in impartiality, gratitude and freedom.

Sr. Tatiana (Italy)



I am grateful for the opportunity to rediscover what inspired and shaped my journey of faith during my initial formation by reading the life of Mother Frances. I draw inspiration from two of her quotes that I had chosen for the gifts I offered at my First Profession and Perpetual Profession:

"Let us prepare a dwelling for Him, the Lord of our whole being, so that He can dwell in the center of our hearts"

This quote reflects my desire to be a dwelling place for God, a womb for God, as the Virgin Mary was when she carried and gave birth to Him. The verb "let us" invites me to not resist, to allow

the Holy Spirit to act, and to let go of myself and my will in order to accept God's will. The life of Mother Frances inspires me to focus on this challenging goal.

"May our Mother of Fair Love lead us profoundly into the mystery of the love of God, and may we, like her, stand firm under the cross"

Mary's example is a guiding light on my journey of faith. Mother Frances especially highlights her under the cross. I am fascinated by the strength of Mary's and Mother Frances's faith. It expresses my desire to deeply know God's love and to take root in Him. Despite the humiliations that life had in store for her, Mother Frances remained faithful to God and humble. Her example helps me do the same when facing life's trials, seeing them as opportunities to strengthen my faith.

Sr. Luciana (Italy)



One aspect of Mother Frances' spiritual journey that impressed me deeply and helped me was the radical nature of her choice to consecrate herself to God. A phrase that immediately struck me and has since become a source of inspiration in my life is, "Lord, I wish to have a thousand lives in order to surrender them all to You". This phrase has always resonated in my heart, inspiring a total commitment: every single part of me belongs to God. It has helped me to always



seek the truth and avoid ambiguity, even in the little things of daily life. It is a constant reminder that my life belongs to God, and this is such a great source of joy that – if I had the chance – I would do it a thousand times. This phrase speaks to me of Mother Frances' joy in living her consecration to the Lord.

Her example gives me strength and joy.

Throughout Mother Frances' life, I see a common thread that marked every choice she made and every trial she faced. God was the

center of her life, and she accepted even the most difficult and painful things with trust for Him. Mother Frances' radical and total commitment to belonging to God, living with Him, and living for Him is a powerful model and sign for my life.

Sr. Viviana Maria Gioia (Italy)