

## Thought for the Day, Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> July 2021



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### **“From “A Life We Never Dared Hope For” - Part One of a Letter addressed to us**

We continue our readings from Brother Roger of Taizé, made all the more poignant by his murder in 2005. Some of his paragraphs are stand-alone maxims, and will help us more if we chew them slowly, rather than bolt them down. <sup>1</sup> <sup>2</sup>

***“I know you want to fashion your life in communion with Christ, who is love, so I have written this letter for you. You will feel freer to move from one provisional stage to the next, if you rely throughout your life on a small number of essential values - a few simple truths.***

Together with the whole people of God, with people from all over the world, you are invited to live a life exceeding all your hopes. On your own, how could you ever experience the radiance of Gods presence?

God is too dazzling to be looked upon. He is a God who blinds our sight. It is Christ who channels this consuming fire, and allows God to shine through without dazzling us.

Christ is present, close to each one of us, whether we know him or not. He is so bound up with us that he lives within us, even when we are unaware of him. He is there in secret, a fire burning in the heart, a light in the darkness.

But Christ is also someone other than yourself. He is alive; he stands beyond, ahead of you. Here is his secret: he loved you first.

That is the meaning of your life: to be loved for ever, loved to all eternity, so that you, in turn, will dare to die for love. Without love, what is the point of living?

From now on, in prayer or in the struggle, only one thing is disastrous, the loss of love. Without love, what is the good of believing, or even of giving your body to the flames?

Do you see? Contemplation and struggle arise from the very same source, Christ who is love.

If you pray, it is out of love. If you struggle to restore dignity to the exploited, that too is for love.

Will you agree to set out on this road? At the risk of losing your life for love, will you live Christ for others?

### **With people all over the world**



On our own, what can we do to give the voiceless their say, and to promote a society without class?

With the whole people of God, collectively, it is possible to light a fire on the earth.

One of Christ's questions hits home. When that poor person was hungry, did you recognise me in him? Where were you when I was sharing the life of the utterly destitute? Have you been the oppressor of even one single human being? When I said 'Woe to the rich' <sup>3</sup> - rich in money, or rich in dogmatic certainties - did you prefer the illusions of wealth?

Your struggle cannot be lived out in ideas that fly from pillar to post and never become reality.

Break the oppressions of the poor and the exploited, and to your astonishment you will see signs of resurrection springing up, here and now.

Share all you have for greater justice. Make no one your victim. Sister to all, a universal sister, run to whoever is despised and rejected.

'Love those who hate you. Pray for those who wrong you.' In hatred, how could you reflect anything of Christ? 'Love your neighbour as yourself.' If you hated yourself, what damage that would do!

But as your life has been filled to overflowing, you try to understand everything in others. The closer you come to communion, the more efforts the tempter will make. To be free of him, sing Christ until you are joyful and serene.

Tensions can be creative. But when your relationship with someone has deteriorated into seething inner contradictions and non-communication, remember that beyond the desert something else lies waiting.

We judge other people by what we are ourselves, by our own hearts. Remember only the best you have found in others. With words of liberation on your lips, and no condemnation in your mouth, do not waste your energy looking at the speck in your sister's eye.

If you suffer unfair criticism for the sake of Christ, dance and forgive as God has forgiven. You will find that you are free, free beyond compare.

In any disagreement, what is the point of trying to find out who was right and who was wrong?

Have nothing to do with clever diplomacy; aim at transparency of heart; never manipulate another's conscience, using her anxiety as a lever to force her into your scheme of things.

In every domain, when things are too easy, creativity is low. Poverty of means leads to living intensely, in the joy of the present moment. But joy vanishes if poverty of means leads to austerity or to judging others.

Poverty of means gives birth to a sense of the universal. And the Festival begins once more. The Festival will never end.

If a festival disappeared from mankind...If we were to wake up, one fine morning, in a society replete but emptied of all spontaneity... if praying became mere words, so secularised that it lost all the sense of mystery, leaving no room for the prayer of gesture

and posture; no room for poetry, nor emotion nor for intuition... if we were to lose childlike trust in the Eucharist and the Word of God... if, on our grey days, we were to demolish all we had grasped during our days of light... if we work to decline the joy offered by him who eight times over declares 'Happy' (Matthew 5).

If Festival disappears from the Body of Christ, if the Church is a place of retrenchment and not of universal comprehension, where in the whole wide world could we find a place of friendship for the whole of mankind?"

Here are some questions for our deeper consideration.

Have I oppressed another human being?

Have I manipulated another's conscience?

Have I ever lost, during grey days, anything good I had ingested during days of light? If so, what action can I take?

Do we dare to die for love?

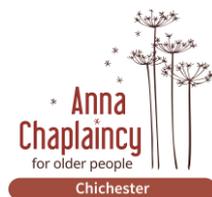
What is this Festival?

Have we declined joy?

Who, if anyone, can I ask to help?

Love and blessings, David

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<sup>1</sup> Brother Roger (1980) (trans. Chisholm E.) *A Life We Never Dared Hope For: Journal 1972-1974*. London & Oxford, UK. Mowbray: 74-75

<sup>2</sup> I have edited the original words of the translator, and hope this aids flow and application.

<sup>3</sup> My dictating app first mistyped this as 'Whoa to the rich'!