



From

**Hiding To
Glory**

Sr. Dr. Cleopatra CMC

FROM HIDING TO GLORY

Saint Euphrasia

Editor

Sr. Dr. Cleopatra CMC

Vice-Postulator

**Canonization Publication
2014**

Euphrasia Publications

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Saint Euphrasia

*"O my dove, in the clefts of the rock,
in the covert of the cliff, let me see Your face,
let me hear Your voice; for Your voice is sweet,
and Your face is lovely."*

(Song of Songs 2:14)



Message

“My steps have held fast to Your paths;
my feet have not slipped” (Ps. 17: 5).

In a sacred corner the human mind, the divine character of prayer, of holiness is lying hidden. The fundamental sacred call of every human being for that matter is the realization or fulfilment in God. This book **FROM HIDING TO GLORY** witnesses to the fact how this call from on High takes flesh in the life of a venerable virgin, Saint Euphrasia!

The architects behind the screen have succeeded in sketching the personality of Saint Euphrasia; what she was, who she was for the sake of those who are in the search for facts (truth). I desire and pray that let this image shine with radiant glory in front of those running up and down to get both ends meet. This book is an authority on Saint Euphrasia, because it is the result of several deep searching studies on various dimenious of the Saint’s life and events. The writers have presented to us in shining colours the hidden gems after cleaning and polishing, a process of the activity of the Holy Spirit who is the author of all significant Revelations. May every reader be able to make his / her marking in the holy steps St. Euphrasia made her Ascent, holding on to all the precious insights without losing any of those valuable pearls.

Congratulations to Sr. Dr. Cleopatra and all the sisters and to Fr. Paul Alapatt (Present Bishop of Ramanathapuram) for being the architects of this glorious book which all of you can be proud of.

Mar Andrews Thazhath

Metropolitan Archbishop of the Archdiocese of Trichur



Introduction

In today's world of challenges, God gives us as gifts, people who are full of goodness to be the light and street lamp on our way! Time and again God our Father gives us saints to take the humans to the depths of God's love and to the sacred rivers of the Eucharist. Such venerable lives impart to us new life and new favours day after day. When we turn to saint Euphrasia's life, we experience the same.

“Come everyone who thirsts, come to the water and you that have no money, come buy corn and eat!” (Is. 55: 1)

Modern man is a man thinking, a man with intellect. He is satisfied only when he has got an intelligent answer after deep thinking. Whatever the topic, whether spiritual or mundane, the society takes as example only those who practise what they say. That is why the Church is eager to reveal those who have led a holy life.

The tradition of Carmel is asceticism. Saint Euphrasia has shown that prayer and asceticism can find solution to our crisis situation in our spiritual journey. We begin to understand that the fear of the thorny stony path is really shaking the main trunk of the root and is about to uproot the tree of Carmelite tradition. As we search for solution we reach again the early spirit of Carmel in a saint of today. Saint Euphrasia of the Sacred Heart. The documentation of the Heroic Virtues and its Declarations in a Decree by the Holy Father John Paul II bear evidence to the fact that in Saint Euphrasia the goal and objectives of the Founder Father are fulfilled.

The way of perfection St. Euphrasia has lighted will help us to climb the Mount of Carmel and to be holy. This glorious Virgin who lived faithfully the CMC (Congregation of the Mother of Carmel)

From Hiding to Glory

charism provides for us an excellent example and an unfailing source of radiant inspiration.

This new English Translation **From Hiding to Glory** is now reaching our hands. The long time Vice-Postulator and the Provincial who took up the Cause of Sr. Euphrasia deserves special mention for the continuous hard tireless endeavour she has placed at the feet of the Lord for the Canonization of Saint Euphrasia. The hard work put up by Sr. Cleopatra the Vice-Postulator and other sisters and Fr. Paul Alappatt for the publication of this English Edition is gratefully remembered. Let this beautiful book help us to renew our lives and restore our spirits. This is my great never-ending hope.

Sr. Sancta CMC

Suprior General

Mount Carmel Generalate, Aluva.



Felicitatio

“I will take up your cause” (Jer. 51:36).

This momentous moment of the Canonization of Blessed Euphrasia testifies to the fact that the Lord Almighty Himself has taken up the ‘Cause’ of Sr. Euphrasia of the Sacred Heart and has brought her **From Hiding to Glory**. 23 November 2014 is the Day of that marking, the Day of Days. When Saint Euphrasia is revealed in the Glory Light of the Sacred Heart, parallelly the Lord God is placing His permanent signature on Sr. Cleopatra’s endeavours of a life-long dedication of 28 years to the Cause of Blessed Euphrasia. When the Lord God Himself takes up the Cause and when He appoints a person for the same, He provides the incentive and guarantees the strength to carry out the task even against Himalayan obstacles. The insurmountable obstacles did appear from within the Province and outside. But as Elijah was carried over to different places by the Spirit, Sr. Cleopatra was led by the Holy Spirit, by an unerring spiritual intuition to the appointed places and people, to the appointed spiritual authorities, to the timely proper actions and to the ailing who were waiting for a healing touch of God through the intercession of Blessed Euphrasia. Finally when the Moment has arrived, Sr. Cleopatra announces: “ He has done it, it is His Cause. I am first the appointed instrument, anointed for the purpose as His servant.” We also join with her in declaring His Glory in this mighty marvellous deed of raising His Saints and bringing them from Hiding to Glory. The Glorification of the Lord God, mystically enough fits Sr. Cleopatra’s name, which means (Gk) ‘ Glory of the Father.’

While highlighting the Lord’s work and Sr. Cleopatra’s instrumentality in the work, let me profoundly thank all the sisters who

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have contributed significant articles to this book, specially Rev. Fr. Paul Alappatt, who is now Mar Paul Alappatt, Bishop of Coimbatore for his generous contribution not only of an article, but His continued generous unstinted support as Chancellor of the Trichur Archdiocese while the Cause was in progress and even after His appointment as the Bishop of Coimbatore. On my behalf and behalf of Sr. Cleopatra, I record our boundless gratitude to him. While exploding in loving embrace the people of Coimbatore, we know his heart is also with us, and his continuing prayerful greetings! Thank you!

On this occasion as I thank all the writers of the articles contributed, let me record my appreciation for the detailed thorough study they have made on the respective areas of St. Euphrasia's spiritual life and the meaning and significance of Religious Consecration, under the guidance of Sr. Cleopatra, the Editor. I, myself have been guided in writing and so I know the thoroughness with which she guides and later she edits and the whole-hearted response each one gives. I do feel the Holy Spirit had been going between us and creating the book in full shape.

So exactly befitting what is happening in St. Euphrasia's life, and in the exact moment, this book **From Hiding to Glory** appears on the records and in the hands of the seekers of sanctity, is being gathered and treasured in the hearts of people, in the climate of Carmel as continuing spring of sanctity. God bless all of us on the way. It is His timely gift to us **From Hiding to Glory**.

With prayerful greeting,

Nirmala Province
Carmelagiri, Kolazhy, Thrissur
Kerala, India

Sr. Omer CMC,
Provincial Superior

Editors's Words

A feeling of oncoming spring! Gentle breeze is wafting in wonderous news! Time to inhale the fragrance of virtues! Blessed Euphrasia is raised to Sainthood! God's graciousness has been met with the expectations of God's people! Halleluiah!

It is this expectation and joy, the reason of this book. Seeing the moments the Holy Father Francis raises Mother Euphrasia to sainthood, I am trying to answer the inspirations of the Holy Spirit. This book **From Hiding to Glory** unveils the glory of the hidden soul and lifts her up to the light of glory!

This is the moment of glory, glory in heaven and glory on earth. A whole human life of 75 years, spent in search of God, waiting for God, meeting God and being united with God! Magnificent! By about the age of 40, Saint Euphrasia reached the end of her search and achieved union with God! The beauty of it is that she was in that state of union with God, doing good to people, being a representative of God on earth, for people to see a future Saint!

God had so arranged everything, that the Cause of Mother Euphrasia was taken up in 1987 on the 35th death anniversary, by me, who has lived with Mother Euphrasia as a novice for a whole year, and then Provincial Superior, with the consent of Bishop Joseph Kundukulam—Mother Euphrasia became SERVANT OF GOD. On 10 Jan. 1999 chain rosary and 1 May 2002 perpetual adoration also were started in the St. Mary's Convent Chapel, Ollur, where lies the tomb of Mother Euphrasia. 3 May 2002 marked the acceptance of the heroic virtues of Mother Euphrasia by the Theologians in Rome and on 5 July 2002 Pope John Paul II declared Mother Euphrasia VENERABLE!

The miracle of cancer healing of Thomas Tharakan submitted in Rome, was unanimously approved by the Medical Consultation as

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a miracle. The Theological Consultation held in Rome also approved the miracle. Similarly the Cardinals' consultation also approved, and Pope Benedict XVI gave approval to the miracle.

On 1 December 2006 the Euphrasia Museum was set up in St. Mary's Convent, where Mother lived for about 48 years. A new Convent was built at the back and the sisters moved out there. On 3 December 2006 was the BEATIFICATION of Mother Euphrasia in the Ollur Forane Church grounds. On 29th August her first feast was celebrated.

Very soon the Lord gave the next miracle, on 26th December the healing of the thyroglossal cyst of Jewel Jenson, a boy of 6 years. On 24 March 2007 Sr. Cleopatra (myself) was appointed Postulator and on 10 April 2008 the Diocesan Tribunal was established in the diocese of Irinjalakuda by Bishop James Pazhayattil. The Tribunal was successfully completed and closed on 31 August 2010 by Bishop Pauly Kannookaden the new bishop who personally submitted the acts of the Tribunal in Rome.

On 25 May 2011, Rev. Fr. George Nedungatt, the Postulator received the Validity decree of the Diocesan Inquiry on the miracle. On 22nd October Rev. Fr. Cherian Thunduparambil became the Postulator. On 2 April 2014 Pope Francis accepted the miracle and on 12 June he announced the date of Canonization. On 23rd November 2014 Pope Francis raised the Carmel Virgin Blessed Euphrasia to Sainthood. Thanks be to God!

Now the joy of joys is that the founder of our congregation, Blessed Chavara Kuriakose Elias and the daughter Blessed Euphrasia are both together raised to Sainthood on 23-11-2014! Both CMI and CMC Congregations are united in this great joy and celebration in Rome and other places. On 29 November, after the canonization is the National Celebration of both together in Rajaigiri, Kakkannad, Ernakulam District. And on 10 January 2015 is the Trichur Archdiocesan Celebration of Saint Euphrasia in the Ollur Forane Church ground God be praised for raising a saint from our Congregation of the Mother of Carmel, the first indigenous Congregation of Kerala! Glory to God! Praised be His name!

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THE CALL AND THE RESPONSE

Sr. Dr. Lissy John CMC

The pure and glorious responses of prophets, overcoming challenges, are as old as human history. The heroic stories of saints are beautiful to listen to, but the reality of living them out can be extremely difficult. The Lord calls those whom he loves towards Him; He anoints them to purify and strengthen them. He expects absolute faith, not victory. Absolute, blind faith which holds fast to Him, even when His ways are not clear to us — that is the foundation on which saintliness is built. Something absolutely impossible and improbable according to human intelligence, can be quite possible and probable by divine grace. It is this absolute faith that turns a man into a saint.

The chosen ones for sainthood always celebrate the faithfulness of their Lord. Mother Euphrasia tells us the story of Christ's infinite mercy, He who chose her in childhood, called her to Him, justified and glorified her.

THE LINEAGE

The beautiful village of Kattoor in Kerala, near Trichur -- the greenery of coconut palms and paddy fields anywhere you turn. There was a very powerful landlord there; Antony the only son of Eluvathingal Cherpukaran Kakku and Kunjannam, a very rich, efficient man, well accepted among the people and their unquestioned leader.

Kunjethi, daughter of Aranattukara, Chalissery Ittikuru Porinchi and Cherchi was Antony's wife. "She was a very beautiful, virtuous

and very pious lady. She was blessed with an extreme degree of patience, endurance and submissiveness. She found peace in prayer.

On October 17th 1877 Mother Euphrasia was born, the beloved eldest daughter of Antony and Kunjethi - She was baptized Rose, she who was to become the pure rose of the Lord later. The dearly beloved sister of her brothers, a girl child born after so many generations in the Eluvathingal family, so precious in both her mother's and father's family, the apple of their eyes, the hope for the future.

Her pious and loving mother passed on the nectar of the Lord's love and the great love of Virgin Mary to her daughter. Through small examples and stories, through little bits of advice she was familiarized to a life of piety. She listened avidly to the heroic stories of saints. She was very eager to clear her doubts. For the explanations she needed, she sought the help of divine intervention. "That is how, Virgin Mary herself answers her question 'What is meant by the 'Queen of Angels'. Our Lord's Mother became a teacher and helper to her (Atmadaham, page 16).

SPECIAL ATTRIBUTES IN CHARACTER

Little Rose's character had some very clear specialities. She had inherited the determination, love and hot temper from her father and endurance, prayerfulness, and the love of Mother Mary from her mother. Through the continuous practice of virtue, Rose nurtured the good in her and destroyed evil. She was totally indifferent to worldly pleasures. She was always ready to do deeds of penance. The Rosary was her great help in the path of piety. The root source of all this was her own mother.

FAMILY - THE ESSENTIAL SOURCE OF HER GROWTH IN THE LORD

In ancient Christian families of good standing there will usually be morning - noon - evening rosary and other pious rituals, beside the family prayer. Saint Chavara mentions these in his biography. The very babes in these families sleep and wake up listening to these prayers.

The Obedient Response

Rose's family was also exactly like this. Pointing out the picture of Mother Mary, her mother would tell her that she is their mother -- as both will kiss the picture. Wish all mothers were like her. In her mother's lap, she had always listened to the prayer 'Hail Mary...'. "The Rosary is not a toy. But even then, at a time when toys were not so plentiful, the first toy I had touched was my Rosary and the last thing I touched before my death was also my Rosary — the habits of a lifetime" (page 53, *Katha Parayunna Evuprassiamma*).

In imitation of the Holy Mother, her mother was giving her the training to suffer and forgive without protest — the first step in a life of total dedication to the Lord.

THE LORD CHOOSES

Rose, who was brought up in a very pious background, was immersed in the affairs of the Lord from Childhood. She had a great yearning for God. She was deeply moved by the possibility of a life of dedication. This great love of God enabled her to dedicate her virginity at the tender age of nine, to the Lord. "Do what he asks you to do" (John 2: 5). The mother who said this at Cana, influencing her life also, is repeatedly remembered by Rose. Appearing to her as the Queen of Angels, teaching her to worship the Lord, hourly, with the angels is a fresh memory in her mind (K. P. E. p. 54). She had chosen Jesus as her soulmate, her Bridegroom. Decking herself with jewellery, posing as a bride, according to her father's wishes, secretly, without permission, she had already given herself to Jesus. She had decided that Jesus is her Lord and had let her mother know that. "Your creator is your husband. He is Lord of the hosts" (Isa. 54: 5). She accepted these words of the prophet in her life.

Her mother found it very difficult to tell her father. The Lord will fight for those chosen by Him. He will not hesitate to perform miracles for those who trust in Him. He is faithful. At an auspicious moment she told him about Rose's decision. Rose wanted to be a nun! Antony, her father was a very obstinate person, unmoved by any pleas. But on the otherhand Rose's decision was also equally

immovable. Whose side will the Lord take? Even in spite of all her father's ranting and raving, Rose was not moved from her decision. She had determination enough to work out her convictions. Both parties were sticking to their guns. Finally, the father was ready for a compromise. . . . Rose must be married off. But there is a second daughter, Kochutheresa, beautiful and brilliant. If absolutely necessary, I'll let her join the convent.

Rose was not ready to submit to this compromise. She had dedicated her virginity at the age of 9 to the Lord. I must fulfill my promise, not my younger sister. Rose did not agree. She was adamant. She wanted to join the convent (*Dhanyaya Evuprasiamma*, p. 13).

Her heart's desire, yearning, her insurmountable thirst for a life of prayer, her dedication, she directed all these arguments, to the Lord who had chosen her (D.E., p. 13). She started prayers and penance before the Lord. For her it was unthinkable not to join the convent.

"I'll do whatever you seek in my name, to glorify the Father in the Son" (John 14: 13). She claimed this promise of Jesus. "Those who trust in Him will never be humiliated" (Psalm 71: 1). "You have not chosen me, but I have chosen You" (John 15: 16). The Lord comforted her that he would fulfil these promises.

The ways of the Lord are totally different from that of man. Here also they were ways beyond expectations. A blow to the Eluvathingal family. His direct intervention for those who trust. An epidemic caused the unexpected death of Kochuthresa.

The father's dreams were totally upset. Slowly he regained the even tenor of life. Once he was convinced of her daughter's determination he started thinking that it would add to his family's prestige if there was a nun in the family. In those days a life of such vocation was very rare. Finally he agreed, though reluctantly to the daughter's wishes (D.E. 14).

Her mother had told her about St. Rose of Lima. She was deeply impressed by it. She took it to heart. A virgin — a saint, sacrifice,

penance, silence, loneliness, poverty, humility, continuous prayer – she also decided, I should also become a saint, an unknown saint.

ROSE TO THE BOARDING

1866 - the dreams of Blessed Chavara and Italian Missionary delegate Leopold Beccaro came true – the beginning of a totally indigenous group of nuns in Koonammavu. They had planned this convent as a place where the gospel was practised in everyday life to mould and shape saints. Even in those days when a woman was not given a very respectable place in society, they believed that by shaping and educating a woman they will be able to influence generations to come. So with the purpose of educating and teaching high moral standards to women and the girl children. With their vocation, they started a boarding along with the convent in 1868. They tried to interest them in good deeds, trained them in various crafts, language, mathematics, music, religious studies, etc.; they hoped thereby to make them more civilized and cultured. Rose, who was born in 1877, joined this boarding in 1888, at the age of 11. The Carmelite Congregation, which was founded in 1866 was growing very fast. The 9 years Rose spent in the boarding she used as a God-given opportunity for character formation and growing in prayer.

THE HAND OF GOD IN LIFE

She loved her life in the Koonammavu Convent. She obeyed the rules and regulations with joy. They were perfectly suited to her hopes and aspirations. Altogether it was a great feast for her soul – she obeyed all the rules strictly, even the least important (D.E., 23). But ill health was her constant companion. Obstacles came up one by one.

“Accept suffering, don’t lose serenity in the midst of crushing misfortune – God purifies in fire, and the chosen ones of God in the fire of suffering” (Sirach 2: 4-5). Her health couldn’t tolerate life in the boarding – intermittent fever, her body was racked with pain. Total exhaustion! When this happened again and again, those in authority told her frankly that she was not healthy enough

to stay in the boarding, let alone joining the convent. . . . What torment, more obstacles. Her heart was filled with pain. “Please my God, I will suffer everything, please don’t send me back home (D.E. p. 24). She was sent back home for treatment. After being cured, she came back on October 24th. But ill health forced her to go back home again. By the grace of God, she was able to come back in better health a second time by July 4th 1889.

Before long, the old diseases came back in greater force. She was so sick that she was given the final anointing. Even when hope became impossible, her heart was fixed in God. She was too ill even to be sent back home. Limitless, blind hope led her to Virgin Mary. Holding on to Mother Mary she prayed with all her heart. “Mother, am I not your daughter? Please let me fulfil my vocation as a member of your congregation (D.E., p. 24). As the sisters were praying around her bed, expecting her imminent death, a variety of emotions passed over her face, followed by a divine glory. All on a sudden she sat up in bed with a smile. She was totally cured. There was heavenly peace on her face. Every one was curious to know what had happened. But she just smiled at them, without offering any explanation (D.E., p. 27).

No one had a difference of opinion about the purity of her character. They hoped and prayed for her better health. There was something special about her. She will be a great treasure for the congregation. She was a great spiritual inspiration for everyone.

She wished to keep the direct intervention of God in her life a secret. But she had to reveal the truth to the questioning of Mother Agnes, who had the right to know. She told her about her vision of the Holy Family. She also told her superior that she will live for a long time as a nun in the congregation and then only she will die. God had given her this promise. The Superior, Impressed by her revelations, wrote down all this and kept the record safe. Some extraordinary work of God was going on in this girl, the superior was convinced. Eight years later in 1897 when Rose went off to her own convent in Thrissur, Mother Agnes had written to the Trichur

The Outstanding Response

diocese Bishop John Menachery: “Before this extraordinary event, we had almost decided not to accept her in the convent. But after this, especially also because of her great piety and obedience, we accepted her as a nun” (*Likhithangal* p. 392). Thus, overcoming all obstacles, on May 10th 1897, she was vested as a full fledged nun at the Ambazhakkattu convent. This humble servant of God was able to fulfil her heart’s desire only through the blessing of the Lord and through the intercession of the Virgin Mary.

Teresa of Avila, who reformed the Congregation of Carmelites was a great devotee of St. Joseph, the protector of Virgins and the head of the Holy Family. Blessed Fr. Chavara who started the Carmelite Congregation in Kerala, according to the monastic rules of St. Teresa was also a great devotee of the Holy Family. He used to pray long in front of the picture of the Holy Family. He wished his followers also to be the devotees of the Holy Family. Rose, one among the first of his children, had imbibed this spirit, and was deeply devoted to Jesus, Mary and Joseph. It is this Holy Family who interceded and granted Rose good health to fulfil her vocation.

IN THE CRUCIBLE OF SUFFERING

The trials and tribulations in the Christian sects in those days, delayed Rose’s entry into the convent. The dominance of the Latins brought about a delay in decision about the Syrians. CMC, in the shadow of the Most High explains the situation very graphically. Rose had to face a lot of obstacles even though she had dedicated herself as a nun at nine years of age old and had entered the Koonammavu Convent at the age of eleven. Living in the Boarding all these years, without having a chance to embrace the life of a nun, which she yearned for, was an excruciating experience.

9 MAY 1897

The much awaited auspicious moment! Those who persist with patience to the end, will surely be saved, this promise of Jesus was carried out without fail. The dioceses of Trichur and Kottayam were divided into the dioceses of Trichur, Ernakulam and

Changanassery in 1896. The Trichur diocese was entrusted into the able hands of Bishop John Menachery. Almost immediately he started a branch of the Koonammavu Convent, at Ambazhakkad. This was the first convent in the Trichur diocese. Everyone from the Trichur diocese in the Koonammavu Convent was ordered to be brought back to Ambazhakkad. Among this first group was the Aspirant Eluvathingal Rose. The blessing and inauguration of the first convent and the final profession of the 8 nuns! She who had dedicated herself to the Lord at the age of nine, now officially became His bride. ‘Sr. Euphrasia of the Sacred Heart of Jesus’.

“I was overjoyed. I had to face many obstacles to reach this day. I had overcome even death! I told my Lord. Beloved, you are my bridegroom, and I, your faithful bride. From now on we are not two — but one. From now on I have no will of my own, I surrender myself completely to your will” (*Kathaparayunna Evuprassia* - p. 70).

THE COURAGE OF CONVICTIONS

“My son, if you are ready to serve the Lord, prepare yourself for temptations” (Sirach 2: 1). This is the irony. We will naturally think that the life with the Lord will be peaceful and serene. That is the ultimate truth — unaffected in the face of even the greatest adversity. “The Lord gave, He took away, glory to the Lord” (Job 1: 21). “The capacity to say this, the courage of hopeful faith fills us with peace; gives us calm serenity”. “The Lord will see to all our affairs”—The founding fathers with this absolute confidence are our guiding lights. This total dependance was the foundation on which the Congregation was built.

The Lord was proud of his servant Job in the Bible. So he challenged even the devil himself that his son will not be tempted. Here is another aspect of Job himself - Mother Euphrasia who was tormented by evil spirits time and again.

“As my spiritual strength increased, my physique became weaker. Just four weeks after the final profession, rheumatic complaints assailed me. . . . terrible pain, all over the body, day and

night. I suffered that without complaint, terrible fever, which exhausted me I was unconscious. The Mother Superior and my Novice Mistress were afraid. I may die any moment. The sisters waited around me, keeping constant vigil. All on a sudden, my face changed, A miraculous cure, far beyond every hope. . . . (Katha. . . . p. 278). The log book of Ambazhakkad Convent bears witness.

‘On July 29th 1897, the above mentioned Sr. Euphrasia was on the brink of death and the Rev. Father was called in for the last rites. Then her critical condition improved all on a sudden and she was cured of her illness. Such and even greater miracles have happened in her life from the age of 12. She has experienced many visions and miracles. Even though she was very sick and in terrible pain, she suffered everything without complaint. Her life seems to be a continuity of suffering.

STRUGGLES OF FAITH

Sr. Euphrasia quietly went about her work in the Convent, hiding her troubles and suffering extreme pain. In this respect she was emulating Mother Mary. She strictly practised penance and prayer. 1898 January 10th — every one was ready for the final profession. In the almost heavenly background of church bells, hymns and prayers of the faithful, Mother Euphrasia dedicated herself totally to her Lord and accepted the holy symbol of that total surrender—the black veil. She was determined to ascend the steps of purity. Her sole purpose in life was to become a little saint, doing pure deeds in absolute purity.

When one is a vehicle of virtue and goodness in this world, the devil will inevitably target her. Sr. Euphrasia was in his list. He clearly knew that her pure life will lead a great number of people to Jesus. He made plans. The evil forces tempted and tormented her, as they did Job. They wanted her to give up the life of an ascetic. She wrote to her spiritual father how they tormented her when she was a newly professed nun.

“These evil spirits used to beat me up, asking me to give up my faith. Most nights they used to push me down from the cot and even move me along with the cot. Some of them told me that the convent will not look after me. As you are sickly and useless, nobody likes you. Everyone hates you. You will be forced to go home; after your father’s death, they also will not accept you. So it is better to go back now itself.

I did not agree. I was determined to suffer everything in the name of the Lord. I will not leave the Convent. Even if everyone gives me up, my Jesus and my Mother will never abandon me. I used to say that I will not agree to any of their advice. This angered them all the more and they used to torture me incessantly. One day, they shut me off on the third floor, not allowing me to join the other nuns. When I come to the stairs they will shut the door with a heavy wooden door. Sometimes the door opened at the sign of the cross. But that day even when I made the sign of the cross, the door did not open. Because I was not among the nuns, they looked for me and many of them came to call me. I am a new nun, and it was wrong on my part not to join the other nuns. The evil spirits beat me saying that I must abandon the convent if I wanted to go down. My Mistress sent someone to call me. I couldn’t go down. Eventhough I kept praying to the Holy Mother, I was given no respite. My mind was sorely troubled. It was impossible to join the rest of the nuns. There were many other reasons too. I had to betray the Lord. I was shut up from 12 noon, to 6 in the evening. I had to go out. So finally I decided to agree to their demand and to go back to wearing ordinary clothes. But whenever I thought of giving up life in the convent, my heart broke in terrible pain. By 6.30, some how or other I had to go down. I sought the help of Holy Mother. I told the evil spirits that I will agree to their conditions, if they will allow me to go down. Immediately they allowed me to go down. On the second floor I jumped into the nearby room. The evil ones started pulling me, saying that I have deceived them. All on a sudden a maiden of great beauty and brilliance came to me

The Ollur Convent Response

and ordered them to let me go. They ran away in abject fear. Then she turned to me and asked, “my dear, why were you so troubled, am I not with you. I will never abandon you. Why did you tell them that? Don’t ever again say anything like this. They cannot understand your heart, only Jesus and Myself have that understanding. They would have pulled you out of the convent, just because you agreed to their demands. Now on, whatever they do, you must not allow them to trouble your heart. Never agree to their demands. You must keep faith and courage. My dear, even when you were abandoned again and again, I am the one who brought you back into the congregation. you must continue to live in My congregation. They will not abandon you. I am your mother” (Letter 33 Page 165 ff).

No peace from any quarter. Her own doubts and sickness on one side, misunderstandings and merciless criticism and judgement on the other side; in the midst of all these the interventions of the Holy Mother and her protection led her forward in her life in the nunnery. Who can understand the ways of the Lord! He was slowly unraveling the means to establish a convent at Ollur.

Ollur was known as “Little Rome”. The good Catholics of Ollur wanted to establish a house for widows. Everything need money and effort. The local people were ready to contribute both. The Bishop of Trichur asked their representatives, whether it won’t be better to establish a convent there; It will help in giving a better education to our girls and in their character formation. On the whole it will help in their betterment and growth. They were in full agreement with him. With their full cooperation, the Ollur convent, the foundation stone laid on October 15th 1898, was completed in two years (KPE page 74).

The branch of Koonammavu Convent at Ambazhakkattu had flourished in the meantime. The number of nuns had increased. Some of them were brought to the Ollur Convent. Sr. Euphrasia was one among them. May 24th 1900 – was a Thursday - a day on which many important things happened, the blessing of the new

Convent at Ollur, the Congregational habit for those who sought to become nuns, perpetual vows of the new nuns. It was a day of celebrations. It was a golden day for Mother Euphrasia. She was the beloved of the Lord; a day of great happiness when she was finally embracing her Lord. It was a moment of total fulfillment. The day she overcame all obstacles and reached her goal.

“As I was ascending the steps of sainthood, the evil forces became more oppressive. His ugly form was invisible to the others. But they could hear the confusion of my struggle against him. They could see my response, So most of the inmates of the convent were afraid to share my room in the beginning . . . but in all my troubles the Holy Mother was my succour, she was my strength and my salvation: (K.E., p. 78).

CALL TO SAINTHOOD

The founding fathers of the Carmelite congregation in Kerala dreamt of moulding saints in the Kerala Congregation. The convents and monasteries of those holy people who had experienced God should become visionary abodes. Mother Euphrasia decided to fulfill this great desire of the founder fathers. An unknown saint—that was her desire. Sainthood had to pay its own price. Nothing valuable is given free — she was convinced.

Even in the early days of convent life, the signs of a greater holiness were evident in Mother Euphrasia. She had to face many challenges. But she overcame the temptations of the devil and the obstacles in her path. The deep faith imparted by her mother in her childhood stood her in good stead through all these trials. The prophet Isaiah tells us “The Lord gives strength to the exhausted, power to the weak. Even strong young men may be weakened and exhausted. The youth may fall down in weakness. But those who put their faith in the Lord will be rejuvenated. They will fly like eagles, running will not tire them, walking will not weaken them” (40: 29-31). These words were the daily experience of this small virgin. She believed there was nothing impossible for the Lord.

She was absolutely faithful to the Lord who called her. She decided to devote every moment of her life to the Lord.

THE REWARD OF FAITH

Responsibilities and high positions sought her. Those faithful in small things will be entrusted with great things. The teacher willing to help always . . . the nurse for the sick. Limitless suffering weakened Mother Euphrasia. But she was not ready to retreat defeated. She grew everyday in faith. The authorities made her the chief mistress. Not for one or two years, but for 13 long years she undertook this job. The promise of virginity at the age of nine, bloomed and attracted everyone. The guiding principle in her life through all these years was “This is my word to you: Love each other as I loved you. The greatest love is to sacrifice your life for your friend” (John 15; 12). “If the teacher goes wrong even in small things, the disciples will make disastrous mistakes...” so I have to practise in my life everything that the novices are to be taught (K. E., p. 88). That was her practice. So she was repeatedly made the novice mistress and later on the Mother Superior of the convent.

THE PERFUME OF PURITY

If Mother Euphrasia prays, nothing is impossible — that was what everybody believed and experienced. So she was called the faithful Mother — holy Mother — Mother of great virtue.

Absorbing God experience as a Carmelite, coming to be known as the virtuous mother, in the presence of God, in incessant prayer, in warm love, in empathy as a comforting presence, the praying mother for everybody around her, she made it possible to impart the spirit of the Carmelite Order into every soul. She responded with her whole heart, mind and spirit to the call of the Lord. With a firm decision she face the challenges, spreading the perfume of piety she is here in our midst. The heavenly intercessor who pours blessings on us — Mother Euphrasia.

End Notes

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2. Sr. Pastor C.M.C., *Athamadham - The Spirituality of Mother Euphrasia*, Nirmala Province, Thrissur, 1998, P. 15.
3. Vice-Postulator, *Mother Euphrasia the Servant of God and some Historical Facts*, St. Mary's Convent Ollur, Thrissur 1991. p. 34.
4. Sr. Peregrin CMC. *The Venerable Mother Euphrasia*. Janatha Book stall, Thevara, Kochi 2002, P. 12 f.
5. Some Historical Facts, p. 46 f.
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8. *C.M.C. Althyunnathante Thanalil*. Ed: C. Josie C.M.C. , Mount Carmel Generalate, Aluva 1991. pp 99- 120

HUMILITY - THE FOUNDATION OF GREATNESS

Sr. Dr. Pastor CMC

The depth of humility in the life of Saint Euphrasia, stimulates our thinking processes.

The basis of this humility is to be found in Jesus himself, who came into this world as our great spiritual leader and example. This great standard (level) of spirituality is evident in all those saintly people who have evidenced in their lives the great heights and depths of spirituality.

The Son of God, the Messiah was born in a manger! “He was swaddled in old clothes and put in the manger, because they could not get space in the inn” (Luke 2: 7). The Lord God who gave us His only begotten son, as our saviour, could have prepared the most luxurious place for His birth. But God the Father taught us the great lesson of glory through humility by letting His prince be born in extremely humble circumstances.

“Jesus who grew up in wisdom and age, in the light of approval of God and men” (Luke 2: 52) humbled Himself in front of John the Baptist, receiving his earthly baptism like any other common man. John told the people about Jesus: “I am not fit even to untie the straps of his sandals. He will baptize you in fire and the Holy Spirit” (Luke 3: 16).

Jesus’s life was the humblest possible. “The foxes have their dens and the birds their nests. But the Son of Man has no where to rest (sleep)” (Mathew 8: 20). Those who followed Him were to

give themselves up completely. That is what He teaches when He tells them that “you should not retaliate, should turn your other cheek to a man who hits you on the right cheek” (Mathew 5: 39).

St. Paul who made Christ his whole life tells us “If someone in this world thinks himself to be wise, let him make a fool of himself in order to become really wise” (1 Cor. 3: 18). This is one of the basic tenets to be followed by a disciple of the Lord.

“The Lord opposes the proud and gives grace to the humble” (James 4: 6). “Be humble before God, He will raise you” (James 4: 10).

St. Augustin confesses that he deserved extreme punishment for his pride in his learning; but instead of repenting I insulted my Lord. He cries out in sorrow. “Where was that pure (holy) love which should have been built up on the foundation stone of the humility of Jesus?”

Humility, which is the foundation of sainthood, had been received by all the saints from Christ, and they have practised it every moment in their lives. Those who are baptized in the Lord, and those who have surrendered their lives to the Lord, have no other choice.

The life of Saint Euphrasia was a small stream of humility. Her humble heart brought so many to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and kept them strong in their faith. This basic nature of humility in her divine Bridegroom, influenced Mother Euphrasia completely. His divine glory enveloped her and she was led to the great heights of sainthood.

Mother Euphrasia’s journey and deeds through the path of humility is being overviewed here.

THE STREAMS OF HER HUMILITY FLOW DOWN:

- ◆ Into the hearts of the poor, the sick, the sorrowful and the abandoned.
- ◆ Into a life style where one is happy with the simplest in food, clothing and conveniences.

Humility From the Humiliation of Glory

- ◆ In the eagerness she exhibited in humiliations even in front of others.
- ◆ A heart full of guilt and repentance.
- ◆ In the thirst for unknown piety and a life subdued to the will of God.
- ◆ In the self-surrender which accepts one's faults.
- ◆ In accepting others as greater than oneself.
- ◆ Seeking help with an awareness of one's own weaknesses.
- ◆ In the practice of humility which is capable of defeating even the forces of darkness.
- ◆ In joyousness even under insults and accusations.
- ◆ In the great yearning for oneness with God.

We can understand these things from the 79 letters she has written to her spiritual guide and from the witnesses of people who were close to her.

TO THE POOR

She was very considerate to the servants, the aged and those who served in the convent. Her great love for them shows a humble heart's closeness to these lowest of the low people. To her they were all the representatives of her heavenly Bridegroom who had no place to be born or to die. Many of them speak about her great love and consideration. Rev. Mother Eucharista speaks openly about this love. When she became the Superior of the convent, she went to see Mother Euphrasia to seek her blessings. Then Mother Euphrasia exhorted her to be merciful to those who served in the convent because they were poor people. Mother Eucharista was deeply touched by this advice.

Mother Euphrasia had looked after the orphan Annakkutty like a mother, from her childhood. When she had scabies all over her body, it was Mother Euphrasia who bathed her. She used to throw up when she had to clean the chamber pots of the old and the sick. Seeing this Mother Euphrasia used to clean them for her. She speaks

about all this with deep gratitude. She will mend and stitch the old and new clothes of these people. When she couldn't do it herself she will persuade others to do it for them. She will teach them to move in the path of piety, chanting prayers and thinking about God every moment of their lives. She was very close to them and loved them dearly. If she had to scold them for something, she will seek their forgiveness, later thinking that she had hurt them. Her humility knew no bounds.

“All those who toil and bear heavy burdens, come to me. I will give you comfort” (Mathew 11: 28). “I want mercy, not sacrifices” (Mathew 12: 7). These words of her heavenly Bridegroom influenced her deeply. “When you are holding a banquet invite the poor, the handicapped, the lame and the blind. Then you are blessed, as they have nothing to give you in return” (Luke 14: 13-14). These words of Jesus lived in her heart, inspiring her at every step.

She may have remembered that when He came in triumph through the streets of Jerusalem, He humbled Himself enough to travel on a young donkey (Mark 11: 23).

TAKING UP HUMBLE TASKS

Mother Euphrasia was always ready to perform the humblest of tasks. As we saw earlier, she helped the servants in the convent by taking up even their most menial jobs. When the sisters go out to do the jobs entrusted to them, she will go with broom and bucket to clean the latrines and bathrooms. She used to clean up the cholera victims. This demanded great courage, along with great love for others. She was ready to do the meanest and most unpleasant tasks. When they were digging a pond in the convent, in the evenings the novices removed the mud brought up by the labourers during the day. Mother Euphrasia, who was not healthy enough to help them, sat beside the pond, prayed the rosary for them and encouraged them.

VERY HUMBLE LIFE CIRCUMSTANCES

Mother Euphrasia found joy in choosing the simplest and the humblest in food, clothing and the other conveniences of life.

Humility From Humiliation to Glory

Usually she wore clothes which were torn and mended, but very clean. She had very few of them, only the absolutely necessary. She mixed bitter things in the food and ate only once a day. All these show her ascetic nature. She was trying to control her desires, her love of food, so that she can concentrate on her Lord and find all joy in Him. Even that food she had, which was only once a day; sometimes old, often made tasteless and sometimes with too much salt put in it. We may wonder why she was subjecting herself to so much torture. All through this, she was repeatedly humiliating herself. You will never witness deeper levels of humility elsewhere.

St. Paul in *Philippians* (3:8) says that he is ready to sacrifice everything for the greatest wealth in his life – the wisdom in the Lord. Mother Euphrasia was also making this the basis of her everyday life.

READY TO HUMBLE HERSELF

Her readiness to humble herself in front of others was unparalleled. We can take her letter from the Ollur St. Mary's Convent to her Spiritual Guide on September 19th 1905 as an example. When four of her novices went against the spirit of the congregation and was disobedient, she prayed to Mother Mary and sought guidance. When she acted accordingly three of them came back to the right path. But the fourth one still followed the path of darkness. So she prayed to the Lord and under his guidance, gathered her novices together, put that sister in her own chair, kissed her feet and asked her forgiveness. She took upon herself all the debts of her novice and promised to be a better nun henceforth. The novice was so distressed that she fell at the feet of her mistress and wept. From that day onwards she chose the path of righteousness for herself. As soon as she asked Mother Euphrasia forgiveness, the evil spirits tempting her, left her in great commotion.

The Gospel of St. John, chapter 13 describes the scene where Jesus washed the feet of His disciples. "After washing their feet He put on His robe and came back to His seat and told them: Do you

understand what I have done for you? If I, who am your teacher and the Lord washed your feet, you must also do the same for each other, because I have given you an example, so that you will do what I have done for you (John 13: 1-15).

To wash each other's feet, or in effect to serve each other, was the instruction given by Jesus. Mother Euphrasia was practising this at the spiritual level. When she kissed the feet of her novice, she must surely have remembered the example of Jesus.

GUILT AND REPENTANCE

There is a deep awareness of sin and repentance born of her humility, in the life of Mother Euphrasia. Her deep humility is the basic nature of a humble spirit, which sees itself in the presence of the Glory of God and His purity. How deeply her sense of sin and repentance affects her is very evident in the letters she had written to her spiritual guide. A few examples are cited here:

“Whenever possible I am trying to do penance for my sins and to pray for sinners. The greatest sorrow in my heart is that I have always made my Lord unhappy, I have never loved Him. I have not done any penance for my sins” (Letter 5, 1st July 1901, P. 40-41).

“Dear father, I have become a terrible sinner. Because of the gravity of my sins, my Lord will surely punish me” (Letter 9. 15th Sept. 1901, P. 51).

She confesses that her sins are the cause of the suffering and pain of Jesus the Saviour. “How can I give him some comfort? I am a terrible sinner who has committed so many sins. I have crucified my loving saviour through my sins. Please pray for me so that my heart will be filled with true humility, repentance and the love of God (Letter 26, 24th March 1903. P. 119). The letter she wrote from Ollur Convent on 22nd May 1905, is a good example of her repentance:

“Loving father, please pray for me so that my Lord, the father who forgave the sins of Mary Magdalene, Mesrene Mary and other saints may forgive my sins and gather me unto his bosom. Let Mother Mary be my protector till my death. I make this prayer from the deep torment of my heart” (Letter 36).

Humility From Humiliation to Glory

Her awareness of sin and her repentance were the results of her great humility. Every pious spirit which realizes one's own humble state and one's lowliness in the presence of God goes through the same experience. Blessed Father Chavara, who found himself in the divine light of the purity of God, also wanted to purify himself in the tears of penance, and to wear the robe of innocence. All those children of the Lord who yearned for purity, have absorbed that ultimate purity, that is God Himself, in this same manner.

Throughout the Bible, it is made evident through so many examples and words of God, that repentance is the key to the heart of God. When King David laments that he has sinned against God, He comforts him through Nathan the prophet "The Lord has forgiven your sins; you will not die" (2 Samuel 12: 13). Psalm 51 also reverberates with the lamentations of David. "Please erase my sins through your infinite mercy," he cries. Jesus starts his work exhorting us to repentance (Mathew 4: 17). We meet Peter, who had rejected his Lord and is immersed in tearful repentance in Mathew 26: 75. Jesus is the saviour of the repentant heart.

UNKNOWN SAINT

She did not want to flaunt her saintliness. She wanted to remain unknown and practise absolute purity. In the Letter she wrote to her spiritual guide, from the Ollur Convent on November 2nd 1901 (Letters 13. p. 69), she expresses this desire. "I constantly pray to Jesus and the holy Mother, that I be given an unknown, pure life. Dear father please pray for the same. She did not want the extraordinary happenings in her totally humble life to be known to anyone. Whenever she wrote about them to her spiritual father, as a part of her vow of obedience, she also added a plea to tear up those letters after perusal.

NO VINDICATION AT ACCUSATIONS

Whenever she was accused of something, she was never unwilling to take up the blame. That is a great example of humility. Even when there is no chance to justify oneself, people try to do it. We will record a few examples of Mother Euphrasia's way of life.

When she was the Mother Superior of Ollur convent, people didn't like when she made a niche in the wall of the recreation room and put the statue of the Sacred Heart of Jesus there. They reported it to the Bishop. He came immediately to the convent, with the intent of finding fault with Mother Euphrasia. She accepted her fault in front of the whole convent, knelt down and kissed the ground at his feet and asked to be pardoned. On another occasion, on August 15th on the holy day of the celebration of Virgin Mary's Assumption into heaven, she was singing in ecstasy, the superior of the convent came to her and started scolding her. She got up and knelt before her and accepted her fault and sought forgiveness.

She never kept a grudge against those who found fault with her. She could only accept them in her heart with love and joy, as she was to follow the precept of love taught her by her Lord. When she was unjustly accused, she accepted it silently following the example of Jesus Christ her Lord. Mother Euphrasia, shows us the way in this to all the disciples of Christ, to all who have surrendered their lives to Him.

RECOGNIZED THE GREATNESS OF OTHERS

Her humility persuaded her to see others as greater than herself. When she speaks of the invaluable gift of God, her vocation, she speaks of the greatness of others and how she never deserved such a gift. She wrote in her letter to her spiritual guide from the Ollur Convent on 1st January 1902:

“Dear father, I am constantly aware of a feeling; that is, the Lord has chosen me above others who have more knowledge and piety. I am so undeserving of the great blessing he has bestowed upon me. He has put me in the path of purity, not in order to give me a good life in this world, but in order to make a saint out of me. The awareness of my weaknesses make me deeply unhappy” (p. 85-86).

On 18th Feb. 1904, she writes to her Spiritual Father about her humble stature and the greatness of others. It is because she

understood the goodness and greatness of others and accepted it, and was deeply aware of her own humble state that she could be so faithful in her surrender and obedience.

INSIGHT INTO HER WEAKNESSES

Insight into her own defaults was an indication of her humility. Because of this awareness she sought the help of people with better knowledge. In the letter 34, p. 179, she seeks the help of the Bishop to teach the novices under her about surrender and goodness of their own heart. This attitude shows her own humble nature. "Because I am ignorant, please teach them better and make them better human beings."

LIMITLESS HUMILITY

Her humility was strong enough to defeat the forces of evil. The forces of the underworld, who tried to tempt and defeat her, were defeated by her humility. She writes about this to her Spiritual Father. She who could kneel at the feet of the novice under her, and accepted her faults as her own, could easily defeat satan through her humility.

SPIRITUAL JOY IN THE INSULTS FROM OTHERS

When others insult and find fault with her, she considered that as sharing in the fate of her Lord. This gave her great joy in the spirit. On 18th Feb. 1904, she wrote to her Spiritual Father (30). "When my Father criticizes me gives me great joy as it is so beneficial to my spirit. Please continue doing this. Dear father, when people speak ill of me, that gives great joy and comfort to my soul. . . . Father, when people appreciate me, I am worried that I am nullified in the eyes of my Lord, and am guilty of untold sins. Father, the blessings of God alone have protected me so far" (Letter 38. 1905, July 14, p. 205). Mother Euphrasia was so detached from the world that she could find joy in the insults of others. Only such a person can move into the limitless depths of humility.

"Because I am a man of peace and humble of heart, you learn from me. Then you will receive comfort" (Mathew 11: 29). These words of the Lord were made true and practised fully in the life of Mother Euphrasia.

THE WORD OF THE LORD IS SUFFICIENT

Her blessings, visions, the relationship that the souls in purgatory had with her, the knowledge of other people's desires, the power of prayer which freed her from the forces of evil and sickness, all these divine blessings were nothing in comparison to the harmony with the spirit of God. She wanted only that oneness with the Lord. She writes about this, in all humility to her Spiritual Father. In her letter on 17th June 1917, she reveals this experience of union.

“As soon as I received the Holy Eucharist, my Lord, full of love and blessing came into my heart. He told me to stop my tears and wiped my tears with his own hands. He kissed my cheek with great love and held me close to His heart . . . I was glowing with love. There was some total change and movement in my heart. I was aware that my beloved Jesus has become one with me. At that moment I knew my nothingness and ingratitude. I offered myself in all humility, praised him and surrendered all my love to him. I don't have words to describe the deep feelings in my heart, the joy of my spirit and the total harmony that I experienced at that moment. My heart beat fast, it was almost as if there was a raging fire in my heart. I felt this till after 3'O' clock in the afternoon” (Letter 71, page 338-339).

On 1st April 1918, from Ollur, (Letter 72) she writes “. . . this blessed unity, I experience almost everyday through the great blessing of the Lord. Loving Father, I find myself at times in great difficulty, because I become unconscious from time to time. I used to pray devotedly, not to make me unconscious on such occasions. Now-a-days through God's grace, I remain conscious. I don't want any special vision. I yearn only for this continued harmony with God. I don't want any difference in me to be noticed by others. I keep on praying for this” (p. 343).

One who has received the special blessings of the Lord, which will be noticed and appreciated by others, being ready to give

Humility From the Heights of Glory

them up, finding joy in the total detachment from this world, and harmony with the Lord -- all these are possible only when one reaches the heights of divine humility. This is the glowing greatness of the humility of Mother Euphrasia. "Wisdom raises the humble to equality with the rich and the powerful". (Sirach 11: 1). These words of the Lord became true in the life of mother Euphrasia. Her humility made her rich in divine wisdom; that raised her among the heavenly lords. She showers blessings on her devotees from her heavenly abode.

In the 7th letter, she writes to her Spiritual Father, that she has a great partiality for the virtue of humility. There is a truth that she reveals to him on January 1st 1902: " At times when things go against my wishes, I don't find any difficulty in remaining peaceful at heart". Only a person who has reached the depths of humility will be able to acquire such a state of mind. The Lord allows her to grow in humility through allowing her to be tempted sorely and supporting and sustaining her on every such occasion. She writes about it in Letter 35, p. 184. When she is tempted, "All that you need to do is to humble yourself and seek the help of God". This advice of the Lord shows how she is handled by Him on such occasions.

LIFE AND GLORY

"As I am peaceful in nature and humble at heart, bear my burden and learn from me". These words of Jesus is the great reality to be practised by every follower of Jesus. In the life of those who have surrendered themselves totally to Jesus and taken special vows to do this, this should be very evident. The lives of saints who have reached the heights of virtue make this very clear.

Here, In our own country, there is Mother Euphrasia, spreading the sweetness of purity. She is there as a guiding light of purity for all of us, for all the disciples of Jesus, for those who have dedicated their lives to Jesus. She is the embodiment of humility

and a great example of purity for all of us to follow. Partaking of her blessedness and purity, we can also choose the humility of the life of the followers of Jesus. Thereby we do acquire the real glory of life.

End notes:

1. V. Augustin, Autobiography, translation Fr. Kuriakose Enekkatt, St. Paul Publications 1977, Volume 7, Chapter 20 P. 190.
2. The Writings of Mother Euphrasia, Fr. Mathias Mundadan CMI, Sr. Cleopatra CMC and Sr. Peregrin CMC, Euphrasia Publications. St. Mary's Convent, Ollur. Thrissur 2001, pp 212 ff.

THE FLAMINGO OF DIVINE LOVE

Sr. Dr. Chrisologa CMC

“They who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength,
they shall mount up with wings like eagles,
They shall run and not be weary, they shall walk
and not faint” (Is. 40: 31).

The flamingo that flies aloft above the throbbing waves of the widespread ocean below, fixing her gaze at the divine Sun who rises at the farthest end of the horizon, that is, Rosa Eluvathingal or Sr. Euphrasia, the flamingo that mounts up with the golden wings of love and mercy into the furnace of God’s love.

“Like an eagle that stirs up its nest,
that flutters over its young
spreading out its wings, catching them,
bearing them on its pinions
the Lord alone did lead him (Deut 32: 11).

The Holy Bible and the saints consider God who leads the whole human race towards the shore of salvation as the eagle. In the wake of ages many eagles who flew up into the height of divine love were born within the enclosure of Carmel. Blessed Euphrasia was a person who had the divine touch in her whole attitude as she found God and His providence in the joys and sorrows of life and walked long distances of life in order to find a place in heaven.

Her spiritual visions and the new endeavours of her life which inflamed the ember of her love of God were written in her letters to her confessor Bishop John Menachery. Those letters are the

main source of this article. Mother Euphrasia who accepted the ordinary events of her day to-day life, both at home and in the convent with an extra ordinary spiritual vision was in a spiritual pilgrimage on the wings of fire, day and night — its wonderful transmissions are what she has rendered us through her letters!¹ These letters bear witness as the fire that expedite, accelerate, stir and transform us to have God’s love inflamed in the depth of our soul.

In the words of St. Thomas Aquinas, “love is a strong attraction towards goodness, the great attraction towards the good that is in persons or things. When such attraction grows a step further and wishes to participate in the good found in that person and desires to possess that person in whom the good resides mutual love generates – When the attraction, desire and love grow stronger and become intense, it leads to imitation and relationship like the teacher-student relationship or the relationship of deep friendship – When the attraction becomes very strong, the desire uncontrollable and love intense -- when all these three are centered in one and the same person, it may lead persons to marital relationship or to the relationship of religious consecration and spiritual marriage which is rather incomprehensible to human intellect.”

Love is an emotion, thought and decision—When love become mere emotion, when emotion become reflection and experience become decision, the person gets the feeling of union – The beneficial effects of love are four in number: “unity, identity, bliss (gratification) and zeal (fervour).²

1. Union: Love unites persons or things as far as possible and gives joy, gratification and accomplishment.
2. Identification: Each individual intensely wishes to be identified with the beloved. Those who have had such identification will not have any more selfish, or individualistic desires or

The Flamboyant Divine Love

dreams, decisions or aims. “I am yours and for you only” will be the aim of their life.

3. Bliss: The fullness of satisfaction and enjoyment of marital relationship is what is meant by this. It also refers to the bliss in mystical marriage.
4. Fervour: It is the earnestness to popularize one’s beloved and to attract and bring others also to the personality and goodness of one’s beloved, the intense desire that everybody should know, love and respect that person who is his / her pride and fortune and all in all and the incessant attempts for it.³

Let us examine how these four factors became part and parcel of Euphrasiamma’s spiritual journey into the heights.

1. Unity: Euphrasiamma was grasped by the fervour of the feeling that she was the bride of Jesus, from her childhood onwards. She has written in detail her vocation and her dedication of herself in her letter to her spiritual Father written on 23rd March 1902. As far as she is concerned, her vocation was the total commitment to the Divine Bridegroom who attracted her by love (Letter 18). It means that she had grown into the intensity and maturity of love even at the early age of nine for arriving at that decision.

It was by waging a good fight against her own loving, pious and noble minded mother and her self-willed but loving father that she descended the steps of her own house. Thereby she was proclaiming to the world around that everything except Jesus was mere illusion — Euphrasia was turning her back against all the worldly pleasures at that time when all the wealth of the world such as costly ornaments and rich costumes were available for her in abundance, and turning her face towards Jesus, her only love. It can undoubtedly be proclaimed to the world that Euphrasiamma had at that early age offered the couplets of “Ascent of Mount Carmel” of St. John of the cross — the great carmelite mystic, as the song of her own soul.

“One dark night,
fired with love’s urgent longings — ah the sheer grace!
I went out unseen
my house being all stilled” (The Ascent 1: 1).⁴

The soul here is singing of the fortune it has now for forsaking all the outward things and the sensual desires and weaknesses. Inspired by the light of God’s love she started descending the steps of her house! Her love for God was the only driving force behind it.

As far as Euphrasiamma is concerned religious vocation is the growth in the love towards her Divine Bridegroom daily, getting deepened in it and being united with Him by participating in His fortunes.

Whether it is in the beginning of her vocation, or in the succeeding stages, or in the last days of her life, we can see that the intensity of the flame of love in her was not in any way less than that of the Little Flower of Jesus or for that matter that of Saint Theresa of Avila.⁵ The fact that those who become one with our Lord become a single soul with Him is quite true of the relationship of Euphrasiamma too. Let me quote from memory an English poem which manifests the internal state of a soul which is led to union with God by experiencing a great attraction towards him.

I am the undisputed property of Him
whose wishes I may not deny
A lover jealous of my heart
who fills the whole of it
and in His mastery withdraws my heart
from what is passing by
And leaves me dreaming of eternal hills

Her union with Jesus was often revealed in the awareness of the presence of God, prayer, Holy Communion and the zeal for fulfilling the will of God. In her letter written on 1st July 1901 we come across the following:

The Flame of Divine Love

“ By the help of God, now I have great desire to practise virtues, being aware of the presence of God is as I told you before, Father, though I am not getting much time to be in solitude, the time I get, I spend with my Divine Jesus for the reparation of my sins, to pray for sinners and to console Him. The cheerful and lovely countenance of that small boy of whom I have informed you before, and the graceful, beautiful and loving look of the Virgin and her sweet glances and words full of grace filling the heart with love constantly remain in my mind - That blissful face seems to be always present before my mind. I earnestly pray that I may die on the day I happen to see it again”.

The desire for unity appears to be the thirst for death. Her love towards the Lord present in the Holy Eucharist used to attract Euphrasiamma’s heart forcefully to the holy presence. The secret of her mind and eyes being drawn towards the tabernacle was her loving unity with the Divine Lord. Euphrasia was the virgin who had been singing the hymns of joy for ever since the moment the seed of love was implanted in her heart—and parallel to it, is her lamenting over her own nothingness.

There is a description of the same in the book, “Hind’s Feet on the High Places” by Hannah Hurnard based on the Song of Songs 1: 5-6

Ye daughters of Jerusalem,
I’m black to look upon
As goatskin tents; but also as
The tent of Solomon
Without, I bear the marks of skin,
But love’s adorning is within
I am not fair save to the king,
Though fair my royal dress
His kingly grace is lavished on
My needs and worthlessness
My blemishes he will not see
But loves the beauty that shall be⁶

(Canticle 1: 12-15, 5, 6).

There are ever so many instances at which Euphrasiamma exclaims about the amazing love of God being poured into her weak nature in such abundance. The love and longing typical of brides also is expressed therein simultaneously.

“Do not despise me;
for if, before you found me dark,
Now truly you can look at me
Since you have looked
and left in me grace and beauty⁷

(Spiritual Canticle 33)

2. Identification: The saints who reach the stage of identification experience a zealous love which unites them with the crucified. A great zeal to accept the love and suffering of the Crucified Lord in their own lives arises in them. They turn to be the suffering souls by entering into the realm of pure love with love's concentration and enthusiasm. The thirst of the Crucified Lord for souls becomes their own thirst too. They identify their thirst with the thirst of the Lord for the redemption of souls becomes their own thirst too. The letters of Euphrasiamma reveal her growing desire to identify herself again and again with Jesus, her spiritual Bridegroom. Overflowing with love of God, St. Teresa of Avila proclaimed: “Suffer or Die” and St. John of the Cross was praying for the blessing to suffer more and more. Such things happen at the height of love. We can see that Blessed Euphrasia also was in such a state of mind. The identification through suffering can be noticed in the prophets who lived centuries ago.

“Behold I have refined you, but not like silver,
I have tried you, in the furnace of affliction
For my own sake, for my own sake I do it” (Is. 48: 10-11).
“For gold is tested in the fire,
and acceptable men in the furnace of humiliation” (Sir 2: 5).

The Humility of Divine Love

We can see God allowing Euphrasiamma to pass through many ordeals like Job. Her magnificent family and affluence were gone to the dogs and they were sinking in utter poverty. Besides the internal struggles, the misunderstandings in the community and loss of prestige, everything together pushed Euphrasiamma into the depth of suffering. Nevertheless, because of her great desire to identify herself with the crucified, she believed like St. Paul that she should take up all the losses as real profits, and thus became blessed — what Hanna Hurard writes about the experience of suffering which identifies one with the crucified, in her book, the “Mountain of Spices” is quite true in the case of Euphrasiamma too

Is love so terrible O Lord,
And meekness hard?
Yes, love’s desire is intense indeed,
It is the fire for purifying the beloved,
The burning divine fire
The Lord’s beauty!. He wishes to make you perfect
in such a way that all those who look
may visualize in you His perfection.

Not only did Euphrasiamma won the mental courage to embrace all sufferings willingly in her endeavour to identify herself with Jesus, but also turned herself into a suffering servant.

3. Bliss: Euphrasiamma’s letters bear witness to the fact that she had often been in blissful experiences during her contemplation and visions.

The Song of Songs became her own song.

“I am my Beloved’s and his desire is for me.

Come my beloved, let us go forth into the fields”- (*Song of Songs* 7: 10-11).

“I Slept, but my heart was awake” (*Song of Songs* 5: 2).

“Before I was aware, my fancy set me

in a chariot before my prince (*Song of Songs* 6: 12).

The experiences of Spiritual marriage are explained in the canticle of love of St. John of the Cross.

The Bride has entered
The sweet garden of her desire
and she rests in delight
Laying her neck on the gentle arms of her Beloved”

(Stanza XXII)

The wonderful preparations, the Bridegroom had done in order that the soul is rescued and united with Him in marital relationship is revealed in the stanza.

“Beneath the apple-tree
There I took you for my own
there I offered you my hand
and restored you
Where your mother was corrupted” (Stanza XXIII).

After the spiritual marriage the soul will be essentially united with God. As far as the internal powers are concerned union with God will not be so very incessant like that. Indeed the special effect of receiving a blessing is described here

In the inner wine cellar
I drank of my beloved and
When I went abroad
through all this valley
I no longer knew anything
and lost the herd which I was following
(Spiritual Canticle 26).

Euphrasiamma has had some mystical experience in pursuance of the spiritual marriage.

We come across the following instance in one of her letters.....
“Loving Father! as soon as they went (I) was in a tremor and trembling with pain and sorrow. My Father, my loving Saviour, as he had never done before, with great love and affection came close to me

The Flamingo of Di. Gher Love

and took my hand. Calling this wretched worm in a very clear and sweet voice creating feelings of joy and love, O! my heart's loving bride, kissed me twice with those holy lips on my cheeks (saying) I am your heavenly Spouse Jesus who has promised eternal reward to all those who suffer, in the end. No harm has been done to your virginity. My daughter, by these trials I have kept a great reward for you in eternity, etc. Euphrasia! know that this trial you have undergone is very dear to my heart and also of double merit to you. By thus you have pleased your Saviour's heart more than many other trials you have undergone. You must be very humble in all things and always very grateful to the grace of God. You have no good. I have given you all. Hence all your goodness is mine, Your Saviour's. You must be convinced that you have only evil, etc. (He) said. After this, to our Mother. Mother, let us console her a little; saying this immediately He held my hand; my Mother with great affection telling me, my daughter ! all this is over, held and raised me up. The moment I (sensed) the presence of some others. A chair was brought. Made me sit on that. From 3.30 to 4.30 (they) fanned me. At that time I saw a great light in my room. My good Jesus (brought me) in a pitcher like chalice some kind of water like wine (which) was a little warm also. Behold this sign of my eternal love, this is your eternal life. This you drink, He said. That moment some how in great love one was being greatly transformed, and I felt my poor heart was being most closely united and being one with Him. Along with this I had a strong fear whether I may cause pain to such a good Saviour by my fault and which way is there to die before I hurt Him etc., these thoughts were constantly in my heart. My Father, after this is over, there is in my heart a special union and transformation into Him. Father! when I drank that I felt it was His precious blood. With that I got in my heart great strength and courage to suffer anything. As before, suddenly I saw a crucifix at that time on the wall. There were five wounds. There was great splendour also. The garment He wore was studded with stars and precious stones. There was a crown on

the holy head. The lower part was adorned with red flowers shining beautifully as (I) saw.

Euphrasia, my daughter! by your sufferings you have healed the wounds on my body. You must be well prepared to suffer. You will finally come to know the fortune that comes from suffering - saying I shall help you in your suffering. With a smile (He) disappeared (letter No. 35).

4. Zeal : The apostolic fervour that the goodness of one's bridegroom should be known all over the world is what is aimed at by it. But the circumstances of the Carmelite nuns of those days were quite different from that of today. The life of the religious sisters was limited to the four walls of the convent. Nevertheless Euphrasiamma spoke about Jesus to all whom she happened to meet, whether they were children or students, youth or the elderly people, in time and out of time remaining within the limits of her enclosure. Euphrasiamma tried her level best to imprint the real figure of Jesus in the novices in her charge through words and deeds and through prayer and example. The praying Mother, the forgiving Mother, the suffering Mother, the serving Mother had turned herself into an incessant evangelical proclamation. Her eyes overflowing with zeal attracted everybody to Jesus. Euphrasiamma who was always the first to enter the chapel in the morning was also the one who used to leave the chapel last of all, after the long hours of night vigil. She used to pray always in reparation for the sins of all. She came forward to offer herself as an incessant sacrifice of love for the conversion of sinners and for everybody to know and love Jesus. Her zeal for Jesus' cause supplied her the wings of a flamingo. She who was the custodian of the tabernacle turned herself as the custodian of each and every soul of the religious, priests and of the shepherds of the church and of the whole church. Her heart was devoured by the zeal for souls.

Yes, Euphrasiamma was transformed as the flamingo of God's love. Is it not what is manifested in her whole life?

The Family of Divine Love

End Notes :

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2. Sr. Giovanni CHF, *Suryodayam*, Congregation of the Holy Family, Mannuthy, Thrissur-680 651, pp 99 f. Translated by this writer.
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4. *The Ascent of Mount Carmel*, St. John of the Cross, Trans. Fr. O Herman OCD. Carmel International Publishing House, Trivandrum, 1972.
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6. Hannah Hurnard, *Hind's feet on High Places*, (Kingsway Publications, Eastbourne) 1982, (Reprint 1986) p. 23.
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THE PURE LAMP OF LOVE

(Late) Sr. Dr. Sobel CMC

“Heaven is for the strong. The strong shall inherit it” (Mathew 11: 12). Mother Euphrasia devoted all her strength into claiming a heavenly life. She thought that the Lord has chosen her for the vocation of a nun, not just for living a pure life, but to struggle to become a saint. She had responded to the call in order to achieve total harmony with the Lord. For that she followed Christ very close.

THE NEW DECREE

At the last supper Jesus declared his new testament. “This is my order. You must love others as I have loved you” (John 15: 12). He said “Those who accept and obey my orders really love me” (John 14: 21). The words were engraved in the heart of Mother Euphrasia! Lord’s love includes the endless mercy to the weak sinners, and the consideration and care for the sick, weak and outcasts. Only those with absolute faith in Jesus, will be able to understand others and love others and work for them. When we analyse the life of Mother Euphrasia, her great desire and effort to be one with God becomes very clear. She was determined to love Jesus and to be loved by Jesus. In this she was second to none. Her heart beats for him. So her love was, like that of Jesus, limitless and full of mercy. She was able to bring everyone into that embrace of love without considering consequences in her own life. She was always ready to help and serve other human beings.

THE GREAT LOVE OF A MOTHER

She could consider everyone equal. She was always pleasant; integrity was part of her basic nature. Deep dedication, motherly love, childlike intensity, selfless availability, all these were the bright rays of her character. A beautiful picture of Mother Euphrasia is drawn for us through the clear witness of many who have experienced the tenderness and care of her motherly love. Sr. Loyola describes an occasion when she was deeply moved by the love and care of Mother. "I was working in the Civil Hospital. Once in a while, when I come on leave to Ollur, I used to visit Mother. My room was on the second floor. So the mother will let me rest in her room, so that I need not climb the stairs. She will send me some soup, to give me more strength and she will ask me to eat that in her room. If you take it up to your room, people will see and comment on it." But mother, who was so caring about all of us, followed a totally different policy as she herself was concerned. For all the sisters she was a loving mother. She could care for all in the convent, as if they were her own children. She was deeply concerned, not only about their spiritual needs but also all other needs.

The servants from the convent were going to the festival of the Raphael Angel at the Ollur church. Mother Euphrasia called the youngest of them. She had stolen ten rupees from an older servant. Mother asked her to put it back. But, at the same time, she took the girl to the Superior, and persuaded her to give her some money to buy glass bangles. Here we experience the love of a mother, who corrects the child in her faults, but at the same time understands her needs.

Her heart was always open to those in suffering and pain. She was always helpful to the orphans and the servants. Once Sr. Beatrice had to scold the servants in the kitchen. Mother Euphrasia was angry with Sr. Beatrice and spoke to her sharply. But later, when she saw sister, she apologised and asked her pardon for causing her pain. She told her, that those servants were poor

people, who were wholly dependant on the sisters. They seek our mercy. If we become angry with these helpless people, God will not forgive us (San Jos P. 136). She could understand the pain of the suffering and had an instinctive capacity to help them in their hour of need. She always used to advise the sisters to treat the servants with mercy.

PURIFICATION OF ACTIONS

She used to teach the servants to purify their work through prayer. She taught them small prayers and loving words which they can chant in the midst of their work. When they were making the small wafers for the Holy Mass, mother will come and help. She used to do this work with total devotion, usually on her knees. Seeing her in this work, was itself a great encouragement and inspiration for many.

Many a time, she will give whatever she had with her, to those who helped her, over and above the promises of her prayer. One such occasion is recorded in her biography. "She used to drink rice soup in a very old vessel. When it was broken, some one gave her a new bowl. One day she called a servant called Anna to her room and gave her the new bowl, saying that she really didn't need so good a bowl. Daughter, you take it, I have nothing else to give you (San Jos P. 108). For a few days afterwards mother used to take rice soup in a coconut shell.

She used to show special care and consideration towards those who were doing really heavy work. She knew very well that she couldn't do such heavy jobs. But even then she will wait for opportunities to help them. Once, a sister who was involved in candle making could not go for her food in time. Mother noticed this and took up the job and sent her away for lunch. It may be a small deed of kindness, but the sister who received help remembers Mother with gratitude. Kindness is born of the fulness of love, takes wings through service. Service demands sacrifice. Sacrifice is possible only for those who love. Her heart was so large in selfless love, that she could always serve others.

GREAT LOVE FOR THOSE WHO WORK VERY HARD

Mother Euphrasia, always loved others more than herself. She was always anxious about the welfare of others. She was ready to give up her comforts in order to help others. People who were close to her can remember hundreds of such occasions.

Sr. Agnes, who was the physical education coach tells us. "When I come back tired and sweating, after coaching the students, mother will come to me in the dining room. There will always be a bright smile on her face and she will bring something special for me, more than the sweetness of the food, was the sweetness of her love. Often, I ask her why she can't eat some of it. Can she only make people eat, never eat anything herself. She will immediately smile and tell me that she didn't need it. She was not doing any heavy physical work. She is not running around with the students and training them". What little food she ate was more than enough for her. She was always so concerned about even the smallest things concerning her sisters, especially those who were weak and tired. To be available to others, within her own limitations, was a fourth vow for her. The comforts and happiness of those around her was her comfort and happiness. She found greater joy in giving than in receiving.

PEACE OF MIND

The core of a spiritual person's existence, who is gathered to the Lord, is that he must never be tormented by worries or sorrow. This was the core of all the goodness in Mother Euphrasia. Mother Matilda, who was a nurse, speaks of her experience. "I used to work in the Mulankunnathukavu T. B. Sanatorium. During one vacation I reached the Ollur convent with terrible troubles in my heart. I tried to keep my pain a closely guarded secret from everybody. One day, I was going to prayer and Mother Euphrasia was coming towards me. I stood aside to let her pass. But she came straight towards me and asked me straight away why I was so unhappy. I tried to evade her query, but she took me by the hand and led me aside and asked me once again the reason for my sadness.

She was so tender that I started crying. Listening to me, she gave me a bit of advice. 'The Lord gives us these troubles to purify us. Accept everything in joy. Don't be unhappy. You should be happy for the pain He gives you'. Those comforting words touched me so deeply. All the darkness in my heart vanished. All my terrible troubles became so light. Ever since, these words have given me courage and strength to face the sorrows of my life (*Prarthikkunna Amma* p 83).

As the Apostle James tells us, love is expressed through deeds more than words. Mother Euphrasia was a prime example for this. Selflessness was the foundation of her great love. In those days electricity was not so common. After prayer at night Mother Euphrasia will go quickly, with a small candle and stand near the staircase, to give some light to the sisters who were climbing to the rooms upstairs. The eternal lamp which spreads light in the pitch darkness of this world is Mother Euphrasia.

Like prophet Elija, who preferred to pray all alone, Mother Euphrasia, inspired by the spirit of Carmel, prayed alone in the convent. She extolled the glory of God, became a part of that glory, thereby she gained a deep understanding of the human heart. She could dive deep into the human heart, absorb its pain and give comfort.

SERVICE TO THE SICK

Her goodness knew no bounds in the service of the sick. Diseases like T. B. and Cholera were very common in those days. She stayed with people plagued with these diseases. She enjoyed serving them. With great love she comforted them. She gave them courage to suffer without complaint; in the last stages, she prepared them for a peaceful death.

The gospels give us many examples of miraculous healing. Jesus was the good news of healing, moving among the people. Take for example, what happened on the banks of Bethseda pond. Jesus asks the sick man whether he wants to be healed, voluntarily reveals his power to heal. Mother Euphrasia was following her Lord

The Public Camp of Ghoore

when she tried to comfort them in body and spirit. Sr. Barthold, who died of T.B. at the age of 28, had received a lot of help from Mother Euphrasia. In those days, when medical science had not progressed this much, people were terrified of this disease. So the sick were extremely lonely and Mother Euphrasia kept them company. Mother came to her, whenever she needed her, even at night. Old age or her own ill health was not an obstacle. Every chance to serve others was considered to be a great opportunity for goodness by Mother.

A sister who saw Mother Euphrasia's willingness to serve others, her goodness, and the intensity of her feelings tells us of this instance.

"A sister, who was affected by cholera, was almost on the point of death. Because it was a terrible disease people were afraid to go near her or help her. Even her mother did not dare. Mother Euphrasia sat beside her all the time and served her every way she could. She had vomiting and diarrhoea and Mother Euphrasia cleaned up all that. She prepared her for a peaceful death and that sister died in her arms".

Sr. Blaseela remembers how she was ill after the Manalur convent wall fell on her. Mother sat beside her and chanted the rosary. When she was sad, mother supported her to walk to the church and pray. Sr. Mary Rose had swelling on her feet after sewing for a long time. Mother sympathised with her. She was cured within two days as a result of Mother Euphrasia's prayer. Whatever she could do, she did well, with joy in her heart.

BESIDE THE DYING

Mother Euphrasia used to keep vigil at the bedside of the dying without sleep or food. She used to comfort them, give them courage and pray with them. She used to chant the holy words for them, preparing them for death. In their inner struggle, the presence of this holy nun gave them strength and courage. When she was the Mother Superior of the Ollur Convent, once one of her sisters was struggling with death. The other sisters were looking

after her. Mother was praying in front of the altar. After her prayer in front of the Eucharist and her conferring with her heavenly Father, she came to the sickbed and asked her whether she had to make peace with anyone. Her eyes overflowing with tears, she told mother how she had persuaded the bishop to transfer a sister she didn't like much to another convent. Through her cruelty she had caused terrible anguish to the other sister. She had never had the opportunity to ask her forgiveness. With a broken heart she pleaded with Mother Euphrasia to write a letter asking forgiveness to that sister. Even before the messenger reached the Ambazakkad convent, the sister died in peace. Mother Euphrasia used her love and friendship of the Lord, its protection and peace, to comfort everyone around her. Sr. Bibiana, who was a junior sister in the Manaloor convent wanted Mother's spiritual help and presence in a her last days. Mother immediately went to her, before she reached there the sister died. Mother Euphrasia is a flame, burning in the glory of Christ to light up the lives of those around her. Mother Euphrasia's life gives us the message that our celibacy should extend itself in sympathy, tenderness, sharing, loving and empathy.

THE VOW OF POVERTY

I don't have anything of my own. Everything I have is the gift of God. Realising this, those who have dedicated themselves to God give of themselves and what they have, willingly. Immense happiness is the result of such total selfless sharing. We have already seen how Mother Euphrasia was sacrificing her time, health and talents for the sake of others without considering her own comfort and convenience. When she was a new nun, she possessed great virtues, still remembered by others. "The way she practised the vow of poverty was exemplary. She possessed only the minimum of things. She found some use in the things discarded by others. She used the things disliked by others. She used the stick of an old umbrella for support. She wrapped some rags at its end, so that it will not disturb the quietness of others. She did not want to spoil

the concentration of those who were praying alone in their rooms (Sanjos, p. 131). Jesus who was the Lord of all creation, had impoverished himself, in order to make us rich. He was her example, so like Jesus she was ready to share everything she had.

WTIH JOY

She had chosen poverty as a way of life and she was never unhappy about her choice. She was never disturbed by the lack of something. Her life was extremely simple. She had very few clothes and she discarded them only when it was impossible to further repair them. Sr. Mary Peter remembers that the curtain in her room was made up of bits and pieces of cloth. She used to stitch her own clothes. As far as possible she will do all her work herself. She was fully content with what few things she had (Sanjos, p. 151).

Today's society is so steeped in amassing worldly comforts, that they may fail to understand a life style like Mother's. We want more leisure than hard work; how much will we be able to share other people's difficulties. The 'kenosis' of Jesus demands the inevitability of eternal self-sacrifice, self-control, broad-mindedness, consideration and great respect for each other. It is a creative force which nullifies the self and prepares us for the service of others.

Mother Euphrasia made this basic tenet of life, the very basis of her own life. In the various turmoils of everyday life, this was her beacon light. She had dedicated her life to the limitless, immense love of man and God. Total selflessness, the feeling that she is nothing, was evident in her every action. 'If a grain of wheat does not fall into the ground and decay, it will remain useless' (John 12: 24). In its decay, it will become a plant and give birth to so many grains of wheat. A grain of wheat, which keeps itself safe and intact will fall into dust with the passage of time. It will not give rise to new life. This seed, Mother Euphrasia — which was planted in the Carmelite soil, nullified itself in the service of others, giving life, strength, support, comfort, mercy and love. It became the life, inspiration and refreshing cool spring of life.

THE GLORY OF HARD WORK

Mother's life always glorified the value and greatness of hard work. She chose for herself. work which will not be preferred by others. Once the sisters went to class, Mother Euphrasia would go about with a broom, cleaning bathrooms and latrines. In those days, a lot of water had to be drawn from the well for this cleaning. She found great satisfaction in doing these difficult jobs, without letting anybody know. Mariamkutty, one of the servants in the convent tells us "In those days, after dinner the sisters will go for 'visitha'. Only afterwards will they come to wash the plates. Mother Euphrasia will come to the dining room while they are at 'visitha', wash all the vessels and leave before anyone comes back (Sanjos p.128). If she saw anyplace dirty, she will immediately clean it.

SIMPLICITY OF LIFE

Her food habits were very simple. She used to fast four days a week. She never used to take fish, meat, egg or milk. She used to control even the normal need for water and food. She had great sympathy towards the weak and the poor. She used to feed others, foregoing her own food. If she gets an item of tasty food, it will surely find its way into the hands of the most tired sister. Sr. Anna, who was very close to her, tells us: "Mother needed to grind her food, as she had lost all her teeth. She who ate very sparingly will keep persuading us to eat well. She will go to the kitchen and make very good chutney, so that we can eat our food better. She will sit beside us and keep us company, making us happy". For those who were exhausted with work, she would make soup. If she had something special to give us, she was very happy. The sisters knew this and used to say that, it would be their great luck if Mother Euphrasia would become their superior. She found joy in giving, even without having sufficient food for herself. She was very sad, if food was wasted. If there was much waste in the wastebin, she will ask us why we were wasting food. Why we didn't give it to the poor and tell us never to waste things which can be used by someone (Sanjos, p. 136). She used to eat only once a day.

The Publican's Prayer

At other times she will drink either black coffee or rice water. She loved serving food to others and watching them eat. If she finally eats something tasty, with permission she will add some corn flour and make it tasteless. Some times too much salt was also added. She never used to eat fruits or other special items of food. She was ready to spend anything for others. The example she followed was that of Jesus, who lived among men as a man. He was born and had lived and died for others.

THE DUTY OF CORRECTING OTHERS

She corrected others, only to bring them closer to Jesus. Frivolity, laziness and irresponsible nature unsuited to the life of an ascetic, was never tolerated by her. She was a golden example to others in prayer, depth of faith and silent endurance. She wanted everyone to lead a virtuous life. So she will correct the faults of others, in that she never showed any partiality. She couldn't suffer worldliness infiltrating into ascetic life. When she had to take temporary charge of the convent she used to point out their faults and remind them of their duties.

Sr. Petronila still remembers an incident during her junior years as a sister. One day we came out from the dining room after cleaning it. Mother Euphrasia came there and saw the cobwebs and dirt under the table. Immediately she called us and told us that we should not do our work so carelessly. If the spiders fall into the food, the sisters become sick. She continued to scold us very seriously for our slipshod work. The words I heard then, still give me strength and inspiration to do my work well for the Lord. Her only purpose in correcting us was to make us grow in our Lord day by day. She was equally ready to accept correction. On March 1st 1901 she wrote to her spiritual father. "Dear father, please correct me whenever I go wrong. I will not resent any such correction. I'll only be happy" (Letter 3). She was ready to forgive and to be forgiven. She used to obey fully even the smallest rule in its full spirit. She expected their total obedience from the sisters also. So she was alert to correct the sisters under her care prayerfully.

She was ready to wait with hope and tolerance for the repentant return of these little sisters. The Rev. Bishop decided to transfer one of the sisters because of some character weaknesses and the disapproval of the congregation. On this occasion, Mother was reluctant to send her to Ambazhakkadu, especially as the sisters didn't have a good opinion of her. She told the Bishop that she was trying her best to improve the sister, and the sister herself was trying to obey the rules and to better herself. A transfer at this stage will do more harm than good. She pleaded with him to re-think his decision (Letter 59, 22 May 1907).

Only an exalted divine vision will give man a mature view point. Our Lord did not reject Peter from among his apostles, even though he had rejected him thrice. The effort to bring back His crying lambs to Him will make him all the more happy.

LOVE THAT FORGIVES

“Forgive them, father, as they do not know what they are doing” (Luke 23: 34). Mother Euphrasia had made her own their great love of Jesus which forgives whole heartedly. She could treat those who criticised and hurt her with great love. “If somebody says that he loves God and hates his brother, then he is lying, because if he cannot love the brother whom he can see, he cannot love God whom he cannot see” (1 John 4: 20). Mother Euphrasia was living this word. She conquered with tender love those who spoke roughly to her. She was on the lookout for an opportunity to help those who hated her. She imitated the example of St. Little Therese in this. She was determined to love and serve those who spoke against her and to be in harmony with them as soon as possible. The sun should not set on their anger, they must make peace with each other before sunset. She taught that patience was also a form of love. If there was some trouble between two sisters, she used to advise the one who was hurt to kiss the other's feet and ask her pardon. This has been witnessed by sisters who have gone through this cleansing experience. Mother must be convinced that they are friends again before they go to sleep. She will advise others

The Confession of Mother Euphrasia

only after practising it in her own life. Only one who has purified her emotions through meditation, prayer and asceticism and has reached the heights of detachment will be able to give such an advice in these days of quarrels and revenge.

Sr. Agnes tells us of an incident when one of Mother's own novices became her superior. Sr. Agnes had gone to Ollur on some job. Whenever she went there she made it a point to see Mother Euphrasia. So, as usual she went to her room. She was shocked to find Mother Euphrasia kissing the ground at the feet of the Superior and accepting her faults. The superior was thundering at her and scolding. Sr. Agnes did not understand what exactly was the reason for this commotion. Even now she remembers clearly how the old mother was accepting all that scolding, silently without any attempt at protest or justification. She did not learn to conquer hate with love overnight. She acquired that strength through continuous prayer. She gave immense, limitless, deep love to all those near and far.

There were sisters in the community who did not appreciate her behaviour. She was aware of their criticism, judgment and insults. Once she herself heard a group of sisters criticising her saying that all her virtues were mere pretence and prayer experiences mere lies. When the leader of that group was mending clothes, mother readily came to help her. There were more who did not accept her extraordinary divine experiences, in her own community. It is easy to brand all these as pretence or mere hysterics of an overemotional woman. She was hurt deeply by insults and misrepresentations. The terrible pain she suffered, when she was passing through the dark night of the soul, guided her to greater glory. The Lord showered great gifts of the Spirit on her, with passionate love for this disciple. She accepted all criticism with an open mind. She wrote to her confessor. "Father, when somebody speaks ill of me, my heart rejoices in that. It gives me comfort and benefits my soul" (Letter 34, 14th July 1905).

RECOGNITION OF GOODNESS

Mother was very prompt in praising others, speaking good of others. She was eager to accept the goodness in others. Sr. Nepumsiana shares her experience: "I was in charge of ringing the bell. As it was the days of Christmas, after every evening meal, there was the practice of drawing lots in the name of Baby Jesus. One day at that time the candle burned out. But as I was ready with another candle and match box, it could be lighted immediately. Mother Euprasia, who was there, immediately praised me in front of the whole assembly, calling out "wise virgin".

"Be always happy, pray continuously" (1 Thess 5: 16-17). Happiness is a rare gift from God, when we try to make others happy. Psychologists say that a happy life spreads a rare perfume in society. There was always a smile on her face. There was a divine light and contentment in her eyes. "A smile is the music of a good soul". The old Testament tells us "Even if the fig does not come into flower, even if there are no grapes on the vine, . . . I will rejoice in the Lord". It is this joy that Mother experienced in her life. She was always happy. She spent her life in prayer. It is a great experience to find joy in spending one's life in harmony with God.

THE VIRGIN WHO BLESSES

Sr. Goretty went to Mother to seek her prayers for her SSLC examination. "Mother looked at me, I felt as if that look went deep into me. 'You must become the Lord's child. I am praying for that'. Then she put her hand on my head and prayed and blessed me". Sr. Goretty believes that she was able to join the convent, overcoming all obstacles, because of the prayer and blessings of Mother Euphrasia. Whoever the visitors were, Mother was never interested in seeing them. But even then she would always enquire after their welfare. She would tell them to love Christ with joy. After that she would bless them; that was all. Sr. Cyprian shares her experience like this: "If you kneel in front of Mother, she will bless you, laying her hand on your head. She will chant. Then she will say go child. Love the Lord and work for Him (San Jos, P. 105).

The Mother of the Poor

She was always sincerely happy in other people's growth and prosperity. She was always ready to wish them joy and to bless them. V. P. Antony was a person belonging to a branch of Mother Euphrasia's family. After the death of his father, his mother was working hard to bring up the child. Mother was aware of their poverty and hardship. Once, in the course of a conversation, blessing little Antony, mother told him to buy a little lamb and to bring it up. You will find prosperity through it. Mother's blessing came true. He reached a rather good financial status. Two days before her death, while she was in the sick room, she called all the convent servants and blessed them individually, laying her hand on their head. Annamma, one of the older servants bears witness to this. When they heard about the illness of this virtuous Mother, the sisters from different convents flocked to her bedside to see her for the last time, to receive her blessings. When people came to know that her end was near, they came to her with their small children for her blessings. Even in her extreme suffering she smiled sweetly for them. When she couldn't lift her hands, they lifted those hands and put them on their heads for her final blessing.

A HEART FULL OF GRATITUDE

It was another aspect of her love, that she was grateful to everyone. She went on repeating to everyone that she will never forget them, even after death. She is fulfilling this promise even today, by blessing us abundantly. She used to thank everyone even for the smallest help she received. She expressed her gratitude, more through her deeds than through her words. Sr. Anna shares her experience. "Mother was troubled sorely by rheumatism. We were all surprised at the way in which she suffered her pain As far as possible she never troubled others. She used to do her work herself. Sometimes she asked me to do small jobs like mending her clothes. I used to do these things with great joy. Even if it is some very unimportant work, mother will appreciate it so much, as if I have done her some great help. She will go on thanking me.

Her sweet promise that she will never forget us, even after her death, was the great expression of her deep love for man and God.

LOVE IS SERVICE

Her internal life was concentrated in her deep friendship with God, who was the all-pervading presence in her life. She had fully imbibed this Upanishad saying in her day-to-day life. She saw God in everything; She was chanting His name every moment; lived always in the presence of the Lord — This was the essence of her spirituality. Her great love completely focussed on her divine Lord Jesus that was the totality of her life. When love develops into divine love, the heart overflows with mercy. Love is the divine experience of the heart, mercy its expression. The beautiful, sweetsmelling flower of mercy blooms in the fullness of love. Mercy is the love we show to those in sorrow and pain. When Jesus and this virgin became one, their love overflowed as mercy into other human beings. She became the great support to all those sought her help in prayer. All those who entered the parlour of the convent with the burdens of their sorrow and pain received her prayer and comfort. To all the novices, she who could meditate deeply, imparted the wisdom of the crucified Lord. She who lived in her own community with the passion of Prophet Elija, burned bright as a candle. She interceded between Heaven and earth. She was a figure of crucified Christ in her prayer room. She was the lamp, on the high pedestal, of mercy, love, sharing, and service. She turned the divinity of Jesus into the flame of service to man. Let her bless us by enabling us to share the beauty of her pure life with others.

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End Notes :

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ON THE ALTAR OF OBEDIENCE *

Sr. Dr. Chrislin CMC

The call of each consecrated person is to follow Jesus – the chaste, poor and obedient — in the pursuit of perfect charity¹. In effect the consecrated life is at the very heart of the church (V. C. No. 3). This way of life has to imbibe the mode of Christian discipleship. The following of Christ, which is the essence of consecrated life is realized by a life of total dedication observing the evangelical counsels or the three vows.

Rosa (Sr. Euphrasia) who started the ascent of Mount Carmel at the age of 11 has written down straight away that it was not merely to lead a good life but to live a most virtuous life so as to become a 'saint' that He (God) has called me².

While we go through the spiritual life of Mother Euphrasia we can find that her observance of the vow of obedience was a very important factor that helped her much in her life of union with God. Mother Euphrasia also like Jesus, her heavenly Bridegroom, who became obedient unto death, practised obedience through her life of suffering. It became the means for this virtuous soul, for a life of union with God, and part and parcel of her life of doing the will of God.

This article is throwing light on the above truth on the basis of the crystal clear life of prayer and writings of this dear disciple of Christ.

What is discipleship? As far as Mother Euphrasia is concerned the call to consecrated life is equivalent to growing daily in love for her divine Bridegroom, deepening in it, and becoming one with Him, participating in His sorrows and joys, sufferings and pains³. In

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other words “her vocation was to abandon herself to the one who drew her with love, whom she loved more than her life itself — it was a complete dedication”. Viewed in this light, discipleship means a loving union with the person of Jesus, and hence it signifies the submission of oneself to the logic of the cross.

OBEDIENCE – A DEDICATION, THE OBLATION OF OBEDIENCE

Obedience which is called mental adoration is the readiness to put away one’s own interests for the fulfillment of God’s will. Offering her obedience as a sacrifice on the altar of God’s will, in loving submission, Mother Euphrasia accepted the will of God the Father, as her daily bread. Like the other two vows, obedience also is based on the three divine virtues of faith, hope and love. To submit herself to the will of God always had become the warp and woof of her life’s morale. Only a person of deep faith can have the true insight of obedience.

Only those who have received the special grace of God can observe the religious obedience ingenuously. Thus, if it is a charism it is an obligation a person, who has dedicated his / her whole being for the service of God and His people, receives in reality. This is not a control imposed on anyone. As we learn more and more about Blessed Euphrasia we come to realize that it is a surrender of oneself to God, and the indispensable part of the resolution one takes out of love of God. This blessed virgin of Carmel through the vow of obedience offered herself as a loving sacrifice by leading a life of union with Jesus her beloved Bridegroom in order to serve Mother Church and her children.

As far as Mother Euphrasia is concerned obedience is surrendering herself to the will of God, revealed through the superiors of her Congregation and the lawful authorities of the Church and through the Constitution of the Congregation (Letter no. 53, 15th Aug. 1906). It is also clear from the insights she has imbibed from the teachings of the Founder Fathers Bl. Chavara and Rev. Fr. Leopold the Missionary were not anything other than this. Her resignation to the will of God naturally led her to the

selfless service of fellow beings. We can see this blessed soul accepting and proclaiming that obedience is the best short cut to union with God.

OBEDIENCE AND SUFFERINGS

As St. Teresa of Avila stresses, what God wants from a soul who has resolved to love God is nothing but obedience which involves many sufferings⁴. For following the suffering Saviour there is no other way – except suffering, i.e., by following Him, carrying the cross with love, good will and fidelity (Letter 62, 1st March 1911) because this faithful servant had understood that suffering is the sign of the Saviour's love and it is through suffering that love is purified and testified (letter No. 52, 13th Aug. 1906). We can explain her vowed life with the Crucified Lord only in relation to her sufferings.

St. Edith Stein, who is one of the contemporaries of Mother Euphrasia, has written a thought-provoking truth on the relationship between a consecrated person's vowed life and obedience – is quite relevant in the life of Mother Euphrasia.

"The bridal joy and fidelity of a soul consecrated to God must be testified through many direct and indirect conflicts that come across the stream of community life, for she has chosen the bruised lamb as her bridegroom. If she is to enter the heavenly glory with Him she must let herself be united with His cross"⁵ (*Complete works of Edith Stein* Eng. Vol. IV, p. 99).

Her beloved Mother Mary, the Queen of Virgins has helped Euphrasiamma very much to live this bridal love with her heavenly bridegroom through the observance of the three vows by walking with her constantly in order to make her the beloved bride of the heavenly bridegroom.

THE INTERVENTIONS OF THE DIVINE MOTHER IN THE OBSERVANCE OF THE VOW OF OBEDIENCE

Our Lady of Immaculate Conception who was her Mother, Mistress and Model had been helping Euphrasia, her spiritual

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daughter to make steady improvement in the observance of the evangelical counsels specially the virtue of obedience. Like her Divine Son who humbled Himself and became obedient unto death through suffering, the holy Mother had been inspiring her beloved daughter Euphrasia also to respond generously to God's will, through many exhortations and instructions.

One of her letters written to her Spiritual Father (Letter 53, 15th Aug. 1906) is throwing light on this fact. As far as Euphrasiamma is concerned, it was an instance which gave her the right interpretation of obedience. Holy Mother had once forbidden her in a vision from informing her Spiritual Father of the state of her soul through any means such as letter or talk, for some time "Even if your spiritual director ask you, should not tell him; this command of mine . . . you must obey me". "Then I asked her in great anxiety "how can I live my Mother, without obeying my superiors and my spiritual father?" (Letter 53, 15th Aug. 1906). These words filled the heart of Euphrasiamma with anxiety and grief. Euphrasiamma has written about the then state of her mind that she was moving about as if she was a dead person. Even during these days of great mental struggle, her convictions about the dedication in obedience was getting all the more shrewd. We notice in the outpouring of her heart to the holy Mother the following facts.

O my Mother, I have decided to inform my superior who is the living image of Jesus himself of the state of my soul, leaving out even a 1000 heavenly visions. The heavenly visions are of no avail to me before this superior. I consider them as mere wind. My Mother I submit myself totally for obedience Even if my body is cut into many pieces I will not refrain from obeying, saying that I am prepared even to die for obedience I let my loving Spiritual Father know of the matter (the same letter, p. 265).

The self control contained in obedience, the spirit of asceticism, willingness to accept everything that the Constitution and the Superiors demand and the readiness of mind to obey at the risk of shedding blood and even at the face of death etc., are the facts manifested in the instance quoted above.

In pursuance of the above instance the reply given to Holy Mother for her question to her spiritual daughter why she did not abide by her order, throws more clear light on her attitude towards obedience. O! my Mother, it is my bounden duty to be obedient to the superiors. I won't disobey them even if I will have to die for it. Quick came the comment, my dear daughter, it was only to rejoice at this genuine obedience of yours I gave you such an order — Your obedience to your superiors is what pleases me most. Don't think I am grieved at it. Was it not for obedience 'sake' that you suffered those distresses and anxieties joyfully? Therefore you have become a daughter most befitting me, your mother (The same letter, p. 271). That was the reply of the heavenly mistress.

The silent and motherly encouragement from Our Lady had indeed helped her to make an oblation of herself on the altar of obedience along with her (Euphrasia's) strong resolution and well trained concentration in this practice.

We have to understand that through such a training our Lady was giving her beloved daughter the conviction that listening in faith and judicious dialogue are involved in such responsible and genuine obedience. To imitate her crucified bridegroom in obedience also was part of the Marian exhortations.

There is no doubt about the fact that the above such instances in the life of Euphrasia do point out to the spiritual motherhood of our Lady who is the Queen of heaven and the one conceived without original sin. In her path of the search for God Euphrassiana was following the foot steps of our Virgin Mother in order to remain as the sole possession of the holy Son of the Mother, her Bridegroom for ever.

The basic truths about obedience Euphrassiana imbibed from our Holy Mother through her constant contact with her became the essence of her constant contact with her became the essence of her spiritual life. Inspired by the intense love towards her spiritual bridegroom and to His holy will, this pious soul tried her level best to overcome the temptations against obedience.

OBEDIENCE - THE PATH TO UNION WITH GOD

As far as Euphrasiamma, who is otherwise called the 'Praying Mother' is concerned, 'Prayer' meant the search of the will of God. Basically the love of God of a person who has reached the highest level of prayer consists of his / her self-surrender to God. It means that such a person's will always be in harmony with the will of God and his / her mind will be in perfect and joyful union with God in whatever does. Not to have anything displeasing to God is of supreme importance. In the words of St. John of the cross, the resignation to the will of God is, in a way the essence of perfection⁶.

We come across this ideal in the teachings of St. Teresa of Avila too who is the teacher par excellence of the way of perfection. The highest perfection one can reach in the way of spirituality consists in uniting one's will to the will of God, says St. Teresa of Avila⁷. She continues to say that the nature of this unity can be defined in genuine love and it consists in pleasing God in everything and trying not to displease him in any way (*Interior Castle* IV / 17). Like St. Teresa of Avila, the life of Saint Euphrasiamma testifies that it is this union of minds (will) that she loved to have in her own life and in the lives of her sisters.⁸ It means that Euphrasiamma also imbibed the spirit of giving first place to God always in such a way as to seek perfect union with God through Teresian spirituality and made it the specific nature of her life.

"Be transformed in God", 'Be one with him' was the only desire and aim of Saint Euphrasia. She was intent on submitting everything silently for love of God. We can listen to her loving aspirations for growing in her sole aim, viz., union with God. 'Please pray, if it is pleasing to God, do not give me any visions except the grace to remain in perfect union of heart with Him till death and to increase in the same (Letter 67, 1 January 1917).

Beloved Father, I am not seeing any good in me . . . yet I must love the divine Bridegroom. To be united with Him most closely is always my desire which is ever increasing in my heart (Letter 68, 1st Feb. 1917).

"This blessed union usually on all days I am getting by the great grace of God I don't want any visions. It is enough if this great union with God lasts only (Letter 72, 1st April 1918).

As we can understand from the above mentioned instances that Euphresiamma realized that there is no supreme union in visions, and that it is possible only by love and perfect love certainly leads a soul to union and such union with God is impossible without the assimilation of minds. As for Euphrasiamma, who is the Praying Mother, the characteristic of a person who is living in union with God, is that he / she will be moving ahead through the ways God leads him / her with love.

If we go through to spiritual ways of Mother Euphrasia we can understand quite well that she was always trying to live in accordance with the will of her divine Bridegroom to the best of her ability. From the simple ejaculation, "O God, let Thy will be done in me", she used to repeat every now and then from her 12th year onwards, including her prayer of self oblation written in 1950 on the occasion of the Golden Jubilee of her Religious Profession—"Eternal Father, I offer myself as a total oblation of love in order that They will and pleasure be consummated in everything and at all times" (*Letters*, page 384) manifests this growth.

If we are to speak in the words of St. Theresa of Avila, "The will of God is to give this soul who has taken the indelible decision to abide by God's will in everything, some facts about the ways to fulfill that decision and its greatness" (*Interior Castle* IV 1.8). Yes, Jesus is her heavenly Bridegroom; and she is His bride; and this is true too. Because the decision of her soul was to fulfill the will of God in everything. This is the way of love, the result of obedience — be one with the Beloved. In that perfect union of spiritual marriage the soul which is the bride becomes one with the bridegroom; gets transformed; and in the loving embrace of God, she reaches the height of perfection that can be reached in this world.

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Genuine Christian mysticism is always the gift of God. Euphrasiamma who had the benefit of such gifts considered herself unworthy of it; and at the same time she was always thirsting to become united with her heavenly bridegroom — Mother Euphrasia had clearly understood that real obedience or the fulfillment of God's will is the basis and ideal of all other virtues and the root cause of all good fortune and every happiness.⁹ It deserves our special notice how very exhaustively has she included her obedience in her prayers. Let Thy holy will which is most just and exalted deserving of love be consummated in me and by me, in everything and by all, everywhere and always (*Hrudayanjali*, page 70). So very wide and extensive and generous was this blessed one's stream of thought about obedience, as it is reflected in this prayer. Therefore Euphrasiamma was ever vigilant to conform her will to the will of God at all costs. We can see here the virtue of obedience as the surest way to attain union with God.

THE DAUGHTER OF CARMEL WHO IMBIBED THE FOUNDER FATHERS' VISION OF OBEDIENCE

No doubt about the fact that Mother Euphrasia had in her life the beauty and authenticity of having put into practice in her life in Carmel the witnessing life of obedience of the Founder Fathers Bl. Chavara and Fr. Leopold and their exhortations. These Founder Fathers have pointed out the following facts as the best means to grow in virtue¹⁰ (*C. M. C. Journal of Accounts*, page 77). "Entrust your heart with the Mother Superior Do not consider this superior as a human being, but as Jesus Christ himself and do to her as you would do to Him"¹¹. They have advised to keep it as the golden letter in the heart. They have also promised the pioneer members that they would become saints capable of performing miracles if they submitted themselves to the superiors and live in accordance with their will and desire.

When Fr. Chavara wrote, “the sole hallmark of sanyasi is the obedience without eye or ear, i.e.; by giving up one’s mind totally. He who has this is the Ascetic.”¹² Fr. Leopold is telling us, “obedience is the most important mark of our congregation (*C.M.C. Journal of Accounts 11*, p. 74) and “let obedience be your most beloved virtue”¹³.

This spirit of obedience became the life style reflected in lives of the Founder Fathers and the pioneer members of the convent which was started for being the mirror of humility, obedience and piety for others,¹⁴ and handed over to the generations following. Whatever we do ‘for the sake of obedience’ should not be for any sheer joy of any emotional satisfaction or comfort but with the sublime aim of doing the holy will of God and for pleasing Him¹⁵ — so also is the exhortation of Rev. Fr. Leopold about the spirit we should have in obeying the regular constitution — It is as follows. “Remember that the constitutional rules and obedience and the means through which God wishes to be loved and served by you — you have no other way except this”¹⁶.

Again here are some of their exhortations. “You need not incline your minds for anything else; neither should you deserve for anything which is not in accordance with obedience, should not do anything else but do the things which are against your liking and inclination, with great joy” (*The Letters of Fr. Leopold*, pp. 4f.) In all her letters is reflected how very well Mother Euphrasia loved the virtue of obedience and its practice. “It gives me always very great joy and satisfaction in my heart to do things in obedience. However harmful might be the situation I am convinced that I will be able to overcome the temptations with God’s help; and that our Holy Mother is giving me very great encouragement and joy for accepting sufferings for her sake” (Letter No. 21, June 1902).

This C.M.C. sister, by confirming obedience as the testimony of her mind and consciousness was living the spirit of the instructions the Founder Fathers had given to the pioneer members. The

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following are the four steps of obedience Fr. Leopold has pointed out.¹⁷

1. Obey the order quickly and smartly
2. Fulfill the order thoroughly without distorting
3. Execute the order joyously
4. Carry out the order without arguing.

In other words, what Father Leopold meant was that a consecrated person should take care to make her obedience an act performed smartly, completely, joyously and in true faith. What the letters of Mother Euphrasia manifests is that she was living with the great thirst that “the will of God must be consummated in me completely till death” (Letter 78, p. 358) and what was happening in her life was a real sacrifice of obedience (Letters 15, 17, 61).

I am enjoying the ejaculation, O my God, may thy holy will be done in me” as if it is a sweet food of my heart. Sometimes I repeat it unawares” (letter 78, p. 358). Again in the letter written on 17th Sept. 1911, she has mentioned as follows; “O my Supreme Lord, my loving Saviour, behold your humble servant ever ready to do your holy will. Fulfill your holy will in me in every thing” (Letter 64, 6th Sept. 1911, page 324). This daughter of obedience who grew up under the loving discipline of Holy Mother, considered herself, like the Holy Mother, as the maid servant of God. The servant has no interest of her own, no schemes or expectations — To do the will of the master is the only function of the servant. The noble servants obey and prove their mettle even at the fiery ordeals. No consideration of profit or loss, prudence or imprudence arises here; because this virtue of obedience, as it is hinted above, helps her to reach the height of union with God. St. Theresa of Avila also bear witness to this truth.¹⁸

As the Founder Fathers often remind us, the gist of the vow of obedience is not so much the things of this world’s ideals as the way of life which has its basis on the faith vision of Spirituality.

Mother Euphrasia's life of faith concentrated in God led her to the divine mystical realms giving her the insight into the heights of perfection.

CONCLUSION

Obedience for a genuine cause is a wonder, challenge and question mark to the world. In the life of Mother Euphrasia, obedience meant a celestial outlook and means and endeavour for the fulfillment of that vision. For her obedience was the 'modus operandi' for finding her heavenly bridegroom in the world's authorities and the will of God in their wishes. The directives of the superiors might be unpleasant and their opinions disgusting. Nevertheless what should be at the core of actions and make them hallowed is the loving inspirations of the soul Otherwise the dedication in love which facilitates union with God insubstantial, and we turn up to be leading a futile life in community. This message also is inherent in this pious soul's obedience.

The life of Mother Euphrasia manifests the face that through obedience one gets the mental strength to bridle one's own wishes and to lead a life in accordance with God's plans and through it to move towards the realms which Jesus wants.

The truth is that a real disciple of Jesus will always be in the presence of Jesus and in contact with Him (cf. Mark 3: 13). In other words, one should be in loving union with God. One who loves God must be always sticking to Him in mind, and should move about along the path of God's plan. This is the reality that shines bright always in Mother Euphrasia's convictions about obedience. Thus she was spreading the gospel of Jesus through her own life.

Mother Euphrasia who chose the good portion Jesus spoke of (Lk. 10: 42) considered the will of God as her supreme fortune as per the Founder Fathers' exhortations. Through her obedience and resignation to the will of God she participated in the salvific sacrifice of Jesus who offered Himself as the ransom for many. This nun was moving towards perfection by submitting her humility, love of God, self sacrifice and above all faith which enabled her to

Of the Affinity of Obedience

be resigned to the will of God together with all her powers and weaknesses Mother Euphrasia is proclaiming to the world that of all sacrifices loving obedience becomes the most pleasing sacrifice to God with the powerful and motherly protection of our Holy Mother and the power of God's grace.

Thus Mother Euphrasia who was ready to accept even martyrdom on the altar of obedience for doing the will of God by daily inclining herself to God's will has proved that her life on earth is the life of union with God and that the virtue of obedience is her willing submission to God's will. This "virgin of obedience" still shines bright before us as the guiding light par excellence.

End Notes :

1. *Vita consecrata*, No.3, Pope John Paul II, P. O. C. Publication, Kochi, 2000
2. *The letters of Mother Euphrasia*. Ed. Fr. Mathias Mundadan CMI, Sr. Cleopatra CMC, Sr. Perigrin CMC, Euphrasia Publication, St. Mary's Convent, Ollur, Thrissur — 680 306, Letter 17, 1st Jan. 1902.
3. Sr. Pastor CMC, Thirsting for Lord, Trans. Sr. Bianca CMC, CMC Publications, Mount Carmel Generalate, Thaikattukara P. O., Aluva - 683 106, 2002 p. 38.
4. Cf. St. Teresa of Jesus, *The History of the Foundation of Convents*, 5: 13.
5. *Complete works of Edith Stein* (English), Vol. IV, P. 99.
6. St. John of the Cross - *The Canticle of Love*, Translated by Fr. Herman OCD, Carmel Book Stall, Trivandrum 1976, No. 27.6
7. Cf. St. Theresa of Jesus, *Interior Castle* 11, 1, 8
8. Cf. St. Theresa of Jesus, *The History of Foundation of Convents* 5: 13
9. *Hrudayanjali, the Prayers of Mother Euphrasia*, compiled by the Vice Postulators 2000, Vol. I P. 70.
10. CMC Journal of Accounts, Vol. II, P. 77.
11. *The letters of Fr. Leopold*, P. 5.
12. *Complete works of Fr. Chavara*, Vol. IV, P. 99
13. Letters of Fr. Leopold, P. 4.
14. *Complete Works of Fr. Chavara*, Vol. IV, P. 93.
15. Fr. Leopold -- *Retreat for the Religious*, P. 228 & Complete Works of Fr. Chavara, Vol. IV, P. 92.
16. *Letters of Fr. Leopold*, P. 4.
17. Fr. Leopold, *Retreat for the Religious*, P. 229.
18. *History of the Founding of Convents*, 5, 10.

PRAYER AT ITS PINNACLE

Sr. Dr. Omer CMC

People who spend their lives praying face a lot of changes. There will be changes in body and character. Voice becomes sweeter. Even his breathing will be unique. The expression on his face reveals that he is in a state of peace. His mind will always be at peace. Even when his eyes are closed or when they are open or when they are engaged in some activity, he will always be praying.

“As he who called you is holy, be holy yourselves in all your conduct” (1 Peter 1/15). Agreeing to this order of God and at a very tender age getting a spiritual intuition and following this intuition, Saint Euphrasia was able to develop a strong spiritual character. From then onwards she has been trying to lead a life of prayer just like the father of this Carmel Congregation, Fr. Elias “who followed the belief that he was standing in front of God (cf. Kings, 19/10) without going into the educational or social service field but spending her life in prayer without anyone knowing about her was a humble Carmelite nun St. Euphrasia.

Leading a life of prayer does not mean spending some hours or doing some rites only but it is an experience which touches you deeply every moment. Fr. Chavara taught that whatever activity or state you are engaged in you must always be praying, i.e., when you are opening or closing a door, whether you are standing or walking or spitting or cleaning or reciting prayers or in a group, you must be praying. She tried to follow the teachings of Fr. Chavara.

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Seeing her always in a state of prayer made others feel the presence of God. The secret behind her calm and pleasant face was that her soul was filled with God's presence. Once Sr. Euphrasia wrote to Bishop Menachery : "For four months I have been noticing . . . whatever I am doing whether it is conversation or when I am working I feel that someone is talking to me inside my heart".

"She loved God to the fullest". Each saint is showing us different faces of God. From Sr. Euphrasia what we learn is her relentless prayer. "Pray in the spirit at all times in every prayer and supplication". (Eph 6/18). She is someone who followed the words of the prophet to the fullest. She lived a completely simple life – praying to the Almighty and praying for the world. She was influenced by her elders and spent long hours before God and spent time in meditation.

The hunger for God helped her to tolerate pain and carry crosses and give strength to her heart. To attain this, the paths to follow were prayer, penance, suffering, following the canons of the Church. St. Euphrasia understood that "in daily life by giving love and help . . . living in a society and doing social service, prayer gives us internal energy and alertness. A person who wishes to be close to God knows that it is a continuous process of prayer. According to Fr. Chavara " the movements of our body, the blinking of our eyes, our breathing as well as hearing the noises of nature" makes a person close to God and Sr. Euphrasia experienced all this in her life.

In reality to love God means facing a lot of sacrifices, pain, abuses and chances of accidents. Sr. Euphrasia had a special spiritual beauty because she had to undergo a lot of pain. From early childhood she suffered a lot to become the bride of Jesus. She had to face her father's disapproval as well as the hatred of her relatives. When she was in the boarding house she had to face many ailments. Finally because of her illness she was sent home! Another time she was on the verge of death. She had to face many tests and

attacks of the devil. Community also provided many difficulties. Her family lost all their wealth and they had to sell their house and when she heard that her brothers and sisters had nowhere to go, “She told them not to lose heart and Almighty God knows everything! But one thing – even if you lose money, see that you do not lose the grace of God”. Saying this she tried to give courage to her family asking them to put their hurts and pain along with Christ’s wounds and pray. In spite of all the problems she continuously prayed and attempted to earn God’s grace through relentless effort. “Even to your old age I am he, even when you turn gray I will carry you, I have made you and I will bear you, I will carry and save you” (Is 46/4). Following the words of the prophet throughout her life to old age, Mother completed her life being close to the Almighty.

To get light and strength in the midst of opposition and difficulty Mother continuously prayed. Prayer for Mother was like food or breathing. The two things that helped St. Euphrasia to pray were silence and solitude. Mother wrote to her spiritual advisor that devotion to God helped her to keep quiet and work and there was no difficulty to attain God’s grace. Solitude helps us to listen to our inner most thoughts which is being uttered from deep inside our soul. This is the answer which man gives to God’s anxiety to relate with man’s soul.

Mother was able to achieve all this by embracing the Almighty in inner silence and was able to face life’s problems, laziness, and strengthen the mind and pray for all.

For a person to pray and reach the pinnacle of prayer, one should have a clear conscience, pure life and high aims. Beside being Mother Euphrasia herself, she was also a person with a special vision. Her holy dreams up to her death were to be like Christ - suffer like Christ, resurrect like Him. According to her we must be able to rise in spirituality.

Early in the morning a heart searching for God is most likely going to get God. Mother Euphrasia’s soul was always in a thirst

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and hunger for God. So very early at dawn itself she got up and tried to be filled with God. Sleep did not deter her from her search for God. The most easy methods to reach God and get God's love one has to always repeat name of Christ and with a thankful heart pray and be always close to God. This is how Mother expressed her desire to see the face of God. "Holy Trinity, my soul wants to see and praise you always like the holy souls".

Her desire to be one with God was expressed in all her actions and prayers. Whatever she heard or saw led her to deep meditation and prayer.

Her words showed that she wished that her heart be filled at all times and all places with God: "O Divine Rescuer! I want only your love! My dear Jesus, whatever you do I will not be separated from you". St. Euphrasia's beliefs and ideas were very strong.

Meditation was the best time of her life. To her spiritual advisor she wrote that her devotion is increased through prayer and meditation: "My Father meditation helps my soul very much when I am meditating. When I am not able to meditate properly. I feel that I have not done anything useful. (Letter 29, 16 Feb 1904, p. 137). Because of her intense belief she was able to fight against all her weaknesses. Her method of rising above these problems was humorous. When she was weak and tired she used to say these words to herself to get energy: "Euphrasia this is your last meditation. It might not be possible to get a chance for these graces. What? You think you will be able to give up all these worldly pleasures for a few virtues? How after the pleasures of life? When asked why have you come? How are you going to answer? Jumping up and lightly kissing and embracing the cross and saying due to Christ's suffering I was able to come" (Letter 27, July 1903).

This virgin's spiritual life was influenced by Holy Communion, Sacred Heart and Holy Mother.

PRAYER - BEFORE HOLY EUCHARIST

A special spiritual practice of St. Euphrasia was being always in front of the Blessed Sacrament. She found great pleasure in the

presence of Blessed Sacrament. In the Holy presence she was able to attain graces for herself and at the same time she was able to pray and attain graces for others.

Her hunger for the Holy Eucharist can be understood from the words of her spiritual Father. Because chances of attending the Holy Mass was not possible daily her heart was filled with deep regret and great desire to see Mass daily (Letter 22, 3 July 1902). To be one with God was in her heart always, That love gave her strength to face all difficulties. In this belief Mother Euphrasia was able to see, hear, experience God's words.

In the Holy Mass, sacrifice of Christ is done so that Heavenly Father is given our body along with Jesus, a chance for us to say thanks. It is that which Jesus teaches Sr. Euphrasia: "My daughter you must see and receive the Holy Eucharist daily and you must pray for the ingratitude of mankind who hurt me and as a sacrifice you must pray to my Father for the redemption of their sins". (Letter 26, 26 Nov. 1902). Through these words Jesus is telling us to adore the Heavenly Father.

Sr. Euphrasia was known as the Blessed Sacraments' missionary and she showed through her daily deeds that she was very close and she adored and loved the Blessed Sacrament very much. She wanted every one to grow in the love for Blessed Sacrament and she wanted every one to experience the love of God. In the Holy Mass Sr. Euphrasia sacrificed her life and transformed into bread and she believed that the Eucharist was not just a piece of bread but the body of her redeemer and bridegroom Jesus Christ. Not just a body but a body with life. For Sr. Euphrasia receiving of the Holy communion was a merger of her loving God and herself. About this merger has been written in letter 69.

Loving Father when I receive the Holy Communion, I know that I am receiving God's infinite graces and I don't know what to give Him in return. But like I wrote earlier sometimes I am not able to appreciate the love of my groom Jesus Christ. But this lowly person is lucky to enjoy God's infinite graces (Letter 69, 2 April 1917).

Promises Fulfilled in Holy

Sr. Euphrasia felt that human mind understood the plans of God and holiness of the souls. She was very pleased “I am able to suffer and work hard due to the strength that I get when I receive the Holy Communion”. (Gems of Thoughts and Aspirations, No. 20).

“My soul clings to you: your right hand upholds me:” Psalm 63: 8.

Sr. Euphrasia upheld the policy of the psalm and through Holy Communion she was able to get a lot of joy. The merging of the soul and Holy spirit is a precious moment. Some of the words of St. Paul can be used to describe her like Virgin of the Church and bride of Christ as well as a firm believer of Christ who loves Him very much and a virgin who offered her life for Christ. All this could be used to describe Sr. Euphrasia. The Holy communion merged her with Christ. When Christ in the Holy Eucharist reached her heart she would press both her hands on her Chest and utter these words: “ My sweet Jesus, please don’t go away from your dwelling inside my heart, please don’t go away from me even for a second.

The thanksgiving time after receiving the Holy communion was for Sr. Euphrasia very precious time. It was during this time that she had many visions and revelations. In the letter written 1901 September 20th it is noted that” My loving Father, today after receiving the Holy Communion my eyes were filled with light and I felt faint like I told you before a man came and stood in front of me with eyes of sorrows I am your Redeemer Jesus Christ His face was red and glowing like the sun (Letter 10, 20 Sept 1901) when Sr. Euphrasia asked Jesus of His sorrow - He told her He was hurt by the actions of mankind their ingratitude, the increase of sinners. He asked Sr. Euphrasia to console Him till her death and make others love him. For her these meetings with Blessed sacrament were like meetings with ordinary men. For her eyes and mind were together with Holy Eucharist and the intense love of God.

Whenever she was faced with a problem you could find her near the Holy Tabernacle. She received a lot of advice and spiritual

enlightenment from there. She spent a lot of hours in front of the Blessed Sacrament not only for herself but for all mankind and she prayed for everyone. Usually her eyes were for two things only—one for the Blessed Sacrament and the other on the face of Blessed Mother. Sometimes she spent whole nights like this. This is how she prayed. In the corner of the church, in front of the Blessed Sacrament she used to sit for hours without any movement and seeing this people called her “Praying Mother!”.

We can see her deep love for the Blessed sacrament and in that way to console the Sacred Heart can be understood from her letter to her Spiritual Father.

My dearest Father! I want to ask a favour. Please allow us to meditate one whole day every month. I beg of you to allow me to go for a one day recollection every first Friday. I would like to see the Holy Mass and then pray before Blessed Sacrament. If everyone meditated on that day it would give great solace to our redeemer. I would be greatly obliged if my desire to pray and offer solace to the Sacred Heart be granted (L. 11, Oct 1901, Page 61).

Sr. Euphrasia informed her spiritual guide that illness prevented her from standing at a time for 10 - 15 minutes but during 40 hours of adoration she was able to kneel and adore for 2 - 3 hours at a stretch. Sr. Euphrasia had a fine belief and innocence so she was able to adore God like the little angels in Heaven. We know from her letter that all this she learned from Mother Mary : “ A beautiful girl came near and woke me up. Let us adore God. The angels are praying Saying this she woke me up every hour. The beautiful girl made me do this daily for three days. As a result the hours were stamped on my heart and I will not ever forget it. My father I did not recognize her at that time but now I know her. I was only nine at that time” (Letter 30, 18 Feb 1904, p. 148). Sr. Euphrasia was a person who wanted to serve God to the fullest and we learn from that this was Blessed Mother’s teachings.

Besides the beauty of the Blessed Sacrament this was about the spirituality of the family, suffering and this was about the glow of Blessed Sacrament on the life of believer.

PRAYER TO THE SACRED HEART

Sr. Euphrasias offering of her life was an act of devotion to the Sacred Heart and deep love for Christ. Her relationship with Christ was a result of her deep devotion to Sacred Heart. Mother had a heart filled with love and devotion to her groom. An exquisite statue of Sacred Heart was placed in the centre of the convent by Mother herself. The running of the convent was left to the Sacred Heart and the statue that she erected is still found in the convent at Ollur. Thus she felt the heavy responsibility of running the convent taken over by Christ and she was given a great relief. She began and ended every day in front of the Sacred Heart. She used to sometimes spend a major part of the night in front of Sacred Heart. About this her companion in the convent says that “Mother used to spend her days in the sick room. The statue was placed in a courtyard next to the sickroom. In those days, I was her companion at night. I often watched Mother spending many hours in front of the Sacred Heart after every one slept. One day mother was praying as usual. The time was 11’o clock. I had laid down but had not slept. In the midst of prayer Mother came in a hurry and called me. She showed me that the Sacred heart was shining. The statue of Blessed Mother placed opposite was similarly shining. This was there for a long time”.

She was proud to be known as Christ’s, Sacred Heart’s Euphrasia. She gave herself to be sacrificed and burnt into cinders by the rays of Sacred Heart. Fridays were regarded as the days for commemorating the Sacred Heart and she used to spend those days in prayers and meditation. The relationship to Sacred Heart was not just a devotion. She studied Christ’s Sacred Heart, just like Jesus she learnt to love, see and look after everyone without any restrictions. She was able to read the minds of others, know their emotions, was able to foretell about others because of her devotion to Sacred Heart.

Man’s ingratitude and sins hurt our savior very much. There are a lot of incidents revealed to her spiritual Father about her strong

desire to console the Sacred Heart of our Saviour. Letter no: 10 to her spiritual advisor reveals what Jesus told her: “Like I told you before I am deeply hurt by the actions of our chief children (those who have dedicated their lives like priests and other devotees) their ingratitude wounds me. You must pray to the “Heavenly Father for their redemption till you die”. (20th Sept: 1901).

She alone did not grow in her devotion to Sacred Heart but she made a great effort for her companions also to grow attached to Christ’s heart and offer solace. We can see that Sr.Euphrasia devoted her life for understanding the aims of her Lord and she tried her level best to spread the devotion to Sacred Heart. To all those who came to her with the problems and temptations they faced, the solution she gave to get strength and graces from God was to recite the rosary in favour of the Sacred Heart. She taught them a small prayer “Blood and water which gushed forth from the Sacred Heart of Jesus have mercy on me” and as a result we see a relief from pain for all those who said this.

We know from the letter written on Nov 1st 1902 to her spiritual advisor that her whole life she was able to spend without being fed up. “I have only one consolation and that I am ready to offer myself for all those who need the help of Sacred Heart and Mother Mary.

She wanted to glow in the rays of Sacred Heart. She wanted to be tied to the love of God with the softest thread and wanted to be very close to God. Her relationship with the Sacred Heart was not just a devotion but a merging of her life with God.

PRAYER NEAR BLESSED MOTHER

Blessed Holy Virgin Mary has been chosen as the patron saint, role model and protector of the CMC by the founders. They were like small children who used to run with their small small joys and sorrows to their mother and this was the kind of attachment and love that they had with the Blessed Mother. To adore Jesus with His Mother was to be like her in the present life. Like the Blessed Mother to take decisions in front of God, to keep the holy secrets

Prayer, Faith, and Love

inside the heart, to sacrifice oneself for others, to make firm believers of Christ, to make the Holy Church grow and spread to all corners – this was what the founders first taught CMC.

Christ and Blessed Mary in the Bible was soaked up by Sr. Euphrasia who was a devout Virgin. Mother Mary was the rock which helped Sr. Euphrasia to go deep into the love of God. Sr. Euphrasia accepted Mother Mary from the beginning of their monastic life as her dear mother. The admiration which she had for the Immaculate Conception made her have a very close mother – daughter relationship.

The depth of her love of Mother Mary can be witnessed in the letters written to her spiritual advisor. In letter no:35 it is written “there are many instances where my mother has helped me. To have a mother is our greatest asset. If we did not have this mother what would have happened to us dear father”. (L. 35, 1 Feb. 1905). She wrote to her spiritual advisor on June 1st 1905: “Once Blessed Mother told me that she was saddened by the sorrows inflicted by the sinners on her Son. It would give me great consolation if you would all together see Mass on the First Saturday of every month and offer it as compensation in honour of my Immaculate Heart. Daughter you have to take interest in this”. (L. 37, 1 June 1905). It was after twelve years in 1917 that our Blessed Mother Mary appeared in Fatima and begged the world to see Mass and receive Holy communion on First Saturday and pray to Immaculate Mother to compensate for the sins against her Son.

The method chosen by Sr. Euphrasia to show her love and devotion, to Blessed Mother was to recite the holy Rosary. The Rosary was her greatest treasure in difficulties and an instrument of prayer. The special interest of this Praying Mother was to meditate on the mysteries of rosary and recite it. The heavenly chain which bound together Mother and daughter was the rosary.

Blessed Mother herself taught her to recite the rosary. In her letters to her spiritual advisor she has mentioned that Mother of Immaculate Conception has accompanied her on many occasions

while reciting the rosary. Even in her last days with her one side paralyzed, people who visited her were astonished to see the beads moving in her tireless hands. To see Sr. Euphrasia without her rosary was a great difficulty. Even when she came face to face with death she held the beads of the rosary very tightly in her hands and she prayed and beseeched God for the whole world.

The small small acts of love which was recited by her showed the deep affection and devotion which she had for the Blessed Mother. When she came face to face with death she had the rosary in her hands and the rosary was the link between Sr. Euphrasia and the whole world. She made others also pray like her.

“Mother of God, Immaculate conception, Queen of the universe we praise you!”

“Dear Mother, always remember that I am your daughter and protect me and correct my mistakes.”

“Queen of Heaven, don’t let me away go of me till I reach you”.

“Blessed Mother, please give me a heart which will always love Jesus”.

“My Jesus, My dear Mother! please protect my soul and body”.

Blessed Mother who consoled her in her suffering and helped her to fight against evil forces, filled her life. Depending on the strength of the evil forces, she increased her prayers and sacrifices and her hope in God. In times of difficulties she depended on God. Blessed Mother came to her aid when she was attacked by Satan and evil forces and during temptations. We know this when we read letter no. 14 by Sr. Euphrasia.

“My daughter! During your life time you will have to face a lot of difficulties and suffering. You must bear all this and you must be strong till the end” (15 Nov 1901).

Her freedom with Blessed Mother and her power of persuasion helped Sr. Euphrasia to help her brothers and sisters. She prayed

Promise Fulfilling Prayers

along with Blessed Mother for the conversion of sinners, souls in purgatory and to destroy the enemies of the church. Blessed Mother helped her always. This close relationship with Mother not only helped Sr. Euphrasia to have a deep bond but also to spread the Marian influence to others.

Let us hope to be like Sr. Euphrasia who prayed to Father in heaven, Jesus Christ and Blessed Mother. Let Sr. Euphrasia be an inspiration for us. Let the Heavenly Father give each one of us “ a big heart” so that we can be like her and give solace to the suffering souls and keep them close to heart and tell them of the unending love of God.

THOSE WHO NESTED ON THE BRANCHES OF PRAYER

Only the good deeds which we do for the love of man and God can be taken with us to heaven. The small things which we do with love will turn into precious prayers before God, therefore love is very important. Through prayer what we receive and give is love. This give and take of love makes our life holy, this is the factor which makes life a prayer. This state can be seen in Sr. Euphrasia. The love she received from God she had to spread it to all mankind. People saw this flowing of love in Sr. Euphrasia.

“Those who say “ I love God” and hates their brothers and sisters are liars for those who do not love a brother or sister whom they have seen, cannot love God whom they have not seen” (1 Jn 4/20).

Mother Euphrasia’s life shows us how close we are to God and how we can increase our piety. Prayer helped Sr. Euphrasia to be one with God. At the same time spending time and praying for others also helped to increase the passion of her love for God. Those who bore witness to the effect of her prayers came from all corners. Sr. Euphrasia prayed for all without differentiating on the basis of religion. For whatever grace she received, she gratefully recited the prayer “ I will not forget even if I die”. There are lots of people who forget their promise after they have been fulfilled. Sr. Euphrasia has been known as the evangelist of intercession. She knew that the secrets and time of death of people far away.

She used to pray and make others pray for them. Mother saw God in the words and deeds of others. So to pray for them and help them and interceding for them was easy for Mother.

St. Euphrasia was a pious lady who even today turns a lot of graces into miracles. Inside the four wall of the convent, she was growing for others -- mankind, Church, souls in purgatory -- interceding on their behalf.

BROTHERS

Since she was the owner of a gentle prayerful life she was not able to keep anyone away from the net of her love. For all those who came for her aid, depended on her, she considered their sorrows her own. Only if we accept the weakness and shortcomings of our brothers will we be accepted by God. She understood very deeply the great truth that if we have hatred and anger in us we will not be able to pray or lead a chaste life. During the time she was not allowed to go outside the convent Sr. Euphrasia prayed for others inside the convent. She was able to show the face of Jesus through her eyes, looks and words to all those who came into contact with her (the sick and the suffering). She was like a mother who comforted all those who came into contact with her.

“Surely he has borne our infirmities and carried our diseases. But he was wounded for our transgressions” (Is 53/4-5). Sr. Euphrasia followed the word of God in her life. If she saw someone sad she made that sadness her own. She consoled those who lost their dear ones to death saying “God is our father, do not worry, He will do everything for us”. She used to pray with them and for them always. She used to make them say these words to place their hope on God, “Lord, I seek refuge in you, Lord, please do not leave me”. She used to pray continuously and advise them that this was a medicine for their pains. When exams are near, school children rushed to the “Praying Mother” for her prayers naturally when the results were out there was great jubilation. Because

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she had a strong belief that whatever she prayed would be granted, she was ready to give others whatever they needed.

Sr. Euphrasia was a symbol of God's love and she followed the commandment of Christ, "As I love you, love others!" She used to pray and look after the sick. Then she sat beside the dying and prayed for them. Lots of people came to Sr. Euphrasia begging for prayers. People came to her for healing of the sick, for peace in the family, for marriages and for having children and so people waited for "Praying Mother". Sr. Euphrasia prayed for them and got graces from God for them. People believed that God heard her prayers. She taught them to pray and prepared for the sacraments.

THE CHURCH

Sr. Euphrasia had a deep love for the Holy Church and she was also like St. Paul in this regard. Both of them considered the Holy church as the living body of Christ. From the letters (16, 20, 26, 30, 41, 42, 43, 45, 48, 50, 53) written to her spiritual advisor we learn of her firm ideas and outlook regarding the Kerala Church – to bring back non Catholics and to end the differences in the Churches - because she felt a great responsibility regarding others. She became more vigilant because of the thought "you are also responsible for the souls of others". To have a relationship with Jesus Christ one must have a big heart to love all Gods children. Sr. Euphrasia had a heart which was throbbing for the Holy Church. Mother's life teaches us that members of the Church should have a firm belief in the teachings of the Church.

Everyone should be able to see the Church as one's mother and like a dutiful daughter she must do all her duties and like a shepherd must look after the flock. Similarly one must pray for all Christians who have separated from the Catholic Church. The respected elders felt that if one talks to Sr. Euphrasia then the spiritual and physical state of the priests will be safe. The prayers

for the priests were for their trustworthiness and for them to be firm in their beliefs.

She loved the Holy Church as the living body of Christ and considered the Church's problems as her own and prayed for solutions in front of God. Sr. Euphrasia prayed not only for the rulers of the Church but for solutions to problems in the Church, for dangerous situations which our Mother Church faced and for the security of the Church. She used to enquire about the problems that the church faced to her spiritual advisor Bishop Menachery. She prayed to have a school and convent among Jacobites in Cherelayam, Kunnamkulam. Later this helped to start our institutions there.

SOULS IN PURGATORY

Sr. Euphrasia proved to be "A person who remembers even after death" to those who prayed to her. Her influence in heaven God revealed through the miracles and signs. Sr. Euphrasia's most important duty in life was to cleanse these souls and help them reach the Heavenly Father by offering Holy mass, continuous recitation of Rosary and interceding for all.

Souls in purgatory used to ask Mother to pray for them. She took it upon herself to save these souls who could not do anything for themselves. She prayed for them and made a lot of sacrifices. A lot of people have witnessed her special vision of being able to predict the time of death.

For Sr. Euphrasia, the love she had for her brethren could not be separated by death and time. Even after her death there are those who have felt her humility, love, prayers when Sr. Euphrasia prayed, souls of purgatory waited around her. A sister who slept in the same room with mother recalled." One day while mother was reciting the rosary she became still. I asked her what happened and she replied "Daughter, the souls of purgatory are all around me". Sometimes she saw familiar souls. Then the expressions on her face would be changed. Sometimes she sobs when asked the

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reason she will give the names of the souls around her. Around that time my mother died. Once while I was praying I was distracted and looked out of the window while reciting the rosary. Sr. Euphrasia called me and said: “Sister, your mother is beside me”. Immediately I fell to my knees and recited the rosary devoutly”. All this shows the depth and strength of her love for God.

We understand from the Bible that God will hear prayers which are said for us as well as others. For the glory of God and saving of our souls we should follow the path of prayer. And the soul which follows this will glow and be happy. Let us pray the intercession of Sr. Euphrasia.

CONCLUSION

Sr. Euphrasia was able to succeed in her attempts to reach Jesus through deep sincerity, alert mind and close relationship with Jesus. She was willing to share His love and suffering.

Sr. Euphrasia became the “Praying Mother” by deep meditation, seeking the Lord in the Blessed Sacrament, praying before the and crucifix and the Sacred Heart of Jesus from morning till night. Through intercession for others she became a participant in the Lord’s plan for salvation. Through this prayer we people, families, Holy Church, Communities, Countries, the whole world and even souls become helpers of the Lord. Sr. Euphrasia understood the great importance of intercession and prayer.

Sr. Euphrasia shows us that only when God, people and I, join together then only we will be able to have a deep spiritual life of worship.

Pope John Paul in no. 30 of his apostolic decree “Dedicated Life” has written in this manner : “In the history of the church, the sacrament of Holy orders is considered to be an offering to deepen the ties which have been made during Baptism. The relationship which began with Christ in Baptism has grown and made closer to the Bible.” Blessed Euphrasia through her life became the daughter

of the church at Baptism and continued to grow closer and became more obedient to holy Mother Church.

In every letter written to her spiritual advisor she began “To, the Holy Cross of the Father, begging for Father’s blessing”. She loved and admired the leaders of the Church and considered them to be the representatives of God. She prayed for the increase of Charisma of priests daily from morning till night. She considered it her special vocation to pray and intercede for priests so that they become glowing rays of God. The leaders of the Church realized the power of her devotion and used to visit the convent at Ollur and ask her to pray for the priests—those who were sick and those who committed sins.

A miracle which occurred when she was dying was that in our Cherlayam convent the bells started ringing automatically. Thus God revealed to the world the power of intercession of Sr. Euphrasia and her tireless efforts to be a missionary of Christ.

Sr. Euphrasia was a throbbing member of the Church. She was hurt when the Lord was hurt. She prayed for, respected and loved the leaders of the Church. She offered her prayers for the security and up-keeping of the church. She knew the breaking Kerala Chapter of the Church and “ In the case regarding the oldest Church of Thrissur, she knew that would be defeated but she predicted a beautiful big church will be built in the centre of Thrissur (Letter No. 51). Those words came true with the building of the New Church” (Letter 23, 21 July 1902). She offered wholeheartedly her prayers, penance, fasting and abstinence for the growth of the Catholic Church. All of us must try to follow her lead in obeying the teachings of the Church.

Let Sr. Euphrasia lead the way and let us follow her and try to be like her as a brave daughter of the Church and after death pray for the glory of the church.

THE WOMAN ASCETIC OF THE DIVINE PRESENCE

(Late) Sr. Dr. Therese Maria CMC

“That figure, seated in the prayer room, with her eyes focussed on the Tabernacle! It is indeed a virtue to see that. What a concentration!”

St. John Paul II in his Encyclical, **Ecclesia De Eucharistia** tells, “The eyes of the Church are always turned towards the Lord present on the Altar” (EE. No. 20).

What a similarity! The same words spoken by St. John Paul II in the beginning of this century about the Holy Church, were remarkably observed about St. Euphrasia in the previous century by her contemporaries. Yes. To this humble virgin who was keeping watch of the Tabernacle fully immersed in the Lord with all her mind and body, eyes and heart, the soul and the inner powers, the holy Eucharist was the food and drink. Let us have just a glance into her life supported and nourished by the Holy Eucharist.

We can truly say that St. Euphrasia was a living witness to what St. John Paul II spoke about the Church in his encyclical, “At every celebration of the Eucharist, we are spiritually brought back to the Paschal Tridium” (E.E. 3). The sweating of blood in Getsamene and the tragic sufferings that followed were not merely past events to this holy virgin. St. Pope John Paul II strongly underlines the teaching of Catechism text of the Catholic Church, ‘The Holy Eucharist’ is not to be counted as a past event- Because, the whole of Christ’s life - everything that he did and suffered for mankind — is a part of God’s immensity, hence that which surpasses the ages”.

We can read in the very words of this holy soul an experience of revealing this great truth by the Holy Redeemer to his loving bride. “My Father, on 11th Wednesday at around 6.30, during thanksgiving after Holy Communion, I fell unconscious, Then I felt, I was seeing someone. This person, my Father, was covered all over in blood — the remembrance of whom makes me cry aloud even now - nailed to a huge cross, his body all mangled with cuts and bruises with his chest pierced with a cruel crown of thorns, the whole body bleeding — my Father, my eyes don’t let me write remembering this. The blood that flows on his beard and from his face splashes on his stomach and in other places, the flesh is torn and hanging because of the fierce scourging and left hand (don’t know which) hanging down (from the cross) twisted. Tears of blood were flowing from his sorrowful eyes and he stood silently in utter sorrow for some time. This time one angel collected the drops of blood flowing from one eye, another angel the blood flowing down from his body in a cup and carried to heaven with great reverence and veneration. During this time, I felt that Jesus was offering His own blood to the Eternal Father as reparation for my sins and the sins of the whole world, and after that He opened his sorrowful holy mouth (and said), my daughter, I don’t experience any consolation ever. My heart is suffering pain incessantly. You must remember and console Me. I asked, why my Redeemer, you have to suffer so much? Then He said again, daughter, the sins of men are greatly increasing. I have come to an unbearable state. I suffer more agony now than I did on the cross” (L. No. 9).

We see in this mother an uncontrollable desire to achieve souls, offering the holy blood of the Divine Saviour to the Eternal father as well as a missionary zeal never fed up and untiring in temptations. Her realization that the passions of the Redeemer never end, poured oil to the flame of her zeal. Not only she offered herself with holy body and blood of Jesus for the salvation of the souls, but also prayed continuously to make her participation in His passions by giving a share of His suffering. Her soul’s bridegroom literally accepted this prayer and gave her crosses one after another.

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The daily Holy Mass was to her a heavenly medicine unavoidable to her mind and soul a panacea (ആമുഖം) 100% effective. This mother who was strongly determined to make her participation in Holy sacrifice most lively was very much alert to compose by herself and also copy from prayer books, prayers highly suitable for the most important parts of the Mass and thus to offer herself to her Holy Lord in every Holy Eucharist.

IN THE SCHOOL OF MARY

Who did train this virgin to enter into the interior parts of the great mystery of Holy Eucharist? It is the Holy Mother herself who offered the first sacrifice with her Son standing at the foot of the cross on which her only son died with severe writhing (struggle). It was in the school of Mary, the woman of Holy Eucharist, that Bl. Euphrasia was taught to collect the treasures from the depths of the sea diving deep into the great ocean of Holy Eucharist. Little Rose, who started her studies at the age of 9 in the School of Mary who appeared to her as the Heavenly Queen, sought the friendship of Holy Mother and her merits to prepare for the Holy Eucharist and Holy Communion in her youth as well as in her old age. Like a child walking with its mother holding the edge of her saree, she had firm faith in the mediatory power of Holy Mother. Like the Heavenly Bridegroom who said, "Everything that belongs to the Father belongs to me" (Jn. 16: 15), this daughter hoped that everything which belonged to the Holy Mother belonged to her. Holy Mother accepted wholeheartedly her prayer "please make mine own virgin Mother's Virtues, the merit and a heart burning with God's love in the place of my sins" (Hrudayanjali p. 90). Whenever Bl. Euphrasia received Holy Communion Virgin Mother too descended to her with her Divine Son. That she asked Bl. Euphrasia to get prepared even on days when there is no Holy Mass, and also teaches this beloved daughter to offer the Holy Blood of her Holy Son to the Eternal Father, is a special sign of this unique mother-daughter relationship.

EUPHRASIA, I SHOULD COME TO YOUR HEART

This Virgin who received the teaching of St. Paul, “whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of profaning the body and blood of the Lord. Let a man examine himself, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup ” (1 Cor. 11: 27-28). With utmost sincerity experienced ecstatic joy in receiving her Divine Bridegroom with a holy soul and body fully unstained and spotless. Reception of Holy Communion was more important to mother Euphrasia than breathing. But this holy virgin did not receive Holy Communion, though with a sorrowful heart, if she feels that there is a slight sin in her soul. But the Lord cannot but come to the heart of Mother Euphrasia.

But Holy Mother reading the mind of her loving Son comes as a mediator. “Yet my daughter your failure to receive Holy Communion is a very saddening thing to your spouse, my son and to me. You must receive Holy Communion tomorrow. Your Sp. Fr. has no great displeasure towards you (L. No. 37, 1 June 1905). Hearing the reply that her Sp. Father the Bishop accused her for something and she did not ask pardon and without begging forgiveness to the sp. Father she would not receive Holy Communion, Holy Mother left though reluctantly. But the problem didn’t end. Can mothers sleep if their children slept without taking supper? Can they take supper? Will not they arouse the children from sleep and feed them? The same thing happened here too. As if Holy Mother cannot rest in Heaven, she came near Mother Euphrasia several times and compelled her to receive Holy Communion the next day. Can we read these events without tears and without a holy Jealousy. Yet, if she does not yield what can be done?

The next day unable to open the ciborium for filling it with counted workers, she called Holy Mother for help. But she did not come. Instead, here comes Jesus a boy of 12 years. But he too didn’t open it for her. He will do it if she agrees to receive Holy Communion. Still she did not agree, instead she repeated that she caused pain to the superiors. Then what did Jesus do? We can hear

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in her own words. "Then Lo! that moment like a young man with five wounds came and stood before me, Euphrasia, my daughter, why are you so sad? You have not caused any sorrow to my heart, the Bishop also has nothing, don't be sad. (He) said altering His Voice a little He said, as you are always prepared to do my will and pleasure, so you must do now also. It is I, your Heavenly Spouse speaking. First of all as soon as (He) said, I must come to your heart, I did not get anything to say against. Here is your handmaid ready to fulfill your will in me etc., (I) said. Finally my daughter! I am powerful to give you without anybody knowing. Instantly it was over Father, as soon as the ciborium was opened and wafers were arranged and given, (I) heard a voice 'go quickly and change your habit.' I asked permission and came, changed the habit and was kneeling in the room. I remember seeing Him coming towards me amidst many angels holding the Holy Eucharist, gave me. Then what happened, don't remember" (letter No. 37, 1st June 1905). We just desire if we had this much holiness of heart and repentance!

THE SACRIFICIAL UNION LEADING TO THE MYSTICAL UNION

"Incorporation into Christ, which is brought about by baptism, is constantly renewed and consolidated by sharing in the Eucharistic sacrifice, especially by that full sharing which takes place in sacramental communion" (EE 22). Regarding St. Euphrasia the reception of each Holy Communion gave her the experiential knowledge of this truth. On the first day of the reception of the Holy Communion, when Jesus, the Eucharistic Lord entered her heart, just pressing the joined palms on her chest satisfy she cried "My Jesus do not change your abode from my heart". Not only did Jesus satisfy this thirst of this tender heart, but also that relationship growing and growing, the experience of perfect union with the Lord of her heart became a day-to-day event. See how she has copied in words, her experience of union of love, where the heart became one with the heart and the soul with the soul.

"This impure sinner, as soon as received Holy Communion, was filled with love, wandering with grace [Jesus] who came into my

heart, daughter! stop your tears, saying thus, with His holy hand itself wiped my face with great loving affection, kissed my thankless cheek and held me close to His Sacred Heart That time what happened in the whole of me there was a pouring out (exchange) and trembling. With that somehow my loving Jesus was united in me. I clearly understood” (L. 71, 17 June 1917). She continues her words telling she saw not only Jesus but all the saints too.

IF THERE IS NO PRIEST, JESUS IS SURE TO COME

This virgin who offered fully her eyes and heart, mind and body to her sp. Bridegroom can spend days without any food or drink. But when that great fortune of Holy Eucharist is not there and there is no way to receive the Lord, the only consolation of her heart, what can be done? She is the one who sang praises to the Lord when she had to fast for two continuous days (ref. L. No. 27, 4 July 1903). But when she realised the possibility of missing the spiritual food of Holy Communion, that alone became her only concern even in food and sleep. Her sighs reached the heart of the Lord opening the door of Heaven. “O God thou art my God, I seek thee, my soul thirsts for thee; my flesh faints for thee, as in a dry and weary land where no water is” (Ps. 63: 1).

The way the Lord has chosen to quench the spiritual thirst of His beloved is marvellous and wonderful. He didn't send any priest to answer her prayer to send some priest on his way to come and offer Holy Mass. But Jesus himself with Holy Mother and the heavenly Host, offers holy sacrifice in the little room of Mother Euphrasia and gives by His own hand His body and blood. See how she explains this in her letter to the Sp. Fr. “After Lent began, on the day when there was no mass, at 3'O' clock in the morning (2) persons in white robes came near me, and called me. Get up soon and change your dress to receive Holy Communion. As was said, I washed my face, prepared myself and came to the room. These (2) themselves arranged the room very beautifully. On my table something like a good altar was arranged” (L. No. 33, 26 March 1904).

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After narrating how that little room was changed into a little chapel beautifully decorated and filled with heavenly fragrance, what she continues to write is sure to take the readers to the heights of God experience. “That moment amidst many angels, emanating myriads of rays from the five wounds, but with inexplicable brightness, heartfilling love, and much better, I cannot explain in words, wearing a bright and shining garments a person coming to the room climbed on the altar and started the Holy Mass During Mass the holy Mother was kneeling near me. My Father during Mass at the elevation I clearly understood, the Holy Mother with great devotion and grief offering the Son and the Holy Ghost in union with sacrifice of Calvary to the Eternal Father for all men Finally with great love and affection He Himself brought the Eucharist to me this abject slave, this wretched worm” (L. No. 33, 26th Mar. 1904).

This is not for one or two days. She tells in the same letter “It was like this till the end of Lent, on days when there was no Mass”.

THE EUCHARISTIC LORD – A MARVELOUS COUNSELLOR

“She who always cast her glance on the Eucharistic Lord like a horn-bill, sought the opinion in every matter from him” (*Venerable Euphrasia*, p. 170). The Eucharistic Lord was her wonderful counsellor (Is 9: 6). It is a public secret that if Mother Euphrasia just calls ‘my divine redeemer’ coming in front of the Tabernacle, He comes before her even before she finishes her prayer. A very strong spiritual relationship that enables mutual communication of the secrets of the hearts. We see in the Old Testament the God who reveals the secret plans to Abraham asking “Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do?” (Gen. 18: 17) But here we can see the humble virgin to whom the Lord reveals the secrets of her sisters for their greater good.

When Mother Euphrasia was the Superior of Ollur convent, a sister was on her death bed. When the struggle for death was prolonged extraordinarily and those around her were wondering why is this, our Mother approached her counsellor and presented

the problem in front of Him. Mother who came back within a few minutes, asked all to vacate the room and asked that sister. "Sister, have you got anything to tell anyone?" She opened her heart pouring out her tears. I have dealt with a superior quite mercilessly, and so please write in my name a letter asking pardon. Immediately she wrote like that and sent it to her. This sister had a peaceful death in the hands of Mother Euphrasia, even before the messenger reached the exact place (*Venerable Euphrasia*, page 58).

The prayer of Solomon ". . . from the throne of thy glory send her . . ." (Wisdom 9: 10) is not heard from the mouth of Euphrasia. But when the whole Heaven descended to her along with her Divine Lord, Wisdom also descended to the soul of Mother. That becoming the fullness of self-knowledge and the consoling power of mind-reading, spread around, Mother Euphrasia changed into the flame of a lamp that gave light to many in the darkness. Here is an example: Sr. Beninga who was moving about as the life-less person confining in herself a severe struggle that troubled her mind, unable to disclose to anyone, Mother lovingly told her: "Daughter, don't be troubled, everything will be alright". Mother will be praying. Sr. Beninga bears witness that at the very moment she experienced a powerful current of peace and joy, and life sprouted in her. She and others who passed through such experiences asked and even now ask "How did she know this? Don't we have the answer in the word of God. Yes; the word speaks: "For to the man who pleases God, He gives wisdom and knowledge and joy" (Ecclesiastes 2: 26).

SELF--COURAGE FROM THE HOLY EUCHARIST

"The Lord of the Holy Eucharist was a mighty protection and strong support, a shelter from the hot wind and a shade from noonday sun, and a guard against stumbling and defence against falling!" (Ecclesiasticus 34: 16).

At the time of severe temptations from the devils, the power to face them was from Holy Eucharist. In the letter to Bishop John Menacherry, dated 21st Oct. 1906) she describes the angels strength-

ening pointing to the Holy Eucharist. "At the time of those cruel attacks two angels were kneeling before me and praying with great grief. To me one of them was showing the cross and the other pointing to the Holy Eucharist and emboldened me" (L. No. 55, 21 Oct. 1906). She continues her letter telling that she had great worry since all these temptations occurred in front of the Holy Eucharist and at the same time courage and consolation too.

A GIFT FROM THE HOLY TABERNACLE

Can the Lord leave this virgin helpless as she comforts Him, joining in His sufferings, and sitting with her eyes fixed on the tabernacle, meditating the face of the Holy Lord aiming only at the joy on his face. How can a spiritual bridegroom be miserly in giving divine love and consolation to one who has abandoned all human love and comforts for His sake? He prepared a plan to give from the Tabernacle itself an embrace of love that marks an indelitable seal of divine love in the mind and heart, an invaluable gift which cannot be forgotten by his beloved who was strongly persuaded to come after him and who was leading an unknown life inside the 'forest' chosen by herself. We can read that in the words of Mother Euphrasia herself: "One day, how I don't know, the priest forgot to lock the tabernacle. During the time of meditation in the night, I felt like someone saying several times to lock the tabernacle and take the key. When the meditation was over and the community dispersed from the church, thinking how I can dare to look at the tabernacle and greatly sorrowing over my abject state, I went and looked at the tabernacle. The key was there only Due to my fault or so, when I took hold of the key, the door suddenly opened. My Father! to whom shall I describe my dismay at the moment. Not knowing what to do I knelt down there itself and prayed. With that, Euphrasia my daughter! Why are you so afraid. Am I not your heavenly spouse, don't fear. Get up and come closer to your bridegroom's embrace and lock the tabernacle, said in a very loving voice with great sorrow and shivering when I was thinking with unbearable grief that I have to lock my loving spouse

in a box, again I heard a voice saying, my loving spouse, rise up quickly and come to me. I went, Father, as there was no other way. As soon as I stretched out my hand to take the key, He took hold of the hand of this wretched worm and shook with great love (and said) why are you sad. Today I, whom you call my love, will give you the spousal embrace and he said close the door [I] give you blessing (L 39, 9 Sept. 1905).

MOTHER EUPHRASIA A PROPHETESS OF HOLY EUCHARISTIC ADORATION

Proclaiming the year of the Holy Eucharist late Pope John Paul II wrote, “it will be a great success of this year of grace . . . and the increase in the adoration of Holy Eucharist outside Holy Mass in all the Christian Communities are the fruits of this year”. Even if she was not lucky to hear and read such official teachings, this poor sister burning with zealous love for the Heavenly Bridegroom, longed for the spread of the adoration of Holy Eucharist and did her best for the same. Through the long hours she spent in front of the tabernacle worshipfully (in worship), not only she became the watch-woman of the tabernacle but also she longed to see all like this. She desired and worked for the public adoration of the Holy Eucharist more and more even before one century the late Pope John Paul IInd announced, “It is the responsibility of pastors to encourage, also by their personal witness, the practice of Eucharistic Adoration and exposition of Bl. Sacrament in particular, as well as prayer of adoration before Christ present under the Eucharistic species” (EE 25). We see our Mother Euphrasia seeking permission from the Bishop to practise public adoration of the Holy Eucharist more and more in the convent. “My loving Father, I have a desire. Let me tell you! We have to spend a whole day in recollection monthly. I humbly request you to grant permission if you will, to have recollection on the first Fridays of the month and to have the exposition of the Blessed Sacrament” (L No. 11, Oct 1901). In the next letter we see the gratitude and joy in getting this permission (L. No. 13, 2 Nov. 1901). Again, when she informs the Bishop humbly

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her desire for the exposition of the Holy Eucharist on the six Fridays of Lent. (L. No. 29, 16 Feb. 1904), the inner yearnings of this virgin who seeks the Lord like a deer that seeks water from a stream are disclosed.

We can surely attribute this zeal of Mother Euphrasia as a basic inspiration for the Eucharistic adoration practised in the CMC houses on Fridays, during Night Vigil, monthly recollection days, etc. This virgin who with a devotion like that of the angels remained before the Holy Eucharist; only unwillingly could draw from there her eyes fixed on the Eucharistic Lord. The adoration of the Eucharistic Lord helped her not only to be united with the source of divine grace, but also to increase and multiply the fruits of union with the precious body and blood of Jesus.

If Bl. Euphrasia was among us, she might have challenged us in the words of Holy Father and might have inspired us to find happiness in the sweetness of that love. Late John Paul II inspires us thus sharing his own experience, as Mother Euphrasia had experienced in front of Holy Eucharist, "It is pleasant to spend time with him, to lie close to his breast like the beloved disciple (Jn. 13: 25) and to feel the infinite love present in his heart. . . . How often, dear brothers and sisters, have I experienced this, and drawn from it strength, consolation and support!" (EE 25).

From the first offering of the Sacrifice starting from the refectory of Sion and completed on a wooden cross at Calvary, till now, Holy Eucharist a great mystery of mercy remains as a crucible that moulds saints. Mother Euphrasia was supported and nourished by this Holy Sacrament. It is this Holy Sacrament that gave speed to the feet of Mother Euphrasia as to a horned deer to climb to the peaks of holiness. Let Mother Euphrasia who converted every offering of the Holy sacrifice into her own life's sacrificial offering, be and inspiration to us to come to the altar taking in the joined palms our dreams of life, gain and losses and our uncontrollable longing for holiness. May the thoughts in the Apostolic Letter (Mane Nobiscum Domine) of Bl. John Paul II fill us with zeal.

“Dear priests, who repeat the words of consecration each day and are witnesses and heralds of the great miracle of love which takes place at your hands; be challenged by the grace of this special year; celebrate Holy Mass each day with the same joy and fervour with which you celebrated your first Mass, and willingly spend time in prayer before the tabernacle. Consecrated men and women, called by that very consecration to more prolonged contemplation, never forget that Jesus in the tabernacle wants you to be at his side, so that he can fill your hearts with the experience of his friendship, which alone gives meaning and fulfillment to your lives.

May all of you Christian faithful, rediscover the gift of the Eucharist as light and strength for your daily lives in the world, in the exercise of your respective professions amid so many different situations. Rediscover this above all in order to experience fully the beauty and the mission of the family.

I have great expectations of you, young people Bring to your encounter with Jesus, hidden in the Eucharist, all the enthusiasm of your age, all your hopes, all your desire to love!

THE SPOUSE OF THE CRUCIFIED

Sr. Dr. Cleopatra CMC

Even before his death, Jesus asked to take up the cross as the price of discipleship. “Whosoever does not carry his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple” (Lk. 14: 27). What is this cross, Jesus explains: “Whoever comes to me cannot be my disciple unless he loves me more than he loves his father and his mother, his wife and his children, his brothers and his sisters, and himself as well” (Lk. 14:26). The Lord is calling for a total offering. In his post-synodal apostolic exhortation *Vita Consecrata* Pope John Paul II of holy memory writes about this total offering quoting Blessed Angela of Folindo: “If any of God’s children were to know and taste divine love, the uncreated God, the incarnate God, the God who endured suffering, the God who is the supreme good, they would give themselves completely to Him” (No. 104). Mother Euphrasia is a great devotee of the Passion of Christ who tried to make meaningful this God enjoyment in its fullness from her childhood onwards. In the terrible trials in connection with the call of God, and in the physical healing in her childhood, since she got the touch of God and presence, in the deciding occasions of life, she was able to embrace the cross with much love and strength.

FAITHFULNESS TO THE MYSTERY OF THE CROSS

As Pope John Paul says in the *Vita Consecrata*: “The consecrated life reflects the splendour of this love because by its fidelity to the mystery of the cross, it confesses that it believes and lives by the

love of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. In this way it helps the Church to remain aware that *the cross is the superabundance of God's love poured out upon the world*, and that it is the great sign of Christ's saving presence, especially in the midst of difficulties and trials. This is the testimony given constantly and with deeply admirable courage by a great number of consecrated persons, many of whom live in difficult situations, even suffering persecution and martyrdom. Their fidelity to the one Love is revealed and confirmed in the humility of a hidden life, in the acceptance of sufferings for the sake of completing in their own flesh "what is lacking in Christ's afflictions" (Col. 1: 24) in silent sacrifice and abandonment to God's holy will and in serene fidelity even as their strength and personal authority wane" (No. 24).

The passion of the Lord was always the meditation of Mother Euphrasia. The sufferings of the Crucified Christ, and shedding of blood embraced her life. Christ himself, who shed His precious blood for the sake of the sins of men, became the director of her ways. Looking intently at the Crucified Jesus, she became shining. She used to pray always: "In the cross is my only salvation. . . . Blessed be the passion and crucifixion of our Lord!"¹ The sisters testify that they have seen Mother Euphrasia often in ecstasy. With what a thirsting heart is she immersed in the thought of the Crucified! She wrote her Spiritual Father: "My father, to me to look intently at the Crucifix and my Holy Mother and shedding tears was the only consolation to my heart".²

THIRSTING TO PARTICIPATE IN THE SUFFERING OF THE CRUCIFIED

Mother Euphrasia, in a bloodless martyrdom in the fire of suffering taking bold steps participated in the suffering of Jesus. She believed, "if only we participated in the suffering of the Lord, we will have share in his love". For it that heart thirsted always. To Mother to walk along with the Crucified was an experience like finding a treasure. The strength for that we can see Jesus himself giving her. "That is, one day when I was kneeling after Holy Communion some one came and standing near me said like this:

The Spousal Fight to Crucified

My daughter! you will not be able to do any thing so pleasing to me as daring to do any thing so pleasing to me as daring to do things against your will and suffering the different sorrows which come from inside and outside with great patience, remembering my passion, and remembering me, who is constantly dying because of love for men! daughter! for the sake of my love you die in yourself and constantly suffer, and saying this left” (Letter 24, 1 Nov. 1902, p. 123). It was from the passion of the Lord that Mother got strong desire and inspiration to suffer. Mother Euphrasia tried to be always with the Crucified by her loving aspirations without break, ejaculations of repentance and also acts of mortification.

TAKING UP SUFFERINGS FOR THE SAKE OF THE CRUCIFIED LORD

To Mother Euphrasia the day without suffering was worth nothing. We can understand from the words of Mother herself that the sufferings and passion of the Crucified Jesus had penetrated her entire life, “The day without suffering for Our Lord seems as nothing.... what fortune is there, more than suffering for the Lord!” (*Gems of Blessed Euphrasia’s thoughts*, Letters p. 383). “My loving Saviour! I am ready to endure any affliction or suffering for your sake” (Letters p. 384).

Mother Euphrasia desired much to suffer again and again, to take up in her own body the sufferings of the Crucified, thus to teach others as Jesus taught that there is a great value in suffering. Once Mother saw a little sister, who is working in the school office, going about with a big face. Isn’t it natural in ordinary people to lose the joy in the face when they get scolding and penance from superiors. As often this melancholy was seen on that sister’s face, Mother who knew very well the value of suffering, called her close and spoke comfortingly: “This is not important, daughter, suffer everything well, don’t lose anything. God is giving you all this with great love. No one has any ill feeling against you. On the contrary, because God loves you, He is giving you all this. Look at the Crucifix, daughter. ‘Ours is small. Daughter, only if we participate in His suffering, we have participation in His Love as much as suffering’³.

In a letter Mother Euphrasia wrote to the Bishop we see thus: “Loving Father! am I not your daughter, I must suffer something for God’s sake, undergo afflictions; I desire very much. I pray also. Loving Father, I pray you very much that you must also join with me and get for me” (Letter 7, p. 72). It is the royal path of the cross that the disciples of Christ have to select that Mother has chosen.

In the **Vita Consecrata** Pope John Paul II says: “They were invited to return to the valley” (No. 14). For what Jesus surrendered himself to crucifixion, Mother Euphrasia tried very hard to make it a reality by her faith and love and penance and being immersed in contemplation before the crucifix.

DESIRE TO HEARTILY EMBRACE CROSSES

Mother Euphrasia desiring to heartily embrace crosses writes to her Spiritual Father: “Dear Father! I am praying for crosses, always with patience along with it” (Letter No. 3). We can see in her a very fervent desire to share in the passion of the divine Saviour: “Dear Father, during these great days of the Passion, I am wandering, searching for ways and means to console my Saviour remembering the suffering my Jesus is undergoing” (Letter No. 4). “As far as Euphrasiamma is concerned, her Divine Spouse is the Son of God who humbled himself till death on the cross. Every event and scene in the life of this Son of God from birth to the resurrection and ascension are live incidents that remain always fresh in her heart. His pains, passions and sorrows continued to pain Euphrasiamma’s heart as proper to the intensity of her bridal love for her Lord. She sees in her mind His tears and bloodshed and when they become real before her eyes she falls unconscious. Certainly it is due to the depth of her love for her Lord”.⁴

VISIONS OF THE CRUCIFIED

This most fervent desire led Mother Euphrasia to the vision of the Crucified.

“My Father, on 11th Wednesday at around 6.30, during thanksgiving after Holy Communion, I fell unconscious. Then felt, I was seeing someone. This person, my Father, was covered all over in

The Spouse of the Crucified

blood – the remembrance of whom makes me cry aloud even now – nailed to a huge cross, his body all mangled with cuts and bruises, with his chest pierced with a cruel crown of thorns, the whole body bleeding – my Father, my eyes don't let me write remembering this. The blood flows on his beard and from his face splashes on his stomach and in other places, the flesh is torn and hanging because of the fierce scourging and left hand (don't know which) hanging down + (from the cross) twisted. Tears of blood were flowing from his sorrowful eyes and he stood silently in utter sorrow for some time. This time one angel collected the drops of blood flowing down from his body in a cup and carried to heaven with great reverence and veneration. During this time, I felt that Jesus was offering his own blood to the Eternal Father as reparation for my sins and the sins of the whole world, and after that he opened his sorrowful holy mouth (and said), my daughter, I don't experience any consolation ever. My heart is suffering pain incessantly. You must remember and console me. I asked, why my Redeemer you have to suffer so much. Then he said again, daughter, the sins of men are greatly increasing. I have come to an unbearable state. I suffer more agony now, than I did on the cross. By Mass and Holy Communion, you can console me. This time his face was full of terrible sorrow and grief. I am to describe it. So great was His sorrow. Those who console me and remember me are very few; saying this from where he stood, he rose high; then I did not see him anymore. My Father, my sorrow at this time was unbearable. If God had not helped me, I would have surely died, I felt. When I became conscious, it was 8.30" (Letter 9, 15 Sept. 1901).

AGAIN VISION OF THE CRUCIFIED – PRAY FOR SINNERS

Again in the vision of the Crucified after Holy Communion, the divine Saviour calls for praying for sinners. "My loving Father! today when I was praying like this after Holy Communion, I felt giddy and thought I was going unconscious. . . . in that very sorrowful manner, one person came and stood before me . . . His face was extremely red and shining . . . As I had informed you

earlier, till your death please console my heart that is infinitely sorrowing because of the ingratitude of my chief children (priests and consecrated religious). You must specially pray to my Father for sinners My heart is crushed very much. In others also, increase love for my tormented heart” (Letter 10, 20 Sept. 1901).

CONSOLE THE LORD SUFFERING CROSSES

Even though Mother Euphrasia desired to die soon, she thought that she will not be able to comfort Jesus, is seen in the next letter: “Though I like to die soon and see Him in eternity, we may not be able to console Him and to suffer hardships any more for Him who has undergone intense agony for the sake of our love. My Father! why are you so very sad and sorrowful?” (Letter 11, 1 October 1901).

OFFER SUFFERINGS ALONG WITH THE PASSION OF THE LORD

We see in Letter 13th how pleasing and fruitful are our sufferings when we offer it along with the passion of the Lord: “That Tuesday night when my sickness⁵ worsened at 10’ O’ clock (someone) with a white robe and a beautiful blue sash tied around the waist and two others wearing multicoloured golden frocks came near poor me There were bright light and sweet fragrance. The one with the blue sash with the affection and intimacy of a mother calling me, daughter Euphrasia! told me, (you) have much pain, no? And said to the two other companions to fan me At that time, the person first mentioned massaged the paining place and in between took the crucifix and made me kiss it, and told me to suffer remembering the Passion of the Lord; now it is good time. Also said, not to be reluctant to console your divine Saviour” (Letter 13, 2 Nov. 1901).

AFTER RECEIVING HOLY COMMUNION, OFFER TO THE FATHER THE CRUCIFIED SAVIOUR

Mother Euphrasia writes in the 25th letter that the crucified Jesus has revealed to Mother Euphrasia that when men make Him

The Spouse of the Crucified

sorry and insult him, His wounds and pains also increase and he desires to be consoled;

One Saturday afternoon at 30' clock, remembering it was the time of the piercing of the His heart, I was meditating and praying as usual, then (some one) appeared before me in the form of the crucified with many wounds and lacerations. Rising slowly from the ground, stood one yard high. For some time he did not speak anything. Euphrasia don't you know that I am much distressed because of the sins of ungrateful men, saying only this, disappeared. Next day also, after receiving Holy Communion, the same thing happened, Father. I was praying with much sorrow offering his precious blood to the Father. He said with much pain, daughter, you console me, why did you give up what I had told you, so saying sorrowfully, he left. My Father, by this word I felt unbearable pain and sadness in my heart and because of this sorrow. I lost consciousness several times. I did not give up my usual devotions, but only added a little. Yet my Father, the remembrance of omitting one of the devotions which he had asked me to do, came to mind at that time. That is daughter! you should receive Holy Communion every day without fail and offer me as a sacrifice to my Father. This gives my heart great consolation. These words which he told me when I was at Ollur suddenly came to my mind. I used to pray with much sorrow and pain several times" (Letter 25, 26 Nov. 1902).

I AM CRUSHED BY MY CLOSE ASSOCIATES

The next morning after meditation while I was participating in the Holy Mass in spirit in my room (he) appeared in a much more sorrowful way, all his body full of wounds covered with blood in such a miserable condition which would make (one) cry out in agony. My Jesus! have mercy on me, and praying to let one know, what shall I do now to give you some relief. After a short while all his holy body turned blue and blood began to flow out of the wounds. At that time he opened his holy mouth and with great sorrow, much grief, I heard him pray, my Father! forgive them.

I think, this was to the Father. My Father, I feel for certain that our loving Saviour is suffering an unbearable sorrow and sadness. After that he turned his eyes on me. That time unable to suffer seeing, I fell unconscious. Yet he calling with much mercy and love (said), my daughter, be brave, as you know for certain, I am greatly tortured, the torture I suffer from ungrateful sinners and from my close followers is very painful to my heart. (Letter 25, 26 November 1902).

RECEIVING HOLY COMMUNION OFFER MY BLOOD AS SACRIFICE TO THE FATHER

“Daughter! thus I suffer always. You must bring some consolation to my heart. My daughter! you must receive Holy Communion everyday without fail and offer me and my sacred blood to my Father daily as a sacrifice in reparation for the severe tortures that ungrateful men inflict upon me. Through you my heart should get some consolation. This I wish most from you” (Letter 25, 26 Nov. 1902).

WHAT SHOULD I DO TO COMFORT THIS CRUCIFIED LOVE

The life of Mother Euphrasia was revolving round the horizon of the Crucified Jesus. The memory and presence of the Crucified was always with her. She writes to her Sp. Father:

“My Father, since this is the day of the Passion of our Lord, what can I do to console Him. I am a great sinner who has committed many sins. What shall I do as reparation for my sins and to comfort His divine heart. Because of the sins of this thankless creature, the Father of blessings became such a big criminal. Please pray that my heart, which is as hard as a rock, may have a real change and great repentance. Day and night always in my poor heart and mind continuously the memory of His Passion and the ingratitude of all people and mine keep coming increasingly. I feel in my heart that he has no consolation whatever. I humbly pray that my Father, yourself must permit me to do certain special penances” (Letter 28, 24 Jan. 1903).

The Spouse of the Crucified

Eventhough she is requesting like this, she was suffering quite a lot. "The abuses and censures from the superiors, those who are under her and from those who are living with her were actually bitter sufferings. It is quite imaginable how bitter and heart--rending were to this loving Mother the financial breakdown and above all the moral breakdown of the family. But these kinds of sufferings were all giving her joy and contentment, because of her love of the Crucified. She used to do many penances. She renounced all good food stuff like meat, fish, egg, milk and fruits for the sake of her crucified Lord. She controlled her food to one time. Other times she may take some Kanchi water or black coffee. She fasted three days a week.

THE LITANY OF THE SACRED WOUNDS OF JESUS

Blessed Euphrasia stood close to the Crucified. Mother Euphrasia not knowing how to comfort and love the Crucified, out of love tried several ways to find out.

The litany of the Sacred wounds manifests this holy sister's deep love for Crucified:

1. I praise and glorify the Sacred members of Jesus which during the passion suffered for our salvation
2. I praise and glorify the holy head worthy of adoration but was pierced with thorns
3. The holy face worthy of adoration but was badly transformed by the impure saliva
4. The merciful holy eyes wet with tears
5. The holy mouth which was made to drink the sour grape wine
6. The holy ears which suffered by curses and abuses
7. The neck which suffered by chains of ropes
8. The holy body broken by scourging
9. The holy hands which were stretched out and pierced on the cross for us

10. The holy chest which changed its form with the suffering of beatings for us
11. The holy wounds of joints which were broken by beatings for us
12. The holy feet which were pierced by nails
13. The holy heart pierced by the spear of Longinus
14. The holy body which was pierced in hands by the crucifixion and died and buried
15. Sacred Heart, treasure house of graces of the Holy Trinity, opened for us
16. Sacred Heart deeply immersed in sorrow till death
17. The precious blood falling from the holy wounds of Jesus.
18. Sacred Heart, shining like stars and willed to keep the aim of love, price of salvation on the holy body.

O! my Jesus, please write my name in your sacred wounds. Please keep me in your sacred wounds so that I may not be involved in the vanities of the world. By all the sacred wounds in your body, when the time of my death approaches, have mercy on me and save me by virtue of your passion and holy death.

LIVE OBEYING THE WILL OF GOD TILL DEATH

Blessed Euphrasia is describing in her Letter 33 the vision of the Crucified she got again: “My Father, what was going on within me, great restlessness, parched tongue and weariness of hands and feet (I) had. Unable to kneel before the Blessed Sacrament, I sat down there itself. I was crying, pouring out my sorrows to Him. After some time, my loving Father, (He) came and stood before me as crucified, with wounds all over, flesh hanging down and in an insufferable and lamentable state. He with great mercy and love (asked), my daughter, Euphrasia, why do you grieve so much. Don’t you see the Passion, I your heavenly Spouse suffer. I am suffering much always because of my love for the thankless mankind. I am fulfilling Father’s will. My daughter! Why are you

The Spouse's Fight to be Glorified

sad don't you want to suffer for my sake. Then I (said), my loving Saviour! for your sake I am prepared to suffer any pain or tribulation. You yourself help me. I become so weak. You don't forsake me etc., I prayed. Then, my loving Saviour, who with great pain and sorrow, was in an unbearable lamentable plight (said) Euphrasia, you must be very courageous. The holy will is not that you should die now, but to live longer and suffer much. You pray like this often, this will be very consoling to you, saying thus, He taught me a small ejaculation. That is, my loving Saviour as you died obedient to the eternal Father to the death on the cross, give me the grace to submit to God's will till death and suffering die (Letter 33, 26 March 1904, p. 172f).

Again in this letter itself suddenly as before a crucifix was seen on the wall at that time. There were five wounds. There was great light Euphrasia, my daughter! by your sufferings you have healed the wounds on my body. You must be well prepared to suffer. You will finally come to know the fortune that comes from suffering" (Letter 35, 1 Feb. 1905, p. 186).

BE PREPARED TO SUFFER

At the time when there were terrible attacks, horrible tortures and when acts against chastity "(I) saw on the wall a big cross. With wounds all over the body (He) came in a manner of intense suffering. (There) were five wounds. By the cruel action of the hellish devils, all on a sudden I cried out. At that time I saw this figure. This figure (said), Euphrasia! my daughter be of courage. You remember the sufferings your heavenly Spouse bore on the cross. Don't you remember all pains I suffered during my circumcision and in the end on the cross. My daughter! why are you disturbed so much. I will not allow (them) to commit any harm to your vow of chastity" (Letter 35, 1 February 1905, p. 186).

Pray for those souls who are being damned offering the blood of Jesus to the Father

Later Jesus came and showing the souls who are being damned, says to pray for them offering the blood of Jesus to the Father:

“My loving Father, yesterday afternoon at 3’o clock when I was at my usual prayer, one person came and striking on my shoulder (told me), my daughter! don’t you remember what I have often informed you earlier. Behold, I am always suffering because of the ingratitude of men. Don’t you see this. My heart is going through insufferable sorrow seeing the ungrateful men, the price of my precious blood, carelessly falling into hell. My daughter, behold this, suddenly I saw hell with the smoke of fire. (I) saw numberless men falling into it one on another Euphrasia, for all these I have shed all my blood, daughter! I spent everything for the salvation of men. These who are damned are the price of my precious blood. Seeing this my heart is suffering unbearable pain. You offer my holy blood to the Eternal Father and pray for the reparation of the sins of ungrateful men. Daughter! (You) must try to give consolation to my heart through others also as much as you can. You must live a hidden life in every way and live very humbly. You must pray well for sinners. Saying this made me kiss His wounds, blessed (me) and left, Father! I felt that my heart was experiencing unbearable sorrow (Letter 35, Feb. 1905, pp. 183f).

“DO NOT WORRY ABOUT TOMORROW” (MT 6:34).

When Mother Euphrasia was grieving about who will look after her spiritual life since Bishop John Menachery was going to Rome, the Lord Jesus reminds her to depend on Him only: “My daughter! am I not the one who is protecting you and your spiritual Father. Then why are you so grieving like this. You grieve remembering my Passion, saying like this with great love, I felt That happened when the holy Host was being raised. It was as if someone was clearly telling Euphrasia, remembering my sufferings well, offering to my Father, pray for sinners. You must give consolation to my heart which is being crushed always by the ingratitude of men. Be bold etc. I heard clearly. All these are like someone is clearly telling in my heart” (Letter 62, 1 March 1911, p. 295).

TRUST ONLY IN THE CRUCIFIED LORD

In Letter No. 64, this Sainly virgin, opening her heart tells her Sp. Father. “My Father, to me to look intently at the Crucifix and my Holy Mother and shedding tears was the only consolation to my heart” (Letter 64, 17 Sept. 1911, p. 300).

The devils made Mother Euphrasia very angry saying that the good things and presentations that the Bishop brought from Rome, he showed all, but did not show Mother Euphrasia, because he did not love her. At that she spoke boldly: “A nun for the sake of her heavenly Bridegroom, what little she can enjoy on earth, all the joys, and fortunes, her self-will and its each movement, once hanging on the cross and dying for love of me, learning from that Saviour, on those 3 nails crucified my own mind, didn’t you know that, Satan! On such occasions thus with great love, I control and present as offering to my heavenly Spouse my own desire and joys, with good will controlled and gave as offering” (Letter 64, 17 Sept. 1911, pp 303 f).

She offered all to her heavenly Spouse and lived for that divine love. She didn’t have a life apart from the Crucified. To her mind her body surrendered. Sr. Silveria testifies: “I have seen Mother praying for a long time, holding a big Crucifix to her chest”. Sr. Anna who had lived for many years in the Ollur Convent and got the fortune to serve Mother Euphrasia: “Sometimes I have felt that Mother was immersed in some ecstasy One day I went and shook her and called. There is no kind of response. After that I stopped calling at such times. During such ecstatic times, I have tried to take the crucifix that Mother has held close to her chest. But as she held the cross very strongly, I have not got it. I have seen Mother lying in this ecstasy for about three hours”. The love for the Crucified led her to union with God. She was able to be one with Jesus and live in that union.

YOU ARE MY SPOUSE

After the great tortures and unbearable sufferings, on the feast of the Holy Cross, when standing after receiving Holy Communion

Jesus Mary and Joseph again gave her their vision. Mother Euphrasia explains how with great love she was united with her divine Lord: “My loving Saviour! Lord of my life! where were you till this time, I blurted out in great sorrow. Then with a smile, I was with you. Have never gone away. Again he, is not today, you have to renew your vows. The moment I finished reciting, my bride come close to my hand, today you have become worthy to receive the loving embrace of your heavenly spouse. I abide in you. You are a bride of mine, you must be sure of that, saying thus He held me close to His Sacred Heart and embracing with much love kissed my cheek. At the end He made me kiss my loving Spouse’s five sacred wounds separately. How can I narrate the happiness and joy I experienced. I cannot” (Letter 64, 17 Sept. 1911, pp 307).

“AND I, WHEN I AM LIFTED UP FROM THE EARTH WILL DRAW ALL PEOPLE TO MYSELF” (JN 12:32)

Jesus prophesied in the last days of His life, the understandable word which is being fulfilled till the end of the world: “And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself”. The meek and humble Son of God to save mankind offered Himself as sacrifice to God. As Mahatma Gandhi said, “The hour of the greatest triumph is the hour of the greatest humility. As St. Paul says in his First Letter to the Corinthians, “a stumbling block to the Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, the Crucified Christ is to those who are called, “Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God” (1 Cor 1: 23, 24). Blessed Euphrasia who understood this truth, standing close to the Crucified Christ was filled with God’s power and wisdom. It is by the grace of God that we are in Christ Jesus, this truth she experienced and spoke aloud through her life. As it is written, “what no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the human heart conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him” (1 Cor. 2:9). “Those who are spiritual discern all things (1 Cor. 2:15). “These things God has revealed to us through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God” (1 Cor. 2:10). We see, this word of God is fulfilled in

The Spouse of the Crucified

Mother Euphrasia. She was able to see the glory of God in the Crucified, to understand the power of God, and to imbibe the wisdom of God. She was crucified along with the Crucified. Sr. Mary Luthgard testifies: "Mother Euphrasia and myself were great companions. Long years we have lived together. She used to advise me: "You have to be a saint, daughter". As I have heard very much about Mother's virtue, one day I went to her room and talked with her. What is special, Mother. Please show me. Then she showed me only a wound on the forehead, likewise in the palm of the right hand a whole as if a nail has been pierced into. When I said, "anything for memory, here, there was a big cross on the chest. Pointing at it said, "daughter, I have only this. I have nothing else to give you. I shall pray for you", She said. I have seen her praying prostrate in the church for a long time. Life is as if she did not think of anything else". She became one with the Crucified; became the bride of the Crucified; became a sharer in the fortune of the Crucified, this Sainly virgin.

Footnotes:

1. *Novena Prayer*, Blessed Euphrasia, published by the Vice-Postulator, St. Mary's Convent, Ollur, Thrissur, 2008, p. 36.
2. *Mother Euphrasia Letters*, Translated and Edited by Sr. Dr. Cleopatra CMC, Vice - Postulator, Carmel International Publishing House, Trivandrum, Kerala, India - 680 306, 2013, Letter 64, 17 Sept. 1911, p. 300.
3. Fr. J. Ephrem C. R., *The Praying Mother* (Trans.), Holy Trinity Convent, Kolazhy P. O., Thrissur, 1999 p. 52.
4. Sr. Dr. Pastor CMC, *Thirsting for God*, Edited and published by Sr. Dr. Cleopatra CMC, the Vice - Postulator, CMC Publications, Mount Carmel Generalate, Thaikattukara P. O., Aluva, Kerala - 683 106, India. 2002, p. 46.
5. Mother Euphrasia used to have constantly, severe rheumatic fever, vomiting of blood, and other diseases. As a result she would have great uneasiness accompanied with great pain and dryness of tongue.

MARIAN DEVOTION – POWER OF LIFE*

Sr. Humbeline CMC

When we stand in obeisance before the statue of Our Lady by closing our eyes and with folded hands the thought that arises in our minds is the words of Jesus: “Behold your Mother” (Jn. 19: 27). The real experience of Marian devotion is evident in this entrusting of the beloved apostle of Jesus with Mary.

What is expressed through these words, “Behold your Mother” is the desire of Jesus to produce in His apostles the sense of loving trust in Our Lady and through that, each believer to accept her as their mother¹ says Pope John Paul II in his exhortation on Virgin Mary. Like John each one of us must know Jesus in depth under the training of our Lady.

The history of Christian Marian devotion teaches us one thing. Mary is the way that leads to Jesus. Our filial devotion to her does not in any way detract us from our attachment to Jesus. On the other hand it helps us to grow in this attachment and raises us up to heavenly heights². Mary is the way which leads to heaven. Jesus must be formed in us as in the Holy Mother - that is the dream of the Mother. “My little children, with whom I am in travail until Christ be formed in you” (Gal. 4: 19). Is it not the same travail that is manifested in Mary too? Our Mother is always earnest about Christ being formed in us.

There is similarity between the spiritual travail and physical travail. In both the situations the aversion to the old, and an attraction towards the new is visible. Each infant must live through its mother

* Translated by Sr. Felicita CMC

Marian Devotion to Our Lady of Life

for growing up and possesses its life and living from her. Mother gives the child's first banquet. The Christ consciousness embedded in me must conquer me at every moment of my spiritual life.

Mother is the one who chooses only the suitable things for the child. When I can discern what is not suitable for my God experience each selection in the spiritual life becomes fruitful. The mother is the one who creates a world of emotions for the child. Only the mother who discerns that her own joy or sorrow is the joy or sorrow of the child will be able to do that. When I can mould a spiritual surrounding for strengthening the divine spirit in me, the Jesus-experience in me too will grow strongly. This is a very significant discernment. Our Lady had this power of discernment.

Was it not a great setting out from the quiet moments of her life of solitude when Our Lady, soon after saying, 'amen' to the will of God revealed through the wonderful hymn of Annunciation went in search of Elizabeth who had conceived, in her old age (Lk. 1: 39)? Yes, they were the moments when interests were turning upside down.

Each child is growing inside the womb of its mother receiving life from the mother herself. Jesus also had been getting life and existence receiving life blood from His Mother. When she had the Christ consciousness in her she was spontaneously saying. "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord". And thus through her constant God – consciousness Jesus was born in the Mother. Mothers avoid everything that does not do good to the child. When the words of the angel, 'Hail, O favoured one, the Lord is with you (Lk. 1: 28) poured the seeds of doubt and uneasiness in the heart of Mary, the Holy Mother asked, "How shall this be, since I have no husband?" (Lk. 1: 34). Nevertheless the moment she realized that even that doubt was not conducive to God-experience, she submitted herself totally to the will of God and thus became the brilliant diadem of faith.

A pleasant world of emotions is necessary for the proper growth of the child. Since the mother and child have one and the same mind the Mother had been getting moulded as the “favoured” one of God — it was then the grace of God flowed into her. This abundance of grace made her grateful and her life was transformed into a life of magnificat, singing “He who is mighty has done great things for me” (Lk. 1: 49). This humble attitude of the Mother made Jesus grow strong in her.

And at last through the travail of suffering, Christ was moulded in her through the suffering of failure, suffering without complaint, silent suffering, redemptive suffering. When he passed through that fiery ordeal — a saviour was moulded. Ah! a Redeemer for us!

It is through them who have realized that sufferings and the instances of sharing in the chalice of Christ that He becomes incarnate — The saints are those who have had this awareness. Those saints who wished Jesus to be born in them through Mary accepted their sufferings whole heartedly. Devotion to Mary had been clearly evident in all of them.

This Marian devotion was flourishing in Bl. Euphrasia too, who was one of the pioneer members of C.M.C., the first indigenous religious congregation of Kerala founded in 1866 by Blessed Chavara, the pillar of the Congregation, who himself was a genuine devotee of Mary. Euphrasiamma’s own mother was pouring into her the devotion to Mary too along with the breastmilk.

Her very birth was in October, the month of rosary, and her baptism was in the parish church of Mother of Carmel. The major portion of her religious life was in the convent of Our Lady of Immaculate Conception at Ollur.³ This Marian Devotion facilitated the moulding of Christ in Euphrasiamma. Just as Jesus was formed in the womb of Mary, the Holy Mother and was born from her, Euphrasiamma too took the Holy Mother as her own Mother at her second birth in the Religious life. The intimate mother--child relationship with the Lady of Immaculate conception became the cause for Jesus to be formed in her personality.

Marian Devotion to Glory of Life

My mother has never written a book, neither has she drawn any glorious picture, but she has moulded my life with her hands", said Margaret Diatric once.⁴ So also did Euphrasiamma entrusted her life in the hands of Mother Mary to be moulded by her. — Euphrasiamma who found gratification in spiritual matters became interested in a life of detachment, even while she was living in the midst of all sorts of conveniences at home. She had an aversion to a life of affluence and an attraction to her new way of detachment.

Towards the end of her letter to her Spiritual Director, Bishop John Menachery written on 18th Feb. 1904, we come across an event that took place when Euphrasiamma was 9 years old. "At home I asked my mother what is meant by "Queen of Angels". Then my mother told me about the Holy Mother and angels. She told me that they adore the Lord, etc. Somehow Father, I thought much about it, went on thinking without sleeping. A very beautiful Lady came to me, and calling me, woke me up. "Let us adore the Lord. Adore the Lord with the first choir of angels". Saying this she came to me each hour. As it is written in this small paper, 3 days continuously this beautiful Lady made me do it. By that all the hours were impressed in my mind. I will never forget it. My Father, I did not know this person at that time, but now I know her. Then I was 9 years old. "Tell your father! and mother to take you to the convent, saying this (she) left"⁵. Thus began the action plan for moulding Christ in her from her second birth which was her life in the convent.

Like any newly born child, imbibes strength from its mother, Euphrasiamma also by staying attached to our Lady, made the Holy Mother's life and strength her own. As it is written in letter No. 13, "When I was sick and bedridden, I never felt any ill will against others. These days I counted as fortunate days. That Tuesday night when my sickness worsened at 10 O' clock (someone) in white robe and a beautiful blue sash tied around the waist and two others wearing multicoloured golden frocks came near poor me The one with the blue sash with the affection and inti-

macy of mother calling me, daughter, Euphrasia! told me fear not (you) have much pain, no? and said to the two other companions to fan me After some time she brought something in a cup which looked like milk, but was not milk, and mixed it with some powder, made me sit up and gave me spoonfuls of it. Again made me lie down. When the bell rang before consecration, someone came and put the mantle on me and led me by the hand to the chapel Then the person with the blue sash smiled and saying, Daughter! I am your Mother, doubt not, and in a sweet loving way smote twice on my poor cheek with those good luminous hands. Gave me a lot of water It is necessary that I help you. That is why I came, daughter, fear not. Be happy” (2 Nov. 1901, pp. 67-69). Thus we see Euphrasiamma who was living in union with Our Lady, considering her as her own mother, because she was being totally influenced by the Christ-consciousness in her. And through the Mother she was led to Jesus.

Just as a mother recognizes and chooses what is best for the child, Euphrasiamma also recognized that it was necessary for her to know, what is most suited for God—experience. Therefore Euphrasiamma was telling our Holy Mother not to give her complete healing; instead, to give her something to suffer. See what she has written in her letter No. 14. “My Mother, don’t give me complete healing. I prayed to give me something to suffer. My daughter, in your life time you will have a lot of things to suffer and endure. You must preserve yourself like this to the end. Commit yourself completely in everything to the superiors and sp. father and do whatever they tell you. Your spouse is all humility, obedience, patience and love. Daughter, as you have prayed, I am going (15 Nov. 1901, p. 73). And Euphrasiamma chose humility, obedience, patience and love which are means for God—experience.

As it is already mentioned above, that the mothers in general do create an emotional world suitable for the children, Euphrasiamma too chose such a life—style in order that Jesus be born and grow strong in her. What is written in letter No. 25 deserves special mention here. “Father! I feel in my heart an

Marian Devotion to Chalice of Life

intense pain and agony as if I am incessantly going to fall into a serious danger. I am greatly anxious whether something will happen to the treasure, the precious pearl⁷ of virginity. But my Mother of purity will not abandon me and the trust and faith that she will always help me encourages and consoles my heart (letter No 25-26th Nov. 1902). Mother Euphrasia who realised that the submission of herself to God through the triple vows was indispensable for Christ to be moulded in her, put into practice the strength of compassion, blessedness of dedication and purity of selfless love in her consecrated life. The virtue of chastity imparted vigour to her life.

Euphrasiamma accepted the pang of child birth too. The awareness that suffering is participation in the chalice of Jesus made her courageous. Like our Holy Mother who transformed her life into praise of God, Euphrasiamma also found real joy in suffering. Look at the vision of the crucified described in her letter No 25. "My Father, I feel for certain that our loving Saviour is suffering an unbearable sorrow and sadness. After that he turned his eyes on me. That time unable to suffer seeing the sight I fell unconscious. Yet He calling me with much mercy and love (said) my daughter, be brave as you know for certain, I am greatly tortured – the torture I suffer from ungrateful sinners and from close followers is very painful to my heart. Daughter, I suffer always. You must bring some consolation to my heart. My daughter, you must receive Holy Communion everyday without fail, and offer me and my sacred blood to my Father daily as a sacrifice, in reparation for the severe tortures that ungrateful men inflict upon me. Through you my heart should get some consolation. This I wish most from you. "My Redeemer! what shall I do, have mercy on me until Easter. Forgive me. Yet here is your handmaid, ready to do your will". Whatever it is thus I prayed. Euphrasiamma was rejoicing in consoling Jesus by being one with Him and participating in His sufferings. Through suffering, Jesus was being born in Euphrasiamma.

The joy in her heart reflected, on her face. The school children who used to approach her requesting for her prayer and those

who were living with her in the convent and the people around have witnessed to this smile of hers which was as cooling as moonlight⁶.

As the mother-daughter relationship was deepening in her preparing the ground for moulding Christ in her, Euphrasiamma was addressing Our Lady by various names such as 'My Mother', Blessed Mother, Mother of Grace, Mother of Mercy, Loving Mother etc. They were so very close to each other.

If we examine each of the ejaculatory prayers of Euphrasiamma, her daughterly love relationship becomes clear.

"Mother of God manifest always that you are my Mother".

"Holy Mother, offer me to God along with Infant Jesus".

"Refuge of sinners, wipe away all the stains of my sins".

Mother of the sorrowing, console the souls in purgatory.

Mother of stability give me the grace to survive in virtue till the end of my life.

O Mary conceived without sin, give me the grace to start from this world without any sin.

O Mary, you are a great queen; the whole world obey you, please save my soul.

My Mother teach me to love infant Jesus.

O Mother of Mercy, pay off all the debts of my life by offering all the blood, your only son has shed for me, to God our Father and get me heaven's fortune.

My mother obtain for me a peaceful death and a favourable judgment from Jesus.

Hail Mary, full of grace!

Holy Mother, you are all beautiful. No stain of sin is in you.

O Mary, the most sublime of all creatures, praise be to you!

O Queen of heaven, praise be to you for ever!

O Mary, the solace and refuge of all the exiled, pray for us.

Marian Devotions to Queen of Life

O! flowers, bless the queen of the three worlds by exhaling your fragrance!

O Mary, I love you!

Eternal father, I offer you the perfect purity of Mary.

O Mary, the most amiable pigeon of Eternal Father, pray for us.

May the Holy Mother be loved by all!

My Mother unite me with the heart of Jesus.

O Mary, my Trust, come to me and console me always.

Praise be to you O loving Bride of the Holy Spirit.

Praise be to you for ever, O Holy Mary full of grace among all the created beings.

Praise be to you for ever, O Mary whom the Eternal Father has chosen as the Queen of the three worlds.

O Mary the most beautiful of all the created beings, the beloved of the Most High! pray for us.

The Queen of Heaven, protect the Holy Church.

Help of Christians, pray for us.

Queen of angels, pray for us.

Queen of peace, pray for us

Mary praise, honour and glory be to the daughter of David.

Blessed be the one who comes in the name of the Lord as our
Queen.

Many greetings of praise and glory be to our Queen!

O Queen, the Mother of Mercy, we greet you!

You and your Holy Son govern us for ever.

O Mother of God, the blessed virgin Mary inviolate, I greet you
as the Queen of the three worlds.

My Mother, help me in all my needs.

O Mother, the procurer of peaceful death, give me a peaceful
death.

O Lady of Fatima, we greet thee!

O Lady of Fatima, we trust in thee.

Holy Virgin Mary, we love you.

Holy Mother of God, please pray for us.

The Refuge of sinners, convert all sinners.

Help of Christians, please come to our aid.

Help of Christians, give us the spirit of love.

Help of Christians, give us true righteousness.

Help of Christians, give us the spirit of purity.

Queen of the world, give peace to the world.

Lady of Fatima, give peace to the world.

Holy Virgin conceived without sin, purify us sinners.

Merciful Virgin born without sin, console my troubled heart.

Holy Mother of Dolours, you who prayed for the good thief and granted him perfect contrition of heart and a blessed death, grant me also perfect contrition of heart, blessed death, and the gift of heaven.

Enlighten me most sweet and beautiful Mother, who is full of love of God and charity towards people.

Most holy Mother of graciousness, let all people know and love you.

O loving daughter of Eternal Father, let all generations bless you!

O! worthy Mother of Eternal son, let the whole creation praise you and bless you.

O! the most amiable Bride of the Holy spirit, you alone are the fullness of all virtues, the most beloved and chosen Mother of Charity.

O! Queen of the three worlds, invite us who are the unfortunate children of Eve to you who are the teacher of love, in order to be burning with love of God.

Marian Devotion: The Glory of Life

Let praise and glory be to Holy Mary who is the Lady and Mother of all the world for ever and ever⁷.

These aspirations are the best manifestations that Euphrasiamma was the devotee of Mother Mary to whom she used to make requests for everything. Her invulnerable love towards the Holy Mother is quite visible in every prayer of '*Marianjali*'. Her practice of offering all the prayers through Holy Mother is worthy of special mention. This daughterly gratification is throbbing in each aspiration of her prayers. These prayers are overflowing with the never ending desire of her heart for praising the Holy Mother.

As she found out her way "To Jesus through Mary" Euphrasiamma made her, her own mother-Abundant were the Spiritual experiences Euphrasiamma had of our Lady's love towards her which was greater than that of any mother who gives birth to children. Our Lady had been there as support and shelter at all the trials when she was diving in the deep waters of the miseries of ailments and the afflictions by hellish powers"⁸.

Euphrasiamma availed herself of her freedom and power of intercession with Our Lady for the good of the fellow beings. Her heart which was overflowing with compassion for the poor and the helpless was hurrying to impart to them peace, love and joy. And many were the miracles that happened whenever she was interceding for them. Many people have received its benefits. Even today many are receiving such favours.

There have been many instances at which people have received such favours as that at the marriage at Cana. Once when Euphrasiamma's own family which had formerly been quite affluent and prestigious was almost on the brink of financial breakdown, her own brother Kakku was in very great mental strain, not knowing what to do about giving away his daughter Kochumary who was a fair and lovely girl, and of marriageable age, as he had no cash balance at all with him. Euphrasiamma was the only porter's rest for them to be relieved of their anxieties. Once while talking

with Euprasiamma the brother did not forget to tell her his heart's desire. "Sister, please pray that a good fellow should come and agree to marry Kochumary without demanding any dowry". Euphrasiamma agreed to pray: And as a result of her prayer, the problem was easily solved. A gentleman who had been waiting to get a suitable girl for marrying after collecting all the needed money and the wedding costumes, came and married Kochumary. The letter Euphrasiamma wrote to that Kochumary before her marriage is quite familiar to all — the instructions for a good family life are written in it. And thus Euphrasiamma could help her brother Kakku to be relieved of his worries.

Like Our Lady who had hurried to help her aunt Elizabeth in her pregnancy, Euphrasiamma also used to extend her helping hand to those who were in need. Once when Euphrasiamma's brother's daughter-in-law was getting ready for delivery, foreseeing the danger Euphrasiamma asked them to go to the hospital, as there would be much trouble at child birth. She told them beforehand that the child that would be born would be female child and she would be in danger of death, but would survive death, and that the child should be named "Euphrasia" and everything happened as was told before, and the child and the mother escaped from death. This niece 'Euphrasia' has a child of her own now. Thus the intercessory power of Mother Euphrasia became a great blessing - Today also many are receiving her power of mediation. Besides that, the people of Ollur and all those who are somehow or other related to Ollur convent are aware of the fact that if the pregnant ladies pray to Euphrasiamma and drink the water with which the feet of the statue of Mother Mary at the Ollur Novitiate was washed are sure to have a comfortable delivery. Even today many are continuing to follow that pious practice, and receiving God's grace too.

It is said about Euphrasiamma "the mother seated in the corner of the chapel" used to pray for a long time. Often her gaze would be at the face of the statue of Our Blessed Lady in the chapel. She would be seated there for two or three hours at a stretch, and at

Marian Devotion to Queen of Life

other times she would be in her room. Euphrasia was the one who converted prayer into dialogue. She was the mediator between God and people. Is it not the duty of a consecrated person too?

The lively expression of Euphrasiamma's Marian devotion was her incessant recitation of rosary - "Rosary is the prayer I like most. Its simplicity and depth is really wonderful. To say the rosary is to meditate the face of Jesus with Mary,¹⁰ says Pope John Paul II. Rosary is the best means to meditate on the holy face of Jesus. Euphrasiamma had no boredom at all in saying the rosary of 153 beads at a stretch. The cause of the strength of her life was this Marian devotion. That was why Euphrasiamma could sincerely say, "Won't forget even after death." We shall transform ourselves to be born in Jesus by holding the hands of Our Lady, like Euphrasiamma the great devotee of Mary. Let the Marian devotion lead us to a great Christ experience.

End Notes :

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3. *Euphrasia -- the Bouquet of Virtues*. ed. Cleopatra CMC. Carmel publications, Mount Carmel Generalate Aluva 2000, P. 153.
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5. *Letters of Mother Euphrasia*, Editor Fr. Mathias Mundaden CMI, Sr. Cleopatra CMC, Sr. Perigrin CMC, Euphrasia publications. St. Mary's Convent, Ollur, Thrissur-2004, Letter No. 30, Page 148.
6. Blessed Mother Euphrasia, Sr. Perigrin CMC, Janatha Book Stall, Thevara, Cochin. 2002 p. 66
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8. *Thirsting for God*, Sr. Pastor CMC, Provincial Superior, Thrissur 1998. Page 98.
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ST. EUPHRASIA – LOVING DAUGHTER OF THE CHURCH

Most Rev. Dr. Paul Alapatt, Bishop of Ramanathapuram,
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It is through the sacrament of baptism, one becomes the member of the Church, whether he / she is born in a Christian household or not. The moment of Baptism is the blessed occasion when one is born in the family of the Church and makes the privileges and duties of the Church his / her own. Just as he / she becomes worthy of the rights and privileges of the Church he / she takes upon himself / herself the great duty of bearing witness to Jesus and His Church within the household and outside, through his life. He is enabled to do so in the wake of time and place and age. Afterwards whichever way of life the person — priest, religious or layman — chooses he / she cannot waive his foremost responsibility of witnessing to Jesus and the Church at each and every sacrament he / she receives.

The essence of consecrated life is to experience the life style of following Christ by living genuinely the dedication one has made at Baptism. The gratification of being possessed by Christ is the great gift which one obtains through it. In this sense our ecclesial activities and witnessing are to begin in the family which is the domestic church we are born in, and the parishes which are the supreme models of the families and the dioceses which are formulated by the parishes. No consecrated life which does not aim at sanctity and close relationship can claim to have the right sense of direction. Therefore the priestly / religious life achieves meaning and gratification when it gets involved in the lives of the

St. Euphrasia From Holy Daughter of the Church

families, parishes and the diocese through the Bishop who is the symbol of unity for the local church. What I have noticed as a great achievement of Mother Euphrasia is that she has been able to give to the world at large and to the church such a vision, by leading a hidden life within the enclosure of her convent. Euphrasia was a sincere daughter of the Church who longed to have peace, unity and prosperity within and outside the Church through her prayer and exhortations even before Blessed Mother Teresa and Blessed Mariam Theresia who were the real personifications of Jesus who blotted out the sufferings of the poor people struggling in pain.

We have to think of the fidelity the Church expects from the consecrated ones. Above all it is the faithfulness towards Christ and the Gospel. Secondly it is the fidelity to the Church and her hierarchy. The religious are to be loyal to the spirit and traditions of each congregation. The next is the faithfulness to be shown to the modern world. The essence of religious life is the following of Christ. It is the duty of every religious. The evangelical counsels must be lived and manifested to the world. Following the example of our Holy Mother, the word of God must be kept in the heart and produce fruits worthy of it. The inspiration to live in union with the Church is to be imbibed from the word of God.

Pope John Paul II in his apostolic exhortation, *Vita Consecrata* says as follows: "In the church's tradition religious profession is considered to be 'a special and fruitful deepening of the consecration received in Baptism' in as much as it is the means by which close union with Christ already begun in Baptism develops in a fuller, more explicit and authentic configuration to him through the profession of Evangelical counsels" (No. 30). It was because of that Sr. Euphrasia who became the daughter of the Church through Baptism became aware and anxious about the fundamental love and obedience she should have towards the Church throughout her life.

On the basis of the exhortation of Vat. II that the Church is a communion of the priests who are the ministers of the Church, the

Religious and of the laity, the Religious have a special responsibility to develop this solidarity. Pope John Paul II is asking the consecrated persons to be true experts of communion and to practise the spirituality of communion by thinking in unison with the Church (*Sentire cum Ecclesia*) and that the consecrated persons must be witnesses and architects of the plan for unity (No. 46). And thus Jesus and Mother Church are inviting the consecrated people to a life style of ecclesial communion and through that awareness to the spirituality of communion in such a way as to enable the Church to grow in accordance with the mind of Jesus in depth, design and width. This spirit of communion of the consecrated should be a great power which leads the nations to faith in Christ and thus communion leads to action.

We can see that the Founders of the Religious Congregations and their saintly members had the clear awareness of the fundamental relationship of the Church and the consecrated people. What Pope John Paul II speaks of it is as follows: It is expressed through the complete participation in all the ecclesial aspects through the willing obedience to Bishops, specially to the Pope: (V. C. No. 45). The Holy Father could respond like this as he himself would have rightly understood the saintly religious who were trying to attain perfection and their intimacy with the Church and the diocese which is the miniature form of the Church. We can find that many of the founders of the religious congregations had been filled with this spirit of right relationship. Fr. Chavara Kuriakose Elias who was born and brought up in Kerala and now reigning as Saint in heaven and in the hearts of people, is the true disciple of Christ who worked hard as the Vicar General of the Syro Malabar Church for the unity and progress of the Church, day and night, often staying outside the religious enclosure. St. Teresa of Avila said: "I feel proud of being a daughter of the Church". This sense of pride, and love of the Church must be visible in us also. "I will be love in the heart of the Church, my mother" said St. Little Therese of Lissieux. There are many saintly religious who, getting out of their small communities and considering the large world outside

St. Euphrasia From Finding a daughter of the Church

as their own, worked in right earnest as the custodians of the Church and her teachings during her many crises. St. Ignatius of Loyola, the founder of the Jesuit order, realising the importance of Apostolic obedience told the members to think with the Church (Sentire cum Ecclesia). What St. Ignatius was implying was that the Religious must be the faithfully consecrated ones in the vessel of church which is moving ahead under the leadership of Pope, the follower of St. Peter and the Bishops.

It is by borrowing this vision that Pope John Paul II has released the post-synodal apostolic exhortation *Vita Consecrata*, in which he emphasizes the fact that the evangelization of the times would be impossible without *sentire cum Ecclesia*. Religious communities are not islands standing apart from the priests and lay people of the diocese, but the links that give proper shape and form to the structure of the diocese. They should be the experts who practise the spirituality of communion and persons who give training for the same. Besides her very earnest prayers during the Holy Mass for those who are in the row of leaders of the church and the children of mother Church in response to the teachings of the Church, Liturgy and the Documents of Vatican II (10, 59, 83). Euphrasiamma was saying special rosary for Mother Church with genuine fervour and she used to participate in the canonical office, which is the official prayer of the church. They are excellent evidences of her ecclesiasticity.

When Pope Benedict XVI spoke to the Religious of the Archdiocese of Rome for the first time, he invoked them thus, “Sisters, realising the needs of the local Church, you please respond creatively”. When we consider the background of the Latin Church, we realize, what the Holy Father meant by it was the Diocese itself. O! how many decades before such exhortations of the Holy Father, Euphrasiamma had delved deep into the heart of the diocese feeling the pulse of the church!

Mother Euphrasia was a daring person who nurtured this vision as her own, decades before and prompted the renewal of

religious life. She was the Religious who through her own life manifested to the world the fact that the testimony of filial love and involvement of the Religious in the affairs of the Church adds authenticity and due power to their apostolate.

She was the genuine Religious who kept in her mind the vision that people would not recognize the Religious who would not think with the people and the Church at the Forane and Diocesan levels. Thus she was carrying out the prophetic message throughout her life.

It becomes explicit from her letters that she considered all the problems of the Church as her own problems. The incessant prayers she was making for the authorities of the Church and for the priests is the clear evidence of her sincere love for the Church. It manifests how very highly she considered, the greatness of priesthood which leads the Church of Jesus forward and how very deep was her respects and sympathy, for those weak human beings who have received this invaluable treasure. We read in her letter No. 27 as follows: “. . . 4 angels dressed in white came. With very great grief they said as follows: Dear sister, you must pray with us for these priests, for their conversion” “My Father, I have performed some more sacrifices besides all those things I used to do and offered for this intention. I have entrusted them with our Holy Mother and prayed for them in right earnest”. What comes to my mind now is the resolution the great Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen took at the time of his priesthood ordination. “I will offer Holy Mass every Saturday in honour of Holy Mother for the intention of my stable survival in priesthood from the beginning to the end”. What a great cause of inspiration and strength to the community of priests is Mother Euphrasia who by her inner thirst had been praying by offering acts of sacrifice for their survival in priesthood till the end!

So also was her zeal for the salvation of souls which became the cause of inspiration for her, for, performing very painful acts of penance for the conversion of sinners. And we come across some

St. Euphrasia From Holy Daughter of the Church

hints in letters 25, 53 etc. that Mother Euphrasia had been praying by doing acts of self sacrifice in response to Our Lady's behest to pray for sinners and schismatics.

The abandonment of some members of the Catholic church and joining the Chaldean Syrian group and the lawsuits about the Church between the Catholics and the Syrians produced very great anxiety and grief in Mother Euphrasia. She suffered very great pain of heart seeing the damage the Church had encountered by the schism. She prayed very much and made others also pray for the schismatics who left the Church refusing to abide by the supreme authority of the Pope. She prayed also for the success of the lawsuit the diocese had filed against them. In her letter no 40. She has written as follows: "As per your exhortations dear Father, I have been praying by all possible means for the schismatics and for the number (the lawsuit about the Church) and made the junior sisters pray for it in a special way. We don't know what is the will of God. His will is enough for us. Is it not dear Father"? In her letters number 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 50, 53 and 63 also we come across her sincere prayer for the return of the Non-Catholics and for doing away with the discord between the Catholic Church and the Non-Catholic Churches, specially the Chaldean Syrian Church.

Mother Euphrasia was the person who intensely wished that all Christians should come into the true church under Pope who is the follower of St. Peter and prayed for it from the depth of her soul offering acts of self sacrifice resplendent with love. What a blessed daughter of the church was mother Euphrasia who decades ago presented to the world the genuine vision that even those Christians outside the catholic community also are the dear children of Jesus, by praying and waiting earnestly for their return to the Catholic Church, and convincing the large majority of the Religious, specially women Religious who were unaware of the meaning of ecumenism and its relevance and importance. A farsighted fellow who dreamed of it long before the global church and the local churches laid stress on it and made preparations for

the same! Mother Euphrasia desired to have a parish church and a convent in the localities where the other Christian denominations (e.g. at Cheralayam in Kunnankulam) were living and prayed for it for the growth of the Church in those areas. One thing becomes clear from it; Mother Euphrasia was not leading a life of dispassionate self-security without bothering about the Church at all. On the other hand she was spending the whole of her life time for the growth of the Catholic Church through her prayer and exhortations to all the people including sisters.

Euphrasiamma was the genuine consecrated daughter of the church who instead of craving to achieve self-gratification by getting involved in the affairs of the convent only, had been carrying in her heart the problems of the Church and that of the Bishop and the priests. Even though she could not render her services to the church like Bl. Father Chavara and Mother Mariam Thesia by running about in the world outside, her prayer and letters were overflowing with the social commitment and zeal for the Church and her children. At this juncture I wish and pray that each and every religious sister, realizing the signs of the time may imbibe the spirit of Euphrasiamma with her slogan, 'she would not forget even after death'.



BURNING WITH APOSTOLIC ZEAL

Sr. Namitha Rose CMC

"And behold there came a voice to him, and said "what are you doing here, Elijah?" He said, "I have been very zealous for the Lord, God of Hosts" (1 Kings 19: 13-14).

Getting filled and flowing out or being emptied are the twin phenomena of nature. Only where there is fullness there can be the flowing out. Only where there is emptiness or vacancy there can be fullness. All those who were filled with the fire of God's love were people who were pouring out to their fellow travellers to their fill. A pot which is full to the brim will not lose its content by splashing. Instead it will be kept purified inside the shell of humility in order that those who are in need may make use of it as and when needed. When Prophet Elijah was violently trembling with the pressure of zealous love of God, he could not but get into the crowd of people. No wonder if the humble nun of Ollur who could take over to her heart the ever-shining wick of Carmelite heritage centuries after and make her unending love of God and her unbreakable apostolic zeal a real investment like that of prophet Elijah. The signs of the times and the visions of the times beyond, were not enchaining Euphrasiamma within limitations. Instead through her blessed life, she was transforming those limitations into unending possibilities which were empowering her to leap into the depth of spiritual stances.

THE NUN WHO LIVED THE FOUNDING CHARISM

“Remain united to Me in contemplation
and consecrated to Me in action”.¹

The concordance of contemplation and action is reflecting in the undercurrent of this motto of C.M.C. The Constitution continues to say:

“The right blending of contemplation and action is the spirit of our congregation. Our minds should flow towards the Lord incessantly in an inseparable gaze of love. This holy and supreme love will create in us the true spirit of selfless action. It will prompt us to offer all our actions, whether in the material or spiritual order as a gift of worshipful service and sacrifice to the Lord, leaving the fruits thereof entirely to Him to be rightfully enjoyed by all His children alike (No. 9).

Saint Euphrasia shines bright as the model par excellence who truly lived the spirit of the apostolic heritage of Carmel, handed over through the founder fathers to CMC, the first indigenous congregation of Kerala for women.

“Speak O Lord, for thy servant listens” (1 Sam 3: 10). This attitude which a CMC sister should have incessantly made the life of Euphrasia affluent of all virtues. Euphrasiamma herself has written as follows: " For about four months I see one thing in me myself That is, even if I am involved in any work or conversation, I clearly see in my mind, one person speaking to my heart, never leaving with great loving affection.”²

As far as Euphrasiamma was concerned consecrated life meant deepening in love for the Divine Bridegroom and being united with him, participating in his fortunes. The source of her apostolic zeal was this very strong inner thirst for being one with Him — the magical touch by which she used to divert the stream of her divine love towards everybody she came across — contemplation and action are mutually complementary. We cannot view them in isolation. One cannot be complete without the other. Those who have had the experience of living with Euphrasiamma bear

Burning Desire for Zeal

witness that her life was the consensus of contemplation and action.

Her virtuous life which became one with the divine Bridegroom in contemplation, and available to people through action made her life imitable for the people of the modern world.

LIFE OF WITNESS – THE UNIQUE APOSTOLATE

“My food is to do the will of Him who sent me and to accomplish His work” (Jn. 4: 34). “As the apostle sent by God, Christ made himself ready to proclaim the kingdom of God and to be the witness of this heavenly Father. The consciousness that He was the one sent by God was the undercurrent of His life and mission”.³

Euphrasiamma who followed her divine Bridegroom to the core, transformed her life situations into streams of witnessing. Many have drunk from that stream to their fill and had the gratification.

Staying within the enclosure of the convent this blessed soul was trying her best to bring about heaven on earth. Like St. Little Therese who, staying within the Carmel convent became the patroness of the missionaries all over the world, the life of Euphrasiamma also with her sweet smile and her words of consolation to those who were in mental struggle became resplendent like the lamp raised on mountain top by accepting the sufferings that came her way with both hands, and offering them for the salvation of souls and above all by her deep prayer experience.

Euphrasiamma had been in charge of the maidservants of the convent for some time. And when she had to retire from it she wrote to her spiritual director: “Loving father, I have been totally removed from the charge of kitchen maids. That work was very pleasing to me and I liked it. Nevertheless I think I have worked only for the sake of God from the time I got the charge, without in the least giving up to my likes I abandon myself totally in everything to the will of God (Letter no. 8, 1st Sept. 1901). These words manifest Euphrasiamma’s chivalry in taking up lowly tasks and perform duties sincerely. This virtuous mother found out ways

and means to share the word of God, and thus introduce Jesus wherever she was.

On the occasions when the hosts for the Holy Mass being prepared she used to rush to help the sisters who are working at it. The very sight of Euphrasiamma doing it prayerfully was indeed a matter of great inspiration and encouragement for many. Meanwhile she would give them exhortations burning with zeal. She used to do all this kneeling with the worshipful unction as that of angels.”⁴

Euphrasiamma’s words and deeds and her very demeanour were means of bearing witness to Jesus. Dr. J. Kattookkaren who was an altar boy then, attests that the fervour of Euphrasiamma expressed in all her services in the sacristy — the respect with which she used to handle the holy objects there, and her concentration in prayer were all matters of great edification for him. Euphrasiamma was convinced of the fact that such a silent life of witnessing would be of better avail to move those who see it than very great precepts. But it should not be suspected as hypocrisy, because it was Euphrasiamma’s natural life style, the charism which remained with her throughout her life.

Euphrasiamma used to extend all the possible help to others even in her old age when her physical condition was not upto the mark to perform responsible tasks. It might be by a word or a smile or a consoling touch. As far as the apostolic service is concerned the contribution the older people can render is indispensable. They can take out from the abundance of their faith and experience both the old and the new, and make use of them not only for themselves but also for the good of the whole community. It is not enough if they remain as were recipients of the apostolic services, but they must realize that they too are missionaries who cannot be replaced, specially among their contemporaries. Today special stress is laid on the importance of apostolic mission of the elderly people bearing testimony to the people of their age. As Pope Paul VI had exhorted us through his encyclical, “Evangelii

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Nuntiandi as follows, "Modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if he does listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses" (No. 41).⁵

All that is specially noted in the Pontifical council document, "The dignity of older people and their Mission in the church and in the world" is hundred percent meaningful in the case of Euphrassamma. Was it not because of it that the people were rushing to see the pious nun of Cherppukaren family?

"I know that there was the general conviction that she was a pious nun. Therefore whenever I used to go there, I would meet Mother Euphrasia and seek her blessing. She used to bless me by placing both her hands on my head. I feel it as a very great fortune and a blessed experience", Sr. Cyprian used to repeat it with her eyes closed as if in a trance — "Even now that figure is before my eyes — her walking towards me, holding a walking stick in hands, with utmost custody of eyes, with her whole concentration in God and God alone".⁶

The first and foremost apostolic duty of the consecrated people is towards themselves. They fulfill it by opening their hearts to the promptness of the Holy Spirit. . . . Thus they proclaim to the world the peace coming from the Father, the dedication witnessed to by the son and the joy which is the fruit of the Holy Spirit. ⁷

Pope John Paul II adds that the consecrated people will be missionaries above all by continually deepening their awareness of having been called and chosen by God.

"In this way they will become true signs of Christ in the world. Their life style too must clearly show the ideal which they profess, and thus present itself as a living sign of God and as an eloquent, albeit often silent proclamation of the Gospel the consecrated persons are called as they are in every situation to bear clear witness that they belong to Christ (No. 25).

When we evaluate the long 75 years of Euphrasamma's life in the light of the modern encyclicals and the teachings of the Church,

we cannot find any loopholes of defects. The reason why this pious soul's life is so very pertinent even today is because she could present before the world the testimony of her life which was overflowing with divine zeal.

THE APOSTLE OF PRAYER

Prayer is a living fellowship with **God**. It unifies all our actions and makes our lives God-centered. This kind of prayer is an interior heaven in the growing life of the CMC sister in everyday ups and downs, mutual give and take of our community life and in the apostolic work (Constitution No. 51).

Prayer was the life-breath for Euphrasiamma. How far is water necessary for a fish, when it is put out of it, so much and even much more than that was Euphrasiamma's life identified with prayer. Fixing her gaze always at the tabernacle she used to pray: "O! most lovable Jesus, sweet Jesus, who lives in solitude, let my heart be a lamp ever burning bright for you and you alone for ever".⁸

Blessed Euphrasiamma was like the Hebrew poet who was living for God and lamenting out of very great thirst for God even at night, was keeping vigil in the presence of the divine sacrament of mercy. She was the ever vigilant worshipper of the Divine Sacrament?

Euphrasiamma's life which was revolving on the axis of prayer alone was a model and inspiration for all. Those who have seen Euphrasiamma when she was alive, have a picture of hers imprinted on their minds — the picture of the mother seated in the corner of the chapel and praying always. Sr. Pastor explains the spirituality of Blessed Euphrasiamma in her book, *Atmadaham*. "When we enter into the life" of Euphrasiamma her offering of herself to Jesus and the intensity of her bride—like love becomes clear in many ways — meditating the crucified Jesus and feeling the throbbing pulses while gazing at the tabernacle, and thus trying to copy each experience of Jesus in her own life, etc.¹⁰

THERE ARE TWO SIDES FOR HER APOSTOLATE OF PRAYER.

1. The prayer of intercession for the whole world, urged by the very fervent inner inspiration.
2. The assurance of intercession promised to those who approached her for the assistance of her prayer

THE POWER OF INTERCESSORY PRAYER

Euphrasiamma's intimacy of heart with her Divine Bridegroom enabled her to have freedom to intercede for the whole world. With the child-like pertinacity she prayed, placing before the divine presence the problems of the current world, the crisis the Holy Catholic Church was encountering, and the intentions revealed to her through personal relations with people. She made special intercession for the complete destruction of schisms, and for the success in the Church litigations.

"What about the Schismatics? Will they be converted? Will we succeed in the law suit, Father. Any news now? I like to know the present situation" (Letter No. 48, 25th April 1906, Page 243).

These letters manifest how very powerfully had Mother Euphrasia's intercessory prayer been influenced by the Pope's exhortation "to think with the church". "Against the background, of St. Francis Assisi's love towards the church, which is the pillar and bulwark of the truth (1 Tim 3:15). We can readily understand his devotion to the 'Lord Pope'. So also was the daughterly outspokenness of St. Catherine of Sienna towards the one whom she called "Sweet Christ on earth", the apostolic obedience and the *Sentire cum Ecclesia* of St. Ignatius of Loyola, and the joyful profession of faith made by St. Theresa of Avila: "I am a daughter of the Church"-we can also understand the deep desire of St. Theresa of the Child Jesus who said: "In the heart of the church, my mother, I will be love". They are examples which consecrated persons need constantly recall (*Vita Consecrata* No. 46).

Euphrasiamma who used to inform Bishop Menachery of all her visions and revelations through letter never showed any hesitation

to accept all the directions and objections of the bishop whole heartedly. She who had been praying in right earnest before the Blessed sacrament with the spirit of self sacrifice, as she was greatly concerned about all the activities of the Church and the well being of the Bishops, priests and lay people, is yet another models par excellence for the consecrated.

The interest Euphrasiamma used to take to remember and pray for all the numerous needs, problems and intentions of those who used to approach her with their requests is indeed praiseworthy. Feeling very great pity for the novice Gasper who was crying like anything as she was about to be sent back home, due to her ailments, Euphrasiamma asked her to pray nine rosaries a day for nine days, and Euphrasiamma also prayed with her. That sister who had been suffering from cancer and could not eat, got cured of her ailment and could live for long years in the congregation.

Mother Euphrasia used to pray for the souls in purgatory also. Her concern for the souls in purgatory was indeed unique. The good God used to let Euphrasiamma know the news of the death of her relatives or the relatives of other sisters in the convent. Euphrasiamma had great interest to help and relieve the suffering souls (cf. Letter 25, 31, 43, 56, 58) from purgatory.

PRAYER FOR THE SUFFERING

Along with her intercessory prayer before the presence of God, Euphrasiamma did not forget to console the suffering people by her words also. “We should seek his face in the faces of those to whom we are sent to share with them the experience of Christ.”¹¹

Euphrasiamma was not in a condition to go in search of wide pasture lands of apostolate, make house visits or to render her services in the fields of the apostolate of education or healing service. Even though Euphrasiamma did not go down into the midst of people, the people around were convinced of the power of her prayer and they came to the Convent in search of the “Praying Mother”.

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The life style of Euphrasiamma was prayerful evangelization which extended from person to person, and from person to families. The iceberg of problems used to vanish by the touch of her consoling words.

The financial breakdown of her own family which had been in the height of glory in the past, and the straying away of her two young brothers from the right path caused very severe mental pain and constant suffering to Euphrasiamma. The weapons she kept in store for their return and conversion were prayer, acts of self-sacrifice and recitation of rosary. She had also directed the members of her family to say special prayers and perform acts of penance diligently. She had been advising them that they should not be behind anybody in spiritual wealth, even though they were backward in the wealth of this world (*Blessed Euphrasiamma* p. 54).

Euphrasiamma would console those who were approaching her with the bundle of family problems with her smile which was oozing out love with the words: "Try to lead an honest life. Don't follow falsehood or cheating. God will bless you. You should pray well; nothing is impossible for God".¹² Many have testified that through the timely words of consolation the mother used to utter with the power of the spirit, and through the prayers she used to ask them to say, they obtained consolation and solutions for their problems.

Many used to approach Euphrasiamma with their various problems such as financial disputes, broken relationship of family members; undue delay in the settlement of proposals for marriage etc. They found her as the sincere nun, who by the power of her prayer would intercede for them before God's presence. There was a popular belief spread among the people that the ailing children would get cured of their ailments if they were taken to Euphrasiamma who would pray over them. She used to give to those people who would approach her for consolation some small prayers and ejaculations written in her own handwriting. The handwritten prayer Euphrasiamma gave her cousin Eluvathingal

Varunny Anthony, an year before her death (1951) to be recited daily is an example of it (cf. *The Letters of Euphrasiamma*, page 385).

Eventhough there weren't any unequalled beginnings in the field of educational apostolate in the life of Euphrasiamma she was indeed an indispensable agent of solace for the students of St. Mary's Convent School. They came in search of the praying Mother to share with her their petty pains and sorrows. The Mother who used to sit on a stool in the corner of the chapel and pray, poured into them the nectar of solace. Euphrasiamma would be all the more busy at the approach of exams; and during the days of examination and afterwards. She would pray for all of them by placing her hand on their heads; and give them the necessary instructions and words of consolation.

The ultimate aim of all apostolic activities is to bear witness to the love of Christ which is the Kingdom of God. This salvific experience in the words of St. Paul, is to be in travail until Christ is formed in the hearts of men" (Gal. 4: 19).¹³

Euphrasiamma was in right earnest in forming Christ through her prayers and spiritual exhortations. She had understood that this apostolate of prayer would become fruitful in the depth of the spirit of penance. She was aware of the fact that the essence of penance consists in sacrificing self-will and resigning one's own will to the will of God by listening to God's voice always. The warding of the external and internal senses, the physical acts of penance by which the evil tendencies of the body are controlled and the pious acts like fasting, almsgiving, etc. also are included in it It is an all embracing disciplinary system which brings under control all the 24 hours of life and harmonizes the things to be performed during that time (*Ratio Institutionis* No. 3:1.1).

Euphrasiamma's life was interwoven with the strings of prayer and penance. See what she has written in her letter to Bishop Menachery. "The one joy in my heart is that although I have not practised any great virtue, I have a consolation in my heart, that by

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the grace of God, I have not abandoned myself to the desire of self-will and passions and pleasures I could have enjoyed if I wanted” (Letter No. 78, p. 357).

Euphrasiamma’s life which had been purified by severe acts of penance and fasting was quite transparent before God. Therefore there wasn’t much delay in getting responses for her prayer. The local people and the members of her community who had realized this fact are the ones who are attesting to her virtuous life.

The Apostolate of Service — the Sign of Consecrated life

Love of God becomes verified when we render our services to those who are in need of it, forgetting ourselves and even foregoing all restrictions — our intimate love for Jesus must flow down and reach the people of God as love and service to them (*Ratio Institutionis* No. 34).

Euphrasiamma who had made this exalted culture of the apostolate of service her own life style, was ever ready to love and serve everybody irrespective of colour, race or caste. She used to have many chances to render service when she was the Superior of the Convent and the Novice Mistress. Euphrasiamma was quite earnest about going to those and consoling and helping who were in need of it. She found delight in rendering the most humble services. When the sisters had gone to school, Euphrasiamma would slowly set out with the broom and the needed equipments to clean the latrines.

It was through petty little acts of charity that she rendered her selfless acts of service. In those days when electric lamps were not many, as soon as the night prayer was over Euphrasiamma would hurriedly go out to the verandah with a lighted candle and stand near the staircase with the aim of giving light to the sisters who were climbing up the stairs; and those in need could light their lamps from it.

Euphrasiamma had a special care for those sisters who were engaged in more laborious tasks. Once one of the sisters who was

making candles could not have leisure to go for lunch. Realising that fact Euphrasiamma had been to her for her relief. Many can narrate such experiences of Euphrasiamma's loving concern. Boundless indeed had been her love and concern for the kitchen maids who were working very hard incessantly. She was earnestly involved in giving them the necessary help such as stitching their dress, repairing their old clothes, etc.

The quest for divine beauty impels consecrated persons to care for the deformed image of God on the faces of their brothers and sisters. On the faces disfigured by hunger, disillusioned by political promises. . . . On the faces of women hurt and humiliated are the deformed image of God¹⁴ (Vita Consecrata No. 75).

Euphrasiamma could impart wholeness and beauty to the deformed faces of the fellow beings through her virtuous life. She who found joy in rendering all the possible help to the poor people who came in search of her, could pour into them strength and hope through her spiritual exhortations.

The servants of the convent were the people who had been lucky enough to enjoy the loving words of solace and kind consolations of Euphrasiamma in abundance. C. D. Annamkutty who was brought to the convent when she was quite small, had her heart full of revenge and spite for others as she had a life of poverty and abandonment at home. All were fed up with her. But the loving approach of Euphrasiamma brought about a metamorphosis in her.

“In those days I was quite reluctant to bathe myself as my body was full of itches and scabies. I used to run always for escape when the senior maids would call me to give me bath. But O! how many times had Euphrasiamma tactfully called me and washed me with tender loving care”.¹⁵

There are ever so many such live witnesses Euphrasiamma's interest in taking care of, and serving the ailing was indeed an eye opener for many. She was always taking great care to spend her time with the ailing sisters by praying rosary with them and consoling them.

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Euphrasiamma had a special charism to prepare the ailing sisters in their death bed to accept death peacefully by helping them to pray. Once a sister had been affected by cholera and was almost on the brim of death. As it was a deadly and contagious disease many were afraid to go to the patient. But Euphrasiamma went forward to her joyously for serving her. She remained with her without ever moving away from her. Besides that, she was cleaning the patient of her excretions due to diarrhoea and vomiting without showing the least sign of disgust (*Dhanyayaya (Blessed) Euphrasiamma* p. 11).

If we watched her dealings with the ailing and her constant staying with them we would feel as if somebody had entrusted her with the duty of the infirmarian. Euphrasiamma did not cease from rendering such services. She took great care to make use of this special charism and the fruits and gifts of the Holy Spirit she had, for the benefit of those who needed it. The charism a word of knowledge, ward of wisdom and utetst charisms the Holy Spirit had given her Mother Euphrasia used for the good of others.

An experience of Sr. Marianna shall be explained here. "Once I was sitting in my room with a disturbed mind. I had a great desire to make confession. Unexpectedly Euphrasiamma had been to my room at that time and asked me. Aren't you worried about having nobody to open your heart to? My wonder had no bounds then" (*Euphrasiamma Dhanyacharitha Parambara (Blessed Euphrasia series* p. 83).

The genuine service--mindedness overflowing with divine love can be pointed out as the powerful inducement of Euphrasiamma's life. Here is an example of the experience of the people around. When there had been no effect at all for all the treatment for curing the diseases people would hurry to Euphrasiamma with the patients or seeking assistance of her prayer.

The three months old son of Varunny Maprany was suffering from severe scabies. The whole body of the child became one big wound as the skin was getting peeled off. The suffering of the child increased ten-fold when it was given some medicine mixed

with mercury by the local Ayurvedic physician. The child was laid on a plantain leaf. It was almost on the point of death. The child's mother came running to Euphrasiamma. Euphrasiamma listened to the lady as sympathetically as possible, and consoled her to the best of her ability and assured her of the child's healing. And she prescribed her a panacea too. "Prayer and penance!" The lady in right earnestness put into practice the direction of Euphrasiamma and after a few days, the lady came in search of Euphrasiamma with her heart full of thanks, with the news that her son was healed.

SUFFERING - THE HIDDEN FACE OF APOSTOLIC SERVICE

On behalf of Christ's body which is the Church, we as followers of Christ are to continue our share of suffering for others by the many trials and hardships of ours (cf. Col. 1: 24). As exemplified in the life of St. Little Flower, suffering offered up to God, in a spirit of sacrifice is itself a great apostolic activity (C.M.C. Constitutions, No. 89).

Euphrasiamma's was a life melted and purified in the fire pan of suffering. By accepting the physical and mental sufferings she experienced in the spirit of self-oblation she could sublimate them into apostolic dimension. As she herself had the deep awareness of the value of suffering, she took special care to impart genuine valour, encouragement and solace to those who were suffering. Once Euphrasiamma told a sister who was worried about something as follows: "Don't worry child; is it not God's gift to you out of His love for you? You please look at the crucifix and realize how very little is our cross! Only if we participate in our Lord's sufferings we will have participation in His love. Only through suffering we will grow in love" (*Blessed Euphrasiamma* p. 84).

She was the wise bride who was careful to reap hundred percent harvest from all experiences she had in life. Euphrasiamma had to encounter many failures and sufferings one after another from her childhood onwards. She was disturbed by bodily ailments and mental afflictions one after another. All the while she did find the will of God in everything and suffer silently. The attacks of

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ailments were wearying her weak body again and again. Knowing about this ill health the superiors sent her for some rest to Ambazhakkad in 1902. After some days the ailments which were coming and going intermittently so far, troubled her all the more. Nevertheless, even in those times when she was encountering death face to face, a sweet smile was spreading on her lips.

Besides the physical ailments the tide of mental conflicts also was beyond her capacity to bear. But she was careful to resign herself to the will of God in everything and to offer herself to His holy will. In her letter to her spiritual director we read, "I am happy to do and suffer whatever be my superiors' commands or directions and long very much for getting them again" (Letter 7, 1st Aug. 1901).

During the period when she was acting as the Junior mistress she was paying very great attention for the formation of those little sisters. Then she had to suffer very much from them. And even afterwards she had to suffer some bitterness and pain from them. These bitter experiences from her own daughters was comparatively more burdensome to bear. Nevertheless that magnanimous sister accepted those sufferings as a great treasure and suffered them silently. And when she was the superior of the convent also and often otherwise the sharp arrows of criticisms from the members of the community were preparing the altar of self-oblation for Euphrasiamma. Whatever was the situation Euphrasiamma was not in the least willing to shirk her responsibilities. Not only did she refrain from retorting at the slanderers but also was trying to love them all the more in return. The following is the letter she wrote to her spiritual director on 14th July 1905.

"Father, when I hear someone slandering me or accusing me, it brings to my heart much joy and consolation and much benefit to my heart Father, if it is the will of God pray and obtain for me quickly a good death or the hatred of others - I firmly believe that a hidden life is very pleasing to God (Letter 38).

The courage for requesting for sufferings and offering them for the redemption of souls was evident at every step of Euphrasiamma's life. The internal sufferings and the afflictions from the devil intensified her sufferings all the more. "My loving Father when I was a novice at Ambazhakad, among the great attacks I had from the devils, these wicked wolves often used to beat me, saying, I must leave the religious congregation and return home. Quite often in the night they used to drag me with the cot and roll me down."

One day without allowing me to go to the community they made me sit on the third floor. That day whenever I tried to go down and reach the staircase they closed the door of the staircase with a big plank of the wood (letter No. 33, 26 March 1904).

The descriptions of such attacks of the devil can be seen throughout the letters. During the climax of such mental afflictions, and even in the midst of the agony of her soul that she has been forsaken by God, Euphrasiamma could find the anchor of hope in her sufferings. She was transformed as the apostle of suffering.

CONCLUSION

Indeed, more than in external works the mission consists in making Christ present to the world through personal witness. This is the challenge, this is the primary task of consecrated life. Thus it can be said that consecrated persons are "in mission" by virtue of their very consecration (cf. *Vita Consecrata* No. 72).

Euphrasiamma who grasped the apostolic dimension of consecrated life in its depth, through her life of fidelity and total oblation subjugated the length, width, height and depth of missionary life. Staying within the enclosure of the convent and leading a life of contemplation and action in right proportion Euphrasiamma was transformed as a flaming model of apostolic zeal.

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End Notes

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Who was Saint Euphrasia, what was she?
Before those who search for answers
to the questions above, the background workers
of this book have tried to draw the sketch of the person.
I pray and desire that before the people
who run about to make both ends of life meet,
let these holy reflections on Mother Euphrasia stand shining!

+ Andrews Thazhath

Mar Andrews Thazhath
Metropolitan Archbishop of Thrichur