

# LOVE IS FRUITFUL

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Mother of God Prayer Meeting  
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## Fruitfulness or Productivity?

Today is the first day of the liturgical year. From time to time, we need to step back and review who we are, what is our purpose as a body. Where does our success lie as a community?

Our modern Western mentality is so oriented to productivity. Efficiency, achievement, results are what counts. How much time do you put in? How many programs do we have? How many people come? What's the result? What's the bottom line? We need a deep change of attitude or else we risk getting derailed from God's purposes.

- Productivity is visible, tangible, measurable. Fruitfulness is hidden, like leaven in dough - it may take a while to appear.
- Productivity occurs in a factory. Fruitfulness occurs in a garden, or in a family. What is our model? Productivity is reassembling what already exists; fruitfulness is something more coming into being.
- Productivity you can do on your own - we value rugged individualism, autonomy, self-sufficiency. Fruitfulness is a work of God. It also needs the cooperation of others. It comes through nuptial union.
- Productivity can be alienating. Fruitfulness is healing, because there is no longer a disconnect between who I am and what I do - they are integrated.

Living a fruitful life is tough and demanding. It is very countercultural. It takes courage and prayer. E.g.: you have a long list of things to do, and someone comes to you needing to talk, or needing a smile.

If we are focused on fruitfulness, we see that the highest priority for God is LOVE. "We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren" ([1 Jn 3:14](#)). "Beloved, let us love one another; for love is of God, and he who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God; for God is love" ([1 Jn 4: 7-8](#)). This is the gauge of our fulfilling our calling as a community; everything stands or falls on it. **Love is fruitful.**

It is *not* that practical things such as our ministries and services are unimportant, but they are of secondary importance. "Success is not one of the names of God" (M. Buber). Services to the body are important, but as an expression of love. *Our love for one another* is what counts. But we shouldn't give up on service because it's less important! It would be like a lover saying, I won't hug or kiss my beloved because that's much less important than the feeling within my heart. On the other hand, to serve out of resigned duty without love would be like a lover saying, I'll hug and kiss because I'm supposed to, mechanically. The exterior is perfected as it becomes a real expression of the interior. It takes practice and wisdom to find the balance.

If we try to multiply our activities and programs while neglecting love, we will experience a lot of futility. If we give ourselves completely in passionate love for God and one another,

he will pour out the water of his Spirit and the desert will bloom; we will experience a mysterious fruitfulness.

### **A Portrait of Love - [1 Cor 13](#)**

Love is:

- patient and kind - able to put up with the faults of others, treat them with respect and gentleness, because Christ is transforming them in his own time, as he is me.
- not jealous or boastful - is glad about what others have, has no need to promote self, is empty of self.
- not arrogant or rude - rudeness comes from not respecting another; love has great reverence because it sees the other as God sees - completely different from what is visible externally. God sees the unspeakable beauty of the inner man, being transformed by divine life.
- does not insist on its own way - does not say, I want to be treated this way, I want to be loved this way, I demand that it be done this way. Love clings to no "rights."
- is not irritable or resentful - does not count injuries but forgets them; has deep compassion for the other person.
- does not rejoice at the wrong, but rejoices at the right - has no secret pleasure in seeing someone "get what he deserves"; is thrilled to see others built up.
- bears all - never says, "I'll go this far and no farther"; does not cut off a relationship because someone mistreated me.
- believes all - gives others the benefit of the doubt, upholds them in thought and word.
- hopes all - never gives up hope in Christ's sanctifying power at work in someone.
- endures all - we are called to love with **no limits** - an active love, not satisfied with merely coexisting; not just "no hard feelings, but see ya."

Love means consenting to hang on the cross with Christ. St. Ignatius: "My love has been crucified." Double meaning: his love is his old way of loving, his love is Jesus.

### **Mother of God Community is meant to be a school of love**

We are not born knowing how to do this. Most of us grew up learning all kinds of patterns opposed to this. It is not possible humanly. But it is possible, God can do it in us if we let him. Our vocation is to "be love in the heart of the Church" (St. Thérèse). People will sense the fragrance of Christ and be drawn to it.

God has given us precious and powerful tools for loving one another beyond what is humanly possible: baptism in the Spirit, the blood and the cross of Jesus, revelation through prayer and scripture, praise and thanksgiving.

This is why we are called "Mother of God" - to say yes to love, yes to the Holy Spirit, as Mary did, and therefore to allow God to bear fruit in us, to bring forth Christ in the world. "Mary opens up countless possibilities of saying yes for all who come after her" (von Balthasar). Through our yes to God, we too open countless possibilities of fruitfulness through the Holy Spirit.

There need be no broken relationships in MOG. There need be no sour or stalled relationships, or mere "coexisting." We can start anew by the unlimited power of God's

grace in us. We did not choose each other, but God chose to put us with each other, because he has a beautiful purpose in teaching us to love.

### **How is it possible?**

By knowing God's love for us. This is the only way. If anyone has a right to be disappointed in us, or fed up, or to give up, it's God - yet he never is, and he never does. We can begin to love like him if we're experiencing his love.

[1 Cor 3](#):1-4 - "While there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not of the flesh, and behaving like mere men?" The disunity among the Corinthians was a sign that they were not "receiving the gifts of the Spirit of God," i.e., assimilating the immensity of God's love through the Holy Spirit.

The grace of baptism in the Spirit is a contemplative grace. We are called to be "charismatics," to enter into deep intimacy with God.

"Love one another with brotherly affection; outdo one another in showing honor" ([Rom 12](#):10). E.g. the l'Arche homes for the mentally disabled - love fills the air, Christ is present. We are no less broken than they, only our brokenness is less visible. Love and joy can fill the air.

Let's take this Advent to prepare for a new coming of Jesus into our lives and into Mother of God Community, by imitating Mary in a radical way, by allowing the Holy Spirit make us fruitful.

### **Questions for Prayer, Study and Small Group Discussion**

1. In what ways can your family or home become more oriented to fruitfulness rather than productivity?
2. Read [1 Cor 13](#). Which lines is the Holy Spirit particularly impressing on you or convicting you of? Do you see ways that God wants to change you, and do you believe it's possible?
3. Read [Luke 1](#):26-38. How can you be like Mary in allowing the Holy Spirit to bring forth Christ in you, and through you into the world?
4. Read [1 Cor 2](#):6-3:4. What does it mean to receive the gifts of the Spirit of God (v. 12-14)? How does receiving those gifts lead to love and unity in the body of Christ?
5. Practice being a "charismatic" this Advent; seek intimacy with God in prayer and perseveringly ask him to break into your life with a new fruitfulness. Do you see ways that God is increasing your thirst for him?