

# *Friends of The Lamb*



## **SPIRIT**

"In the middle of the night a cry was heard: Look, the Spouse is coming, let us go and meet Him!"

Matt 25:6 In these the last times, the Lord is sending His Spirit the Consolator to renew His Church so as to make ready His Spouse and call her to the wedding banquet of the Lamb. He makes her younger and unceasingly renews her, preparing her for the perfect union with her Spouse; the Spirit and the Bride say to the Lord: "Come!"

Rev.22:17 This introductory text from the Book of Life expresses the yearning for the fullness of the Kingdom that is at the Heart of the vocation of the Community of the Beatitudes. Filled with this eschatological reality, fascinated by the perfection of the life to come, the brothers and sisters of the Community feel themselves called to leave everything and follow Christ, wholeheartedly consecrating themselves to this vocation in anticipation of the Kingdom, through its contemplative grace and apostolic work which proceeds from that.

But they are not the only ones to feel this invitation from the Spirit to orient their whole lives in view of the Kingdom. Other Christians of all backgrounds and states of life, close in heart to the Community, but not feeling called to enter it, desire to live in the heart of the world according to the grace which is theirs.

Like John the Baptist who did not have the same Public Ministry as Christ, yet he nevertheless witnessed to the Lamb of God by his whole life and he went as far as giving up his own life for Him, as a way of accompanying the Lord. Those who wish to carry the beautiful name "Friend of the Lamb" and to be just that in reality, accept to decrease so that He can increase; to die to themselves so that Jesus can live in them, making their joy in their own self-giving, in a more hidden and humble manner, but real all the same, so as to help in the accomplishment of the Wedding Feast and the union of the Groom and His Bride.

Jn 3: 27-30 Even if it is in a less visible way, they wish to follow the Lamb wherever He goes, they wish to be in the world but not of the world, fleeing the seduction of idols, belonging exclusively to the Living God so as to be His servants, carrying on their foreheads the name of the Lamb and His Father. First-fruits for God, redeemed from the world, no lie in their mouths and faultless in their presence because their robes have been washed with the blood of the Lamb.

Amidst their occupations and obligations, they wish to serve God first and endlessly sing the song which proclaims their hope in salvation of God. The Lamb is their Pastor. The Eucharist is their food. The Sacraments their strength. Through their perseverance in prayer they keep awake the fervor of love.

Rev 7: 13-17

Rev 14: 1-5

They are free from all attachment to the material goods of this world, because their hope is not in things that pass but in those eternal things which eyes have not yet seen nor ears heard, but which God has prepared for those who love Him. They do not worry about tomorrow, neither for their bodies nor their souls because their Heavenly Father knows what they need. They no longer follow the illusions of their own will but, detached from themselves and rejoicing in the voice of God, they are listening out for the Word of God, in the Scriptures and the Magisterium of the Church, conforming themselves to it in filial and loving obedience, wishing to make their food the Will of their Heavenly Father.

Cor 2: 9 They rejoice in being the children of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Lamb and the Shepherd, because they realize that only in her can they receive Jesus, love Him, and become like Him, since it is she who gave Jesus to the world.

Matt 6: 32 They have a particular love for the Church, Spouse of Christ, desiring to be fully at her service so as to find in her the beauty with which she will be found at the time of the coming wedding between the two Spouses. They will be perfectly and lovingly attached to the Church's Pastors, particularly the Sovereign Pontiff, forcing themselves to follow the teachings of the Church and loving her even in her poverties, knowing that "only love can heal her". (CATHERINE of SIENA). They will help the Church spiritually and materially, according to their capabilities, praying for her, participating in her works of evangelization and mercy, willingly consecrating part of their time and resources to her, since true love cannot be stay inactive and must be shared, body and soul.

## **CHARTER**

The proper identity of the Friends of the Lamb essentially consists in their own spirit and their spiritual communion with the Community of the Beatitudes. It appears to be necessary, however, although not of utmost importance, to devise a concrete formula for the commitment that the Friends of the Lamb undertake and their link to the Community, under the form of a "Charter". This Charter may evolve and become more precise in the future; in the beginning, the Charter will take the following form:

### **Definition**

The Friends of the Lamb are faithful from all walks of life (the Clergy or the Laity) and all states of life (singles or marrieds) who, even though they are not committed to the Community of the Beatitudes, wish to participate in the very grace of the Community, forcing themselves to live according to the spirit which characterizes it, united in prayer, fraternal love, common service of the Church with the Community and other Friends of the Lamb.

### **Link with other Ecclesial Realities**

Being a Friend of the Lamb does not imply exclusion from Prayer Groups or Parishes; on the contrary, the Friends of the Lamb, sharing the grace of The Beatitudes, will be even more present to their commitments, strengthened by the contemplative prayer of the Community and a concrete communion with it.

### **Concrete Commitment of the Friends of the Lamb**

The Friends of the Lamb commit themselves to living, as much as possible, the spirit of the Community, as it is defined in the Community's "Book of Life": organizing their lives around the Unique Necessary, loving God and making Him loved, all this in a vigilant and joyful expectation of the Kingdom to come, conscious that time is short and that the world is passing away. They will have it at heart to associate themselves with the renewal of the Church by the Holy Spirit, thanks to a life of continual conversion, of praise, adoration, active charity towards one's neighbor, to a trusting abandonment to Divine Providence, and under the motherly direction of the Virgin Mary.

With this perspective in mind, they commit themselves in first place to a life of daily and fervent prayer, either alone or with the family; Liturgical prayer (preferably using the Offices of the Community), silent personal prayer if possible in adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, active sacramental life, application where possible of the family liturgies (eg. Shabbat), participation in the celebrations and conferences organized by the Community.

With confidence in the power of the elect which can shorten the time of the world's suffering, they will particularly carry in their intercession, the five subjects of intercession given to the Community: Praying for the Second Coming of the Lord, for Unity of the Church, for the proclamation of the Gospel to all peoples by the power of the Holy Spirit, for vocations, and so that Israel may recognize Jesus as their Messiah.

They will participate where possible in works of mercy, either those of the Community or others. This may be through prayer or listening or direct active assistance to suffering members of the Body of Christ or any other form

They will live-out a sharing of their material goods. The ideal would be a tenth given to the Community; but each person will commit themselves according to their ability to effectuate this sharing, although help should be given to already existent charities or a Community project.

They will commit themselves in all things in the discretion of mere servants, not using their attachment to the Community as a means of furthering personal interests or pretending to have a right over the orientations of the Community.

The sign that a person has committed themselves as a Friend of the Lamb, is a small metallic cross carrying the motif of a lamb, which they receive during their commitment ceremony.

### **Attachment to a House of the Community**

Each Friend of the Lamb will be attached to a house of the Community. This decision is taken by the Shepherd of the House, who discerns the vocation of a Friend of the Lamb. The concrete mode according to which the person commits themselves to a life of prayer and sharing is decided with the Shepherd.

### **Method of Commitment**

The commitment ceremony will take place during a Liturgical office of the house to which the Friend of the Lamb is to be attached. The person will be received by the Shepherd after which the latter speaks about the vocation about to be undertaken. The candidate then receives the cross, recites their commitment and is prayed for by the brothers and sisters of the House.

The Friends of the Lamb can renew their commitment each year during the celebration of Mass in the House to which they are attached.

If a Friend of the Lamb does not wish to continue his or her commitment, the Shepherd of the House concerned will be notified and the person will be released from their commitment. Only fervent Christians of sufficient maturity will be considered for this commitment, in communion with the Church, and as long as their becoming a Friend of the Lamb does not infringe on any previous commitments taken by the candidate. Consecrated members of religious orders cannot become Friends of the Lamb.

Couples can take this commitment with their joint consent and at the same time. Certain circumstances can be taken into consideration for couples who are separated, to allow one of the partners to become a Friend of the Lamb.

### **Obligations of the Community Regarding the Friends of the Lamb**

Aware of the blessing it receives from the Friends of the Lamb, the Community for her part is committed to:

Praying for the Friends of the Lamb every day, including them in her night-time prayer for the needs of all the people of the world.

Helping the Friends of the Lamb spiritually, according to her capabilities, but she cannot commit herself to providing spiritual direction for each individual.

Encouraging fraternal communion between the Community and the Friends of the Lamb and organizing regular meetings.

Keeping the Friends of the Lamb informed of what is happening in the life of the Community, its desires, calls, developments - and also its difficulties. A newsletter could also help the Friends of the Lamb get to know each other to mutually support each other.

The Shepherd to which the Friend of the Lamb is attached will ensure that the Community upholds these commitments. The Shepherd could designate a particular person in his or her house to look after the Friends of the Lamb.