

THE CHARTER



“Those who abide in me and I in them bear fruit in plenty” Jn15.5

CHARTER

Preamble

This Charter aspires to capture in a few short pages the heart of our calling from God. It builds upon our three key historical inspirations:

Building praying communities, around the Holy Eucharist, which are a prophetic sign of the Kingdom.

Inspiring, encouraging and equipping people to live a deep life of divine communion with God and realise their full baptismal inheritance and Christian vocation through life in the Spirit.

Identifying with, ministering to and sharing with the poor and the needy.

The Charter expresses these themes more fully and offers some clarification. Beginning with the charism and the name, we then proceed under the three headings of, Called to Community, Called to Prayer, Called to Witness. The Charter makes no attempt to describe all that God may wish to do in and through Cor et Lumen Christi. Rather it sets priorities. It is given to the family of Cor et Lumen Christi as an affirmation of our shared vision and vocation. It is specific in inspiration but not in details. The detailed out workings are for the most part to be found in the Directives. The Charter, belonging to the whole community, focuses on only that which pertains to every member and, therefore, issues relating to one's state of life, or particular personal circumstances, are necessarily omitted. Here we express what we believe to be the essentials that God has given us, the foundations on which to build. In this text we have the essence of who we are to be for God and his Church. May we embrace His

covenant of love and become a holy and fruitful people for the glory of his name and the coming of the Kingdom.

Dear Father in heaven may your Kingdom come, your will be done.

We adore you Jesus, glorious one.

Come Holy Spirit, come.

The Charism

¹1Jn.3+4,

Eph4.1.

CCC460

²Jn15.5

³Jn17.21+23

CCC260

⁴2Pet1.4

⁵Jn1.4+5,

Mt5.14,

Mt17.1+2,

Jn8.12, Eph5.8,

Is 60.1

⁶St Athenasius,

Ep.Serap.1,

24:PG26, 585

and 588. -

Quoted in

CCC1988,

2Cor13.13

⁷St Irenaus of

Lyons. Against

Heresies

LG51.Quoted in

CCC 959

“To become the Heart and Light of Christ through Divine Communion.”

Divine Communion

Cor et Lumen Christi (The Heart and Light of Christ) has as its absolute centre the beautiful mystery of divine communion.¹ This is both the source and fruit of our life in God. “Those who abide in me and I in them bear fruit in plenty.”²

Divine communion is the life of blissful love lived within the heart of the Holy Trinity.³ This is the destiny of all who respond by the grace and power of the Holy Spirit to God’s invitation to become partakers in His Divine nature⁴ and share in the transfigured life and ministry of Christ the “light of the world.”⁵ God “gave himself to us through his Spirit. By the participation of the Spirit, we become communicants in the divine nature...For this reason, those in whom the Spirit dwells are divinised.”⁶

The Holy Spirit is the principal agent of communion. In our Christian life it is He who makes divine communion with the Lord and each other a reality and our apostolate fruitful. “Communion with God is life.”⁷

Heart and Light

The two main aspects of the Christian life, communion and mission, are expressed for us as Heart and Light. The “Heart” represents our divine communion with God and each other through prayer, worship and community

⁸1Jn4.8

⁹Jn15.10-12,
1Jn4.19, 2Jn1.6
¹⁰Ez36.26
¹¹Acts4.32
¹²Sg1.4
¹³2Cor4.6
¹⁴St Macarius
¹⁵Eph2.10
¹⁶Jn17.22,
Eph5.9
Mt5.16, Is60.1

life. God is love⁸ and it is love that is at the heart of every Christian vocation. True joy and happiness are found in a life of love.⁹ As we are drawn ever more deeply into the heart of God, He lovingly forms the heart of Christ within each one of us,¹⁰ and makes us “one heart and soul”¹¹ with Him and each other.

Our mission, which is the fruit of this divine communion of love, is signified by “Light”. Having been led into the embrace of divine love¹² we are inwardly transformed and illuminated.¹³ “Our nature is transformed into the power of God, and it is kindled into fire and light.”¹⁴ God’s light transfigures the Christian disciple causing them and their works¹⁵ to shine out with His glory.¹⁶ We are called to be a prophetic sign of the Kingdom and proclaim and demonstrate God’s love, truth, power and presence leading others into divine communion through the power of the Holy Spirit.¹⁷

We can be described as a contemplative and charismatic* community with a Eucharistic heart. This marriage is foundational to our calling.

CALLED TO COMMUNITY (Jn 17.11, Acts 2.42-47, Acts 4.32)

Building Communities.

¹⁸Mt3.11,
Acts1.5
¹⁹Rm5.5
²⁰2Cor3.17+18
²¹1Jn.4.11,
Acts4.32,
Jn13.34,
Jn15.15

²²Jn17.21+26
²³Acts2.42-47,
4.32

Our encounter with the living God through the “Baptism in the Holy Spirit”¹⁸ has radically and wonderfully transformed our lives. The infusion of God’s love and power through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit¹⁹ is an ongoing and deepening experience for us.²⁰ Being filled with the one Spirit urges us towards and empowers us to live a deeper communion with our brothers and sisters in love and friendship.²¹ This requires great generosity and openness of heart, forgiveness, mutual encouragement and gratitude in a spirit of humility, faith and hope. Aspiring to a Trinitarian love²² and inspired by the community of Jerusalem in the Book of Acts,²³ we are, by God’s grace, building a community which, as a new spiritual family within the Church, welcomes all the vocational states of life. As such each one of us embraces the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity and obedience in a way appropriate to our personal vocation. We seek a deep life of divine communion with the Holy Trinity and with each other through

deep life of divine communion with the Holy Trinity and with each other through prayer and love, while also engaging in a variety of ministries. Our vision is to establish local communities throughout the world comprising of residential members (Community of Life) and non-residential members (Companions of the Heart) who normally seek to live near to the community house. This may not always be possible and we remain open to how God may lead us in the future to spread the Cor et Lumen Christi Family in the Church.

In our life we seek to hold in balance and harmony the gifts of prayer, worship, family, friendship, community, work and ministry. We feel strongly called to embrace a radical, holy and sustainable way of life. We accept God's call to holiness as His invitation to true happiness. As we make God our first love we are clothed with His joy "for the Holy Spirit turns to joy whatever He touches."²⁴ God is Joy! As the English mystic Richard Rolle exclaimed "May God's cheerfulness forever sing out merrily in your life." True holiness always gives birth to indestructible joy. We have confidence that God in His power and mercy will make us holy. "Have great confidence for it is necessary not to hold back one's desires, but to believe in God that if we try we shall little by little, even though it may not be soon, reach the state the Saints did with His help. For if they had never determined to desire and seek this state little by little in practice they would never have mounted so high. His Majesty wants this determination..."²⁵

We are working to establish a community life in which members can live out the fullness of their Catholic Christian vocation and advance the Kingdom of God as true disciples of the Lord.²⁶ We are committed to grow in love and unity in our common life as "a people brought into unity from the unity of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit."²⁷ As a Catholic community this unity is also expressed in the community's submission to the Magisterium of the Church and recognition of the authority of the local Ordinary.

Two expressions

While sharing one heart, charism, spirituality and mission²⁸ we have been gifted with two expressions which serve as the two hands of the community. These

²⁴St Seraphim of Sarof

²⁵St Teresa of Avila 'Life' Ch.13

²⁶Mtt28.19

²⁷St Cyprian. Quoted in LG4

²⁸Acts4.32

with two expressions which serve as the two hands of the community. These complement one another and make possible a greater praying, prophetic and missionary presence.

In the one call to holiness there are different expressions in lifestyle. From the very origins of the Church some have been called by God to live their Christian vocation in full-time ministry and some in ordinary daily life. Community members strive to live radically their calling in the setting the Lord has placed them.

²⁹Mk16.20

Acts6.4

Rm15.19

The residential members leave their homes and employment and, living on divine providence, devote themselves to prayer and the ministry of the word in the power of the Holy Spirit.²⁹ This vocation is lived in the context of a balanced lifestyle structured upon New Testament values so as to facilitate a deep life of prayer, fellowship and missionary endeavour. The residential community provides Eucharistic centres for prayer, community gatherings, for teaching, training, ministry and retreat. They aspire to be a place of encounter with the living God, and a material sign of the Kingdom, a light on a hill. They also engage in missionary outreach and formation in the wider Church at home and abroad.

The community members who live in their own homes embrace a less structured form of community commitment. This enables them, in diverse circumstances, to respond appropriately to each challenge and opportunity which presents itself. In this way they conform their lives to New Testament values. They seek to be a transforming leaven³⁰ and a light in the world in which they have been placed. They take the gospel into the day to day life of the world giving witness through their commitment to Christian values and sharing the Good news. They also engage in various services and ministries within the community and the wider Church as they are called and their circumstances permit.

³⁰Lk13.20

We share our material resources, meet together very regularly for praise, worship, adoration, formation, fellowship, outreach and the celebration of the Holy Eucharist.³¹

³¹Acts2.42-47

Giving thanks to God for the wonderful gift of these two expressions within our community we commit ourselves to encourage and honour each other in our complementary vocations within Cor et Lumen Christi. We want to take to heart

complementary vocations within Cor et Lumen Christi. We want to take to heart the words of Ephesians, “lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit and the bond of peace.”³²

³²Eph4.1-3

CALLED TO PRAYER (Lk 11.1, Col 4.2, Ps 32.6)

The Holy Eucharist.

³³Rm5.5

Divine communion is made possible through the infusion of the Holy Spirit³³ for which we pray daily. This is profoundly experienced in the Eucharistic Heart of Jesus the tabernacle of the Holy Trinity, perfect communion at the heart of the Church.

³⁴Ps 63, Ignatius of Antioch

Letter to

Romans 7.3

³⁵St. Theodoret

³⁶Sg1.4, 2.4,

Ps81.16

³⁷Rev19.9

“I long for the bread of God which is the flesh of Jesus Christ, and for His blood to drink which is incorruptible love.”³⁴ Longing for God we are drawn by the Spirit into His Eucharistic Heart, which is the bridal chamber of Divine love, for in “eating the elements of the bridegroom and drinking His blood, we accomplish a marriage union.”³⁵ Here we partake in Our Lord’s most intimate communion with His beloved ones,³⁶ anticipating the eternal wedding banquet of the Lamb and His Bride.³⁷

³⁸Sg7.10,

Jer31.20,

Lk22.15

Rev22.17

³⁹Ps63, Rev4.

Jn19.37

⁴⁰Ex19.9,

Lk9.34

This wonder of God’s presence in the midst of his body, the Church, is irresistible to us. As He longs to receive us,³⁸ we hunger to receive Him in the Eucharist as often as we can, daily if possible. With all of heaven we contemplate His dazzling love and beauty through adoration of the Blessed Sacrament,³⁹ even though at times He may seem to be concealed in a cloud.⁴⁰

The celebration of the Holy Eucharist is the source and summit of our prayer, life and mission. Our regular community celebrations of the Holy Eucharist, often accompanied by an agape meal, are important and a particular joy for us because they allow the community to express its spirituality at the Eucharistic banquet. The holy Eucharist is our heart.

⁴¹1Jn4.16

Prayer.

⁴²St Theophane

“God is love and those who abide in love abide in God.”⁴¹ This call to abide in love manifests itself first of all in our life of prayer, which we understand as the foundation of our Christian life and our first and fundamental response to God’s love and grace. “If prayer is right, everything is right.”⁴² Though aware of our poverty we hear the invitation of God to the mystical life of prayer. This involves profound conversion and poverty of spirit in an ever-deepening surrender to God’s transforming love through a heroic, yet confident, vulnerability of heart. We remember that the first calling of every person is to believe and receive the love of God.⁴³

⁴³Eph2.4-6,

1Jn4.10+16

⁴⁴St Augustine

⁴⁵St Symeon the

New

Theologian

⁴⁶St John of the

Cross

⁴⁷Rm5.5

⁴⁸St John of the

Cross

⁴⁹Lk10.21,

Rm14.17,

2Cor3.18,

1Th1.6

⁵⁰Mk12.30

⁵¹Jn15.5

The life of prayer has at its heart an enduring desire and longing for God and His Kingdom. “The more desire dilates the heart the more able we become to welcome God.”⁴⁴ This wonderful desire is itself the presence and action of the Holy Spirit who is Himself “the desire that is within me.”⁴⁵ We confidently long for the “infusion of love”⁴⁶ which is the gift of The Spirit⁴⁷ who is Himself the “living flame of love”⁴⁸ and the source of our transfiguration and joy.⁴⁹ It is in prayer that we embrace, in a special way, the call of the first commandment of Jesus to “love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your mind and all your strength.”⁵⁰ We see our life of divine communion with the Lord in prayer as the source of our communion with each other and as integral to our mission and the source of its fruitfulness. “Those who abide in me and I in them bear fruit in plenty.”⁵¹ “Every believer in this world of ours must be a spark of light, a centre of love, a vivifying leaven amidst his fellow men. But he will be this all the more perfectly the more closely he lives in communion with God in the intimacy of his soul.”⁵² Prayer is both a joy and an “exercise of love.”⁵³ At times it is filled with light and peace, at others it is a great trial. However we “never lose heart”⁵⁴ knowing that “those who seek find.”⁵⁵ “For God does not deny Himself to anyone who perseveres.”⁵⁶ Love expressed in prayer is the foundation of holiness, which is the vocation of all, “be holy for the lord your God is holy.”⁵⁷

⁵²Pope John

XXIII

⁵³St Teresa of

Avila Life 11.5

⁵⁴Lk18.1

⁵⁵Mt7.7

⁵⁶St Teresa of

Avila

⁵⁷Lev19.2.

Eph 1.4

is holy.”⁵⁷

2Tim1.9,

1Thes4.3

⁵⁸Mt26.40

⁵⁹Eph6.18

⁶⁰St Theophane

The Art of

Prayer pg.121

We believe that a commitment to prayer is an act of love for the Church and the world. It has a multitude of effects and a hidden but powerful apostolic fruitfulness for the advancement of the Kingdom of light. With these things in mind we commit ourselves to pray for at least one hour each day⁵⁸ and endeavour to “pray in the Spirit on all occasions.”⁵⁹ St John Chrysostom reminds us that: “It is possible to offer fervent prayer even while walking in public or strolling alone, or seated in your shop...while buying or selling...or even while cooking.” In doing so we will enjoy a “conscious and living communion with the Lord.”⁶⁰

Our spirituality has been inspired by several “streams”, especially that of the Charismatic and Pentecostal Renewal and the contemplative mystical tradition. However we look to the life of Jesus and the New Testament Church for our fundamental inspiration.

⁶¹1Jn1.5

Worship.

⁶²Eph5.19

⁶³Jn4.24

1Cor14.15

This journey into the Divine Communion of love with our God of light⁶¹ is not one we engage in alone. Our corporate worship, inspired by the model of the early Church, is liturgical, charismatic and free so as to be open to the action and inspiration of the Holy Spirit.⁶² Inspired by and rooted in the word of God and expressed in the freedom of the anointing of the Holy Spirit, including the use of the gift of tongues, we aspire to worship in “Spirit and truth.”⁶³ For us the essential values of worship are intimate divine communion, truth, beauty, joy and rest in the loving presence of God.

Worship has a place in every community gathering and each of us prays at least part of the Divine Office daily.

⁶⁴Heb4.12

⁶⁵Acts10

⁶⁶Jn8.31+32

⁶⁷Rm8.29,

Jn17.17,

The Word of God

We draw life and inspiration from the word of God, which is “something alive and active”⁶⁴ and gives light to our soul. We seek to live in fidelity to God’s word whether in Scripture or through discerned prophecy⁶⁵ believing that the truth

Ps119.11
68Col3.16
69Mt4.4
70St Jerome

whether in Scripture or through discerned prophecy⁶⁵ believing that the truth will bring us into freedom⁶⁶ and help conform us to the pattern of Christ.⁶⁷ The Lord invites us to make His word our home and allow His word to dwell in us richly⁶⁸ for “Man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.”⁶⁹ We accept that “ignorance of scripture is ignorance of Christ”⁷⁰ and commit ourselves to pursue a deeper knowledge and understanding of the mysteries of God through His word. We take up the Pauline prayer for a “spirit of wisdom and revelation as you come to know him, so that with the eyes of your heart enlightened you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance among the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power for us who believe, according to the working of his great power.”⁷¹

71Eph1.17+19

We commit ourselves to read God’s word daily.

72Mt1.4,
Mk1.12,
Mk9.4,
Lk9.30-32
Phil3.17
Rev5.8
LG50+51

The Communion of Saints

During his earthly life Jesus had powerful encounters with the angels and Saints who both encouraged him and ministered to him.⁷² The Communion of Saints is a powerful reality for us. We receive inspiration, help and encouragement from their example, intercession, teaching and friendship. Particular place is given to St Therese and St Pio. Together they express, along with others, something of the community’s contemplative and charismatic vocation. Mary’s presence in the community is gentle and she is venerated in a variety of ways. We also give thanks for God’s angels whose presence and help we invoke.

73Jn13.35,
Jn17.23
74Isaiah60.1
Mt5.14-16
75Jn17.16,
Php2.14

CALLED TO WITNESS (Mt 5.14, Mk 16.20, Acts 1.8)

A Prophetic Sign.

76Mt5.16

The first fruit of this life of divine communion of love with God and each other is that we become a prophetic sign of the Kingdom of God⁷³ a living icon, a body of light.⁷⁴ Our vocation is strongly prophetic in nature. We seek to be a prophetic

⁷⁷St Marcellinus,
Pr13.9,
2Pt1.19,Php2.1
5, Mt13.43

light.⁷⁴ Our vocation is strongly prophetic in nature. We seek to be a prophetic sign among the people of God and a sign of contradiction and hope to the world.⁷⁵ People need the word of God proclaimed but they must also witness its incarnation in us. In a shattered world and a wounded Church people are longing to see that loving communion with God and others is really possible. In addition to this corporate sign we, as individual members, understand that each of us is called to be a credible sign of the presence of Christ to those around us through the way we live.⁷⁶ As tapers ignited from a single flame, we are all to shine out with the light of Christ.⁷⁷

⁷⁸Mt5.16,
Mk9.15,
Acts13.47,
2Pet1.19
⁷⁹Mt10.7+8,
Mtt28.19+20,
Mk16.20,
Lk4.14, Acts
4.29-30, 1Cor
2.1-5

Proclamation of the Gospel

Our experience of God's love in our prayer, worship and fellowship empowers us for mission. We are compelled to descend the mountain and communicate His light to others⁷⁸ through the ministry of the word in the power of the Holy Spirit.⁷⁹ This we do through preaching, teaching, training, informal sharing and, we hope, by example. Healings, signs and wonders had a vital place in the ministry of Jesus⁸⁰ and the early Church.⁸¹ So too, in our own proclamation of the gospel the "spiritual gifts"⁸² and signs and wonders,⁸³ play a crucial role. "In all truth I tell you anyone who has faith in me will perform the same works as I have been doing, indeed he will perform even greater works than these because I am going to my Father."⁸⁴ These charisms and signs and wonders are manifestations of the Holy Spirit⁸⁵ revealing God's presence and power and expressing His love. Exercised in faith hope and love they build up the Church⁸⁶ and confirm the gospel message "And they went out and proclaimed the Good news everywhere, while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the message by the signs that accompanied it."⁸⁷ "We cannot but desire that these gifts come and may God grant it with abundance. Besides grace let God's church be able to obtain and possess the charisms....God grant that the Lord will still increase this rain of charisms to make the church fruitful, beautiful, marvellous, and capable of inspiring respect, even the attention and amazement of the profane world"^{87a}

⁸⁰Mt4.23,
Mk1.32-34,
Jn14.11,
Acts2.22
⁸¹Acts5.12,
Heb2.3-4
⁸²1Cor12.1,
12.7-10, 14.1
⁸³Acts4.29+30
⁸⁴Jn14.12
⁸⁵1Cor12.7
⁸⁶1Cor14.12
⁸⁷Mk16.20
^{87a}Pope Paul VI

⁸⁸Acts4.29+30

We seek to make our own the prayer of the New Testament Church “enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness. Stretch out your hand to heal and perform miraculous signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus.”⁸⁸

⁸⁹Acts1.5

⁹⁰Mt10.24

⁹¹Mk16.20

⁹²1Pt4.10,

LG.12,

AA.3

⁹³1Pt3.15

⁹⁴1Cor 12.7-10

⁹⁵Mt8.38,

Rm1.16,

2Tim1.8

AA6.3Quoted

in CCC905,

AG11Quoted in

CCC2472

In our proclamation of the word of God we seek to inspire, encourage and empower others to live a deep life of intimate communion with the Lord and to realise their full baptismal inheritance and true Christian vocation through life in the Spirit. For this reason we promote the “Baptism in the Holy Spirit,”⁸⁹ radical discipleship⁹⁰ and ministry in the power of the Holy Spirit⁹¹ as normal aspects of the Christian life. While our ministry is not exclusively to Catholics, building up the Catholic Church has a central place in our mission.

We have all been given gifts to be used in the service of our common life and mission. “Each of you has received a special gift, so, like good stewards responsible for these varied gifts of God, put it at the service of others.”⁹² Every member accepts the call to proclaim the gospel⁹³ and exercise the spiritual gifts⁹⁴ for the sake of the Kingdom.

We are not ashamed of the glory of being His disciples, on the contrary we rejoice to be His witnesses.⁹⁵

⁹⁶Mtt19.21,

2Cor8.9

⁹⁷ Lk12.15

⁹⁸ Jn17.16

Simplicity of Life

Inspired by the example of Jesus and the New Testament Church we embrace a simple lifestyle for the sake of the Kingdom,⁹⁶ so that endeavouring to be free from attachment to material things our hearts may more deeply welcome God and be free to love.⁹⁷ We desire to challenge the materialistic values of society and live a more just lifestyle through radical material and financial sharing.⁹⁸

Our spirituality of divine communion inspires us to “remember the poor.”⁹⁹ We accept that all humanity is a “beggar before God.”¹⁰⁰ We acknowledge our communion with the poor by striving to embrace a simple lifestyle, by sharing, almsgiving, fasting, solidarity and a variety of ministries and hidden acts of service. The good news must be made available to the poor and for this reason our events are organised on a donation basis so that all may attend, whatever

⁹⁹ Gal2.10

¹⁰⁰ St Augustine

Sermo56, 6,

PL38 381

¹⁰¹2Cor3.5+6

¹⁰²Eph1.4

¹⁰³Rm15.4,
Col1.27,
Ps119.74,

Ps147.11

¹⁰⁴2Cor12.9

¹⁰⁵Eph3.20+21

our events are organised on a donation basis so that all may attend, whatever their financial circumstances.

In Conclusion

All of this is impossible for us in our own strength,¹⁰¹ whom though chosen by God to be His saints¹⁰² are frail and inconstant. Even so, putting our faith and hope in our loving God and his word,¹⁰³ urged on by the Church and the Saints and in the power of the Holy Spirit,¹⁰⁴ we believe He “can accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, to him be glory in the Church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever. Amen.”¹⁰⁵

Damian. 17th October 2003. The Feast of St Ignatius of Antioch.

*Note: by “charismatic” I mean especially, though not exclusively, those charisms referred to by St Paul as ‘spiritual gifts’ in 1 Corinthians Ch12,7-10.

LG-Lumen Gentium.Dogmatic Constitution on the Church. Vat II

AA-Apostolicam Actuositatem. Decree on the Apostolate of Lay People. Vat II

AG-Ad Gentes. Decree on the Church’s Missionary Activity. Vat II

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