

# A MONTH WITH PRIMA MAESTRA THECLA



Generalate of the Daughters of St. Paul  
Rome 2022  
*For Private Use*

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## ABBREVIATIONS

VPC     *Vi porto nel cuore (I Carry You in My Heart)*

CSAS   *Un cuor solo un'anima sola (One in Heart and Soul)*

## A MONTH WITH PRIMA MAESTRA THECLA

We are invited to vividly recall the legacy of love that Maestra Thecla left us with the maternal plea: “If all the Daughters of St. Paul love each other, if they are one in heart and soul, they will go forward well and the Congregation will flourish.”

Let us all walk together every day of the month of February in the company of Maestra Thecla.

### *Special Intentions:*

- to pray for the beatification of Maestra Thecla and for vocations;
- to grow in love for God and for everyone;
- to live and make continual progress in sisterly love in our communities.

### *Index of themes:*

- Love is without measure (Days 1-3)
- Love is eternal (Days 4-7)
- Love is prayerful (Days 8-10)
- Love is unselfish (Days 11-14)
- Love is patient (Days 15-18)
- Love is forgiving (Days 19-20)
- Love is progressive (Days 21-25)
- Love is joyful (Days 26-28)

# PRAYER

## FOR THE REQUEST OF GRACES



**M**ost Holy Trinity, thank you for the singular gifts of light, grace and virtue which you granted to Venerable Sister Thecla Merlo, and for having chosen and constituted her the wise mother and sure guide of the Daughters of St. Paul.

Through her intercession, grant that I may live of her great loves: Jesus Master, the Holy Eucharist, the Church, and the Gospel proclaimed to all people through the instruments of social communication, to the point of total sacrifice.

Lord, if it is in the design of your divine wisdom, exalt this faithful Servant to the joy of the Church and the good of all humanity and grant me, through her intercession, the favor I ask of you.... Amen.

### *With ecclesiastical approval*

Anyone who receives graces and favors through the intercession of Venerable Sister Thecla Merlo is asked to send this information to the Superior General of the Daughters of St. Paul, Via San Giovanni Eudes 25, 00163 Rome, Italy.

## LOVE IS JOYFUL

*Now that you have purified yourselves by obedience to the truth so that you have genuine mutual love, love one another deeply, from the heart" (1 Pt. 1:22).*

*From the words and writings of Sr. Thecla Merlo*

Let us be like bees, which fly from flower to flower, gathering nectar to give us honey. Let us be like bees by always looking for the good in others, for the positive side of things and of people. If we do this, we will always be happy (CSAS 15.7).

How do we stand when it comes to love? Do we love our sisters—all our sisters? [...] Our Constitutions say: "Let us desire the true good of the sisters, and let us demonstrate this also externally. Our joy and satisfaction for the well-being of our sisters should truly spring from our heart" (art. 171). Are we happy when good befalls our sisters or are we unhappy about this? (CSAS 24.13)

Let us love one another. This is very hard to do. It is easy to love people who live far away because we rarely see them. We love them, we pray for them, and that's it. Loving the people with whom we are in constant contact is more difficult, but it is also more meritorious. The Lord gives us the grace to do this (CSAS 129.5).

*Prayer for the Request of Graces (p. 4)*

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory

## LOVE IS WITHOUT MEASURE

*God proves his love for us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us (Rom. 5:8).*

*From the words and writings of Sr. Thecla Merlo*

May this be a year overflowing with love. Let us take the Blessed Mother as our example. When we judge a sister, let us ask ourselves, "What would the Blessed Mother do in my place? Would she say this? Would she think in this way? Would she treat the sister like this?" [...] And let us remember a basic rule: "Don't do to others what you would not want them to do to you." It would certainly be a good thing for us, as religious, to take Mary as our model and ask ourselves, "What would the Blessed Mother do in my place?" In this way, we will finish the year well (if the Lord allows us to finish it) and we will be serene before the judgment seat of God, where the Lord will be as open-handed with us as we were with others. The *Our Father* puts it very well: "Forgive us our sins as we forgive others" (cf. Mt. 6:12). But if you do not forgive, if you judge everything, you condemn yourself. So let's be smart out of self-interest, if nothing else! (CSAS 61.6)

*Prayer for the Request of Graces (p. 4)*

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory

## LOVE IS WITHOUT MEASURE

*If a shepherd has a hundred sheep, and one of them has gone astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine on the mountains, and go in search of the one that went astray?  
And if he finds it, truly I tell you, he rejoices over it more than over the ninety-nine that never went astray (Mt. 18:12-13).*

*From the words and writings of Sr. Thecla Merlo*

Do we want to be at peace? Do we want to be counted among those of good will? Then let us try to conform ourselves to the divine will at all times and in everything. If we do this, we will lead a happy life on this poor earth and a blissful one in eternity.

The best wishes I would like to offer myself and all of you are these: that we might always remain united to the will of God in order to always be happy. May the Lord's will be done, even though our human nature might complain! Whatever God wants, so do I.

Another source of peace and joy comes from putting into practice the love of members of a family. Let us love one another, let us have compassion for each other's failings, let us overlook mistakes and help each other! May this type of love be shown from one house to another, from one sister to another, from mistress to subject. May we all be one in heart! If this is so, the Lord will truly be pleased with us (VPC 85).

*Prayer for the Request of Graces (p. 4)*

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory

## LOVE IS JOYFUL

*By this everyone will know  
that you are my disciples:  
if you love one another (Jn. 13:35).*

*From the words and writings of Sr. Thecla Merlo*

Let us love everyone. Let us help one another. Let us be compassionate toward each other. In this way, love will reign among us. The Lord says: "Where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them" (Mt. 18:20) (CSAS 59.8).

We need to be very, very careful! Let us try to love each other, to remain together, to treat each other with respect, with good manners, and to help each other. Living together is so beautiful! Our Constitutions say: "Let [the sisters] sympathize with the griefs and pains of the others and rejoice in their joys" (art. 172). Let us also try to give our sisters a little pleasure, even if it costs us some sacrifice. If we do this, we can make life more joyful for everyone. If we live in love among ourselves, our Congregation will be an antechamber of heaven, don't you agree? (CSAS 104.9)

*Prayer for the Request of Graces (p. 4)*

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory

## TWENTY-SIXTH DAY

### LOVE IS JOYFUL

*Rejoice in the Lord always.  
I say it again: rejoice!  
Your kindness should be known to all.  
The Lord is near (Phil. 4:4-5).*

*From the words and writings of Sr. Thecla Merlo*

Let's do everything we can to find vocations, without growing tired or discouraged. A sister who is truly content with her vocation will want to help others share the same joy (VPC 171).

Do you know what it takes to be cheerful all the time? It means being content with what we have; it means being detached from ourselves. When we have a lot of desires and seek this or that comfort, we will never be cheerful because we will always have some worry. St. Paul knew this very well and he said it very well! May we know how to accept his words (CSAS 107.1).

Always be happy! Why is it that sometimes someone is sad? How can we be sad when we have the Lord right next to us, we can tell him all our annoyances and allow him to help us? (CSAS 144.7)

*Prayer for the Request of Graces (p. 4)*  
Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory

## THIRD DAY

### LOVE IS WITHOUT MEASURE

*If I, your Lord and Teacher,  
have washed your feet, you also  
ought to wash one another's feet (Jn. 13:14).*

*From the words and writings of Sr. Thecla Merlo*

There is a thought of Primo Maestro that reads like this: "The degree of fervor in a house is measured by how we observe love." Do we want to see if we are fervent? Then let us see if we observe love. Let us imitate Jesus' great love for us and repay him for it in a small way by loving one another. We have done so little [for the Lord] and he has given us so much! There's no comparison! So let us gladly make the small sacrifice of loving one another. [...] May we welcome the graces the Lord has prepared for us, that he wants to give us, and that he certainly will give us if we make room for them. If, for example, you want to pour a little water into a glass that is already full, it's not possible because there's no room. The same is true of our heart and soul. The Lord wants to give us his graces, but there's no room for them if our heart, soul and mind are filled with other things! (CSAS 127.7)

*Prayer for the Request of Graces (p. 4)*  
Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory

## FOURTH DAY

# LOVE IS ETERNAL

*If then you were raised with Christ,  
seek what is above, where Christ is seated  
at the right hand of God (Col. 3:1).*

*From the words and writings of Sr. Thecla Merlo*

Keep this in mind: we can't remain on earth forever, so we have to prepare for eternity. We are people of eternity and all the things we do have an impact on eternity. So if we want our actions to be completely holy, completely good, we must do them in God's grace, in his holy will. May our mind, will and heart always be directed toward heaven, not toward earth. The Lord created us for himself and for a beautiful heaven. So let's be courageous!

Let's ask the Blessed Mother for the grace to always keep our thoughts fixed on heaven. Yes, we must attend to earthly things because this is our duty, but we shouldn't attach our hearts to them! As St. Paul says: "Do things or use things as if not making use of them" (cf. 1 Cor. 7:31). [...] We have left the world, but sometimes we belong neither to the world nor to God. We must belong entirely to God! And one fine day we will reach heaven, where we will be happy for all eternity. Remember that we were created for heaven! (CSAS 46.15)

*Prayer for the Request of Graces (p. 4)*

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory

## TWENTY-FIFTH DAY

# LOVE IS PROGRESSIVE

*If your enemies are hungry, feed them; if they are thirsty,  
give them something to drink, for by doing this,  
you will heap burning coals on their heads (Rom. 12:20).*

*From the words and writings of Sr. Thecla Merlo*

The more we nurture small resentments in our heart, the harder it is to correct them; the more we feed them, the more they take root. On the other hand, if we have a problem with a sister, if she has made us feel unhappy, let us humble ourselves, even going so far as to ask her to forgive us because we were the reason she stumbled. Thus, little by little, virtue becomes easier. Let's be very clear about this: do we want to acquire humility, do we want to acquire love, do we want to acquire some other virtue? Then we must exercise it because otherwise we will never acquire it, and it is exercised whenever there is an opportunity to put it into practice. If everything went smoothly, if we never had to struggle with a virtue, then how would we exercise it? (CSAS 59.6)

The past is now in the past; what's done is done. If we did something well, it awaits us at the gate of heaven; if we did something wrong, then let us ask God for forgiveness and try to do some penance. All we have is the present moment—this moment (CSAS 81.4).

*Prayer for the Request of Graces (p. 4)*

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory

## LOVE IS PROGRESSIVE

*Love is patient; love is kind.  
It is not envious  
or boastful or conceited (1 Cor. 13:4).*

*From the words and writings of Sr. Thecla Merlo*

Let us hold a “goodness crusade” in our families: a contest to see who can be better, more understanding, more charitable, more patient. Then, through our example, and also through our words and the press, let us preach the “goodness crusade” to others. In this way, we will help to guide people toward their Christian duties (VPC 130).

St. Paul says: “Imitate me.” I would say to imitate him in love, indeed in the nuances of love. But to imitate him in the nuances, one must imitate him above all in the most important things. Do you know what the nuances of love are? To be gentle with one another, to respond with courtesy, to treat each other well, [...] to be kind to everyone. [...]

What kind of love did St. Paul practice? He made himself all things to all people with great generosity. He was good-hearted with everyone, treating them well and responding to them well. [...] Never criticize, never! Because do you know what love asks of us? It asks us to respect even the sensitivities of others (CSAS 6,1-4).

*Prayer for the Request of Graces (p. 4)*  
Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory

## LOVE IS ETERNAL

*No one can serve two masters: a slave will either hate the first and love the other, or be devoted to the first and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth (Mt. 6:24).*

*From the words and writings of Sr. Thecla Merlo*

We need to put to death our self-love, to try to remain attached to God, to do penance, to practice self-sacrifice in order to acquire virtue and get along with everyone. [...] When we see that we are not content, that we don’t get along with this or that person, that we are not happy in this or that house, let us ask ourselves: but where does this come from? Deep down we discover that it’s our self-love that wants to be satisfied.

But our heart is too big to be satisfied with things that end. Only God can fill it. So let us cling tightly to God. If we do this, then we will always be content in any place, with any person, in any office (CSAS 110.3).

*Prayer for the Request of Graces (p. 4)*  
Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory

## LOVE IS ETERNAL

*Our citizenship is in heaven.  
It is from there that we are expecting a Savior,  
the Lord Jesus Christ (Phil. 3:20).*

*From the words and writings of Sr. Thecla Merlo*

Let us try to cement unity among ourselves by means of love. Is it better to overlook something? Then let's do it. In life we must learn to overlook many things, because one day everything will end, including us. Let's strive to be compassionate toward one another and help one another with the thought of heaven. What are we here for in the religious life? To do what we like? No. We are here to serve the Lord, to work for souls; indeed, we want to teach souls. How did Jesus behave? First he acted, then he taught. Do we want to teach others about love? If so, then let's be the first to put it into practice (CSAS 48.4).

Let's try to foster and cement love: a love that is patient—the kind of love described on those posters hanging on our walls. [...] Let's try very hard to belong entirely to God and never say anything that might offend our neighbor. Let's behave well! We need to obtain the grace that love will reign in the world (CSAS 48.6).

*Prayer for the Request of Graces (p. 4)*  
Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory

## LOVE IS PROGRESSIVE

*Make your own the mind  
of Christ Jesus (Phil. 2:5).*

*From the words and writings of Sr. Thecla Merlo*

The Lord says: "Where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them" (Mt. 18:20). But if those two or three are bickering, the Lord runs away. Let's not drive the Lord away! We want to behave in such a way that he feels at home among us, that he helps and enlightens us. Let us imitate his gentleness, humility and understanding (CSAS 18.12).

Let us read the Gospel and learn from the example of Jesus. We spread the Gospel, but first and foremost we must practice it. If we do this, it will benefit the people to whom we give it. [...] Let us learn from Jesus how to put the Gospel into practice. When we read it, we should ask ourselves, "Am I following the example of the Divine Master?" [...] Let us remember that Jesus not only offers us his example but also gives us the grace to imitate him (CSAS 18.14).

*Prayer for the Request of Graces (p. 4)*  
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## LOVE IS PROGRESSIVE

*Love does not insist on its own way;  
it is not irritable or resentful (1 Cor. 13:5).*

*From the words and writings of Sr. Thecla Merlo*

We are daughters of the Apostle of Love. Who has ever spoken as well about love as St. Paul? He is our father! We should take holy pride in him. [...] Let us strive to put the finer points of love into practice. [...] Be happy and try to reach the heights of mutual love. You are already doing this to a notable degree with our sick sisters. Now you must also practice this exquisite charity among yourselves. If we notice a flaw in a sister, let us pray for her, asking the Lord when we receive communion in the morning to enable her to correct herself (CSAS 59.7, 9).

*Prayer for the Request of Graces (p. 4)*

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory

## LOVE IS ETERNAL

*“Truly I tell you, what you did not do for one  
of these least ones, you did not do for me.” And those  
[who failed to serve God in others]  
will go off to eternal punishment,  
but the righteous to eternal life (Mt. 25:45-46).*

*From the words and writings of Sr. Thecla Merlo*

Our Constitutions have no less than a whole chapter on love (articles 170-175): by this we can see that this virtue is indeed very difficult and important. It is important because at the judgment we will be examined on love. When there are jealousies or rivalries, when we do not willingly accept a transfer to a particular house because of a sister who there, let me ask you: is love being observed well? Do we love our sisters? The Lord says, “Love your neighbor as yourself” (Mt. 19:19).

And who is our neighbor? It is easy to get along with someone in Japan or America, but it is harder to do this with those who are nearby, who touch us, push us, clash with us. Do we want to be saved? Then our first duty is love. Our mission is to spread the Gospel, but first of all we must love our neighbor: “If you don’t love the neighbor you see, don’t say you love the God you can’t see” (cf. 1 Jn. 4:20) (CSAS 98.1).

*Prayer for the Request of Graces (p. 4)*

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory

## LOVE IS PRAYERFUL

*If you then, who are wicked, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good things to those who ask him! (Mt. 7:11).*

*From the words and writings of Sr. Thecla Merlo*

I carry all of you in my heart: every day I entrust you to the Lord and place you under Our Lady's mantle. She, who is our first and great Teacher, our Mother and Queen, knows how to respond to the needs of her daughters and satisfy them. Let us not be afraid: we are in good hands! Let us be sincerely good. If we never offend the Lord, we will not lack his help (VPC 112).

All problems can be solved by prayer and mortification, and by using a little love with others. Let us remember that if we do not love our neighbor, then we don't love God either. We must live in great unity and love among ourselves. As Daughters of St. Paul, we must imitate our father: we must be strong women. Let us make a little progress! Even when it comes to health, eight times out of ten we are well when we want to be well (CSAS 98.8).

*Prayer for the Request of Graces (p. 4)*

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory

## LOVE IS PROGRESSIVE

*Forgetting what lies behind me and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward my goal to win the heavenly prize to which God has called me in Christ Jesus (Phil. 3:13-14).*

*From the words and writings of Sr. Thecla Merlo*

Our beloved Congregation must develop. [...] Let us try harder to put our selfishness to death and to fill ourselves with God. Let's take a step forward every day: each one should try to make some personal progress in what she does. In this way, the whole Congregation will make progress (VPC 88).

First of all, let us always be united to God and grow in love for him. Through prayer, the apostolate and sacrifice, let us do good to everyone, spending all our energies for them, like our father St. Paul. This should be our "specialization." Does it appeal to you? Do you agree that we should try to reach this point? Then let's move ahead, trusting in God. By myself I can do nothing, but with God I can do all things! (VPC 274)

If we truly love ourselves, then let's try to progress in virtue, in perfection, in holiness. May the Lord pour out many graces on all of us; may he help us understand things well, so that we can set out and proceed at a rapid pace—indeed, at a run! (CSAS 50.11)

*Prayer for the Request of Graces (p. 4)*

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory

## LOVE IS FORGIVING

*Forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive everyone in debt to us.*

*And do not put us to the test (Lk. 11:4).*

*From the words and writings of Sr. Thecla Merlo*

The Lord came into the world to save us; woe to us if he were to treat us the way we sometimes treat others—if he were to look only at our faults, our sins, our failings! Instead, he forgives and forgets; he no longer remembers our shortcomings. So why do we insist on remembering the little things our sisters did to us? [...] If we cannot take a negative comment in stride, where is our virtue? Who do we think we are? (CSAS 61.5)

What has the Lord, our Master, taught us? How did he behave? Let us meditate on this one thing: he was on the cross, nailed there by his executioners. They had put a crown of thorns on him and had insulted him, the Innocent One. And what did Jesus say? Did he curse them? No. He said: “Father, forgive them for they do not know what they are doing” (Lk. 23:34). If we want to be forgiven, then let us forgive (CSAS 50.3).

*Prayer for the Request of Graces (p. 4)*

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory

## LOVE IS PRAYERFUL

*I pray not only for them,  
but also for those who will believe in me  
through their word (Jn. 17:20).*

*From the words and writings of Sr. Thecla Merlo*

Let's be big-hearted. Let's entrust to the Lord everyone in the world: all sinners, all unbelievers....

Let's not be dried-up people who think only about praying for themselves. Yes, all right, we must pray for ourselves, but then we must have a big heart that includes everyone. The Lord, who sees our intentions, will be as generous with us as we are with others. So let's be brave and go forward under the protection of the Blessed Mother, offering all the minutes of this year to God (CSAS 29.8).

May we all reach our destination and may no one be lost. May no one be lost! This should be our continual prayer. When the Judge takes the roll call, may all the Daughters of St. Paul be present in St. Paul's dwelling in heaven, in order to occupy the beautiful place the Lord has prepared for each one of us. So let's pray for one another. My hope is that we will not only reach heaven, but that we will also attain great holiness—the holiness the Lord destined us for when he created us (CSAS 96.16).

*Prayer for the Request of Graces (p. 4)*

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory

## TENTH DAY

### LOVE IS PRAYERFUL

*I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to join me in earnest prayer to God on my behalf (Rom. 15:30).*

*From the words and writings of Sr. Thecla Merlo*

Let us pray unceasingly for all our needs and for the needs of everyone, for those who suffer.... Let us have hearts as big as the heart of Jesus (VPC 64).

Prayer should be more abundant when the apostolate is more demanding and communication with seculars is more frequent and dangerous. Let us never neglect prayer, especially the Visit and meditation. The more we have to do, the more we should pray. [...] Let us have confidence, let us never be discouraged.

Even if we sometimes see sisters who always seem to be at the same point, let us trust God, trust our Queen, trust the Divine Master, and beg St. Paul to help us. If we remain firmly attached to the Lord, if we nourish our interior life, then we will always have the graces we need for ourselves and for those entrusted to us (CSAS 96.15).

*Prayer for the Request of Graces (p. 4)*

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory

## NINETEENTH DAY

### LOVE IS FORGIVING

*"Lord, if a brother or sister sins against me, how often should I forgive that person? As many as seven times?" Jesus answered: "Not seven times, but seventy-seven times" (Mt. 18:21-22).*

*From the words and writings of Sr. Thecla Merlo*

We all need forgiveness! We must first forgive one another so that the Lord, in turn, will forgive us. We say this every day in the *Our Father*: "Forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive everyone in debt to us" (Mt. 6:12). If we do not forgive our sisters, if we look at them negatively, if we harbor suspicion, envy or jealousy toward them, we cause the Lord to turn away from us. That's right! The Lord is compassionate toward us to the degree that we are compassionate toward our sisters. This is the measure! Do we want to be forgiven unconditionally? Then we too must forgive unconditionally (CSAS 128.2).

We all need forgiveness from the Lord because we all are naughty at times. If we forgive others, the Lord forgives us. We say this every day in the *Our Father*, but sometimes we let a little bit of dislike grow in our hearts, which does not please the Lord (CSAS 71.2).

*Prayer for the Request of Graces (p. 4)*

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory

## EIGHTEENTH DAY

### LOVE IS PATIENT

*The testing of your faith produces endurance.  
Let endurance have its full effect, so that you  
may be mature and complete, lacking in nothing (Jas. 1:4).*

*From the words and writings of Sr. Thecla Merlo*

We must first of all have patience with one another and then know how to sympathize with each other. In families, especially in religious families, the virtue that we need to always keep within hand's reach is precisely that of patience. Patience is also fortitude; it is a daughter of charity and a granddaughter of humility (CSAS 18.4).

Let us ask the Lord for patience. Patience is also fortitude, and fortitude is a gift of the Holy Spirit (CSAS 114.14).

In all our houses, the characteristics of love are displayed on the walls. But what good is it to have them stuck on a wall? We must not only read them and learn them by heart; we must internalize and practice them. "Love is patient." When we make the examination of conscience, we should ask ourselves: Am I patient? "Love bears all things." Do I know how to do this? (CSAS 59.5)

*Prayer for the Request of Graces (p. 4)*

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory

## ELEVENTH DAY

### LOVE IS UNSELFISH

*The love of Christ urges us on because we are convinced  
that one has died for all; therefore all have died.  
And he died for all, so that those who live might live  
no longer for themselves, but for him who died  
and was raised for them (2 Cor. 5:14-15).*

*From the words and writings of Sr. Thecla Merlo*

We need to get used to forgetting more about ourselves and our own interests. How often we are worried about our own affairs, which are very minor! We try to avoid sorrows and sufferings. Our thoughts revolve around ourselves—our little cuts and bruises and satisfactions—and we forget about the important things. I'm not saying we always do this, but sometimes we're very selfish: we create a small, private world for ourselves and woe to anyone who touches it! Instead, let us strive to have a big mind, a big heart. Let us think of the whole world, of the countless souls waiting for the light of the Gospel and who are perhaps being lost.

If we can't reach them ourselves, we can at least offer our small sufferings for them. Let's forget about ourselves more and remember all the souls who are in great pain. Many things cannot be understood if they are not seen. We must feel responsible for the people of good will who do not yet know the Lord and are waiting for the light of the Gospel (CSAS 12.1).

*Prayer for the Request of Graces (p. 4)*

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory

## TWELFTH DAY

### LOVE IS UNSELFISH

*Love bears all things,  
believes of all things, hopes all things,  
endures all things (1 Cor. 13:7).*

*From the words and writings of Sr. Thecla Merlo*

Families always need members that function like oil. Do you know what oil does? This: when you want to preserve a sauce, put some oil in the bottle, so that no air gets in. When someone who carries out the work of oil sees a person who is not doing well or who is a little agitated, he/she tries to step into the breach, to excuse the person. These people are a big help in a community; they carry out a service that benefits everyone (CSAS 18.8).

Never misjudge others because we don't know how a person stands in the sight of the Lord. Sometimes an action might seem wrong, but from the standpoint of God it could be meritorious. This can happen, you know. So let's never think badly about our sisters or judge them. Instead, let's get into the habit of always judging others positively because this benefits us too: if we don't judge others, the Lord will not judge us (cf. Mt. 7:1) (CSAS 18:7).

*Prayer for the Request of Graces (p. 4)*  
Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory

## SEVENTEENTH DAY

### LOVE IS PATIENT

*You hypocrite! First take the log out of your own eye,  
and then you will see clearly to take the speck out  
of your neighbor's eye (Mt. 7:5).*

*From the words and writings of Sr. Thecla Merlo*

If this is true for all Christians, it is even more true for religious. We should willingly accept from God's hands the many adversities, crosses and opportunities for self-sacrifice that we encounter. We should try to get along with one another, love one another, bear with one another, sympathize with one another. Even if someone says something to me that I don't like, I should accept it out of love for God. [...] We have to live together, so let's try to have patience, to bear with each other for the love of Jesus. [...] Every day and every moment there are things to bear, even if it's only the fact that we are stretched to the breaking point, yet at the same time we don't have enough sisters. In every house, in every department, we hear these complaints. But we can't behave like people in fairy tales where, at the touch of a magic wand a beautiful house appears, and at another touch people come out of it. Let us learn how to be adaptable, how to be unselfish, because many times we are self-centered: when it comes to me, everything is right and good; it is up to the others to adapt to me! (CSAS 44.3, 4)

*Prayer for the Request of Graces (p. 4)*  
Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory

## SIXTEENTH DAY

### LOVE IS PATIENT

*Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, heartfelt compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience, bearing with one another and forgiving one another, if one has a grievance against another; as the Lord has forgiven you, so must you also do (Col. 3:12-13).*

*From the words and writings of Sr. Thecla Merlo*

In a family, it is helpful to practice the small virtues of charity, patience, silence [...]. Those who are faithful in small things will have the strength to remain steadfast when greater virtue is required (VPC 162).

We must bear with each other and not believe that it is only the others who should bear with us: I bear with you and you bear with me. In community life, it is especially necessary to remember to do good to our sisters in the faith, that is, to help them, to be compassionate toward them. [...] Always speak positively. If we think well of everyone, love everyone, then good words—words of support and encouragement—will follow. What do we want to take root among us? The union of love, mutual charity, all of us pulling together in the same direction (CSAS 37.3, 4).

*Prayer for the Request of Graces (p. 4)*

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory

## THIRTEENTH DAY

### LOVE IS UNSELFISH

*My children, for whom I am in labor again until Christ is formed in you.... (Gal. 4:19).*

*From the words and writings of Sr. Thecla Merlo*

Another very important thing is that we must love souls. Primo Maestro said it too—love souls! We must feel the weight of the countless people who are being lost precisely because of the means we have in our hands—the press, cinema, radio, television—all means intended to do good! So many souls are being lost! Primo Maestro said: “Think of the millions of people who are reading and watching immoral things! At night, while we are sleeping, powerful presses churn out millions and millions of flyers against religion and against morals.” It is the devil at work to make people lose their souls. We must love these people, carry them in our hearts, and throw ourselves into the apostolate in order to do good to them. [...] Feel a torment for souls—all the souls we must reach and help to save! If we keep this in mind, we will pray more ardently. Let us help our sisters to pray and unite themselves to the Lord (CSAS 120.3, 7).

*Prayer for the Request of Graces (p. 4)*

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory

## FOURTEENTH DAY

### LOVE IS UNSELFISH

*We urge you, beloved, to admonish idlers, encourage the faint-hearted, help the weak, be patient with everyone.... (1 Thes. 5:14).*

*From the words and writings of Sr. Thecla Merlo*

May we always be more united to the Lord and among ourselves, lovingly helping one another to correct our faults. If we do this, we will move ahead well (CSAS 18.16).

I would like to say this: try to be sisterly. Do you know what that means? For example, we might see someone make a mistake and do something wrong. If so, we should correct her, but not in front of everyone. Do as the Gospel says: "If someone does something wrong, go and point out the fault when the two of you are alone. If the offender does not listen to you or to the urgings of others, then denounce that person" (cf. Mt. 18:15-16) (CSAS 18.5).

The spirit of the world enters religious houses too, and the devil, who is cunning, knows what he must do to ruin sisterly love and prevent the members from doing good to souls. To do this, he encourages selfishness. When there are three or four children in a family and one of them does well, is promoted, gets good grades and a degree, then all the members of the family rejoice. We must do the same thing, namely: rejoice when anyone in our family does well (CSAS 98.2).

*Prayer for the Request of Graces (p. 4)*

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory

## FIFTEENTH DAY

### LOVE IS PATIENT

*I urge you to live in a manner worthy of the call you have received, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love (Eph. 4:1-2).*

*From the words and writings of Sr. Thecla Merlo*

The Lord has given us a beautiful vocation, so let us behave in a manner worthy of it. We should fulfill our duties well: those of prayer, study and the apostolate; those regarding observance of the vows of obedience, poverty, chastity [...] This requires a lot of patience, right? Patience with ourselves, with things, with others. [...] Patience in living, and patience in dying. Always patience. [...]

We don't realize how much of a burden we are to others; instead, we believe that *others* are boring and burdensome, and we have to put up with them [...] We are burdens for each other because we all have our flaws. Every minute there is something to bear: here a word, there something else. We clash with one another, especially in community life. But if we put a little love of God in the midst of these clashes, their impact is less. If we mix in a little patience, a little gentleness, then the clashes cease (CSAS 2.4-5).

*Prayer for the Request of Graces (p. 4)*

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory