

THE ASC CHARISM

An Incessant Flow of Love of God and Fellow Beings



1. Towards understanding Charism

Charism is a gift given to one for the sake of a community, as St. Paul clearly describes it in 1Cor. 12 and 14. In this sense there can be different gifts given to different members of a community. But, there can be a special Charism, which the Lord of all gifts bestows upon a person with a special mission. Founders of the Congregations are charismatic in this. Thus St. Benedict left his affluent world hid himself in a cave on the mount Subiaco, because he found the lack of contemplative prayer in the Church and naturally offered himself to become the realization of that in the Church. In course of time, we had a contemplative order in the Church.

Charism is a vision, strongly attached to a mission of realizing this vision in a given situation and sharing it to all those who come forward to participate in that original experience and life style.

2. The vision and mission of St. Maria De Mattias

St. Maria de Mattias had a vision, which was deeply related to the mission and future life style. The essence of this vision can be summarized in one sentence dear to her heart. "To reveal his infinite love

for us, Jesus Christ consented to shed his Precious Blood for us" and therefore each member of the Adorers of Blood of Christ "must be patterned and shaped into a living image of that Divine Charity with which this Divine Blood was shed and of which it was a sign, expression, measure and pledge". Since blood is a sign and witness of self-giving love, for the Adorers of the redeeming Blood of Christ the Charism became "the life of the adoring and redeeming love". As she very boldly and clearly says: "the Spirit of this holy work is all charity". Thus Maria had a vision summarized in love, adoring love to God and redeeming love to all people.

3. Blood as sign of love

To the ASC Charism belong these two words Blood and Love. They are profoundly interpenetrating. Shedding blood of someone is certainly great sign of love. "The greatest love a person can have for his friends is giving his life for him"(Jn. 15: 13). The master who said this fulfilled his saying the very next day by shedding the last drop of Blood. Blood is a sign, a pointer to a great love with which one loves the other. It was Blood of the Lamb that was kept on the doorpost as a sign that led the Israel from slavery to freedom, across the Red Sea to the Promised Land. It was the Blood of

Christ, poured on Calvary that redeemed the mankind from the inner slavery of sin. It was the Blood of martyrs that nurtured the nascent Church of Christ in the first centuries of Christianity. So blood was the supreme sign of redemptive love before Christ, in Christ and after Christ.

4. The adoring and redeeming love

Adoring love is a love, which is at the same time complete and unconditional surrender of the lover to the beloved. Such was the love of Maria to Jesus, literally 'adoring love'. In the sense of surrendering and spending every moment of her life in continued surrendering through actions of apostolate. The adoring surrender to the Lord now becomes surrender to untold items of service for peoples all around, especially for the poor and marginalized. As the Blood of Christ redeems the adorers so also the living blood poured out through their services redeems the poor people they serve. Adoring love since it is absolutely selfless is always redeeming. Redeeming is always the work of Christ. But this Blood now flows to the people through the streams of adorers, who identify themselves with the Lamb sacrificed apply the Blood of Christ for the salvation of all. Maria De Mattias says, "God has called us all to this great work of performing adoration and the applying of the merits of the Blood of Jesus".

5. A call to Martyrdom and complete self-denial

Blood speaks more than the words. Adorers of the Blood of Christ with their

heart set on the sacrificial death of Jesus, earnestly accept the call to sacrifice their life for Jesus. Maria intensely longed to lay down her life as a sacrifice to the Lord. But there are two kinds of martyrdom; one that happens in a sudden, but grace filled moment in which the physical blood is literally shed. But the other is an ongoing martyrdom of continued self giving for others, with no motives than pleasing the Lord and the welfare of the people served. Adorers' charism, silently, but eloquently proclaim this truth continued in their call.

Conclusion

Maria de Mattias was a prophetic visionary. She is a product of her time when the Church needed to be more radical. Spiritual vision and unassuming service in a world of rising rationalism and erosion of genuine faith and Gospel values. So she came as an inspired woman with an innate Mantra; carita, love for the people and with an appropriate symbol, the Blood of the Lord that was shed in love and for love. The Lord blessed her and what followed in history proved that her vision was right.

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Let's seek to make our witness clear and labor well to see our friends and neighbors drawn to Christ by reading you and me.