

"Oporetet Illum Regnare".+ F.C.C.
Portiuncula Monastery of the Holy Trinity,
Poor Clares-Colettines, P.O.Box 75, Mwanza.
28th.2.'68.

Reverend and Dear Mother Abbess,

Many thanks for your very kind letter, which reached us long ago. I hope you will forgive us for being so late in answering it! We thank you for the nice picture of your Monastery, and also for the article entitled: "Openness and the Cloister" by Thomas Merton. We find this article very good in many ways, but the last part disappoint-ing. In fact, we simply cannot agree with it. I suppose you know to what I refer..the idea of more private and free conversation with each other - which means saying "Goodbye" to regular silence, and also the Permission (spécial), for some of the Community to enjoy more time for solitude and silence! We really cannot reconcile this with our regular common life. Perhaps it might be admitted if all the members of the Community were perfect..which is simply a 'dream' on this earth.

All these changes aim at more independence, which includes less obedience, to speak clearly, for how could less (obedience) dependence on the Rules lead to real union with the Divine Will? The results, or, at least, some of the results will be, - as one may clearly foresee - if one has some experience of the cloistered life, - a diminution of esteem and love for the letter of the rules, of course, with the vain hope of keeping their spirit!! - diminution - more and more remarked - of respect for authority, - therefore for supernatural spirit, for real, practised humility, - all things directly opposed to the spirit of the Holy Founders, in a word, against the spirit of the Gospels. Is that a 'return to the sources'? Certainly, our recent Popes who repeatedly demanded that return, had not the intention to shut the doors leading to those holy spurces.

3.

Have you a big Community? And do you get many subjects these days?

We came here in 1954, from Alwaye, India, and, after many difficulties, succeeded in building our Monastery by 1959 (D.G.)

At first, native vocations were very few, but now we have six African Sisters, five of whom have the black veil - two in Solemn Vows, and three in Temporary Vows. Please pray for their perseverance. They are very fervent, but not too strong physically. More African girls are asking to join us, as many as four coming at Christmas for interview, hence, our hitherto small Community is growing slowly, and is full of hope for the future.

Wishing your dear Community a very fervent Lent, followed by the great joy of Easter, and promising to pray very specially for you, Mother, and all your Daughters -

I remain,

Affectionately yours,

S. Marie of the Assumption

p. d. m. abbess

2.
It is a great pity that the actual spirit in many religions is a mixture of Christian and of worldly spirit... Now, nobody can make us believe that one can, with that mixture, make a pure evangelical spirit... How can the so-called contemplative religious accomplish their task in the Church if they prefer to cut here and there certain exigences of the Gospel? They might live a pious life perhaps, but to spread the flame of Divine Love in the world will certainly not be their work, - because that alliance between Christ and His enemy the World (that kind of World for which He did not even pray), prevent such religious from living the life of Love, of Divine Love, - consequently, they have no way of spreading it - although it is just what is needed actually - and always - in our disturbed and deceived World...

In sending to Rome our requests with regard to our life, we have begged to retain all that is symbolic of complete 'separation' from the world, and everything that pertains to Major Papal Enclosure, because, whilst agreeing with the changes brought about by Vatican II., and loyally accepting all that applies to us as Cloistered Religious, we understand by the "spiritual renewal", and 'return to the sources', the real spirit of fervour of our Holy Founder and Foundress.

When we held the Chapters for answering the "Questionnaire", we were truly touched with the answers of our young African Professed, and their zeal to cling to everything of the austerities of our life. Their Mistress said they had been left absolutely free to say and write according to their own ideas and desires.

As this is the first time we have any correspondence with each other, dear Mother, we feel we do not know you or your Community

~~-and you will feel the same~~

-and you will feel the same as regards us -



AIR MAIL
PAR AVION
AÉROGRAMME

Lowell, Mass.,
U.S.A.



Reverend Mother Abbess,

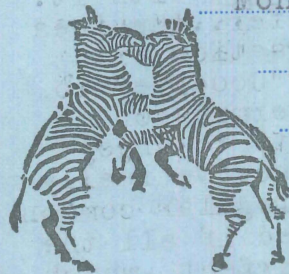
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