

Mary, the Chaste One

Reflections from the Gospels

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Outline

- A. Definitions: chaste, chastity, vow of chastity
- B. Mary in the Four Gospels
 - Mark
 - Matthew
 - Luke
 - John
- C. Mary, the Chaste One
- D. Living Chastity as Religious Women

Definitions (Dictionary)

Chaste –

1. Innocent of unlawful sexual intercourse
2. Celibate
3. Pure in thought and act
4. Simple, Austere, clean, spotless

Synonyms: clean, decent, **immaculate**, modest, **pure**, vestal, **virgin**, virginal

Antonyms: coarse, dirty, filthy, immodest, impure, indecent, obscene, smutty, unchaste, vulgar

First known use – 13th century

In Christian Tradition

Chastity

1. Sexual purity
2. **Not having sexual relations before marriage.**
3. Fidelity to husband or wife during marriage.
4. In morality, it is placed opposite the deadly sin of lust and classified as one of seven virtues.
5. To be virtuous, the moderation of sexual desires is required.
6. A form of virtue of temperance, which controls according to right reason the desire for and use of things that give greatest sensual pleasure.
7. Reason, will and desire can harmoniously work together to do what is good. (*Catholic Encyclopedia*)

Acc to Catechism of Catholic Church

Church

Chastity

1. Successful integration of sexuality within the person; the inner unity of the body and spirit.
2. Sexuality, in which the person's belonging to the bodily and biological world is expressed, becomes personal and truly human when it is integrated into the relationship of one person to another, in the complete and lifelong mutual gift of a man and a woman.
3. Involves the integrity of the person and the completeness of the gift. (2337)

Acc. to Perfectae Caritatis

Vow of Chastity

1. An evangelical counsel
2. “for the sake of the kingdom of heaven” (Mt 19:12)
3. **A gift of grace**
4. It frees the heart of a person in a unique fashion (1 Cor 7:32-35) so it may be more inflamed with love for God and people.
5. Religious dedicate themselves with undivided heart to the service of God and the apostolate.
6. Points the faithful to the marriage decreed by God which will be revealed in the future where the Church takes Christ as only spouse.

Perfectae Caritatis 12

After Vatican II – Changes in Perspectives

From a concept of the vow of chastity which emphasizes the moral purity of individuals, as the virtue of renunciation, mortification and temperance, toward understanding chastity and consecrated celibacy as **an expression of affection fulfilled personally and in community offered in love to God and neighbor.**

Consecrated chastity becomes a sign of the hope of the Kingdom, an anticipation of the authentic fulfillment of the end times, and a definitive expression of human love.

- From vow of chastity experienced as deprivation of the gifts of full sexuality, of paternity and maternity, or personal intimacy, and the physical enjoyment of love, to a view of chastity as an offering that affirms **integral affection as a mature expression of freedom, and the capacity to give oneself totally and without expecting in return**
- Vow becomes a means of experiencing dynamically **the grace of God** toward us. We have concrete way of demonstrating and strengthening **a genuine and selfless love that is neither possessive nor based upon selfish gratification.**

Marcello Aze vedo, *The Consecrated Life*

Chaste

- Moral purity: immaculate, pure, virgin
- Expression of affection offered in love to God and neighbor
- Integration of sexuality within the person; the inner unity of the body and spirit.
- A sign of the hope of the Kingdom of God.
- Not seen as deprivation of the gifts of full sexuality, of paternity and maternity, or personal intimacy, and the physical enjoyment of love
- an offering that affirms integral affection as a mature expression of freedom, and the capacity to give oneself totally and without expecting in return
- Grace of God
- Means of strengthening a genuine and selfless love that is neither possessive nor based upon selfish gratification.

Mary in the Gospels

Mark	Matthew	Luke	John
	1:16	1:26-38	
	1:18-25	1:39-45	
	2:11-21	1:46-55	
		2:22-24	
			2:1-11 19:25-27
3:31-35	12:46-50	8:19-21	
6:1-3	13:53-58		

Mark on Mary

- *Then his mother and his brothers came; and standing outside, they sent to him and called him.³² A crowd was sitting around him; and they said to him, "Your mother and your brothers and sisters are outside, asking for you."³³ And he replied, "Who are my mother and my brothers?"³⁴ And looking at those who sat around him, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers!³⁵ Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother."*

(Mark 3:31-35 NRS)

Family of Jesus



Mark on Mary

- *He left that place and came to his hometown, and his disciples followed him.² On the sabbath he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were astounded. They said, "Where did this man get all this? What is this wisdom that has been given to him? What deeds of power are being done by his hands!³ Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon, and are not his sisters here with us?" And they took offense at him.*

(Mark 6:1-3 NRS)

Characterization of Mary in Mark

1. His mother and brothers standing outside looking for Jesus while around Jesus sit those who listen to him.
2. If she does the will of God, she is mother of Jesus.
3. Her name is Mary, who is mother to the carpenter, Jesus and his brothers James, Joses, Judas and Simon, and sisters.

Matthew on Mary

and Jacob the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called the Messiah.

(Matthew 1:16 NRS)

Mary

1. Wife of Joseph
2. Of whom Jesus was born
3. Mother of the Messiah
4. One of the four women in the genealogy who had irregular life: she conceives of the Holy Spirit

Matthew on Mary

*Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When **his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit.***¹⁹ Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly.²⁰ But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid **to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.**"²¹ She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins."

- ²² *All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:*²³ "Look, the **virgin** shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel," which means, "God is with us."²⁴ *When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as **his wife**,*²⁵ *but had **no marital relations with her** until she had borne a son; and he named him Jesus.*

(Matthew 1:18-25 NRS)

Characterization

Mary:

1. Mother of Jesus Christ
2. Betrothed to Joseph, his wife
3. Found to be with child of the Holy Spirit
4. To be divorced by husband Joseph
5. That who is conceived of her is of the Holy Spirit
6. She will bear a son, whose name will be Jesus
7. **Virgin shall conceive and bear a son**
8. Taken by Joseph as wife
9. **Joseph did not have marital relations with her until she had borne a son**

The Jewishness of Mary

- Genealogy – in the ancestry of Abraham, father in faith
- The Jewish marriage ceremony
- Call of Mary – in line with annunciation themes in the OT: angelic apparition, disturbance, objection, confirmation of a sign (cf. Gen. 17-18 on Isaac; Exod 3-4, Moses; Judg 13:3-22, Samson)
- Magnificat – in the tradition of Hannah in Samuel
- Purification rites of the Mother and consecration of her first born son according to the law

Matthew on Mary

On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.¹² And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.¹³ Now after they had left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him."¹⁴ Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt,¹⁵ and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet, "Out of Egypt I have called my son."

- *¹⁶ When Herod saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, he was infuriated, and he sent and killed all the children in and around Bethlehem who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had learned from the wise men. ¹⁷ Then was fulfilled what had been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah: ¹⁸ "A voice was heard in Ramah, wailing and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be consoled, because they are no more." ¹⁹ When Herod died, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, ²⁰ "Get up, take the child and **his mother**, and go to the land of Israel, for those who were seeking the child's life are dead." ²¹ Then Joseph got up, took the child and **his mother**, and went to the land of Israel.*

(Matthew 2:11-21 NRS)

Characterization

- The son and his mother were visited by wise men from the east.
- The son and his mother were brought by Joseph to Egypt to protect them from the evil plans of Herod.
- After Herod died, Joseph brought back the son and his mother to Israel.

Matthew on Mary

- *46 While he was still speaking to the crowds, his mother and his brothers were standing outside, wanting to speak to him. 47 Someone told him, "Look, your mother and your brothers are standing outside, wanting to speak to you." 48 But to the one who had told him this, Jesus replied, "Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?" 49 And pointing to his disciples, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers! 50 For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother." (Matthew 12:46-50 NRS)*
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Characterization

1. Jesus' mother together with his brothers are looking for him. They seem to be outside the group of disciples listening to Jesus.
2. If the mother of Jesus does the will of God, she too becomes eschatological mother of Jesus.

Matthew on Mary

- *When Jesus had finished these parables, he left that place.⁵⁴ He came to his hometown and began to teach the people in their synagogue, so that they were astounded and said, "Where did this man get this wisdom and these deeds of power?⁵⁵ Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary? And are not his brothers James and Joseph and Simon and Judas?⁵⁶ And are not all his sisters with us? Where then did this man get all this?"⁵⁷ And they took offense at him. But Jesus said to them, "Prophets are not without honor except in their own country and in their own house."⁵⁸ And he did not do many deeds of power there, because of their unbelief. (Matthew 13:53-58 NRS)*

Characterization

1. Mary is mother of Jesus. As such, Jesus is looked down by people because of his parentage. His own people of his own home, Nazareth cannot accept him as a prophet.
2. Mary is just a simple, ordinary person in the community . How can she have a son who teaches with wisdom and acts deeds of power?

Portrayal of Mary in Matthew

1. Mother of Jesus and his brothers
2. Wife to Joseph
3. Virgin , a young maiden

“Mary Matthew’s Gospel is a symbol of virginal hope: a mother untouched but at the same time pregnant with life, the face of people full of light, the face of God which gives always new life to those destroyed by sin and death.”

Luke on Mary

- *In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, ²⁷ to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸ And he came to her and said, "Greetings, **favored one! The Lord is with you.**" ²⁹ But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. ³⁰ The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found **favor with God.** ³¹ And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. ³² He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. ³³ He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."*



*34 Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a **virgin**?" 35 The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow*

*you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. 36 And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. 37 For nothing will be impossible with God." 38 Then Mary said, "**Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.**" Then the angel departed from her. (Luke 1:26-38 NRS)*

Characterization

1. A virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph
2. Virgin's name was Mary
3. "Hail O favored one, the Lord is with you."
4. She was greatly troubled with the saying
5. She is assured by the angel
6. Mary has found favor with God.
7. Will conceive in her womb and bear a son, she shall call Jesus
8. Mary asks, "How shall this be since I have no husband?"
9. The Holy Spirit will come upon her and the Holy Spirit will overshadow her.
10. She receives a sign: Elizabeth is 6 months pregnant.
11. Fiat of Mary: let it be to me according to your word.

Luke on Mary

- *In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, ⁴⁰ where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹ When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit ⁴² and exclaimed with a loud cry, "**Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb.** ⁴³ And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? ⁴⁴ For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. ⁴⁵ And **blessed** is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord." (Luke 1:39-45 NRS)*

Characterization

1. Mary went with haste into the hill country, to a city of Judah
2. She entered the house of Zechariah and Elizabeth
3. With the greeting of Mary, the baby in Elizabeth's womb leaped.
4. "Blessed are you among women and blessed is the fruit of your womb."
5. Mother of my Lord
6. Blessed is she who believed the fulfillment of what the Lord said

Luke on Mary

- And Mary said, "*My soul magnifies the Lord,⁴⁷ and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,⁴⁸ for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant. Surely, from now on all generations will call me **blessed**;⁴⁹ for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name.⁵⁰ His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation.⁵¹ He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.⁵² He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly;⁵³ he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty.⁵⁴ He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy,⁵⁵ according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants forever.*" (Luke 1:46-55 NRS)

Characterization

1. Mary's soul magnifies the Lord / her spirit rejoices in God my savior
2. God regarded her low estate – “poor of Yahweh”
3. All generations will call her blessed.
4. God has done great things for her
5. She praises God's name, mercy, strength,
6. God has reversed the situation of the humble, the poor,
7. Mary remained with Elizabeth about 3 months, then returned home.

- “The God of the Covenant, celebrated in the exultation of her spirit by the Virgin of Nazareth, is also he who ‘has cast down the mighty from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly, filled the hungry with good things, sent the rich away empty, scattered the proud-hearted and his mercy is from age to age on ‘those who fear him’. ... Mary truly proclaims the coming of the ‘Messiah of the poor.’ The love of God expressed in the Magnificat, is later expressed in the words and works of Jesus.”

John Paul II

Magnificat

⁵⁰ His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation.

⁵¹ He has shown strength with his arm;

he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.

⁵² He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly;

⁵³ he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty.

⁵⁴ He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, ⁵⁵ according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants forever." (Luke 1:46-55 NRS)

Jesus' Mission

¹⁸ "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, ¹⁹ to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

²¹ Then he began to say to them, "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing." (Luke 4:16-21 NRS)

Characterization

- God's preference for the poor is expressed in the Magnificat of Mary.
- Mary then is imbued with the spirit of the “poor of Yahweh” –those who put their trust and confidence in him (Pss 25; 31; 35; 55)
- Mary proclaims the Messiah of the poor.
- Her faith expresses the truth about God who saves, who is the source of every gift, and who has preferential love for the poor and humble, expressed in the words and works of Jesus.
- Mary is totally dependent upon God and completely directed towards him

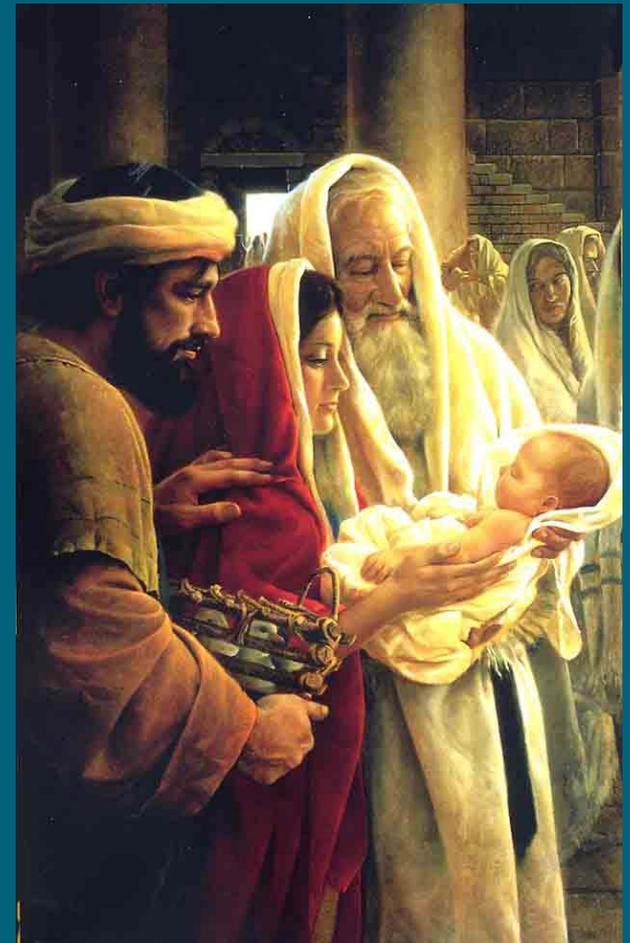
Luke on Mary

- *When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord²³ (as it is written in the law of the Lord, "Every firstborn male shall be designated as holy to the Lord"),²⁴ and they offered a sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, "a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons." (Luke 2:22-24 NRS)*

Characterization

- The Presentation of Jesus in the Temple portrays **the consecration of Jesus and Mary to God.**

- A sword will pierce her heart.
She will struggle to uphold justice just like those who are concerned about the things of God.
Pondered these things in heart.



Luke on Mary

Then his mother and his brothers came to him, but they could not reach him because of the crowd.²⁰ And he was told, "Your mother and your brothers are standing outside, wanting to see you."²¹ But he said to them, "My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and do it." (Luke 8:19-21 NRS)

Characterization

- This passage is parallel to Mark with modification.
- Jesus' mother is one who hears the word of God and do it.
- Mary is presented as hearing the word of God and keeping it.

- **In Luke, Mary is**

1. **Virgin**
2. **Mother**
3. **Received favor of God.**
4. **Blessed by God**
5. **Servant of the Lord**
6. **Hearing God's Word and Doing God's will: Fiat**
7. **Consecrated to God**
8. **Having Faith in the God who saves. Rejoices in God**
9. **Totally dependent upon God and completely directed towards him – poor of Yahweh**
10. **Foreshadows the mission of Jesus, the messiah of the poor.**

John on Mary

*On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the **mother of Jesus** was there.² Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding.³ When the wine gave out, the **mother of Jesus** said to him, "They have no wine."⁴ And Jesus said to her, "Woman, what concern is that to you and to me? My hour has not yet come."⁵ **His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you."***



• *⁶ Now standing there were six stone water jars for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. ⁷ Jesus said to them, "Fill the jars with water." And they filled them up to the brim. ⁸ He said to them, "Now draw some out, and take it to the chief steward." So they took it. ⁹ When the steward tasted the water that had become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the steward called the bridegroom ¹⁰ and said to him, "Everyone serves the good wine first, and then the inferior wine after the guests have become drunk. But you have kept the good wine until now." ¹¹ Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee, and revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him. (John 2:1-11 NRS)*

Characterization

1. The mother of Jesus elucidated the situation of the wedding party: they have no wine.
2. She also showed concern.
3. Probably she was a family member of the groom or bride, so that she could enter the kitchen and know the situation there. Or maybe, she was helping there.
4. “What to me and to you?” speaks of the relationship of the mother and the son.
5. Their relationship is about the hour—the will of God, in the passion, death and resurrection.
6. The mother introduces his son to do the will of God, and begin his public ministry.
7. She is a true mother—not only biological, but also eschatological relationship.

John on Mary

*And that is what the soldiers did. Meanwhile, standing near the cross of Jesus were **his mother**, and **his mother's** sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene.²⁶ When Jesus saw **his mother** and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to **his mother**, "Woman, here is your son."²⁷ Then he said to the disciple, "Here is your mother." And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home. (John 19:25-27 NRS)*

Characterization

1. The mother stood by the cross as her son was crucified.
2. She was there, since she followed from the first sign of Jesus.
3. She too was his disciple.
4. As her son leaves her to the Beloved Disciple, she begets a new son and family—the family of the disciples of Jesus of whom she becomes their mother.
5. By the cross, she gives birth to the community of disciples.

Mary the Chaste One

1. Virgin –a young maiden, who has not had sexual intercourse with a man before marriage. (Mt, Lk)
2. Virgin – before pregnancy, during pregnancy and after pregnancy (Mt, Lk)
3. A mother, wife, disciple—intimate relationship with God, and attuned to God’s actions in her life. (Mk, Mt, Lk, Jn) Integration of sexuality/bodiliness within the person; the inner unity of the body and spirit;
4. A person of integrity who heard the Word of God and could freely say “Fiat” to God’s will. (Lk)
5. A gift of grace: she is favored by God; blessed by God

6. God is with her (Lk)
8. Her relationships are in relation to doing God's will.
(Mk, Mt, Lk, Jn) with Jesus and the community of disciples (Jn): as a true mother
9. She is servant of the Lord. (Lk)
10. Her life foreshadows the mission of Jesus, as one single hearted and directed to God. (Lk)

Being chaste like Mary today

1. Having faith in the words of the Lord.
 - a. Celebrating the Liturgy of the Word & Eucharist
 - b. Reading and Studying the Scriptures
 - c. Reflection and Prayer on the word of God.
 - d. Believing what one hears and doing it.
 - e. Rejoicing in God's saving words and works

2. Not to overestimate one's own strength
 - a. knowing one's poverty yet with strength and confidence in the Lord and not in one's gifts
“what do we have that we have not received.”
 - b. accepting one's weaknesses and paying attention to them so as to overcome them.
Practice makes perfect.
 - c. Moderation: food, sleep, relaxation (talking, tv, movie, facebook), common sense, danger signals; practice mortification and custody of the senses

3. Care /promote health of mind and body

a. mind – study, reflection, meditation, positive thinking, avoid cognitive fallacies

b. body – cleanliness, food, sleep, rest and relaxation

4. True brotherly/sisterly love in the community, birthing of a Christian community
 - a. love and acceptance of each one with our uniqueness
 - b. presence and investing one's life in the community
 - c. faith sharing – prayers and God experiences, concerns in the ministry, relationships
 - d. bearing one another's burdens -- failures, illness, confusions, emotions, sin
 - e. Friendship in community
 - f. love of God and neighbors

Conclusion:

- To be chaste in the example of Mary signifies:
 1. Dedication of one's sexuality to God and God's reign
 2. Trust and dependence on the word of God and rejoicing in his saving acts – unity of body and spirit; integrity
 3. Believing the word of God and doing God's will.
 4. Being mother , brother, sister in the community of disciples – love, affection , especially to the poor
 5. Having a free heart that is inflamed with the love of God – God centered
 6. Faithfulness and fidelity to God and people.

Thanks to you all!