

Reverend Father Teodoro Kalaw, CRM *Superior General*
Clerics Regular Minor Adorno Fathers and Brothers
Via della Tribuna di Campitelli 6A, Rome, Italy 00186
+39 349 831 8995 | 1201-655-8020 (WhatsApp)



Are we making our life more difficult? I wonder at times if the cause for lack of vocations in many parts of the world, including our religious family, is the way we live our life.

Through centuries, there has been a false understanding of the cross. Christ said, “take up your cross and follow me.” Carrying of the cross is not a stifling act, it is heavy and uncomfortable. There are many people who intentionally avoid to be happy because they see the cross as a sign of suffering because of sin. As a result of suffering, these people become too hard on themselves until they become jaded and bitter with how they see life. In our religious community, we have our community activities and rituals that sometimes becomes just a mere obligation, a rule that is meant to be followed. The celebrations becomes rigid, devoid of joy and love. St. Teresa of Avilla said that a sad Nun is a bad nun. I am more afraid of one unhappy nun that a crowd of evil spirits. Pope Francis often said he is afraid of unhappy and rigid priests that bite. Of course, this was said in jest but we also know that jokes are half meant. God wants us to die happy and not miserably. He wanted us to have a happy death and not a sad one. A Happy death is a holy death.

To live life well, I encourage us to remember that God is love. God truly loves us and desires nothing more but to provide what is best for us. He willingly

sent his only begotten Son to favor us with eternal happiness. This intention of God and his will to give us his kingdom is already an invitation for us to live our lives to the fullest. There certainly is always the daily cross and challenges of life. This however must be confronted with an attitude defined and inspired by our faith. God meant for us to be happy which is equivalent to holiness. The big question is how can we live our life to the fullest?

Pray: Prayer is the basic foundation of our spiritual and Christian life. Without fervent prayers, we are just empty vessels. Prayer integrates us so much with what we do every day. As we are confronted with so many things in life, prayer directs us to sustain who we are and what we need to do. When we find life burdensome, it is not because we are forsaken and cursed, but because it is how we decide to see our life.

Choose to be happy and avoid worrying: Happiness is not an emotion, not a destination, but is a decision. Contentment must not be dependent in what we have, but rather in who we are. We are created in the image and likeness of God and are called to live with Him intimately through this way of life. Happiness must not come from outside, it is integral and at the core of man’s heart. We choose by the power of the will to be happy. This is a reality that we can always

strive to control. If we depend our happiness on others, we will always be frustrated because they might not live according to our expectations. Accept who they are, respect their choices and be encouraging in any way you live your life. Life is short, choose to live it to the fullest now. Worry comes from doubts and willing to be in full control. Leave all uncertainties to God and make the effort to place our full confidence in HIM.

Obey: In obedience we submit our entire will like the will of Christ to his father. We never lose our will and our choice, we remain free as God intended us to be free. By embracing this way of life, we choose the highest freedom which is the will of the Father. In order to do this, we need to live a generous life. The way of obedience is nothing more than generosity. According to Saint Ignatius of Loyola, obedience becomes generosity. What else is obedience but the constant practice of generosity in one's life? And what else is generosity but the constant practice of obedience in one's life? Let us not just live but let us celebrate the gift of obedience in our lives as we pray with St. Ignatius:

“Dearest Lord, teach me to be generous, Teach me to serve you as I should, To give and not to count the cost, To fight and not to heed the wounds, To toil and not to seek for rest, To labor and ask not for reward, Save that of knowing that I do Your most holy will. Amen.”

Generosity is freeing oneself to do the will of God. The true measure of

obedience is the generosity of one's heart. In being ready to give, we experience the greatest joy of the heart. A generous person is one who loves and possesses a happy demeanor and is positive in life. Even with the presence of the cross, this person who strives to live this every day finds the fullest meaning and reason to live.

Be true to yourself: The heaviest burdens that we carry are the thoughts in our head. In a culture where the value of one's self is dependent on other's validation through hearts and likes on social media, it is a challenge to not live according to the expectation of the others. No matter how your post launched a thousand hearts, never let this affect your self-worth. Live according to the expectation of God. What matters most at the end of the day is not what other people will say. What matters most is what God intends us to be. Do not be conquered by your pride. Be conquered with the love of God. No one else will care and accept you, but you and God. So don't be too hard on yourself. Take care of yourself, your image in God's face and your dealings with others.

Ultimately, let us ask the Blessed Virgin Mary for her intercession to make us obedient. It is very timely because the month of October is dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary. While growing up in the Philippines, praying the rosary every 6pm is vital to every household to honor Mary's obedience to God and to ask for her intercession in asking for God's mercy.

Fr. Ted, CRM