

BENEDICT XVI, *Deus Caritas Est**Charity as a responsibility of the Church*

20. Love of neighbour, grounded in the love of God, is first and foremost a responsibility for each individual member of the faithful, but it is also a responsibility for the entire ecclesial community at every level: from the local community to the particular Church and to the Church universal in its entirety. As a community, the Church must practice love. Love thus needs to be organized if it is to be an ordered service to the community. The awareness of this responsibility has had a constitutive relevance in the Church from the beginning: “All who believed were together and had all things in common; and they sold their possessions and goods and distributed them to all, as any had need” (*Acts* 2:44-5). In these words, Saint Luke provides a kind of definition of the Church, whose constitutive elements include fidelity to the “teaching of the Apostles”, “communion” (*koinonia*), “the breaking of the bread” and “prayer” (cf. *Acts* 2:42). The element of “communion” (*koinonia*) is not initially defined, but appears concretely in the verses quoted above: it consists in the fact that believers hold all things in common and that among them, there is no longer any distinction between rich and poor (cf. also *Acts* 4:32-37). As the Church grew, this radical form of material communion could not in fact be preserved. But its essential core remained: within the community of believers there can never be room for a poverty that denies anyone what is needed for a dignified life.

***Franciscan Prayer* - Ilia Delio OSF - pg 113**

Through the Spirit, we are to take on the Word in our own lives so that we become the Word. How? By coming to a true knowledge of who we are and coming to a deeper understanding of who we are meant to be. God utters each of us as a little “word” so that, from all eternity, each of us is meant to express something of God. Because we often live with divided selves—where the spirit longs for God but the flesh longs for something else—we fail to live in the truth of our identity, and thus we fail to be the “word” that God intended us to be. Prayer of the heart, that unceasing prayer where God breathes in us and our hearts are turned toward God, allows us to deepen our identity in God. And in that deepening of life in God by which we become more of our true selves, the Word shines forth in our lives. We become an expression of the Word of God. Thus, when we allow the Word to take root within us through prayer and the indwelling of the Spirit then we bring the Word to life. In Francis' view, nothing is to hinder us from this vocation nor should we desire anything else: “Let us desire nothing else, let us want nothing else, let nothing else please us and cause us delight except our Creator, Redeemer and Savior, the only true God, let nothing hinder us, nothing separate us, nothing come between us.”¹⁴ That is, let us focus our energies on God alone.

A Mirror of the Perfection

Chapter 24

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**A BROTHER WHO NEITHER PRAYED
NOR WORKED BUT ATE WELL**

At the religion's beginning, when the brothers were staying at Rivo Torto, near Assisi, there was a brother among them who prayed little, did not work, and did not want to go for alms; but he ate heartily. Giving the matter some thought, blessed Francis knew through the Holy Spirit that the man was carnal. He told him: "Go on your way, Brother Fly, because you want to feed on the labor of your brothers, but wish to be idle in the work of God, like a lazy and sterile bee, that does not gather or work, yet eats the work and gain of the good bees."

So he went his way. And because he lived according to the flesh, he neither asked for mercy nor found it.

Scripture Reflection**Romans 8:26-39**

²⁶In the same way, the Spirit too comes to the aid of our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit itself intercedes with inexpressible groanings.

²⁷And the one who searches hearts knows what is the intention of the Spirit, because it intercedes for the holy ones according to God's will.

God's Indomitable Love in Christ.

²⁸We know that all things work for good for those who love God,* who are called according to his purpose.

²⁹For those he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, so that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.

³⁰And those he predestined he also called; and those he called he also justified; and those he justified he also glorified.

³¹What then shall we say to this? If God is for us, who can be against us?

³²He who did not spare his own Son but handed him over for us all, how will he not also give us everything else along with him?

³³Who will bring a charge against God's chosen ones? It is God who acquits us.

³⁴Who will condemn? It is Christ [Jesus] who died, rather, was raised, who also is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us.

³⁵What will separate us from the love of Christ? Will anguish, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or the sword?

³⁶As it is written:

“For your sake we are being slain all the day; we are looked upon as sheep to be slaughtered.”

³⁷No, in all these things we conquer overwhelmingly through him who loved us.

³⁸For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor present things,* nor future things, nor powers,

³⁹nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.