



## Advent Reflection

By Giuliana Spigone

**During Advent let us reflect...** on some of the natural and supernatural roots present in us. We said that we carry **positive roots**, which we need to cultivate with the help of grace, and strengthen through the practice of charity. At the same time, we carry **negative roots**, such as sin, inappropriate tendencies, and uncontrolled reactions, which we need to overcome through effort and love.

The first negative root, the Founder says, is **egoism**. He writes, *“If we were not egotistic (or selfish), but generous and giving, we would not lack charity even in the least. Therefore, we must correct our tendencies, restrain our nerves, and be self-controlled. However, before we can do all these we need to correct our egotism and selfishness, for egotism is indeed the root of our lack of charity”* (La Carita’, p 60).

Then, there is the root of pride, which can only be conquered by the practice of humility. Again, the Founder says, *“a deeply humble heart, **seldom lacks charity**. The practical remedy for pride is mortification – **without mortification, we will not be able to practice charity**.*

One last root is a lack of supernatural spirit. If we should try to read everything with a purely human logic, or human mind, we will never be able to open ourselves to a real understanding of things, and of events. We will never be able to judge people’s behavior with a heart willing and capable to discover a higher good.

In this field – interspersed with bad roots and good sprouts – we are called to work and to produce good fruit with the help of the Lord’s grace. We all are invited to answer generously to the call to holiness as to a gift that has already been granted to us.

How are we to do this? First of all, through a gentleness which the “Father” calls the “condiment of charity”; gentleness in speaking, in looking, in judging, and in giving orders.

*“See how sweetness embraces every expression of life, and attracts souls”* (La Carita’, p. 5). To look into each other’s eyes, to speak kind words, to listen, to hold each other’s hand, or to be gentle seem like easy and natural gestures. Yet such gestures are lacking even among husband and wife, among father and son, and among communities. We never exchange these gestures, which are the nourishment of our soul. We have lost the taste for free giving, and the meaning of gift and generosity. Everything seems to be “necessary”, better yet, “a necessity”: possession, organization, and utter efficiency.

An Indian motto sounds like this, “The disciples of a great master wanted to know what ideals the master had as a disciple. The master answered: ‘the one who has only two tunics and sells one of them to buy flowers for a gift.’” An innocent story? It make us laugh? Perhaps it makes us think.

What about our interior fervor or eagerness? In each of us there is something deeper than our external agitation. In each of us there is an inner desire for depth, for sincerity, and for purity. Before God, we would like to be more transparent and clear. We feel the desire to find God, who is waiting for us, and leads our history beyond our own will. There is in every Oblate (and every member of the Pro Sanctity Family) the will to follow Christ in truth, and to build paschal communities that celebrate the risen Christ; *men and women* who desire to share in the holiness of the God who called them.

Our response to God's call is not only constant, but also gradually ascending. The degree and intensity of my interior life should affect all that I do; it will earn me merits that will automatically increase my fervor (La Carita', p. 7).

On the other hand, a lack of correspondence will cause negative consequences that will affect not only my own self, but also the whole world. *"Let us not forget the great principle of instrumentality established by God. God decreed that the salvation of the world should be brought about through human instrumentality"* (La Carita', p. 58).

**Therefore, let us live in harmony** with God, not expecting God to adjust to our will, but rather, by obeying his will. This disposition will be the most splendid miracle to ask our "Father", for he said, *"I do not intend to perform healing miracles, but miracles of conversion."*

Giuliana Spigone 2006



**Thought for the day ... G. Giaquinta**

Mary, give us your eyes and your heart that we may learn to love and serve all our brothers and sisters as you did.

(Pictured: Rita Hejkal and her first grandchild, Marie Cecilia)