



Disturbed by Love

LETTER TO MSSP RELIGIOUS AND LAITY **Message by the MSSP Superior General**

There is no denying that one of our basic desires as human beings is to be loved. We do all sort of things, mostly unconscious, to prove our worth and consequently to be noticed, appreciated, valued and held significant in the eyes of the others. All these, are partial definitions of love. But, have we ever experienced real and pure love? Maybe somehow and somewhere we did! And I assure you that if we are not seriously narcissistic, it would have left us perturbed. Pure love derails us from our stable patterns, disturbs us and can even frighten us. So why is it that something we desire so much becomes something we run away from?

When I am unconditionally loved by somebody, that person donates himself or herself vulnerably to me and risks being hurt. But in the process, I realize that one of two things are happening. Much as I want to be loved, that love either reads me to the core and thus exposes me naked in front of another human being or simply fails to get through the hard scale of my secret world highlighting my lies first and foremost to myself. Either way it is not a straight forward thing to let ourselves be loved!

Mary in front of the angel was deeply disturbed because pure love touched her life to the very core, and with nothing to hide she let the power of the Most High change her plans and lead her to heights not only above her but to the level of God. In contrast, the rich young man, when Jesus' loving gaze fell on him, could not stand the fact that his secret plans with his wealth were too precious to be disturbed by God. Two opposite stances, out of many in Scripture, that clearly



demonstrate the point.

Living Advent is about waiting for Christ. But I can wait passively for time to pass by like clockwork, closed in my ivory tower, happy with the fragments of life and with nothing touching me. Or I can wait passionately with a desire for a significant other to love me unconditionally, even with the risk of exposing naked my highs and lows, changing my life drastically. True love is dynamic, brings life, stretches my boundaries, transforms me.

This is what real Christmas is all about. Away from the hollowed lights, alienating stress and rehashed parties, it is about pure love coming straight into my life, asking for a relationship that will disturb me deeply but giving me the heights of God. But do I want it? Do I really want to be loved in this way? Christmas is not about waiting for another sweet baby Jesus to be born. That was done once and for all, in God's time, two thousand years ago. Christmas is about us being born as children of God, passing through the pangs of birth (leaving behind our old self) and transformed into his children, inheriting the same substance of God: love.

Christ will not force himself into our Christmas. He will gently gaze on us irrespective of where we are. His gaze seeks a relationship and nothing less. Are we bold enough to risk this love? As missionaries, religious and lay, we are called like Mary that while our lives are gradually or suddenly disturbed by Love we birth God to others. And this can only be done in simplicity, vulnerability and as a gift.

Wishing you a passionate desire for Christ and a loving self-gift for others.

Blessings


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