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**An Exploration of Palau's Dedication to Mary as a Model of Perfect
Discipleship for Carmelite Missionaries in Kenya**

SUPERVISOR

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**A Reflection Paper Submitted In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Certificate Program**

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STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that this reflection paper is my original work achieved through my personal reading, research on other related writings and reflection. It is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for certificate in Religious Formation and Spirituality. It has never been submitted to any other college or university for academic credit. All sources have been cited in full and acknowledged.

Signed.....

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This Reflection Paper has been submitted for examination with my approval as the college supervisor

Signed

Name of Supervisor: Sr. Mary Gitau, IBVM

Date.....

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to all the lovers and devotees of the Blessed Virgin Mary, “Our Lady of Mt. Carmel.” In a special way, to all the daughters of Blessed Francisco Palau who have been called by God to enrich the Congregational Charism left by their Founder; and through whose profession of the Evangelical Counsels adds to the holiness of the Church.

EPIGRAPH

In order that the pure and ever young virgin might be known by the pilgrim on earth, God in his wise providence created a perfect type to represent the purity, virginity and maternity, fecundity and beauty. And so it was fitting that woman should be virgin, immaculate, always pure and mother, and in both the moral and in the physical order should possess all gifts, all the graces and all the perfection possible in pure creature. That is what the Virgin Mary, Mother of God was and is: she is a clear mirror in which the holy Church can be seen. And as we go to the Father through Christ, so through Mary our heart raises its flames of love towards its beloved object (MRel. 11. 21).

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My prayer is that the Lord may bless and reward each and every one more abundantly. May Our Lady Queen and Beauty of Mt. Carmel obtain for each one the graces to be fulfilled and faithful in their vocation, and fruitful in their ministries as authentic disciples of her Son, Jesus Christ.

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ABBREVIATIONS

1Jn.	First Letter of Saint John
Acts	Acts of the Apostles
CCC	Catechism of the Catholic Church
Cf.	Confer
CM	Carmelite Missionaries
Col.	Colossians
Cor.	Corinthians
DE	The Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, “ <i>De Ecclesia</i> ” on <i>Dogmatic Constitution on the Church</i> , 56
Ed.	Edited by
Eph.	Ephesians
Heb.	Hebrew
Jn.	John
Jr.	Jeremiah
Kgs	Kings
LG	Lumen Gentium
Lk.	Luke
Mk.	Mark
MRel.	Francisco Palau Writings, My Relations with the Church
Matt.	Matthew
Mt.	Mount
OCD	Order of Carmelite Discalced
Philip.	Philippians
Ps.	Psalm
Rev.	Revelations
Rm.	Romans
Thes.	Thessalonians
Trans.	Translated by
Vat. II	Vatican Two

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

This research paper is a partial fulfillment of the requirement for a certificate in Spirituality in the Institute of Spirituality and Religious Formation, Tangaza University College, Nairobi, Kenya. The researcher explores Palau's dedication to Mary as a Model of Perfect Discipleship for the Carmelite Missionaries in Kenya. The study is divided into three chapters. The first chapter focuses on the model of authentic discipleship. In the second chapter, the paper presents some of the challenges facing discipleship. The last chapter presents suggestions regarding some of the means to resolve the challenges facing discipleship.

Background of the Study

As Consecrated persons, we commit our lives to Jesus who has called us in loving response to His divine call. In the New Testament, Jesus began his call along the Sea of Galilee. He first called Simon and Andrew whom He told 'follow me.' He continued His invitation to many others whom He titled disciples. They followed Him, stayed with Him and He sent them for mission. The Carmelite Missionaries are also called to be with Him and to be sent. To be called is to feel that someone is interested in you. Jesus is interested in us for a purpose.¹

The Blessed Virgin Mary received the same call from God and she responded; "I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be done to me according to your will." (Lk.1: 38) From the time she said 'Yes' Jesus took flesh in her womb and she remained with Jesus during His mission on earth up to His death on a cross. As a faithful disciple she adhered to the instruction of Jesus to remain in Jerusalem until the coming of the Holy Spirit. No one on earth has been with Jesus as Mary did. She understands Jesus more than every other person/disciple. Throughout His ministry, Mary was present as a disciple. She learnt from her son and could teach others to follow Him. She believed and helped others to believe in Him as she did in the wedding at Cana (cf. Jn. 2:5).

The Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches us that what we believe about Mary is based on what we believe about Christ (cf. CCC 487). To know Mary is to know Jesus. Mary lived her vocation faithfully in total dedication to God. Mary is in better position to direct all who are called to be disciples. All those she directs never lose focus and all those she leads do not go astray. The researcher having read the writings of Blessed Francisco Palau, was

¹ Cf. O. GUIDO, *The Gift of Religious life*, 2002.

motivated to explore how his dedication to Mary helped him in living his discipleship as he encourages his daughters to see Mary as “the perfect type of the Church”² and “the mirror through which the Church could be seen.”³

The call of discipleship has its own challenges and Jesus made it clear that anyone who wants to follow Him should pick up his/her cross daily and follow Him (cf. Lk.14: 27). Embracing the cross has become a great challenge for living authentic discipleship today. Just as smart phones, disciples are tempted to look for smart/immediate solutions to every problem. Giving quality time in prayer, listening to God and discerning His will seems to be a delay. Some disciples are more engrossed in the mission and wearied in returning to the Lord for renewal. The emptiness within leave some disciples broken through which they keep breaking one another. As present disciples faced with various challenges, Mary is the best model to imitate so as to live this call faithfully as she did.

Purpose and Aim

Discipleship is a call and life commitment to follow Christ intimately in total adherence to the Holy Spirit. As Consecrated persons, we have freely responded to this divine call which depends on grace. The precious gift of divine grace given to the disciples helps them bind themselves in God alone more easily with an undivided heart.⁴ The Blessed Virgin Mary is an example of one who received this grace. Filled with the grace of God, she said ‘Yes’ to God and lived her call perfectly.

This study aims at exploring Palau’s dedication to Mary as a model of authentic discipleship for the Carmelite Missionaries in Kenya. The purpose is to help the researcher live as a true disciple of Christ, following the example of Mary as model of authentic disciple. It will also motivate the daughters of Francisco Palau to recall the advice of their Founder in surrendering the keys of their hearts to Mary and imitating her virtues.⁵ This study will bring us closer to her for better understanding and living of our call as authentic disciples. It will help the researcher and those who will benefit from this work, grow in virtues imitating the virtues of Mary. Above all, it will strengthen and help them in time of challenges as Disciples of Christ.

²E. PACHO, *Francisco Palau Writings: My Relations*, 65.

³E. PACHO, *Francisco Palau Writings: My Relations*, 772.

⁴ Synod of Bishops, *to the Consecrated Life*, 48.

⁵ Cf. E. PACHO, *Francisco Palau Writings: My Relations*, 539.

Problem Statement

The researcher in her experience had seen some Carmelite Missionary disciples who joyfully proclaimed their “Yes” to Jesus as they made their religious vows. They promised just as the apostle Peter did, to follow the Lord even if it demands their life (cf. Mk. 14: 27-31) but in time of difficulty they find it difficult to recall their promises and vows, thus tend to forget their “first love” for God (cf. Rev. 2: 4). Some disciples moved with the zealous zeal like Elijah’s (cf. 1kgs. 19:10) have been engrossed in the mission of the Lord and in service of others without taking time off for renewal. When it results in burnout and demoralization, the person can end up in depression. The primary goal for discipleship, which is “being” with the Lord, is turning into secondary goal and this affects disciples personally and as a whole.

The researcher’s interest in this study is based on the above experience. Being interested in the life of Palau as a faithful servant of God, she was moved to explore how Palau’s dedication to Mary helped him to balance his religious commitment. The researcher wishes to explore how Palau balanced his life in living as an authentic disciple, persevering to the end. She wishes to explore Palau’s call as a disciple and the legacy that he has left us, of seeing Mary as the perfect type of the Church.

Study Objectives

The followings are the objectives for this research:

- ❖ To explore Blessed Francisco Palau’s Life of dedication to Mary as a perfect disciple.
- ❖ To find out challenges facing discipleship in the contemporary context of the Carmelite Missionaries.
- ❖ To find out some values that could help Carmelite Missionaries live their discipleship following the example of Blessed Francisco Palau in his imitation of Mary as a perfect disciple.

Justification of the Study

Carmelite Missionaries as a Congregation founded by Blessed Francisco Palau always look at Mary as a perfect type of the Church. According to Francisco Palau, she is the mirror through which the Church could be seen.⁶Christ is head of the body, the Church. It is necessary that the Carmelite Missionaries will keep this ‘mirror’ always before them so as to look, imitate and live their discipleship perfectly as she had lived. This study will encourage the Sisters to

⁶E. PACHO, *Francisco Palau Writings: My Relations* 772.

keep running the race tirelessly and to be drawn more closely to Jesus in their daily life. Also in their journey of discipleship, to keep consolidating their inheritance of modeling on Mary as Francisco Palau did.

Scope and Delimitation

Carmelite Missionaries is a Congregation that is spread in the five continents with various communities in different countries but this study will be limited only to the context of the Carmelite Missionaries in Kenya.

Difficulties and How to Overcome Them

In order to carry out this research, the researcher has to explore many documents that have dealt on this topic or in line with the topic so as to grasp other people's view based on this work. The use of internet sources will also be adopted so as to get reasonable result which could benefit the readers of this work.

Research Questions

- ❖ In which ways did Blessed Francisco Palau's dedication to Mary helped him in living as an authentic disciple?
- ❖ What are the challenges facing discipleship in the context of the Carmelite Missionaries?
- ❖ What are the possible values which could help Carmelite Missionaries in living their discipleship as Mary did?

Methodology

For the enrichment of this research, it will be carried out through Internet sources, Catholic documents, Congregational documents, the Bible and other materials which others have written about this topic. It will also make use of personal experience lived as a disciple of Christ in the Congregation of the Carmelite Missionaries.

CHAPTER ONE

MODEL OF AUTHENTIC DISCIPLESHIP

1.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the model of authentic discipleship. In order to understand it better, the chapter will highlight what it means to be a disciple and its cost. It is only in knowing whom we are called to be that we can respond joyfully and give credible service. Each individual craves for best quality since it is the nature of man to seek for something good. It will also present Mary's quality as a model of authentic discipleship. And finally the chapter will give a brief introduction of Blessed Francisco Palau and his images of Mary as an authentic disciple. This chapter will help in reactivating the knowledge on discipleship for those called to be disciples.

1.2 Who is a Disciple?

The Webster Dictionary defines disciple as a follower who accepts and helps to spread the teachings of another. The word "disciple" is translated from a Greek word which means "learner." The designating word 'discipleship' is a verb meaning "to follow" and "to send."⁷ "As He passed by the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting their nets into the sea; they were fishermen. Jesus said to them, 'come after me, and I will make you fishers of men'" (Mk.1:16).

In the Gospel tradition, the disciples are those who witness the works and listened to the words of Jesus and respond to them in a variety of ways. In the Gospel of Mark, His first public act was the selection of the first disciples; Peter and the two sons of Zebedee (cf. Mk. 1: 16 – 20). The next person called was Levi (cf. Mk. 2: 13 – 14) and in the third chapter, the evangelist presents the call and mission of the twelve (cf. Mk. 3: 13- !9). The first two call stories indicate that in Christian discipleship, ordinary people are called and Jesus is the one who takes the initiative of reaching out to them with a very clear command, "*follow me.*" Also the gospel presents the immediate response of those called. They left everything, their ordinary life and adhered to Jesus.⁸

⁷ Cf. W. SZYPULA, "Synoptic Gospel" Class note.

⁸ Cf. W. SZYPULA, "Synoptic Gospel" Class note.

A disciple is the person who receives the gift of being called to follow, experiences a transforming grace, and responds to it freely.⁹ A disciple is one who has heard about the goodness of Jesus and leaves everything to follow Him. John tells about the two disciples who followed Jesus after hearing the testimony of John the Baptist (cf. Jn. 1:35-39). Also, a disciple who experiences the goodness of Jesus is expected to proclaim the good news by bringing others to Christ as Philip did (cf. Jn. 1: 40-42). A disciple is the one who obeys the instruction of the Master. “After hearing the invitation, they left everything and followed Him (cf. Mk. I: 18). This shows the process of idealization and radicalization. The immediate response shows that Christ call uprooted them from their profession and families and gave new direction to their lives. The change of profession is made clear by the explanatory sentence in the narrative of the call of the first four disciples; *and I will make you fishers of men*”¹⁰ It is also good to note that Disciples are *made* through baptism (cf. Matt. 28: 19).

The disciples share in Jesus’ mission. They responded very well to Jesus’ call to repent and believe. They changed the direction of their lives completely and entrusted themselves to Jesus. They were devoted to Jesus, followed Him faithfully and carried out His instructions, went with Him to foreign lands. Disciples are men/women who set out to follow Christ with great liberty and imitate Him more closely. The term disciple is used in the synoptic only to indicate a specific group of people who were with Jesus. It seems to have been directed to a limited group of followers.

Discipleship is the final norm of religious life (cf. Vat II). It is an imitation of the Lord, not in a general ascetical sense but actual reproduction of the type of life lived by Jesus proposed by Him to His disciples. Discipleship is a continuous communion with Christ which should be reflected in all that we do. An inferred meaning according to conciliar documents regards it as an adherence to Jesus and His service.¹¹ The gospel of Mark acknowledges the human condition/limitations of the disciples. In their humanity, they experience the negative emotions of fear and selfishness, giving in to the temptation of pursuit of power, status, authority, self-interest and one’s security. It also reveals the challenges that the ‘would-be’ disciples of Jesus will face in every generation.¹²

⁹M. RUBIN, “*Mary, the Perfect Disciple and Model for Religious Life.*”

¹⁰ M. LOZANO, *Discipleship: Towards Understanding of Religious Life*, 15.

¹¹ Cf. M. LOZANO, *Discipleship: Towards Understanding of Religious Life*, 2.

¹² Cf. W. SZYPULA, “Synoptic Gospel” Class note.

1.3 Qualities of an Authentic Disciple

The scripture gives account of many people that followed Jesus but not all were in support of His teaching. He said; “many are called but few are chosen.” (Matt. 22: 14) Many of His disciples withdrew after the hard teaching of eating His Body and drinking His Blood (cf. Jn. 6: 66). Likewise the attitude of the young rich man whose face fell on hearing the requirement to attain the kingdom of God (cf.Lk.18:18-24). The few that persevered in following Jesus shows that there are possibilities of these requirements of an authentic disciple. On October 19th 2014, Annand Menon shared a Biblical perspective on authentic Christian Discipleship. He began by explaining who, according to the Word of God is a Christian, and the true spirit of the great commission that Jesus left with His Church to make disciples of all nations. He gave five criteria for authentic Christian discipleship as follows.¹³

1.3.1 Love of God and Love of Neighbour as a Mark of Authentic Discipleship

Jesus summarizes the whole commandment in one sentence love of God and of neighbour. Love is the center of our Christianity for it is because of love that Jesus died for us. He commands His followers to do same. “Love one another as I have loved you” (Jn. 13: 34-35). His love is seen in self emptying (kenosis); giving oneself in the service of others. For love is patient, love is kind... it bears all things, believes all things, and endures all things... Love is the greatest of all gifts (cf. 1 Cor. 13: 4-13). Love as Jesus loves, by this all people will know that you are my disciples.

1.3.2 Listening to the Word of God as a Sign of Authentic Discipleship

“Jesus then said to the Jews who believed in him, if you remain in my word, you will truly be my disciples...” (Jn. 8: 31 – 32). Remaining in the word of God by being with Him, listening to Him as Mary did and pondering the word heard. It is making God’s word a home and a place of encounter. An authentic disciple is one who listens to hear the instructions and ever ready to do the will of the master. Listening of a disciple entails silence. It is quieting of the mind and allowing God to speak to one through His creatures, various life experiences and life of the Saints. Listening of a disciple goes hand in hand with obedience (doing what the word has said). All true disciples are characterized as obedient listeners. Hearing the word of God and putting it into practice with complete surrender of oneself (cf. Rm. 1: 5; 10: 14). In baptism, the priest touches the ears of the newly baptized. At the same time, he pronounces the word which Jesus used over a deaf man “Be opened” (cf. Mk. 7: 35) so that the disciple may

¹³ Cf. R. IKPE, “Authentic Discipleship”, Class note.

now listen to Good News, believe it and follow it faithfully. ¹⁴To listen is to be present in mind and body.

1.3.3 Detachment/Renouncement as a Way for Authentic Discipleship

Just as Jesus left His own family in order to form a new community united by the will of God so must his disciples. One must choose between following Jesus and possessions. So in the same way, none of you can be my disciple without giving up all that he owns (cf. Lk.14: 33). An authentic disciple gives up everything including one's life so as to possess Christ. In total detachment, one becomes free to serve God without entanglement. The heart loves only his creator and does all to please Him. It makes one free and light for the mission of Christ. A heart which is attached to other things rather than God is divided. You need to do one thing more. Go and sell what you own and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me (cf. Mk 10:21). "The happy result of detachment is inner freedom, freedom from worry about bodily comfort, honor and wealth."¹⁵

1.3.4 Carrying of Cross as a Means for Authentic Discipleship

Jesus never preached prosperity. In His teachings, He helps His disciples to identify with and embrace the cross/suffering. "Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple" (Lk.14: 27). The commentary of Jerusalem Bible on Col. 1: 25 indicates that Jesus suffered in order to establish the reign of God and anyone who continues in his work must share in His suffering. There is no shortcut in becoming like the Master rather than learning the Master's secret; carrying the cross. Cross is our destiny. Disciples are destined to carry their crosses and follow Jesus. It is inevitable task for all disciples and cannot be separated from the call of discipleship. An authentic disciple understands that cross is not a curse but an inheritance as Christians. It is path of the journey for mortification. Cross purifies the bearer. Every cross is painful but it is not bad, it brings joy. It is an instrument which prepares the disciples for the mission ahead. There is no process to greatness that is sweet, it is always painful.

1.3.5 Bearing Much Fruits as an Effect of Authentic Disciple

Disciples are meant to bear fruits that last. A true leader is testified by the quality of the successors. After following Christ and listening to His teaching, the effect is seen by the

¹⁴ Cf. M. USHA, *A Time for Healing*, 57.

¹⁵ K. KAVANAUGH– O RODRÍGUEZ, Trans. *The Collected Works of St. Theresa of Avila*, 30.

disciples that one brings to Jesus. “By this is my Father glorified, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples” (Jn.15: 8). “So by their fruits you will know them” (Mt 7:20). As disciples, we bear fruit from the gospel we preach and the life we live. Disciples get self satisfaction in the fruit they bore. Just as a teacher rejoices in seeing his/her student grow in wisdom and understanding so do disciple rejoice over the fruit they bore through their mission.

In the book *Rethinking Mission*, the author using Paul as an example in this aspect, refers it as the joy of a missionary. It says that it is the joy of a missionary as he/she sees the churches he/she has planted grow in self-understanding and self respect.¹⁶ In the Gospel of John, Jesus explains that for the disciples to bear fruits, first they should abide in Him for cut off from Him they shall do nothing (cf. Jn. 15: 5). In order to bear fruits, one has to abide in Jesus, dwell in Jesus and be linked to Him. Bearing fruits of a disciple also demands pruning so as to bear much fruit the kind that lasts (cf. Jn. 15: 2). This calls to mind that disciples can be pruned in various forms as it pleases the Master.

1.4 Cost of Discipleship

Have you ever paid a lot for what you wanted and yet you are satisfied with the price? Everything has a price tag; whether an article or service rendered. Every decision we make in life has got its cost. It is always advisable to sit down and make a budget of our needs so as to calculate the cost and see if we have the requirements. Jesus admonishes His followers to do the same as He says “which of you wishing to construct a tower does not first sit down and calculate the cost to see if there is enough for its completion?” (Lk.14:28). “The demands of discipleship is difficult (impossible without divine help) for human being to follow the Lord.”¹⁷

The sayings attributed to the Lord which expresses the stern requirements for becoming and remaining a disciple is found in Lk.14:25-27 “If anyone comes to me without hating his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. All that we forgo in order to embrace Christ is what the economists regard as opportunity cost. Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple.” Being a disciple of Christ has its cost and Jesus makes it clear to all who would like to follow Him by highlighting these points:

¹⁶*Rethinking Mission; Evangelization in Africa in New Era*, 74.

¹⁷M. LOZANO, *Discipleship: Towards Understanding of Religious Life*, 18.

1.4.1 Renunciation of Family and One's Life in Order to Follow Christ

The disciples who followed Jesus had actually left their families behind in order to embark on the adventure of announcing the kingdom with Him. Renunciation entails leaving behind everything that pertains to normal human living. We have renounced our family by the choice to remain celibate and leaving our relatives in order to form a new family united by the will of God. Anyone who embarks on this journey does not need to look back (cf. Lk. 9: 62). Renunciation is made for a higher value.

1.4.2 Carrying of One's Cross Daily so as to Follow Christ

There is no shortcut to greatness. The call of discipleship cannot be separated from the cross because it is on the cross that our salvation came. In its nature, discipleship attracts rejection from the world since it first rejected the Master (Matt. 13: 57). It embraces suffering since the Master is a suffering Messiah. Whoever wants to follow Jesus as His disciple must embrace a style of life that is rootless, since it is itinerant or subject to persecution, just as Jesus' own. Faith in the kingdom which was announced by Jesus calls for fidelity to the point of crucifixion and death.¹⁸ Discipleship demands some discomforts. It may be rejection from the people we evangelize as Jesus says that the world will reject you as it rejected Him.

1.4.3 Following the Footsteps of Jesus, the Master

A disciple must follow in the footsteps of the master. The cross we carry must be after Jesus for He leads the way. When a cross is carried after another person rather than Jesus it becomes too heavy to carry. He says: "carry your cross daily and come after me." An authentic disciple does not count the cost of following Jesus rather he/she, after making the budget, sells everything in purchase of this greater value just as the farmer who discovered a pearl (cf. Matt. 13: 45- 46). It is always a price paid in love and with joy just as the master who paid with our ransom with His blood; a great sacrifice. It demands a discernment to make such decisive decision and count every other thing as lost like St. Paul (cf. Philip. 3: 7- 9). Being an authentic disciple is shedding off the old self and taking up the new life in Christ. It is leaving ones old way of life and putting on the new self (cf. Col.3:9-10). The difference must be clearly seen (cf. 2 Cor. 5: 17). It results in death over sin and the result of Christ, His virtues begins to manifest in our lives.

¹⁸ M. LOZANO, *Discipleship: Towards Understanding of Religious Life*, 12.

1.5 Mary as an Authentic Disciple

Mary is the first disciple who said “Yes” to God. She welcomed the Word of God in her heart and from the moment she accepted the will of God, the Incarnate Word took flesh in her by the power of the Holy Spirit. She is full of grace. Mathew Rubin, in his talk on Mary, the Perfect Disciple and Model for Religious Life cited the following;

“Pope Paul VI exhorted the faithful on 24th April 1970 “if we want to be Christians we have to be Marian that is, we have to recognize the essential, vital and providential rapport that unites the Madonna to Jesus and that opens to us the way that leads to Him.” It is all the more important for us religious to imitate Mary, the virgin who listened, the virgin who responded to the apparently impossible and a virgin who lived a life of contemplation. Mary is the one consecrated by the Spirit. That is she is the model per excellence; the one consecrated by the Spirit. As Pope John Paul II would say that “by virtue of the descent of the Holy Spirit in her, Mary becomes the most holy one, as the traditional liturgy could call her, she is the one fully consecrated to God in the most perfect way.” She is the first tabernacle.”¹⁹

As an authentic disciple, she was with Jesus from conception until death on a cross and even after resurrection. Mary is assumed into heaven body and soul meaning that she is still with her Son, Jesus. She listened to His instructions and obeyed his command to His disciples to remain in Jerusalem until they are clothed with the power from on high (cf. Lk.24: 49, Acts 1: 14). The event of His first miracle in Cana shows that, Mary believed in Jesus and she taught others to do so (cf. Jn. 2: 5). In this occasion, she enlightens others on whom Jesus was through the miracle which made the disciples to believe in Him. Mary is the Christ bearer. In humility, she carried Him and gave birth to Him, whom she brings to others. When she brought Jesus to her cousin Elizabeth, she expressed her joy as she exclaimed “And how does this happen to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For at the moment the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy.” (Lk.2: 43-44)

1.6 Qualities of a Disciple Found in Mary

This section presents a reflection on qualities of a disciple found in Mary. It covers the values we could emulate in Mary who listened to the Word of God. It also discusses Mary’s obedience and her generosity for accepting the will of God. Furthermore, it explores Mary’s practice of charity and love as a manifestation of her commitment as a disciple and her detachment from material things. It also considers Mary’s devotion and her ability to carry the cross till the end.

¹⁹ M. RUBIN, “Mary, the Perfect Disciple and Model for Religious Life.”

1.6.1 Mary Who Listened to the Word of God

Mary's whole life reveals a woman who listened to the voice of God in prayer. In listening she heard God speaking through the Angel Gabriel and she responded positively. She is a model of contemplative silence. Pope John Paul II calls Mary a "Woman of silence, given to listening."²⁰ In different occasions where Mary is mentioned in the Scripture, it reveals that she always pondered the Word of God in her heart. At Annunciation (cf. Lk.1: 29) and after finding the child Jesus in the Temple (cf. Lk.2:51).

1.6.2 Mary Who in Obedience Accepted the Will of God

Mary was ever ready to do the will of God which she heard through listening. In humility, Mary presented herself as the handmaid of the Lord and accepted the will of God for her. The Fathers of the Church considered Mary not as passively made use by God, but as one who co-operated with unconstrained faith and obedience in the salvation of man. As St Irenaeus says: 'In her obedience she became the cause of salvation for herself and for the whole human race.' Many of the Fathers of antiquity joined him with this assertion in their preaching. The knot of Eve's disobedience; had its untying by Mary's obedience.²¹ In obedience she surrendered her own will in exchange for God's will.

1.6.3 Mary Who Practiced Charity/Love

Mary teaches us to live a life of charity by the example she gave in hastening to the house of her cousin, Elizabeth. In this aspect she brought joy in the life of her cousin which was expressed by the baby in her womb (cf. Lk.1: 44). She equally showed concern and was sensitive to the needs of the couple at the wedding in Cana. She saved them from public shame as she alerted her Son at the shortage of wine and through her intercession Jesus performed His first miracle (cf. Jn. 2: 1-11).

1.6.4 Mary Who was Detached from Material Things

Mary was totally detached from material things as well as herself. She emptied herself in order to cling whole heartedly to God alone. This helped in giving up her will to embrace the will of God in her life. Mary's virginity implies total renunciation and detachment. Although, she was the mother of Jesus, she never possessed him for selfish desires. She allowed

²⁰F. STOCKL, *Mary, Model and Mother of Consecrated Life*, 407.

²¹Cf. A. GARLEY, Trans., "*De Ecclesia*" on *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*, 80.56.

others to experience the goodness of Jesus. She was able to understand the words of Jesus in the temple about who are his relatives and his mother because she was open minded. Mary was not attached to Joseph. Even though she loved him as the betrothed, she was free and flexible to embrace the new direction God was opening before her. Being detached from all sorts of possession she was able to render a selfless service and participated effectively in the mystery of our salvation.

1.6.5 Mary Who Patiently Carried Her Cross until the End

The prophecy of Simeon during presentation clearly reveals that Mary also carried her cross as a disciple. “Behold this child is destined for the fall and rise of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be contradicted (and you yourself a sword will pierce) so that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed” (Lk. 2: 34- 35). The flight to Egypt (cf. Matt. 2: 13- 16) was also a painful experience which led to the slaying of the infants in search of Jesus. Mary followed Jesus on His way to Calvary and her inability to help her child was a cross which she carried patiently.

She shared in the mystery of the Cross. “At the foot of the Cross, the Mother stood in keeping with the divine plan (cf. Jn. 19:26), grieving exceedingly with her only Son, uniting herself with a maternal heart to his sacrifice , and lovingly consenting to the immolation of this victim which she herself had brought forth.”²² The apex of the pain she bore was at the foot of the cross, watching all the drama and finally the death of her son. John the beloved disciple, being with Mary persevered until the foot of the cross. Mary still helps all the disciples of Jesus to carry their crosses and she utters words of comfort.

1.7 Who is Blessed Francisco Palau?

Blessed Francisco Palau was an OCD Priest, Founder of the Carmelite Missionaries and the Teresian Carmelite Missionaries (Religious congregations founded in 1960). He was Spanish, born in Aytona (Lerida), on 29th December 1811. Before his vocation as a founder became clear to him, he had a long search for his beloved. He was exiled in various occasions, preached popular missions and from that, he obtained the title “Apostolic Missionary” from the Holy See on 19th January 1840. Attentive to God’s signs in the history and the needs of the Church, he planned and organized the revolutionary work on the School of Virtue which turned into a model catechetical education. The consoling reality of the mystery of **the Church: “God**

²²F. STOCKL, *Mary, Model and Mother of Consecrated Life*, 309.

and Neighbour” was revealed to him as a definitive object of his love during his preaching at the Cathedral of Ciudadela (Menorca), in November 1860.²³

The life of Blessed Francisco Palau was wrapped in Mary’s presence. He published various books and one of them, “Month of Mary” was totally on the teachings on the virtues of Mary. Palau sees in Mary the mirror with which the Church should be looked at. For Palau, Mary reflects the Church meaning that she possesses all the qualities needed in the Church and for the Church. He died on 20th March 1872 and was beatified by Pope John Paul II on 24th April 1988, Marian year.

1.8 Palau’s Images of Mary as an Authentic Disciple

Mary occupies a special place in the life of Palau because of her place in the Carmelite tradition and also because of Palau’s personal experience. Palau found in Mary full of grace and the model of all virtues. Prepared for the plenitude of graces and gifts by the Holy Spirit, she possessed all in very Sublime degree, superior to all the angels and men put together; for this she was chosen to become the mother of God.

“You searched for me, you called me and I did not answer because you were looking at me as a particular virgin, an individual, and it was not suitable for you to see me in that way. Now that your beloved object is revealed to you, I will be with you from today onwards and I shall never leave you; wherever you go I will follow. I shall be with you not as a mother of God, but as a young mother, and as beautiful as can be conceived by human imagination... but as perfect type of that ever pure virgin who has been revealed to you...”²⁴

Palau finds in Mary the totality and the perfection of the Church, that’s why the one who looks at Mary can see the Church as a clean mirror, because she is the image of holiness of the Church. Mary is the perfect type of the Church.²⁵ Palau sees in Mary the face and the image of God. “I looked at the image and saw then in Mary my love. I saw the holy Church. In Christ, her head, I contemplated her immense beauty and in her physiognomy, I saw the face and image of God.”²⁶ He also sees in Mary all the graces and all the perfection possible in pure creature. God in His wise providence created her as the perfect type to represent the purity,

²³Cf. E. PACHO, *Francisco Palau Writings: My Relation with the Church* 877-880.

²⁴E. PACHO, *Francisco Palau Writings: My Relation with the Church* 1.12.

²⁵Cf. E. PACHO, *Francisco Palau Writings: My Relation with the Church* 66.3.

²⁶ E. PACHO – T. MORILLO – A. BAQUEDANO, *A Guide to Understanding Francisco Palau and His Teachings*.

virginity and maternity, fecundity and beauty of the Church. She is a clear mirror in which the Church could be seen.

Mary is the perfect and complete type of the Church, figure of living and consummated image of its infinite beauty and infinite goodness of its motherhood and virginity, of all endless perfections... Mary was chosen and predestined, not only as mother of the Incarnated Word, but as accomplished model of perfection and holiness of the Church²⁷. Mary has never had and never will have equal in all aspects of perfection. She was as perfect as it is possible to conceive perfection in a pure creature, because it was fitting for the dignity of Mother of God. Her perfection cannot be compared to any other creature; she is the perfect type to represent purity, virginity, and maternity, fecundity and beauty.²⁸In terms of sin, Mary was all pure; she was free from the stain of original sin.²⁹

Francisco Palau sees Mary as a woman with all the qualities and virtues needed as an authentic disciple. In his book, “Month of Mary,” he presents Mary as one who has all the theological virtues (faith, hope and charity). In this book, he intended to teach people to imitate her virtues, the best way to honor her. Also in the school of virtue which he taught, he presented Mary as the paragon of and model of all virtues. Charity is the queen of the virtues and Mary surpassed in charity to all men and angels together, and because of that she was exalted above all of them.³⁰

1.9 Conclusion

The elements of discipleship includes “*to follow*” (follow the teachings and example of Christ in every aspect of life), “*I will make you*” (this means to change, becoming Christ in His growth process called sanctification. Jesus intends to shape his followers such that they bear much fruit for His kingdom (cf. Jn.15: 12) and “*Fishers of men*” (an authentic disciple is committed to the mission of Christ. Jesus asks us to be perfect just as our heavenly Father is perfect. A disciple is one who bases his/her life on the teachings of Christ. As disciples of Christ we long to live a life deeply rooted in Christ and as faithful followers of His. Christian discipleship entails not only learning the teachings of Jesus Christ but living them. The most prominent in the Gospel is that: Jesus was upfront with his disciples. He did not promise that being committed to Him would save them from suffering and persecution rather He encouraged

²⁷Cf. E. PACHO, *Francisco Palau Writings: My Relation with the Church* 66.3.

²⁸Cf. E. PACHO, *Francisco Palau Writings: My Relation with the Church* 11.21.

²⁹Cf. E. PACHO, *Francisco Palau Writings: My Relation with the Church* 11.17.

³⁰Cf. E. PACHO, *Francisco Palau Writings: Month of Mary*, 542.

them to embrace the cross as He did. Discipleship is a life that is accompanied with a price. The good news for all disciples longing for authenticity is that God is intimately involved in the process.³¹ Mary is a model for authentic disciple.

³¹Cf. A. WILKIE, *By Way of the Heart*, 20.

CHAPTER TWO

CHALLENGES FACING DISCIPLESHIP

2.0 Introduction

The Christian life is a constant battle. Blessed Francisco Palau responded to the challenges of his own time modeling on Mary who was faithful even in the midst of resistant tribulations. He was exiled in various occasions but he persevered in his vocation. During his period of exiles, he resided most of the time near the grottos of Mary where he prayed. He asked for the intercession of Mary and her advice on how to pray and what to ask for, from her Son.³² This chapter presents some of the challenges facing discipleship as witnessed in day-to-day life, encouraging disciples to model on Mary as Blessed Francisco Palau did in responding to the challenges of his own time. The chapter discusses the challenges related to faithfulness to personal prayer, challenges related to discernment through active listening to God, and other challenges regarding personal commitment to authentic discipleship.

2.1 Lack of Personal Prayer/Interior Silence

Palau had a period of interior silence which helped him to realize the power of God within him to face the challenges of his time. He learned this virtue of dedication to personal prayer from Mary who pondered these things in her heart (cf. Lk.1:29). No one claims to be a disciple without returning to the master. In prayer disciples have personal encounter with God who loves them. In personal prayer disciples renew their love and regain energy for the work of the Lord. It becomes a great challenge to answer the call of discipleship when a disciple thinks he/she can do it all alone.

A disciple needs that space of silence for the Lord speaks to hearts in silence. Blessed Francisco Palau in his writings asks his daughters to enter into the depth of their souls and remain there in silence and listen.³³ Lack of interior silence, leads to emptiness and it is chaotic when one is unable to maintain silence. Sometimes disciples are afraid of entering within themselves. They avoid hearing the voice speaking within them because it presents the reality of life and challenges all aspects of their lives. It is in prayer that disciples are energized and the zeal for the mission, re-enkindled.

³² Cf. E. PACHO, *Francisco Palau Writings: Struggle of the Soul with God*, 23.

³³ Cf. E. PACHO, *Francisco Palau Writings: Letters*, 1.2.

2.2 Lack of the Ability to Listen to God

In all human dealings, non-listening by one person or both parties means breakdown in communication and death of the relationship. Refusing to listen to another person signifies hostility and defiance. The prophets refer to rebellion against God in terms of refusal to listen (cf. Jr. 6:10). Only God can open hearts, minds and ears for one to hear and understand.³⁴ Mary's life was identified with contemplative silence; listening to God. In the life of Francisco Palau, many caves were recorded where he sought the presence of God in solitude; to listen and discern the will of God in his life and endeavours precisely near the shrine of Mary.³⁵ Authentic disciples are called to look unto Him who has called them with eagerness to return to him in prayer; listening and having a friendly conversation. In listening to God, a disciple discerns the will of God at all times and in every situation. Listening of a disciple also entails obedience to the voice and direction of God. A disciple who does not listen can never hear the voice of the master.

2.3 Lack of Self Knowledge and Self Evaluation

Sharma defines self-knowledge as the DNA of self enlightenment and the stepping stone of self-mastery.³⁶ It is the true knowledge of oneself. In self-knowledge one can get acquainted with his/her capacity, strengths and weaknesses. It leads to understanding of self and others. In order to be effective in ones mission as an authentic disciple, self-evaluation is needed so as to gain self-knowledge. When a disciple lacks self-knowledge it distorts his/her relationship with God and neighbour. Gill states that people trained for ministry two or three decades ago experienced formation geared to providing them with knowledge which they could impart and skills by which they could express the truths they were learning about God, people and the world.

Today, the ministry has shifted *in giving what one knows to sharing who one is*. Today's ministers, whether religious or lay, are exhorted to communicate with them, personally and individually, by listening to their needs, sharing their struggles, allowing them to come to know our deepest attitudes, values, faith, experiences, struggles and weakness, and, in brief, giving them a chance to recognize us as 'wounded healers.' This encourages a deepening in understanding of ourselves as well as the people we serve.³⁷

³⁴Cf. M. USHA, *A Time for Healing*, 58.

³⁵Cf. E. PACHO, *Francisco Palau y Quer, A Passion for the Church*, 30.

³⁶Cf. M. GITAU, "Anthropology of Christian Vocation", Class note

³⁷Cf. A. WILKIE, *By Way of Heart*, 21.

It is said that a realistic self-esteem comes from an objective evaluation of oneself. “This includes the personal dignity that one accords him/herself, the recognition and acceptance of one’s limitations; the appreciation that one has inherent potentials on which one can build his/her life.”³⁸ An unexamined life is not worth living. A disciple who lacks self-evaluation will be blind whereas he/she will be trying to remove splinter in another person’s eye (cf. Lk. 6:41). Jesus invites His disciples for evaluation when He asked them, “Who do people say I am...?” (cf. Mk. 8: 27-29).

2.4 Lack of Detachment from Material Things

Mary’s detachment was seen in her total self-abandonment and clinging to God alone. She was united to God whole heartedly and was focused in doing the will of God. For Francisco Palau, renunciation and detachment is a narrow gate through which one can enter into the palace of God.³⁹ The young man who approached Jesus declared his desire to enter the kingdom of God and Jesus was pleased with him after listening to all he had achieved. He was disappointed when Jesus requested for one thing which was remaining for him to accomplish and the scripture recorded that his face fell and he went away sad (cf. Lk.10:21-22). The inability to detach from the material things leads to unhappiness of a disciple.

Many disciples today are not far from this reality. Some of the disciples who willingly gave up their material wealth are falling into the temptation of compensation in other forms such as: acquiring unnecessary titles, pursuit of power, favourable mission, possessing/individualizing apostolate, inability to leave familiar environment, and so on. The more one is attached to the material things, the lesser value for God because the heart lies on that which it holds very dear and no one can serve two masters at a time (cf. Matt.6 :24). The inability to detach brings distraction in following Jesus. In sending His disciples for a mission, He asked them not to carry two tunics or sandals as they travel (cf. Lk.9: 3). In this sense the Master himself teaches the disciples to trust on God’s providence. Therefore, following Jesus faithfully demands giving up possessions of all kinds.

2.5 Fear of Carrying One’s Cross in Following Jesus

Jesus did not hide from his disciples how difficult it was for him to fulfill his mission of salvation (cf. Jn.12: 27-28). His mission was to be fulfilled on the cross and it was the purpose why He came. Jesus embraced His cross as His Father willed and he carried it faithfully

³⁸ M. GITAU, “Anthropology of Christian Vocation”, Class note.

³⁹ Cf. E. PACHO, *Francisco Palau Writings: Letters* 1.2.

till the end. Mary on her own part as the Mother of Jesus, shared in this mystery of the cross. She faithfully persevered in her union with her Son unto the cross. She stood at the foot of the cross in keeping with the divine plan (cf. Jn. 19: 25). She united herself with the sacrifice of her Son.⁴⁰ An authentic disciple has to embrace cross as a sign of love. In following the footsteps of Mary Blessed Francisco Palau persevered to the end even in his period of long search for his beloved, his prolonged exclaustation and exile in France. His desire to give totally to God by way of martyrdom, (to shed his blood as a proof of love) set him on fire. He said that only one thing alleviated his suffering: the hope of dying as a victim among the flames.⁴¹ As long as a disciple understands that the cross is an inevitable assignment for all disciples and that everyone have their crosses to carry, one begins to see the cross not as a curse but as a blessing.

Jesus lived an exemplary life by embracing His cross and He persevered until his death on the cross; so should the disciples. Fear and rejection of the cross entails rejecting the one who died on the cross for the salvation of all. Today, disciples are tempted to abhor sufferings and cling towards prosperity as easy way of life. The ability to embrace one's cross brings inner peace and enthusiasm in following Jesus and the presence of Jesus lightens the cross. It also requires an understanding that there is joy which accompanies the cross. It is a joy of suffering for a cause one believes in, such as preaching the Gospel or doing something worthwhile. The joy of the cross when accomplished is certain satisfaction that cannot be adequately captured with words. As Jesus tell His disciples: "...you will weep and mourn...you will grieve, but your grief will become joy...and no one will take it away from you" (Jn. 16:20-24).⁴² For disciples to carry their cross faithfully, wisdom and patience are needed.

2.6 Lack of Witnessing in the Life of Disciples

Preaching the Gospel by words is not enough rather it demands "living" the Gospel. For one to be a true witness of Christ he/she needs to evangelize, and best means of evangelization is self-evangelization. We live the 'word' before proclaiming it. According to Pope Paul VI, modern men listen to witnesses than teachers; and if they listen to teachers it is because they are witnesses (cf. *Evangelii Nuntiandi*). Palau preached and lived communion and it was realized and expressed in unity of the Church (God and neighbor). Love of the Church flowed in Palau's life and was the determinant of his actions. He promoted this love by words

⁴⁰ F. STOCKL, *Mary, Model and Mother of Consecrated Life*, 309.

⁴¹E. PACHO – T. MORILLO – A. BAQUEDANO , *Understanding Francisco Palau and His Teachings*, 11.

⁴² Cf. *Rethinking Mission; Evangelization in Africa in New Era*, 74.

and deeds: Palau believed that an act of perfect charity is an act of love to the Church because charity is love of God and neighbours. He preached love of God and neighbor and showed example in his service to the Church. In most of his letters, he instructed his daughters to live by example beginning by being charitable to one another. He writes: “the first work of charity consists in becoming slaves and servants of one another. To serve, be servant of all and all of you servant of one another, this is the peak of perfection, without this, perfection is an illusion.”⁴³

In relation to prayer, it is particularly clear and documentable that Francisco Palau a pray-er and contemplative, taught what he lived. In each stage of his existence, he proposed forms of prayer in consonance with what he was preoccupied and lived within himself. In his prayer, he brought to God the realities of his time and he lived out his prayer experience in his service to the Church. Today some disciple live contrary of what they proclaim. In deaconate ordination, the Church instructs the candidates to *believe* what they read, teach what they believe and *practice* what they teach.

Disciples are called to be witnesses but there are actual ways of bearing witness.⁴⁴ They are called to be holy by living their lives with love and by bearing witness in everything they do, wherever they find themselves.⁴⁵ Disciples witness by loving one another and doing the will of God. “This is how all will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another” (Jn. 13: 35). In this aspect, Palau exhorts his daughters to be of one heart, animated and guided by the Spirit of God.⁴⁶ It becomes a great challenge when the life of a disciple is contrary to what he/she preaches. An authentic disciple is called to be the letter that others read.

2.7 Lack of Sacrifice as a Personal Effort to Follow Jesus

The Christian life is a constant battle, requiring personal sacrifice in collaboration with the grace of God. Most often, the imitation of the Saints becomes a source of strength. As it is in every aspect of life that people have someone whom they look upon so in offering personal sacrifice in order to respond positively to the call to authentic discipleship. For instance, Blessed Francisco Palau responded to the challenges of his own time modeling on Mary who offered great sacrifice of herself to God. Mary as the model of authentic disciple emptied herself totally for the love of God and salvation of all mankind. God consecrated her in Christ,

⁴³E. PACHO, *Francisco Palau Writings: Letters*, 99.6.

⁴⁴ Cf. H. BALTHASAR, “*Theology and Holiness, in Communion*,” 345.

⁴⁵Cf. FRANCIS, *Rejoice and Be Glad*, 14.

⁴⁶ Cf. E. PACHO, *Francisco Palau Writings: Letters*, 7.

the Redeemer, in the most perfect way.⁴⁷ She accepted the will of God which was a total renunciation of her own will.

Modeling on Mary's consecration to God, Francisco Palau in his search for the object of his love made sacrifices which left him with self-satisfaction. He said: "In the austerity of religious life: fasting, silence, poverty: I searched and I found my love and I united with her in faith, hope and love! Her presence satisfied my passion and with her I am happy – her beauty gratified me."⁴⁸ He gave himself totally rendering services for the Church; this is made clear in one of sayings: "I live and will live for the Church; I will live and will die for her."⁴⁹ Discipleship calls for daily sacrifice; selfless service and self-emptying. Love one another as I have loved you; for what greater love is this that a man should die for his friend (cf. Jn. 15:12 - 14). Discipleship demands leaving one's comfort zone.

2.8 Lack of Proper Discernment in Seeking the Will of God

Proper discernment helps one to differentiate what comes from the Holy Spirit and that of the world or the devil. It is more than intelligence or common sense. It is a gift which a disciple must implore, asking with confidence that the Holy Spirit grant this gift. Disciples need to seek to develop it through prayer, reflection, reading and good counsel. Without the wisdom of discernment, one can easily become prey to every passing trend.⁵⁰ Sometimes the spirit of the world or the devil may opt for a rigid resistance to change; yet that would block the working of the Spirit. Though disciples are free with the freedom of Christ; yet He asks to them to examine what is within. Desires, anxieties, fears and questions what takes place all around everyone. As St. Paul instructs the people to test everything and hold fast to what is good (cf. 1 Thes.5:21).⁵¹

Palau's anxious and prolonged search was clarified through proper discernment which involves study and reflection. This corresponds to the prolonged period of prayer which was typically a personal effort in meditation. It was his moment of vocational discernment. In order to know the will of God, he modeled on Mary's contemplative silence seeking the will of God. In silence and solitude, he continually meditates between the society of men and the society of

⁴⁷Cf. F. STOCKL, *MARY, Model and Mother of Consecrated Life* 148.

⁴⁸E. PACHO, *Francisco Palau Writings: My Relation with the Church* 1.4.

⁴⁹E. PACHO, *Francisco Palau Writings: My Relation with the Church* 773.

⁵⁰Cf. FRANCIS, *Rejoice and Be Glad*, 167.

⁵¹Cf. FRANCIS *Contemplate*, 168.

angels.⁵² Authentic disciples need discernment at all times lest they fail to heed the promptings of his grace and disregard his invitation to grow. Often, discernment is exercised in small and apparently irrelevant things. Since greatness of spirit is manifested in simple everyday realities.

2.9 Lack of Balance between Ministry and Rest

Disciples should learn to care for the “care-giver.” The absence of rest in ministry can result in burnout and demoralization and can affect one’s life as an individual, community and the entire ministry. Francisco Palau was able to live a balanced life. He understood that a life of intimacy with God and the life of service to the neighbours are the two channels of the same love to Christ and the members of His Body, the Church. For Palau, the apostolic service is the realization and manifestation of love to the neighbours united in Christ. He really gave his life for the service of the Church and he also knew the importance of balancing between apostolate and rest.

In different occasions, Palau isolated himself to a lonely place where he could be alone with God and his preferred places were caves. It was during this encounter that Palau regains his strength to offer his services to the Church. An authentic disciple should bear it in mind that to stay vibrant, ministry must be balanced by rest because leisure is in the heart of prayer, solitude, community and friendship. “Our relationship with ourselves, others and God requires that quality time be devoted to such “non-productive” activities as prayer and play, solitude and interpersonal sharing. Without leisure, we not only jeopardize our humanity, but endanger the Spirit’s work in our lives.”⁵³

2.10 Ingratitude to God for the Gratuitous Gifts Received

Mary was ever grateful to God for the favour she received. Her song of praise shows her joy and appreciation to God who has chosen her as she exclaims: “My soul magnifies the Lord, my Spirit rejoices in God my Saviour...” (Lk.1: 46-47ff). In imitating Mary, Palau offered himself to God and accepting to die for the love of the Church in return to the love of God. Palau was grateful to God for all that he received from God. He understood that his vocation was a gift from God and he appreciated by returning God’s love in service to the Church. The spirit of gratitude must permeate a disciple. It must be part and parcel of an

⁵²Cf. E. PACHO, *Francisco Palau Writings: My Relation with the Church*, 3.

⁵³A. WILKIE, *By Way of the Heart*, 39.

authentic disciple: gratitude for what is what has been and will be. “A spirit of gratitude is a spirit of a mystic, one whose life’s focus is the goodness of God.”⁵⁴

An authentic disciple is one who realizes that sanctity goes with a grateful heart. The Psalmist instructs disciples to offer praise as sacrifice to God (cf. Ps 50:14). Moreover, joy and gratitude are a result of, and bring about this experience of harmony with God, other people and the universe. The joy of being alive brings one in contact with God, therefore, disciples should thank God for touching lives through them. It is a challenge when a disciple begins to complain and forgets that his/her life and vocation is a gratuitous gift from God for the service of mankind and for the glory of God.

2.11 Conclusion

Jesus made it clear to His disciples that whoever wishes to follow Him should take up his/her cross daily and follow Him. This following of the Lord is accompanied with various challenges which call the disciples to stand their ground unless they will be carried away by the storms of life. Anyone who wishes to be an authentic disciple is called to this awareness that just like every other aspect of human life, discipleship is not without challenges. Holiness is highly recommended in the life of all disciples for that will bring them closer to Christ and they should always return to Him in prayer to form a bond with Him.

The Church invites all the Disciples of Christ to the universal call to holiness as Jesus is the Teacher and Model of all perfection. He preached holiness of life to each and every one of His disciples of every condition (cf. *LG*, 40). Authentic disciples should always keep Jesus at the center of their lives. In order to overcome these challenges, disciples should model on Mary whose life is an example for all the followers of Christ. Mary teaches a life of holiness for she is ever virgin and most pure. Her holiness is totally unique and cannot be reached by any other creature because she imitated her Son in most absolute and simplest way. Her holiness is the most total and simple.⁵⁵

The ability to confront one’s fears and face the challenges is a mark of a true disciple. Mary was not afraid of the challenges that will follow her “Yes”, she courageously said yes by the power of the Holy Spirit. Modeling on Mary Blessed Francisco Palau persevered even in the midst of his uncertainty. Above all, with love and cheerfulness in day-to-day living of a

⁵⁴“Rethinking Mission; Evangelization in Africa in New Era,” 75.

⁵⁵Cf. F. STOCKL, *Mary, Model and Mother of Consecrated Life*, 150.

disciple, he/she ascends the ladder of holiness and joy of self-giving in the mission. It is very important to note that the clear image one has for God will help a great deal to overcome the challenges which are rebelling against the faculties of Christ disciples. Mary had a clear image of her Son and she taught the disciples to do whatever He tells them.

CHAPTER THREE

VALUES FOR LIVING CARMELITE MISSIONARY DISCIPLESHIP

3.0 Introduction

This chapter presents possible values which will strengthen Carmelite Missionaries in living their discipleship. It will focus more on Mary's virtues since the entire work is on Palau's dedication to Mary as a model of authentic discipleship. Pope John Paul II sees in Mary the perfect disciple, the outstanding model of Christian life to be imitated by all Christians, and particularly by those called to be a more radical discipleship. In his Angelus address in 29th May, 2002, he said: "Mary shines forth before us as a model of Christian life. In her school we learn silence, listening and service, the fundamental marks of a disciple.

Today too, in our restless and often confused world, silence helps us to make space for the world which saves, listening teaches us attention and tenderness, while free and generous service enlivens fraternal and community life."⁵⁶ In the life of a disciple, listening is a great virtue which one needs to cultivate. This chapter present how Mary's listening helped her to answer her call as a faithful disciple. It also discusses Lectio Divina and active participation in liturgy as another tool for living one's discipleship. Lastly it presents how Palau's dedication to Our Mary of Mount Carmel helped him live his discipleship and finally, some of the virtues of Mary which one can imitate.

3.1 Listening Passionately to the Spirit

The Spirit is the common bond of love that flows between the Father and the Son in total self-giving love. The Holy Spirit is a great teacher. Jesus while addressing His disciples about the coming of the advocate said that when the Spirit comes, he will teach and remind them all that He has taught them (cf. Jn. 14: 26). The Spirit glorifies God in us and guides us to all truth (cf. Jn. 16: 13). An authentic disciple should listen passionately to the Spirit so as to hear the voice of the Master. In a prayerful reflection born out of readiness to listen; a disciple listens to the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

The Spirit makes one ready to listen to the Lord, hear him in others and to reality itself, which always challenges us in new ways.⁵⁷ The listening of the Word requires vigilance (cf. 2:1-3), attention to what is being heard (cf. Mk 4:24), awareness of whom one is listening to (cf. Jr.

⁵⁶Cf. F. STOCKL, *Mary, Model and Mother of Consecrated Life*, 431.

⁵⁷ Cf. FRANCIS, *Rejoice and Be Glad*, 172.

23: 16) and of how one listens (cf. Lk.8:18).⁵⁸ In listening prayerfully, a disciple should be able to discern and test the spirits and see if they belong to God (cf. 1Jn. 4:1).

3.2 Personal Prayer /Lectio Divina

Prayer is the most essential element in the life of every Christian. It is an inner birth: we become aware of a life present within us, one that sprouts and grows in silence. It is a yearning, a search, practice and a journey. Prayer brings us back to the center of our being; it gives us over to Jesus, while it heals our self and restores our unity.⁵⁹ The more we know and commune with the one who called us, the better we know ourselves and our vocation in life. “The first element of prayer is silence and listening to God who reveals himself.”⁶⁰ The saints are distinguished by a spirit of prayer and a need for communion with God.⁶¹ In prayer, we remain with a friend whom we dare to be ourselves. Our soul can be naked with Him; He seems to ask of us to put on nothing, only to be whom we are.

In prayer we empty ourselves before God in freedom. It is a space for healing and enlightenment. “Prayer that is beneficial addresses needs, whether petition or thanksgiving-but they are needs, real or felt.”⁶² It has to be connected to everyday life experience which ranges the whole spectrum of human emotions. As disciples, our prayer life is reflected in our day-to-day relationship with self, God and neighbor because prayer is lived and not said. Disciples’ presence in prayer is a divine act which God does, in them and through them. Community prayer helps in relationship with one another but personal prayer bonds intimacy with God. One who prays is one who has become ‘pray-er’ because prayer prays in him/her.

Lectio Divina is regarded as Prayerful reading of God’s word. It is the method of contemplative prayer that evolved in the monastic milieu. It is primarily a way of listening to the Scripture. What is remarkable about the process of *Lectio Divina* is that one can move from one level of relating to Jesus to the next in the same period of prayer, experiencing variety of responses to the divine initiative.”⁶³ “The main purpose of the classical process of *Lectio Divina* is to help transform meditation and prayer into a loving relationship with God the Father, in Jesus the Son, through the Holy Spirit operating through the biblical text. It aims at helping the praying person experience God’s covenant through the meditation of the biblical

⁵⁸Cf. FRANCIS *Contemplate*, 36.

⁵⁹Cf. FRANCIS *Contemplate*, 30.

⁶⁰ F. STOCKL, *Mary, Model And Mother of Consecrated Life*, 407.

⁶¹ Cf. FRANCIS, *Rejoice and Be Glad*.147.

⁶²*Rethinking Mission; Evangelization in Africa in New Era*, 70.

⁶³Cf. T. KEATING,*Intimacy with God*, 46.

text, which in the Spirit who inspired it becomes the voice of Christ, incarnate Word of God, speaking to and growing in us.”⁶⁴

In *Lectio Divina* the Scripture is not read as a story book, but under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. It is the process of letting God’s Spirit touch and transform us after which we are moved into praise and thanksgiving to God. *Lectio Divina* leads to a concrete plan for change. For instance if someone reflects on the experience of the young man who approached Jesus asking for what he must do to inherit the kingdom (cf. Mk. 10:19-22). He/she might hear Him saying to go an extra mile as He reveals to the person one thing which is remaining. Praying in this form brings joy to the heart and inspires spirit of gratitude and fulfillment in the life of a disciple. *Lectio Divina* should help one cultivate a docile, wise and discerning heart, capable of knowing what is of God and what can lead one away from Him.⁶⁵

3.3 Taking Active Participation in Liturgy

Liturgy is not something abstract but the reality of one’s daily practice in prayer which affects one’s life. Awareness and attentiveness in liturgy matters a lot because Liturgy is the celebration of Christ. In liturgy, disciples are prophets standing as intercessors before God. In communion with Christ, they pray the prayer of Christ not theirs. Liturgy is a time for spiritual renewal. The Eucharistic sacrifice is the source and summit of Christian life. The most Holy Eucharist contains the Church’s wealth: Christ himself our Passover and living bread.⁶⁶ In taking part in the sacramental communion, we are renewed and consolidated in Christ. We not only receive Christ but He also receives us. He enters into friendship with us and gives us life (cf. Jn. 6: 57). In the Eucharist we participate in the body and blood of Christ (cf. 1Cor 10:14f).

Active participation in Liturgy therefore makes us fully present in body, soul and spirit. It keeps us alert and mindful of who we are (part of Christ’s body) and what we are doing (partaking in the sacrifice of Christ). This awareness will boost our consciousness and help us in striving for holiness as we come to realize that we are part of Christ’s body and the temples of the Holy Spirit (cf. 1Cor 6:18-20). Eucharistic communion brings about in a sublime way the mutual abiding of Christ and each of His followers as He said in John’s gospel; Abide in me, and I in you (cf. Jn. 15:4). From the perpetuation of the sacrifice of the Cross and her communion with the body and blood of Christ in the Eucharist, the Church draws the spiritual

⁶⁴ G. OLIANA, *Lectio Divina, Spirituality for the Mission*, 15.

⁶⁵ Cf. FRANCIS, *Seeking the Face of God*, 20.

⁶⁶ Cf. JOHN PAUL II *The Eucharist*, 1.

power needed to carry out her mission. The Eucharist thus, is the source and summit of all evangelization.⁶⁷

In the Liturgy of hours which is the public prayer of the Church, a source of devotion and nourishment for personal prayer designed to sanctify the whole course of the day. The Divine office therefore is the work of God; the Holy Office where we meet God. Through it, we dedicate ourselves and human activity into the hours of God. The willingness with which one celebrates the divine praises shows how much one appreciates the importance of this more intimate participation in the Church's life.⁶⁸ Active participation in all forms of Liturgical celebration is therefore required for every disciple so as to be fully involved; being present in mind, body and spirit as Christ forms part of us.

3.4 Modeling on Mary's Virtue of Contemplative Silence

English dictionary defines silence as the condition of being or keeping quiet/still. It is a period of time without speech or noise meaning absence of sound. The prayerful listening to the word of God in silence certainly supported the Blessed Virgin in her reply to the Angel and in her generous response to God's call (cf. General Audience of Sept. 10, 1997, Theotokos, 38).⁶⁹ Mary's silence is not a moderation of speech rather her silence is wise and capacity for remembering and embracing the "Word of God" and the mystery of his earthly life. Mary having grown in the religious tradition which emphasized regular prayer, her life was contemplative. Her silence is not an empty silence rather it is a prayerful and healing silence. It is such that enhances concentration and allows her to be in touch with her inner world. Her silence is full of wisdom. It is more than a state of being silent. She pondered the word of God in her heart and lived by it.

Contemplation is quieting of oneself in a single awareness of God, for God's sake alone to relish our human. It requires both exterior and interior solitary environment of silence. In other words, Christian contemplation is a holy silence in which one needs to listen to one's heart. This helps one to discern his/her own spirit and the movements of the heart. Mary's contemplative silence was centered on God. In her silence she recalls the words of the Angel and all that was said about her child which prevented her from wavering even when faced with the drama of the cross. In her contemplative silence she became docile to the Divine Will which

⁶⁷Cf. JOHN PAUL II. *The Eucharist*, 22.

⁶⁸ Cf. F. AUSTIN., ed., *The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents*, 12.

⁶⁹F.STOCKL, *Mary, Model And Mother of Consecrated Life*, 407.

was linked to her faith. Her silence teaches disciples that their faith can be strengthened as they turn their hearts to God in prayer. Mary invites Disciples of Christ living in a noisy world filled with messages of all kinds to cultivate the attitude of contemplative silence.

Mary's witness enables disciples appreciate a spiritually rich silence and foster a contemplative spirit. The Virgin Mary standing courageously by the cross of Christ is teaching us contemplation on the Passion. By reviving devotion to her, according to the teaching and tradition of the Church (*LG 66-67*) religious will find the sure way to illuminate and strengthen the contemplative dimension of their lives. The contemplative life of a religious would be incomplete if it were not directed in filial love towards her who is the Mother of the Church and of consecrated souls.⁷⁰ Mary teaches us how to be attuned to the promptings of the Spirit. From Mary we learn that cultivating the attitude of contemplative silence will keep us in an intimate communion with God. As disciples, we must, in a spirit of contemplation, learn to love silence and quietness in order to ponder on the word of God as Mary did.

3.5 Modeling on Mary's Virtue of Obedience

Obedience is a term that disturbs many people, especially when it is applied to adults. How are disciples to make sense of obedience as a virtue distinguishing their lives as followers of Jesus who learnt obedience through His sufferings (cf. Heb. 5:8). Obedience is a readiness to do the will of God just as Jesus accepted to die for us who are sinners in obedience to the will of the Father. Obedience is fundamentally affirmation of the Good News that we are God's very own, chosen to be part of the family of God (cf. Eph. 1:4).

The heart of obedience lies in the joyful "yes" to this familial relationship with God. Through obedience, we humbly acknowledge that we have been created by a loving God and are called to express our gratitude through a loving service.⁷¹ Mary in her obedience untied the knot tied by Eve's disobedience; what Eve tied with her unbelief, the Virgin Mary untied by faith. (*DE 56*) She accepted the will of God by her simple "yes" and she rendered faithful service to all mankind. She is a model of humility and obedience.

3.6 Modeling on Mary's Virtue of Charity

To be charitable is to live in Christ and to become Christ-like. Charity opens human heart to love. The Virgin Mary is a model for every consecrated person and for participation in the apostolic mission of the Church. This is a particular evident when we consider the spiritual

⁷⁰Cf. F. AUSTIN., ed., *The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents*, 13.

⁷¹ Cf. A. WILKIE, *By Way of the Heart*, 121.

attitudes which characterized her such as listening to the word of God. The Virgin Mary at prayer is a most excellent model of the Church in order of faith, charity and perfect union with Christ.⁷² Mary found Christ and kept Him at heart and cared for Him. She cared for Jesus in His material needs; she cared for her husband Joseph in ensuring peace in the family. She cared for her cousin Elisabeth.

Charity helps one to make Christ available and visible to others. It is charity that opens ones heart so that others may dwell in there. It helps one to be sensitive to others' needs and enables people to show concern to one another. Mother Mary showed charity to the couple at the wedding at Cana by alerting her Son about the shortage of wine. Charity strengthens relationship; Mary kept good relationship in the Holy family at Nazareth. From her we learn that keeping good relationship in our communities and throughout the Congregation is a great source of strength and continuity. It is good relationship that will help one to build a strong community and Congregation where all of us are at home with one another.

3.7 Modeling on Palau's Dedication to Our Lady of Mt. Carmel

Mt. Carmel is a sacred mountain and a place of prayer. It is used as a symbol of beauty and fruitfulness.⁷³ It is the mountain of Mary. She has complete dominion over Carmel; she is the Lady of Carmel and the indisputable mistress and Patron par excellence of Carmel.⁷⁴ An invocation to Mary with a title Our Lady of Mt. Carmel reminds one of the power and manifestation of God on Mt. Carmel (cf. 1Kgs 18: 30- 40) and all the great things God has done through the intercession of the Mother of Carmel. The title, "Our Lady of Mt. Carmel" as addressed to the Blessed Virgin Mary was bestowed upon her by virtue of her role as Patron, Protectress and Advocate of the Carmelites, the Scapular wearers and all those affiliated to the Carmelite Order.

The title originated among the hermits of Mt. Carmel, usually referred to as the first Carmelites who lived in Carmel during the late 12th and early 13th century. These hermits built an oratory, dedicated Our Lady at the middle of cells where they gathered for their prayers, spiritual exercises and some devotional practices.⁷⁵ They recognized in Mary, more a mother and sister in faith than a patron thus they regarded themselves as sons and brothers to the Blessed Virgin Mary, than vassals. This view brought intimate and tender relation with their

⁷²F. AUSTIN., ed., *The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents*, 13.

⁷³Cf. S. GIORDANO, *Carmel in the Holy Land*, 11.

⁷⁴Cf. S. GIORDANO, *Carmel in the Holy Land*, 44.

⁷⁵Cf. S. GIORDANO, *Carmel in the Holy Land*, 57.

patron (the Blessed Virgin Mary). They conceived her as the “Lady of the Mount” thus “Our Lady of Mt. Carmel. Staying in Carmel, they sought in Mary, as an exemplar of perfection. They saw in the example of Mary’s life something to be accepted, imitated and assimilated. They venerated Mary as “Mother of Carmel.”⁷⁶ They also saw the whole of Mt. Carmel which totally belong to Our Lady as a place of *walking in spiritual footsteps* and of carrying out devotions to our Lady.⁷⁷

Mary occupies a special place in the Palautian spirituality because of her place in the Carmelite tradition and also Palau’s personal and unique experience. As a Carmelite, Blessed Francisco Palau was so much dedicated to our Lady of Mt. Carmel. His whole life was wrapped by Mary’s presence. During infancy and adolescence, his enthusiasm for the Rosary was noteworthy. He entered Carmel an order that is dedicated to Mary, with the name “Brothers of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Mt. Carmel” with an essential Marian character so as it is said that Carmel is all of Mary. Francisco lived in the convent for a short time, barely three years. Nevertheless, he deeply assimilated the way of relating with Mary. In the Carmelite vocation, one of the characteristics is marked by the aspiration towards the true discovery of Mary and intimacy with her.

Francisco Palau goes on incorporating fundamental elements that determine his Marian experience that enriches and gives unity to his life such as contemplation as the key elements in the discovery of Mary which helped the saints of Carmel penetrate into the mystery of Mary. Palau was so much in love with Carmel and lived his vocation as a Carmelite to the full. He said in one of his writings; “to live in Carmel, I needed only one thing; Vocation.”⁷⁸ For Blessed Francisco Palau, a peculiar way of making Mary present in the community and in one’s life involves taking her as a model of intimacy with God, making her mediatrix and animator of our apostolate, and invoking her as a special protector and advocate.⁷⁹ Palau’s dedication to Mary was so obvious that he left a legacy to his daughters in relating to her and seeing her as a mirror with which the Church can be viewed. He saw Mary as model of all the virtues and encourages all his daughters to imitate her as a model.

⁷⁶Cf. S. GIORDANO, *Carmel in the Holy Land*, 46.

⁷⁷ C. UDOM, *The Brown Scapular and Our Lady of Mt. Carmel*, 1.

⁷⁸E. PACHO, *Francisco Palau Writings: Solitary Life* 10.

⁷⁹Cf. E. PACHO – T. MORILLO– A. BAQUEDANO , *A Guide to Understanding Francisco Palau and His Teachings*.40.

3.8 Conclusion

In his comment on Jesus' statement: "My mother and brother are those who hear the word of God and do it" (cf. Lk.8: 20-21), Pope John Paul II says that since Mary from the very beginning said "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be done to me according to your word" (cf. Lk.1: 38) and through faith she continued to hear and ponder that word. Thus in a sense Mary as a Mother, became *the first "disciple."* of her Son, the first to whom He seemed to say "*follow me,*" even before He addressed this call to the Apostles or to anyone else (cf. Jn.1: 43).⁸⁰

Christ's faithful in the meantime are still striving to overcome sin and to grow in holiness. They therefore raise their eyes to Mary who shines, as example of virtues on the whole community of the chosen. The Church dutifully reflects on her, contemplates her in the light of Word made man.⁸¹ Mary is a perfect type and model for all disciples. She possesses more than these values presented in this chapter and she is ever ready to help all disciples of her Son. As Francisco Palau advises his daughters to imitate her virtues, this will help all Carmelite Missionaries to continue living their discipleship in joy and love having Christ at the center of their lives.

⁸⁰Cf. F. STOCKL, *Mary, Model And Mother of Consecrated Life*, 430.

⁸¹Cf. The Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, "*De Ecclesia*" on *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*, 65

GENERAL CONCLUSION

Summary

Discipleship is a call initiated by Jesus Himself. His invitation is to follow (being with) Him and then he transforms the person into fishers of men (mission). It is difficult to separate the term discipleship from the phrase “following of Christ.” Jesus Himself takes the initiative of calling the disciple to follow Him. A disciple is one who renounces every other thing in order to follow Jesus. Today, following of Jesus has become the vocation of all believers since disciples of the historical Jesus became prototype of the Church. As disciples, one finds his/herself in a radically new situation, the eschatological one, in which the important thing is to welcome the presence of the kingdom and place oneself in its service and the manner of doing this is to follow Jesus.⁸² Thus, a disciple is expected to reflect the Master in every way. Discipleship has its own challenges but the presence of Christ makes it possible to overcome.

Conversely, the first vocation for all Christian is a call to holiness and model for all members of the Church is the desire for sanctity. “The Lord Jesus, the divine Teacher and Model of all perfection preached holiness of life to each and every one of His disciples of every condition” (LG 40). He invites disciples to be perfect as the heavenly Father is perfect (cf. Mt. 5: 48). In order to live this life of discipleship, Mary is a prototype of an authentic disciple. Blessed Francisco Palau sees her as the perfect type of the Church. In Mary, all the qualities of an authentic disciple are found. With regards to holiness, Mary’s holiness is distinct to all other saints because she imitated her Son in a unique way (the most absolute and the simplest way). She is the Christian par excellence.⁸³ She knows her son better than every other person and she directs others to Him and journeys with all the disciples on their way towards Him.

Conclusion

The essence of discipleship is imitating Jesus through faithful service and self-giving love. It is the love of God and love of neighbor. By the virtue of Christian baptism, all the members of the people of God have become missionary disciples (cf. Mt. 28:19).⁸⁴ Mary responded to God’s saving Word, she received it and welcomed it. She is a follower of Christ. Mary is the first Christian and finest follower of Christ the Saviour⁸⁵ and so she is the best model. There are moments of gladness, sorrow and perplexity in the life of disciples. This

⁸²Cf. M. LOZANO, *Discipleship: Towards Understanding of Religious Life*.

⁸³Cf. F. STOCKL, *Mary, Model And Mother of Consecrated Life*, 150.

⁸⁴ Cf. FRANCIS, “*EvangeliumGaudium*” 120

⁸⁵ Cf. Constitution of the Church 63

moment of challenges calls for perseverance and steadfastness and total abandonment of one's will to the grace of God. This work helps a great deal in the knowledge of Mary, and motivates disciples to draw closer to Jesus modeling on Mary because to know Mary is to know Christ. Anyone who follows her will never go astray and the one she directs will never lose focus.

Recommendation

From the Mystical Instructions of Michael of St Augustine, he writes: Devotion to Mary is an outstanding effective means of leading a devote life in Christ. In order to reach the throne of grace, one must try to resemble as chastely as possible Our Lady, Mother of Grace, by imitating her perfections and making her excellence one's own. Offer yourself to her each day, commit yourself to her completely. Have recourse to her as the best of teachers; consult her as the most prudent of virgins: conduct yourself as befits a good son/daughter. If indeed you love her as a mother, imitate her humility, chastity, her poverty, her obedience; imitate her love of God and all her virtues.⁸⁶

Mary's perfection can never be overemphasized and so this work is recommended as yeast for all Carmelite Missionaries in their journey of discipleship to keep consolidating their inheritance of modeling on Mary as Blessed Francisco Palau did. Modeling on Mary, will help them to live a well-integrated life, living as agents of authentic communion in the Church. For all members and lovers of Carmelite order, to keep invoking on the intersection of Our Lady of Mt Carmel and for all those who longs to serve God faithfully and authentically and all the would-be disciples, to set their eyes on Mary as a model of authentic discipleship.

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⁸⁶ Cf. Discalced Carmelite, Proper Offices 87.

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