



“I lead you in the way you should go.”

Isaiah 48,17-19

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

How blessed we are this Advent to have been given the opportunity to share in the online Carmelite Retreat with Madame Acarie! (Blessed Mary of the Incarnation, ocd).

Although we are physically distanced from one another, we are united in this Retreat through the wonders of technology. Wherever we are in the world, we are called upon in these days of retreat to “keep awake, be watchful, and wait upon the Lord in silence and peace.”

These directives in the light of the teachings of Blessed Mary of the Incarnation bring into intense focus what we have been living out in our communities and daily lives this year.

Change and darkness came upon all of us, suddenly and forcefully, as we faced the Covid-19 pandemic as well as facing unexpected events in our Province.

Blessed Mary of the Incarnation encourages us to constantly “keep awake” in the sense of being open and available to God through recognizing that unforeseen events are often a call to a deeper union with Him through a change of path set out by Him which is much greater than any path we might choose for ourselves.

Through the cultivation of “watchfulness” in our spiritual practice, Blessed Mary of the Incarnation teaches us that attentiveness to God, seeking His Will in simplicity, coupled with an awareness of our own poverty, enables us grow within our hearts in freedom and obedience based on God’s love for us.

What a gift of grace are these two counsels of Blessed Mary of the Incarnation for us individually and as communities as we continue to move forward through this year on a path that seems uncertain causing us to live more expectantly and with increased hope that Isaiah’s words in scripture will be fulfilled in us. *“I lead you in the way you should go.”*

In this Advent Retreat Blessed Mary of the Incarnation teaches us by her lived experience the benefit of cultivating the spiritual practice of “waiting upon the Lord”. Waiting requires us to be patient in our living by living in the present and waiting there. Although her desire was to enter religious life by living and nurturing the present moment, she was able to hear and listen to the Lord’s will for her. She surrendered this desire for religious life and entered then without resistance into the state of marriage.

Blessed are those servants whom the master finds awake, watchful, and waiting when He comes. Let us all together keep awake, watch and wait for the light of Christmas, Christ the Lord!!!

Be safe and keep healthy,

In Carmel,

Gladys McMullin

President, Disalced Carmelite Secular Order
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